

# IRREGULAR SENEGALESE EMIGRATION TO SPAIN. ISSUES, CAUSES AND CURRENT SITUATION

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## Abstract

In recent years, irregular migration, which is forbidden and highly controlled, has increasingly attracted the attention of numerous researchers: sociologists, geographers, demographers, political scientists, and jurists. This is still the case today, following the many attempts of would-be migrants, some of them boarding pirogues from the African coast to reach a country close to the European continent, others aboard trucks and pick-ups to make their journey across the Sahara Desert. These various, somewhat desperate attempts are most often reported in the local and international press, revealing a growing worldwide media coverage of the issue. It is this form of irregular migration, carried out by sea in dugout canoes, that our paper will attempt to explore. Particular attention is paid to irregular emigration by sea from Senegal to Spain. The first part of our presentation will focus on the issues involved in this irregular migration to Spain. In the second part, we will diagnose the various economic, social, political, and cultural causes behind departures from Senegalese shores. More precisely, we will try to provide some answers to the question: Why do young people take the path of irregular migration to Senegal ?

**Keywords :** Irregular migration; cause; Spain; Senegal.

## Introduction

Between September 4 and 14, 2023, 17 pirogues from Senegal docked on the Spanish islands. On October 13, 2023, two pirogues with 27 and 43 people on board arrived in Tenerife (Spanish island). The following day, October 14, 2023, two pirogues from Senegal

with 142 and 23 people on board, including 5 women, 22 children and 1 baby, docked at El Hierro (Spanish island). On Saturday October 21, 2023, at least 1032 would-be migrants landed on the Spanish coast between El Hierro, Tenerife and Gran Canaria. On the night of November 04 to 05, 2023, 275 young people from Bargny perished in Mauritanian waters when their pirogue, carrying 300 would-be migrants, sank. More recently, on February 28, 2024, a pirogue carrying would-be migrants capsized in Saint-Louis, killing around 26 people, according to official figures. These are just a few examples of the great determination of would-be migrants, despite the deterrent measures taken by the Senegalese government and the awareness-raising campaigns on irregular migration. The list is long and non-exhaustive, but it does introduce the subject of this contribution, in this case the irregular emigration of Senegalese to Spain.

## Methodology

The research was carried out mainly in Casamance, more specifically in the regions of Ziguinchor, Kolda and Sédhiou. Field surveys were carried out between 2021 and 2023. We conducted interviews with 60 candidates for migration and various actors (pirogue captains, intermediary trip promoters, families, fishermen, etc.) involved in these trips.

## Conclusion and discussion

The results of our research show that, on the one hand, there are objective factors: poverty, difficult household living conditions, difficulties in obtaining visas, the influence of immigrants returning periodically or permanently, and the impact of new information and communication technologies. There are also more subjective factors, such as many young people's desire for "self-fulfilment," their despair, the fantasy of "elsewhere", the image they have of life in Europe and the weight of the new figures of success.

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