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Migration as Post-Colonial Praxis: Life Histories and Social Theory from the African-European border zone

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One of the most striking aspects of contemporary African-European migration and how it is represented is the almost complete anonymity of its protagonists. The problem with this absence of detailed accounts of migrant life histories is that the reasons, motivations, and socio-cultural/economic dynamics behind current migratory endeavours tend to remain hidden or be reduced to a somewhat simplistic and undifferentiated picture of generalized poverty, unemployment and economic hardship.

In response to this, the present research project follows individual migrant trajectories from West Africa to Europe. Starting from the personal experiences and accounts of Senegalese and Gambian migrants in Spain, the working hypothesis of the project considers 'illegal' migration, not solely in terms of economic deprivation or issues of border control but as an emergent space of post-colonial praxis and existential trajectory.

Looking at the migratory process from a threefold perspective (pre-departure, border crossing and diaspora), the theoretical analysis of the case studies focuses on three main issues: (a) the relation between the migratory imaginations and practices we are currently witnessing and culturally specific and historically embedded notions of mobility and agency; (b) the concrete working and impact of globalization processes and the phenomenon of the border zone; (c) the production of diasporic lifeworlds and realities at the intersection of individual experience and the politics and actions of the receiving state governing the field of economic and political access.



Labour Day Demonstration in Almería, Spain 2008



Tamanrasset: crossroads of migration

The Emergence of New Translocal Labour Markets in Algeria

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The income gained from petroleum, accumulated during Algeria's period of political crisis, is now being used to reconstruct the country, with Chinese companies playing an increasingly important role. This takes place on the basis of several concerns and strategies: China seeks to develop new markets on the African continent, using Algeria as the starting point to expand its trade, while Algeria in turn is strongly influenced by the favourable conditions offered by China. Algeria's building sector in particular is gradually being dominated by Chinese companies that also recruit Africans *en route* to Europe to work on their construction projects.

Dalila Nadi investigates the interaction between the Algerian state and the Chinese companies in Algeria's building sector, on the one hand, and immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa, on the other.

Algeria has seen an entirely new development. Many of the Chinese and African migrant labourers decide to settle in Algeria once their work contracts expire, recognizing fresh opportunities in its economic boom. These new spaces of interaction and conflict of interest are examined against a background of social, political and economic aspects. The implications of both the Chinese government's investments and the growing reality that Chinese and sub-Saharan immigrants are becoming established in Algeria's private sector are also addressed.



Subsaharian migrants in the Sahara