



# Bacheloroppgave

**ADM650 Jus og administrasjon**

**A Case study of "The irregular and risky migration from  
The Gambia to Europe"**

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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Migration .....	3
1.2	Irregular migration and the backway to Europe .....	3
1.3	Purpose and research question.....	4
1.4	Limitation .....	5
1.5	Thesis structure .....	5
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Theoretical perspective .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1.1	Neoclassical microeconomic theory .....	6
2.1.2	De Haas migration theory.....	7
2.1.3	Coleman’s rational choice theory .....	8
2.1.4	Odden the push and pull theory .....	9
2.1.5	Summary.....	9
2.1.6	The socioeconomic and status situation in Gambia.....	10
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Method .....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1.1	Document examination.....	12
3.1.2	Earlier research and sources collection.....	12
<b>4.0</b>	<b>What is “The Backway”.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Imperialism and historical background .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Discussion .....</b>	<b>17</b>
6.1.1	Why are so many young Gambian men taking the backway to Europe? ....	17
6.1.2	Social and family structure .....	18
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>21</b>

## 1.0 Introduction

The Gambia is one of the smallest countries in the African nation, within and outside the country irregular migration is a phenomenon that is well known and discussed. However, little is understood about the deep personal and sociocultural motives that put young people/ Gambians on the perilous journey across the Sahara to Europe. An examination of the ambitions and capabilities of Gambians who migrate irregularly or along the so-called “backway” is presented in this thesis. It’s the unofficial route to Europe, as an easier and effective option for the less fortunate.

Around 1.7 million people fled across the Mediterranean for Europe in the recent past four years 2014-17 and risked their lives. Over 13,000 died or have disappeared in their attempts to cross. The situation of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers has captured outstanding global attention as stories of desperation, death and ill-treatment have multiplied. In Europe, these large movements of people have sparked debates about the rights of migrants and refugees and the right political responses.

[https://actionaid.org/sites/default/files/back\\_way\\_to\\_europe\\_web.pdf](https://actionaid.org/sites/default/files/back_way_to_europe_web.pdf)

First, migrants must travel through many different countries before reaching Europe, all of which are at their own risk. In Libya, many migrants are arrested and detained in militia-run detention centre's, with high levels of violence. Hundreds of migrants die in the Sahara Desert each year. The extreme heat and dry conditions of the Sahara Desert have killed hundreds of migrants trying to reach Libya and European countries, some of whom have been left there by unscrupulous smugglers. Smugglers lie about the safety of the route and methods of transportation especially boats used. From 2014 to mid-2018, 16,850 migrants died while trying to cross the Mediterranean. Life in transit, especially in Libya, is very dangerous. Being a child or a woman does not protect one against the abuse, violence, and other crimes, and that makes the irregular journey to Europe even more risky. The topic I have chosen to investigate in my thesis is, why “African migrants take the backway to Europe” and what can both Africa and Europe do to stop this. The Gambia is one of the countries that is hardly affected by this issue.

Migrating from an underdeveloped country to the Europe, you must often depend on the illegal activities, such as human trafficking, hence the legal way is difficult, and it comes with rules and regulations. For some, it seems to be impossible to even get a visitor's or a tourist visa to Europe, because most times the authorities deny visas based on the perception that the person applying will not return home once in Europe. My research's question will be, "why are young Gambian men taking the risk of using the back way to get to Europe". There is a previous study about the same case done by (Suso. 2019), (Strand. 2014) and (Kebbeh. O. 2013).

My suggestion to answer this question is that there are historical and social reasons for these young men to migrate. Firstly, it can be traced back to colonization of Africa. Most countries have been exploited by colonial rulers and left undeveloped, while others are abandoned depending on their relationship with their former colonial rulers. Secondly the government corruptions in some of these African countries, makes it hard for the migrants to get a suitable job as a way of survival. Therefore the only option these desperate African migrants see is to succeed in Europe. The little they earn by rendering in Europe, such as cleaning jobs, is worth a lot back home. The social mobility and the inquisitiveness are the main reasons for young men to migrate. I will discuss about social mobility further down in the thesis.

It has been estimated that 10-15 % of the world's migrants are undocumented, and there is an expectation of the number rising in the coming years (Mbye 2014:2). Research on such migration experiences typically focuses on Mexico-USA, with relatively few studies of Africa-Europe. Those studies from the African continent tend to be confined to better-researched countries such as Morocco, Senegal, Ghana, and South Africa (Flahaux & De Haas 2016:3).

In my study I will be focusing on the young men from Gambia who want a better living and see the back way as their only option of succeeding. I want to understand why they want to go on this dangerous journey and what is making them risk everything. I chose to focus on particularly young Gambian men, who are taking the back way almost every day. I am a born Gambian and I frequently visit my country. I also tend to notice people speaking about the back way very often, people are talking about it a lot, either they know someone who has taken the back way, or they have heard about someone who has.

The reason why I choose to focus on young men although there are some young women who also take the same route, it's because there are mostly young men taking the back way.

## **1.1 Migration**

Humanity has always been on the move. People move to seek economic opportunities, join their families, or study. There are also those who move because of conflict, persecution, terrorism, or human rights violations. Others move to escape adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters, or other environmental factors. To migrate is something that is accessible for those who live in the western world and can do it if they want to, in the main while the ones from developing countries, migration is less accessible. There are different types of migration, and I will list down some of them: (National Geographic Society)

- Internal migration (moving within a state, country, or continent)
- External migration (moving to a different state, country, or continent)
- Emigration (leaving one country to move to another)
- Immigration (moving into a new country)

The number of international migrants worldwide, almost reached 272 million in 2019 and from 258 million in 2017. People reside in a country other than their birth country, the largest percent of this migration is men, female migrants constituted 48% and the rest is mostly men but also children. (Global Migration Data Portal). (IOM) defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State from there habitual place of residence/birth. This study be focusing on the irregular migration happening from West Africa to Europe, through an illegal route.

## **1.2 Irregular migration and the backway to Europe**

Irregular migration is a movement of a person outside the law, regulations and international agreement governing the entry or exit into borders. The word is used to describe a person's movement outside regular migration channels.



In the recent past, irregular migration from sub-Saharan Africa towards Europe, and between West and Central Africa has substantially increased. States in those regions are becoming transit destination countries, and with irregular migration featuring prominently in the political agendas for most of the governments concerns. (iom.int)

Migrants in irregular situations are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, abuse, and exploitation. Such migration through the back way, put migrants also in danger of being exploited by criminal organizations involved in human trafficking and smuggling, these are crimes that are constituted as serious violation of the human right. Refugees and asylum seekers are granted protection by the international law.

### **1.3 Purpose and research question**

It is believed that little has been done to stop young African men from taking the back way to Europe. Parents lose their children, others lose sisters, brothers, and spouses, this situation is unacceptable and calls for a positive action by the global community. The main question is what are African leaders doing wrong, why is it difficult for migrants that have African roots to stay in their countries and try to make a better living, why take the dangerous road to Europe?

There are few case studies on this topic “the backway”, some have received positive changes, yet still it doesn’t stop these young men from taking the dangerous route to Europe.

Most people fleeing Africa are educated, dreams, family, their lives like everyone else in this world. But because of corruption, poor finances, violence, freedom, etc., these young women and men choose to have better lives and to be able to provide for their families.

The truth is that all this can be traced back to the colonization of Africa, most countries are left undeveloped, others are abandoned depending on European countries. They also expect these desperate African migrants to remain in their countries, with no future. Why downgrade the poor, job-free young generation? How does one expect these migrants to stop and taking the risky path, without any better alternative?

## **1.4 Limitation**

This study will be looking into previous sources about the irregular migration coming from the west of Africa to Europe through the back way. And the results of my thesis will be based on my finding's online and on past knowledge. The study will also be using some of Suso's research about "The Backway".

## **1.5 Thesis structure**

To be able to answer the thesis question that is centred around the caption "Backway to Europe". The structure of the thesis starts with an introduction about the Gambia and the irregular migration form the Gambia to Europe through the Backway. The first part of the thesis is based on the theoretical perspective which contains definitions of three different theories, further it will be introducing the problem question "why are so many young Gambian men taking the Backway to Europe?". I will be talking about some of the reasons found. In the second part, it will be in the second part, it will be presenting the method to be used in the thesis also elaborate a bit about earlier research and source collection.

In the third part, it will be to elaborate more on the backway and how it works, also discuss about my preunderstandings about the topic. The fourth part of the thesis is based on the imperialism and historical background of the Gambia. Finally, there will be discussion and conclusion.

## **2.0 Theoretical perspective**

To be able to go in depth and analyse the empirical data this study is focusing on, a theoretical perspective must be done, which can be used as a tool in the analysis. In this study rational choice theory will be used, which is based on people's rational decisions that will affect their lives. And the push and pull method. Theory can be said to be a statement about a situation, or an explanation of why a phenomenon has become as it is. At last, I will define the neoclassical microeconomic theory. The study will use micro and macro-perspectives to discuss the theory being used.

The empirical evidence presented above indicates that it may make sense to use the rational theory of dependence, and that is why one chooses to precisely use this theory in the thesis. The study will be analysing two theories of migration; these are founded by De Haas and James Coleman. The aim of this study was to unravel how and why aspiring migrants came to believe their futures belong elsewhere, and what effects they are having on themselves, socially, and culturally in their host countries. Based on the theoretical framework and the premise of this thesis, Migration is instead rethought to reflect aspiration and desire. The study will also use a transnational migration theory from a Norwegian senior researcher. She wrote about the push and pull theory for migration. Her research and teaching activity also dealt with migration and diversity. In recent years, migration has been the subject of numerous theories about why people migrate. Various theories have been advanced to account for migration, but the neoclassical theory is the most relevant in explaining migration since it assumes that such decisions are motivated by rational economic considerations of relative costs and benefits (Todaro & Smith, 2006, p. 342).

### **2.1.1 Neoclassical microeconomic theory**

Migration is primarily conceptualized as driven by differences in return to labour in the neoclassical theory of migration. Neoclassical theory is split into macro and micro levels of analysis; this paper focuses on the micro level. Neoclassical theory is centred around the wage issue. Neoclassical micro theory views migration as a rational choice made by individuals based on the calculation of "cost-benefit" with the expectation of better returns or income in the destination country driving the migration decision. According to this theory, migrants migrate to destinations with higher productivity and higher wages (Castles, et al., 2014, p. 29). According to this theory, migration is viewed as a human capital investment, since migrants move to places where their skills will increase their income in comparison with their countries of origin or other destinations

According to Bauer and Zimmermann (1999), the chances of moving from one country to another decrease with age and increase with education (Baurer & Zimmermann, 1999). (Massey, et al., 1993, p. 434). Travel costs may be just one factor in the equation, as living expenses before obtaining an income may also be considered (Massey, et al., 1993, p.

434). A key aspect of this theory is the assumption that migrants may improve their occupation because of migration (Hagen-Zanker, 2008, p. 10).

The Dutch migration scholar de Haas has recently published a theoretical contribution to develop an approach that could increase our understanding of human mobility as part of larger processes of social change. A large part of De Haas's research focused on the Middle East and Africa, particularly Morocco. His publications range from migration theory, trends and drivers of migration processes, migration and development in origin societies, the nature and effectiveness of immigration policies, to issues surrounding racism, identity, and transnationalism.

James Coleman is an American sociologist and a pioneer in Mathematical sociology. The study will be using his findings on rational theory to conclude why and how migration happens. his study provided sociological support for the practice of busing students to achieve racial balance in schools, a practice that was met with strong opposition from parents in many areas.

### **2.1.2 De Haas migration theory**

**De Haas** has recently been leading conceptual contributions to discuss migration and many other writers such as Flahaux. De Haas talks about both individual and broader social processes, is that he is interested in both micro and macro processes. His concept of push and pull factors has been a traditional mainstay of migration literature, but Gambian irregular migration involves much more than that. The traditional push-pull model of development has been challenged by scholars who argue that, in poor societies in particular, development increases rather than reduces migration. Further point to emphasize is to move beyond the idea that African migrants are objects passively pushed around by external factors such as poverty, populism, and violent conflict (Flahaux & de Haas, 2016: 3-4). Despite widespread research on international migration, no single, cohesive theory has emerged, only a fragmented collection of theories that have developed largely independently of one another, sometimes segmented by disciplinary boundaries, sometimes not (Massey et al. 1993: 432). De Haas argues that migration theory has been at an impasse for several decades and Massey's frustration is evident today (de Haas 2014: 4).

### **2.1.3 Coleman's rational choice theory**

The rational choice theory was popularized by James S Coleman, who among other things founded the magazine *Rationality and Society*. The magazine focuses on rational choice perspectives, which makes his theory focused on micro levels. In Coleman's view rational choice is based on people's act towards a goal and a purpose formed by what they value, and that is our preconceived notions and preferences (Ritzer, 2018). An analysis of Rational choice theory looks at people's individual choices that they make, that will benefit them individually, and that they do a cost-benefit analysis before they decide on whether to do something, participate or try to change their situation. According to this theory, people act collectively only if they gain something from the situation personally. It is also often used to explain why criminals commit crimes and why people choose to do criminal acts. Rational theory also explains why people join groups and act collectively (Conteh-Morgan, 2004). The study chose to use this theory as a part of the researcher's analytical framework to explain the research question in this case study, because people take cost-benefit decisions in life, and once that decision is made, they will benefit from it and so will their families as well. This theory will help one put an understanding to why these people are willing to risk involved in taking the back way.

Emotions play a vital role in people's migration plans, and that paying attention to these emotions is crucial to humanising migration (Carling & Collins 2017: 5). Flahaux & de Haas (2016: 4) speak of aspirations and capabilities in relation to migration, as people who aspire to migrate will only do so if they have the resources to do so. The term migration aspiration is generally used to describe people who embark on the backway with a strong conviction that leaving would be better than staying. According to migration transition theory, income, education, and access to information and networks increase people's ability and desire to migrate (Willems 2014: 331; Flahaux & de Haas 2016: 23), emphasizing that this trend will likely continue in the future. According to Sen's (1985) capabilities framework, human mobility is seen as people's ability to choose where to live, including their option to remain, rather than automated, passive, and predictable response to a set of static push and pull factors (Graw 2012: 36; de Haas 2014: 4).

#### **2.1.4 Odden the push and pull theory**

The Norwegian scholar Gunhild Odden is using a transnational approach in her book on migration, which emphasizes migrants' ties to their countries of origin. There are various types of migration discussed in the book, such as circular migration, transit migration, and return migration. These perspectives are rarely seen in other texts. Migration perspectives explore topics related to family, gender, education, social mobility, health, and development. The book presents both international and national research in the field and is suitable as a syllabus book for various social science subjects, health sciences and social sciences.

The push and pull model are a collection of theoretical approaches focused on factors that promote the movement of people from one country to another (push factor). Push factors include population growth and density, limited economic opportunities, and political repression. Pull factors include labour, vacant land, economic opportunity, and political freedom (Odden, 2018, p.56-57).

A push-pull model may appear to be a good way to explain geographical mobility at first glance. It dominated much of the migration drawing in the 20th century. Nevertheless, weaknesses can be highlighted in this model. First and foremost, this model is descriptive, and one does not really get into how the combination of different factors can affect migration. Furthermore, the model is not suitable for explaining return migration or situations where a country is both a country of emigration and a country of immigration.

#### **2.1.5 Summary**

Scholars such as (Willems 2014: 331; Flahaux & de Haas 2016: 23), has demonstrated that an increase in income, education, and access to information and networks, migration transition theory argues that people's capabilities and aspirations to migrate can also increase showing that this trend is likely to continue. Based on Sen's (1985) capabilities framework, human mobility is viewed as people's ability (freedom) to decide where to live – including the option to stay – rather than an automated, passive, and predictable response

to a set of static push and pull factors (Graw 2012: 36; de Haas 2014: 4). The theoretical framework for the current study of Gambian irregular migration is defined by the socio-cultural roots of migration imaginations, and people who aspire to migrate are situated in a culture of migration but are not always capable of doing so. And In Coleman's view rational choice is based on peoples act towards a goal and a purpose formed by what they value, and that is our preconceived notions and preferences (Ritzer, 2018).

To summarize Odden's method would be the most suitable to explain my thesis, when it comes to why migration accords. The push and pull model can be said to be a deterministic model based that economic, demographic, and political differences lead to migration. However, there are examples of that says the opposite. Poverty can, for example, lead to limiting opportunities to migrate because one does not have the resources needed to do so (Odden, 2018, p.57). and this perfectly explains why young Gambian men are taking the risk to migrate to Europe, by using the backway.

### **3.0 The socioeconomic and status situation in Gambia**

Poverty, limited opportunities, and lack of job prospects are visible characteristics in the Gambian society and most of the population is poor. The country's economic crisis, as well as youth unemployment, is something they all face and a reason for them to contemplate taking the back road. They consider leaving because there is nothing to do and no opportunity to make money to contribute to their family's survival. The young males I've been speaking with are all in this situation, where they must fend for themselves.

Migration aspirations are formed in specific social context, which is why social pressure is a strong motivational factor when it comes to migration decisions. When it comes to absolute poverty, the determining factor is often a perceived inability to contribute to society. It has been shown that these social roles are common in West Africa, but the exact nature of them differs (Hernandez-Carretero & Carling 2012; Carling 2002; Jonsson 2008). The studies of Graw (2012: 35) has also demonstrated that remittances and expectations from overseas experiences have permeated families and communities alike.

The pressure to migrate also comes from friends, relatives, and the society at large, it has also been observed in other locations; for example, in Hyderabad, India, it has become "normal" for immigrants to migrate in search of a better paying work, as a means of providing for their families. Not migrating, or rather not wanting to migrate, is perceived as 'deviant' behaviour (Ali 2017: 51). In the current study, we describe the effects of pressure on an individual, manifested as stress.

The problem with the Gambian society is that they will only recognise you when you go away and come back, bringing a lot of money. That's when they recognise you as to them you have succeeded, and mother's will then brag about how their son and daughter has made a better living for them, by either having a husband who lives' abroad or you yourself being the one in Europe. For Gambians respect is very important, and to get that you must represent yourself well, dress well, driving a nice car, they respect you based on your wealth. Therefore, it can be said that the backway migrants are pushed by the narrative about family and responsibility, with gender norms that falls upon men in terms of providing for family (Uggla, 2015: 15), although women also make this journey, but they are less in numbers.

## **4.0 Method**

The research is writing a case study and the theme here is (Migrants who take the back road to Europe). The reason for choosing this topic is because it is a topic that means a lot to me, and I have an interest in it. It is also something personal for me, I know some close people that have taken this route to Europe. Some of them have reached Europe while others have remained at sea. I have not done interview on this study, it is based on my previous knowledge, therefor it has not been relevant for me to do interviews. I have primarily used online articles and case studies that have been done. Document examination is thus a qualitative method for collecting empirical data. This method depends on secondary data as a source, sources for empirical data that other has already collected. My thesis is mainly based on empirical collected document analysis.

Jacobsen's (Jacobsen 2018) theory of method is based on collecting empirical data, data, and information about reality. To collect empirical data certain requirements must be met.



Jacobsen (ibid 2018) lists two different points that must be met when it comes to the empirical data. The data must be valid, relevant, and reliable. I will go more into these points through chapter 4.2.

Furthermore, the method is divided into two for collecting empirical data. These two methods have a quantitative and qualitative method. The quantitative method is based on analysing different units at once, where the empirical data is often obtained primarily through questionnaires which is anonymized. While the qualitative method on the other hand depends on analysing few units in which the empirical data collected are primarily words, sentences, and narratives (ibid, p 140, 2018).

#### **4.1.1 Document examination**

A document survey will be very suitable when it is impossible to collect primary data or when we want to look at what people have already done researched on. (Jacobsen, 2016, p.170).

As it will be difficult to obtain primary data as sources for this thesis, both in terms of timing and resources, therefore it will be using secondary data as sources, which is documents written by others. The documents used in this case study will mostly be articles online, previous case studies and some personal information.

To answer the research questions, the research has done analysis of previous studies regarding irregular migration. For the best results of the study, research has done and had personal information from close friends. The point of the study is to understand why, and how they think of taking the back way.

#### **4.1.2 Earlier research and sources collection**

The source material in this thesis consists mainly of documents and articles, both in the terms of primary and secondary sources, along with some books. The documents and articles that are being used are all available online.

In earlier research that has been done within the area of migration and irregular migration are done in different angles.

There is also some focusing on research that is on the securitization of land borders and what Europe is doing to stop the irregular migrants from entering European countries (Anderson, 2014).

## **5.0 What is “The Backway”**

The backway designates an illegal solution for migrants. It is chosen as term to explain about a particular route with risks and challenges. “The backway” offers more than just an overview of migration aspirations. It’s a journey to Europe, where migrants travel through different countries before they reach Europe. The journey for most starts from Libya, then through

The Sahara Desert, where the majority die, due to the heat and arid conditions. This caused the death of many migrants. Further comes The Mediterranean Sea, where more than hundreds of migrants are forced on small gummy boats by their smugglers. The smugglers exploit these migrants, by either selling them to other smugglers or even kill them, if they don’t give ransoms demanded from the migrant’s family (The migrant project. 2022).

A better understanding of Gambia's aspirations is essential for migration management, with NGOs and decision-makers benefitting from knowing the context within which Gambians strive to reach abilities to leave (Suso 2019). The Backway comes with a lot of risk and dangerous complications. It’s from being trapped in prisons and detention centres with limited food, water, and electricity, regularly breaking of human right regulation. Gambians and other migrants are being beaten and murdered, being enslaved, and forced to work for nothing, raped and violence, kidnapped by bandits who call captive’s families demanding money for their release.



Source) African asylum seekers rescued off boats and taken aboard an Italy navy ship.

Photograph: Massimo Sestini/eyevine Photograph: Massimo Sestini/Massimo Sestini / eyevine

Before doing this study about the back way, the researcher has had pre-understanding about it, from watching the news, articles and mostly when I am in Gambia for holidays. I have always had interest in migration and irregular migration and therefore I have been keeping up with the issue. This case study is based on what I have heard and read from before and I have a good understanding when it comes to the back way. I have also previously read a book under the pseudonym “Bilal” written by an Italian journalist called Fabrizio Gatti. The book embarks on a perilous journey as an undocumented immigrant through large parts of Africa and it’s based on the author’s experience along with other people’s experience about traveling through the back way. He started his journey by taxi from Dakar the capital city of Senegal, then entered the desert that begins in Mali, where he met his fellow travellers. To write about the backway Gatti put himself in the same circumstance as the other migrants, who are willing to risk everything for a better opportunity in Europe. His secondary sources are life stories told by people who experienced the journey first-hand.

There are many reasons to irregular migration, people around the world live under different conditions which make their reasons to move different. Migration is accessible for all people, but for those who live in the west, world migration is more accessible than for those who live in developing countries. Coming from a developing country, you most certainly want to improve your life and standards by migrating to Europe. For some people migration to Europe is the only possible way to improve one’s living, and for most the illegal route to Europe is the only option. People sell their valuable properties just to help

send one family member to the back way, a journey that is not reliable, due to the challenges that comes with it.

## **6.0 Imperialism and historical background**

In this part of the thesis the research will describe about the imperialism and historical background based on Micro- perspectives (De Haas 2021).

The Gambia is the smallest country in mainland Africa, and it's located in west on the continent. The country is a strip of land and reaches about 450 km from the Atlantic coast and it's centred around the river Gambia. It is bordering Senegal from the north, the east and the south, except the Atlantic coast in the west. The country's population is about 1.8 million people. The country's source of economy is dominated by agriculture. About two-thirds of its population is engaged in raising livestock or growing crops for survival. As a result of the recovery in the agriculture labour market, the poverty rate declined from 9.2 % in 2020 to 8.5 % in 2021, lifting over 10,000 people out of poverty. However, as capital expenditures increased, mainly for locally funded infrastructure projects, and tax revenues and grants declined, the fiscal deficit doubled to 4.4 % of GDP. As a result of pandemic-related support, recurrent spending decreased.

The Gambia found a niche within tourism, due to the advantage of beautiful beaches, warm water, and nature resorts. It is well known for having over 540 species of birds recorded by (Barlow and Wacher, 1997). Therefore it is known for bird watching as well. When it comes to the health and welfare, there has been improvements since it gained independence, the overall health conditions in the Gambia are poor. Only one fifth of all Gambians are formally employed, and the job opportunities are few, the payment is bad. Freedom of speech and freedom of press has become better after the dictator leader, Yaya Jammeh. The youth unemployment is something the country struggles with and the young population live in conditions where they are not able to contribute to the household. They are dependents and therefore it makes most of them take the option of the backway to Europe.

With a Gross National Income of less than US\$500 per capita (World Bank 2013), it is one of the poorest countries in the world. Because of this, many people cannot meet their basic needs and rights, such as food, health care, and education. More than half the population lives below the poverty line (less than \$2/day), unemployment rates are over half the

population, with even higher rates among the younger demographics (UNDP 2016, as cited in MGSOG 2017). It is difficult to find employment, particularly in rural areas, where many families rely on inefficient family farms. Outside of agriculture, the country is largely dependent on tourism and remittances, the latter accounting for as much as 22% of its GDP (IFAD 2016: 22), one of the highest rates on the continent. Even for those fortunate enough to have formal employment, the income rates are too low that it is nearly impossible to make ends meet. Emigration has increased dramatically due to slow economic growth, limited employment opportunities, and food insecurity (World Bank, 2018).

During the reign of former dictator Jammeh (1996-2017), The Gambia became corrupt, and the economy crumbled. The democratically elected Barrow government now governs a bankrupt country with soaring unemployment and a dysfunctional labour market, and it will have to move forward (Zanker & Altrogge 2017: 2). Despite the change in government, the new government has expressed optimism about migration changing: 'the change from a dictatorship to a democracy will encourage people to remain and pursue their interests.' "Isatou Touray, Gambian Minister of Trade, Regional Integration and Employment" (Dempha et al. 2017).

Depending on the level of analysis: macro-, meso-, and micro-level explanations of migration may require different conceptual tools. Forms of exploitative labour migration that seem to fit in with the neo-Marxist paradigm can still be rational for migrants and their families.

Macroeconomically, 'exploitative' forms of migration can exacerbate economic gaps between origins and destinations by supplying cheap labour and boosting profits and income growth in the destination areas. This is because reverse resource flows to origins such as remittances will not compensate. As a result of unfair trade terms, higher productivity, and economics of scale, economic activities are likely to concentrate in wealthy destination countries along with the migration of workers from poor countries to support them (see Martin and Taylor 1996). People may also benefit from migration on a micro level if this increases their income significantly. This will enable them to build a house, afford health care, send their children to school, or even start a small business. The second insight does not prove the first wrong – vice versa. (De Haas 2021). According to

Massey and his colleagues (Massey et al. 1993, p. 432), there is considerable scope for combining insights from different theories.

## **7.0 Discussion**

We are now able to follow up and address the question about why young men choose to migrate by using the backway to Europe. I have just explained that colonialism and the imperial legacy gives us a better understanding of the reasons for migration and, particularly, for why young men choose this risky route and to migrate to Europe using The Backway. Imperialism gives us a macro-historical perspective. It provides a background to understand the reasons for the current pattern and the choices that young men may have. There are both individual and macro-historical reasons, as well as family gender norms.

### **7.1.1 Why are so many young Gambian men taking the backway to Europe?**

The Gambia has struggled economically for decades and with a growing population, increased exposure to and desire for better ways of life, people are seeking ways out of poverty. The skilled emigration rate (63% in 2000) was ranked among the top worldwide and second highest among African countries. And emigrants from The Gambia, both skilled and unskilled, send high levels of remittances home. Moving outside the rural areas as well as to other countries, especially in Europe and North America, has become a common and enduring coping strategy for many Gambians (Kebbeh 2013: 3, Suso 2019: 120).

Individual micro-crises may intersect with local processes of dispossession, which are in turn ushered by broader regional, interregional, and international dynamics. Therefore this study has presented that the most relevant professional approach about migration is the one that Gunnhild Odden (2019) contributes with. Also, that rational theory contributes to explaining, why these migrants are willing to take the extreme risky of getting to Europe and how they are a burden to both their families and the governments affected by this irregular migration.

In this thesis I have achieved the goals by finding the most relevant subjects to argue about “The Backway” and about migration theory. I have not learnt enough about migration in my 3 years of Bachelors, it’s not taught away in a socially inappropriate context. I believed that scholars who study social science should focus more on migrations and particular “The Backway”. This with human migration is important to have knowledge about, to understand the global society we live in.

In addition, this paper confirms that migrant networks also play an important role in decision-making. Based on social ties in destination countries, migrants make decisions about their destination countries based on the migrant network theory. According to the Reacher data, migrants receive pre-departure information through social ties, weak or strong, on their possible destinations, routes, prices or costs of travel, information on checkpoints, and information on obstacles and smuggling networks. Migrants have also pointed out that some of their migrant networks do not only share relevant travel information, but also provide financial assistance as loans or as solidarity assistance.

As said in (Eriksen 2019) the global/world is much more intertwined and we are more dependent on each other than before, but that does not mean that the whole world is globalized. His definition of globalization today is "Globalization refers to transnational connectedness and encompasses important economic, political, cultural and environmental dimensions". In other words, globalization refers to transnational connectivity and includes important economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions.

The issue of irregular migration is one of our time's most pressing problems, and we must find a solution very soon. There have already been too many deaths in the desert and in the Mediterranean Sea in the process of trying to reach Europe. They are willing to sacrifice their lives to make it to Europe, and what they endure on the way can only be imagined. By closing all routes to Europe, Europe is preventing these migrants from entering and causing exactly what they're trying to avoid.

### **7.1.2 Social and family structure**

The Family and social networks are arranged in a hierarchical order, with the father as the head of the household and the one who is in charge. If he says something, it goes, and he is

the one who is responsible for the household economy. Ultimately, it is he who is responsible for bringing the money to the family and ensuring its survival. Mothers are subordinate to their husbands, and they are responsible for their children. Her responsibility is to ensure the children have food every day and take care of their wellbeing, clothing, and behaviours. Families and other social networks are part of the social system and its hierarchy. The older can send the younger to do things on their behalf, for example, buy cigarettes or run errands. However, the younger is supposed to respect the older despite their age. As a result, you are subordinate in one group and superior in another, the system lets you know your place in the society and when to assume which role. The first-born child (called "taaw" in the local language Wolof) in the family is the one who is supposed to run the house after the father.

Today, social prestige and the transition to adulthood can also be attained by acquiring financial independence to support one's parents and family, and because of current macroeconomic challenges, this autonomous status is more easily acquired through international migration. As a result, 'the migrant' is now seen as an additional role model. Thus, in the public imagination, migrants are now considered heroes. (Willems 2014: 321).

## **8.0 Conclusion**

To stop these young men from living for the backway, the Gambian government has changes that must be done to better the living for its young population. The research findings this study has come up with shows unless and until The Gambia improves job prospects and agricultural livelihoods – which also involves seriously addressing climate change – large-scale migration from the country is likely to continue. Young people are leaving because of the lack of jobs and opportunities in rural and urban areas, the lack of adequate support to farming which is being badly affected by climate change and because they see a better life in Europe.

On the other hand, migration may be a development strategy and a source of income for individuals, who have the right to migrate for economic reasons if they so want. The freedom of movement and the right to leave and return to one's home country are essential



rights that are sometimes disregarded in discussions about migration and development. Indeed, Gambians who have moved contribute to their country's growth by sending remittances back to their family. Migration and development have a complicated relationship. ActionAid believes that the human right to seek safety, security, dignity, and sustainable livelihoods is intrinsic and indivisible, and hence advocates for the humanitarian treatment of - and appropriate aid for-all people who are driven to flee their homes. Despite all that, there is a sense of love for the country, and a sadness that if only things were better in The Gambia, one wouldn't feel the sense of urgency to leave, although we are aware of how things are in The Gambia now.

In most cases, people who wish to go to Europe want to go for a short time, to work hard and earn some money to take back home to establish something. As it stands today, these people have very little chance of getting a visa to go to Europe and work, and they are left with no option but to travel the back way. As a result of the closed borders and visa denials, Europe is keen to stop irregular immigration. Until recently, Gambian migration was to a large extent the result of repressive government policies and the lack of political and civil rights. But not all Gambian migration was the result of political repression, and many young Gambians are still leaving the country.

To understand further of why they have taken these choices, one must conduct systematic interviews, and I have then limited myself to methodology using previous case studies, books, and online articles.

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