CREATING AND CONTESTING THE MESSAGE

The lifecycle of EU Migration Information Campaigns from Europe to Senegal

Cecilia Schenetti

Propositions

1. Migration information campaigns are transnational and multi-actor tools of migration governance. A *lifecycle* approach enables the exploration of their conception, implementation, and reception across borders, which is essential to understanding the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in MICs.

2. A multi-sited research design guided by the principle "to follow the message" offers insights into how ideas are created and transformed by the actors who, across space, engage with and are affected by such a message, as well as how these actors give meaning to their positions and experiences as they pass on the message.

3. Migration campaigns emerge and develop through the imagination, translation, and emotional forms of *work* undertaken by multiple actors between campaign-funding states in the Global North and campaign-receiving states in the Global South.

4. By contributing in various ways to the creation of campaigns, multiple actors produce and simultaneously contest global hierarchies of migration regimes from their different worldviews. This makes migration campaigns political and polysemic phenomena.

5. Migration campaigns are emotionally and socially demanding events. Long-term ethnography allows for a comprehensive exploration of campaigns' (local) social worlds, including their structure, functioning, arrangements, affective dimensions, and the intangible effects they generate within the local contexts in which they operate.

6. Ethnographers are not neutral observers but active participants within situations characterised by unequal power dynamics. Their emotional entanglements are not accidental but integral to the research process. By reflexively engaging with their emotions in the field, ethnographers can critically examine their own positionality and address the power structures that uphold various forms of oppression.

7. To better understand how European states develop their migration policies abroad, it is important to examine the stages of creation, implementation, and reception, as the involvement of multiple actors results in contradictory meanings and effects that greatly influence how policies are interpreted, enacted, and contested in the countries where they are designed, as well as where they are implemented and received.

8. The mobility injustice that confronts people in Senegal deserves more attention. Rather than investing in campaign events that mix fun with emotional distress, European states should consider adopting more inclusive migration policies. Only access to safe migration pathways can make a real difference in saving lives.

9. *Ni Oublie, Ni Pardon – « Nous faisons une promesse: celle de ne pas oublier ceux qui ont perdu la vie et nous luttons contre les frontières qui les ont tués. (...). Nous continuerons à lutter pour la liberté de mouvement de toutes et tous dans notre vie quotidienne, nous exigeons la vérité, la justice et la réparation pour les victimes de la migration et leurs familles ».* Neither forget, Nor Forgive - "We make a promise: not to forget those who lost their lives, and we fight against the borders that killed them. (…) We will continue to fight for the freedom of movement for everyone in our daily lives; we demand truth, justice, and reparation for the victims of migration and their families". (Boza Fii, Senegalese activist group).

10. One: we are the People. Two: we won't be silent. Three: let's stop the bombing now, now, now! Free, free Palestine.

Creating and contesting the message

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ISBN 978-94-6534-037-1

Printed by: ProefschriftMaken // www.proefschriftmaken.nl
Layout: Giulia Riva
Cover: designed by Giulia Riva based on a picture taken by Massow Ka

Most of the photos in this thesis were captured by photographer Massow Ka, who participated in some of the campaign events that I also attended. The thesis also includes two photos I took during fieldwork and one photo taken by Sarita Marchesi.

Maastricht University

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Department of Society Studies

Creating and contesting the message

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DISSERTATION

to obtain the degree of Doctor at Maastricht University,
on the authority of the Rector Magnificus, Prof. Dr. Pamela Habibović,
in accordance with the decision of the Board of Deans,
to be defended in public on Tuesday, 16 December 2025, at 13.00 hours,

by

Cecilia Schenetti

Supervisor:

Prof. Dr. Valentina Mazzucato, Maastricht University

Co-supervisors:

Prof. Dr. Sally Wyatt, Maastricht University
Dr. Djamila Schans, Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Datacentrum (WODC)

Assessment Committee

Chair:

Prof. Dr. Sophie Vanhoonacker, Maastricht University

Members:

Dr. Talitha Mortimer Dubow, UNU-MERIT/ Maastricht University
Prof. Dr. Antoine Pécoud, Université Sorbonne Paris Nord
Prof. Dr. Papa Sakho, University of Cheikh Anta Diop
Dr. Giulia Sinatti, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

The research conducted for this dissertation was funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 847596, within the scope of the LIMES programme.

Maa la dig tekki
Ndam li dina ñëw yaw
Ngala bul xàddi
Di nga mësa rée yaw.

Je te promets de réussir
La réussite viendra
Ne te décourage pas
Tu souriras un jour.

I promise you I will make it
Success will come
Do not be discouraged
One day you will smile.

Selbe Diouf aka Sister LB, Senegalese rapper-singer

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge all the people who have accompanied me throughout this PhD journey, whose kindness and unwavering support have made this work possible. First and foremost, I would like to thank all the research participants for entrusting me with their stories and for generously sharing their knowledge and experiences, even when it was difficult. To the Senegalese people who welcomed me into their lives, thank you for making my fieldwork a very meaningful experience. I will always be grateful for your openness to my curiosity and your constant care. Your resilience and courage have been a source of inspiration and a reminder to keep challenging injustices.

I am deeply thankful to the three remarkable women who have guided me from the very beginning of this project: Valentina, Sally, and Djamila, you truly make the dream supervision team! Valentina, thank you for your trust and for believing I could do a PhD. Thank you for always being there when I needed guidance, for reminding me to trust my intuition, for encouraging me to go further, and for gently planting seeds that led me to paths you knew I would enjoy. Your mentorship has been invaluable, and I am very grateful for everything you taught me. Sally, I sincerely appreciated your dedication to my project and your interest in its development and outcomes. Thank you for thoroughly reading my numerous drafts and consistently providing insightful, precise feedback. I have gained immensely from your perspectives and reflections. Djamila, thank you for always attending supervision meetings and sharing your expertise, which greatly enriched the project. Thank you also for granting me access to participants, supporting me during ministry conferences, and hosting me at the WODC.

During my stay in Senegal, I had the honour of being supervised by Prof. Papa Sakho, and I wish to thank him for his kind invitation to join the Laboratoire de Géographie at Cheikh Anta Diop University (UCAD) in Dakar and for his academic guidance. I am also grateful to him and to the other members of the assessment committee - Prof. Dr. Sophie Vanhoonacker, Dr. Talitha Mortimer Dubow, Prof. Dr. Antoine Pécoud, and Dr. Giulia Sinatti - for reading my thesis and providing valuable feedback.

This thesis has greatly benefited from the contributions of others. I am especially thankful to Ilaria for her excellent work during her internship, to Marietou for her meticulous transcriptions and diligence as a research assistant, to Gwyn for editing my writing and to Giulia for her help preparing this book.

The Graduate School at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences had been a special community, one with a remarkable spirit of peer support. Thank you, Pieter, Maud, Candida, Yiming, Yabo and Sharon for the many exchanges of tips, the mutual sharing of frustrations, the numerous chats over coffee and lunch breaks, the pep talks in the corridor, and all the laughter that made things lighter. My heartfelt thanks to Joeri and Sabine for their hard work

in nurturing the graduate school.

Wonderful colleagues have greatly contributed to my development and well-being over the past years. I am especially grateful to Marie, Karlien, Sophie, and Ana for their tireless presence in the office and their willingness to listen and provide advice. I am also grateful to Jiaqi, Marta, Sarah and Onallia for making me feel welcome in their office in the last phase of my PhD. Thank you, Sarah, Laura, and Gladys, for generously sharing your perspectives whenever possible and for reviewing my writing multiple times. I feel fortunate to have had you as more experienced researchers to learn from. Thanks to the colleagues of the Transnational Migration Group (TMG) and Globalisation, Transnationalism and Development (GTD) research group – Brigitte, Lauren, Karlijn, Bilisuma, Elsje, Dhika, Wiebe, Simone, Timo, Faisal and Valentina – for the stimulating discussions and sharing of ideas and visions, all of which have enriched my professional and personal development. I am also grateful to the colleagues at UCAD – Ibrahima, Momar, Abdulaye, Mareme, Ndaye Fatou and Ansu, among others - for welcoming me into their research group and giving me the space to elaborate thoughts and ask questions.

Friendship has been crucial in helping me navigate PhD life. My sincere thanks go to Maha and Marie for their support every step of the way; your stamina, passion and kind hearts have given me immense strength. Thanks, Joma, for helping me see the glass half full and reminding me that things don't always need to be taken too seriously. To my dear friend Onallia, my endless gratitude for never leaving me alone this past year and helping me stay focused. Your guidance and words of encouragement were vital in reaching this point, and your loyalty means a lot to me. Thank you, Saena, for bearing with me through all the ups and downs of the past few years, for celebrating every milestone, and for listening to my rambling thoughts on the couch late at night. Living with you has given me the stability and support I needed to finish this thesis.

I wish to express special thanks to the researchers I have met along the way, who have supported me in numerous ways and have become great friends. Thank you, Leonie, for all our exchanges of doubts and dilemmas, for the many writing retreats, and for the long voice notes where we complained about PhD life. Your friendship has been a great source of motivation and comfort. Thanks, Omar, for the enriching conversations we had and the many challenging presentations we faced together. Thank you, Rossella, for always being available to give advice, which made me a better researcher. Your sharp thinking and strength of spirit are truly admirable. Infinite thanks to Yassin for being my anchor, whose altruism and relentless efforts encourage me to be at my best. Thank you for pushing me to dream and for wanting to dream together. I am also grateful to Ida and Julia for our fruitful discussions over the years and their help in preparing for my defence.

While many experienced social isolation during a global pandemic, I was fortunate to live at the Ullies, surrounded by the warmth and love of special people. Thank you,

Phoebe, Cec, Serg, and Cathe, for welcoming me back into the house and for your daily acts of care that nourished our community and helped us grow. Cec, I am grateful for all your revisions to my chapters and for your honest and thoughtful feedback. Serg, the way we transformed that room into an office and how you patiently listened to my brainstorming contributed greatly to the success of my research proposal. Cathe, thank you for being the sister who understands me without needing words, and for always having my back. Your friendship brings peace to my heart. I also wish to extend my thanks to those who joined the house later. Anna, thank you for sharing your wisdom and for always expressing how proud you are of me. A big thanks goes to Meggy for her steady presence over the past years; your companionship has been a true gift, bringing joy and comfort in moments when I needed it most.

If it weren't for Coumba, I would have felt lost in Dakar. Thank you, Coumbis, for being the best ñatigué I could have ever wished for. You welcomed me into your family and loved me like a sister, for which I will always be grateful. I wish to express my gratitude to Adama for teaching me to decentre my gaze and to trust the guidance of those around me. Thank you for taking me by the hand and helping me make sense of things. I also thank Bas for his fun-loving spirit and philosophical insights, which have often brought me relief. I cannot thank enough the members of La Maison Bayefall — Amy, Racine, Saña — for always welcoming me with warmth and good ataya whenever I showed up unannounced. Many thanks to my dear friend Junior for sharing his brilliant reflections and for gifting me his wonderful photographs. Thanks to the Impact Hub crew - Mounty, Babacar, Ouli, Lena, Dieye, Oumi, and Cecilia - for your company during long working days.

I am deeply grateful to my Italian friends in Dakar and Modena. To Fede and Silvia for sharing their professional experiences and many funny anecdotes, which greatly helped me make sense of many situations. Sarita, thank you for being my aunt in Dakar and for showing me that creativity is the key to making things better. Thank you, Laura, for kindly helping me deconstruct visions with your smart thoughts shared during spontaneous beers at Aiman's. Special thanks to my dear friend Oumi for wholeheartedly supporting me throughout my fieldwork in ways that words cannot fully capture. Many thanks to Anna, Cate, Pola, Rebi, Pissi, Mahdi, Sofia, and Emma for always being there whenever I come back home and for following my journey from afar with enthusiasm and admiration. My heartfelt thanks to Maurizia for welcoming me into her home in Tuscany when I needed an escape; few places soothe the mind and soul like the Chianti hills!

I would like to thank my family for giving me the roots that keep me grounded. Thanks to my lovely grandma for her generous financial contribution to my studies. Thanks to my parents, Maurizio and Carla, for their infinite sacrifices, which allowed us to travel and pursue education, and for creating a loving home where dialogue, service, diversity and emotions were always at the core. Thank you to my mum for being such a headstrong woman

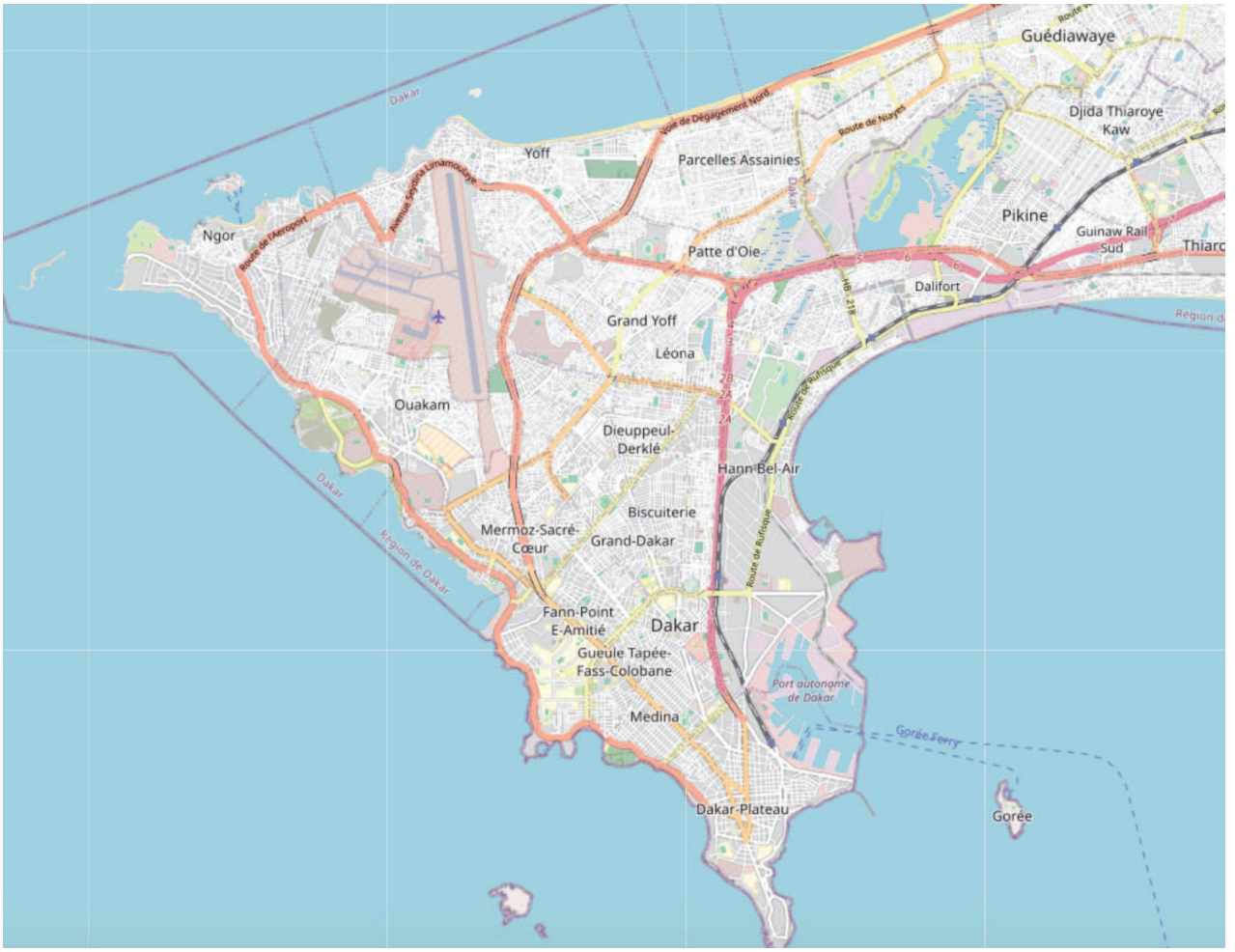
who teaches me to get ahead of things and reminds me to stay awake. Thanks to my brothers for being the closest companions who share my joys and struggles despite our differences. To Tommi and Mari, thanks for looking after me during several writing retreats when I stayed temporarily at your house; to Nicolò, thanks for giving me energy even from afar; to Giacomo, thanks for deciding to live close to me and for showing me how beautiful it is to be a sister. I could not imagine my life without you boys. Finally, thank you to my dad for taking me to that open day in 2013, when, curious, afraid, and unaware of what lay ahead, I entered FASoS for the first time.

Table of Contents

Map of Senegal

Source: Nations Online Project, 2021

Map of Dakar



Source: OpenStreetMap, n.d

Abbreviations

ACRA	NGO - Associazione di Cooperazione Rurale in Africa e America Latina (Association for Rural Cooperation in Africa and Latin America)
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
AICS	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
ASMI	Association Sénégalaise de lutte contre la Migration Irrégulière (Senegalese Association for the fight against Irregular Migration)
CDPS	Centre Départemental d'Éducation Populaire et Sportive (Departmental Centre for Popular and Sports Education)
CISV	NGO - Comunità, Impegno, Servizio, Volontariato (Community, Engagement, Service, Volunteering)
COSPE	NGO - Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo dei Paesi Emergenti (Cooperation for Development Countries)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DMB	Migration Policy Department of the Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands
DSH	Department for Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
DT&V	Repatriation and Departure Service of the Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands
EMN	European Migration Network
EU	European Union

EUTF	European Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
FRONTEX	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
GIZ	German Development Agency
GMDAC	Global Migration Data Analysis Centre
GMFF	Global Migration Film Festival
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
LVIA	NGO - Associazione Internazionale Volontari Laici (International Association of Lay Volunteers)
MaM	Migrants as Messengers
MIC(s)	Migration Information Campaign(s)
MIGRA	Migrazioni, Impiego, Giovani, Resilienza, Auto-impresa (Migration, Engagement, Youth, Resilience, Self-enterprise)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UCAD	University Cheikh Anta Diop (Dakar)
VIS NGO	NGO - Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo (International Volunteers for Development)

Migration information campaign MIGRA, graffiti activity, March 2021, © Cecilia Schenetti
The inscription on the wall says: *Tukki Takhul Tekki* (to migrate does not mean to succeed)

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Vignette 1

Daan is a Dutch policymaker responsible for initiating migration information campaigns (MICs) in migrants' countries of origin on behalf of the Netherlands. His job is to formulate policy and allocate state funds to specific information campaign projects abroad. In practice, Daan decides where to run MICs and collaborates with implementing partners to develop the campaign's design, communication strategy, and content. In his view, MICs seek to achieve two key aims of the Dutch state: to reduce the number of migrants entering the Netherlands, and to prevent people from dying along perilous migration routes. These aims pull in different directions, creating confusion about underlying motives. Daan told me that there is considerable scepticism within the Dutch government regarding the value of these campaigns, which is why some policymakers, including himself, question the purpose of funding them: "MICs are not effective at stopping people from migrating", he asserted. But he also believes that the dissemination of information is highly beneficial, as every person dissuaded from taking dangerous migration routes represents a success. Daan is aware that potential migrants[1] have access to other, more trusted, sources of information, and they will continue to embark on irregular journeys to Europe. Nevertheless, he thinks many do not know the risks, as people continue to die at sea or in the desert. For Daan and his colleagues from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it remained unclear who exactly MICs reach and whether potential migrants might ultimately change their minds. Despite all their concerns and doubts, in 2019, they decided to fund the MIC Migrants as Messengers (MaM) in several West African countries. Why would Daan continue to promote MICs if he acknowledges their limited efficacy? And why does he believe MICs are necessary if he does not know who they reach and is aware that migration to Europe will not stop?

Vignette 2

Hammed is a young Senegalese man working for the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) on the migration campaign Migrants as Messengers (MaM) in Senegal. One day, Hammed and his colleagues organised the campaign event Street Art Together on the outskirts of Dakar. For the occasion, IOM staff invited local youth to join a graffiti-making activity.

[1]"Potential migrant" is used in the EU MICs policy discourse in a generalizing way. It refers to young people who are keen to migrate regardless of having the capacity to do so and to people who are likely to migrate due to societal expectations and structural factors regardless of having expressed a wish to do so. Potential migrants are considered by EU campaign initiators the primary target of campaign messages.

According to the campaign project document, the event aimed to convey to participants "key messages" about migration risks and about alternatives to migration while they painted a school wall together. The participants were encouraged to strive for a stable life in Senegal rather than migrating. That day, Hammed was responsible for the practical coordination of the event. He assisted in painting the wall, he listened to discussions among participants, and he took pictures to promote the event on the IOM's social media platforms. In this way, he contributed to turning campaign policy into practice. But like many people attending the event, Hammed also dreamt of travelling to Europe. So why would he work for an MIC that encourages Senegalese youth to stay at home? In his view, the campaign did not have "key messages" to communicate as such; the mural's main purpose was to bring the community together. What he found important was for local youth to engage with individuals who had experienced migration, to voice their concerns, and to share their own realities in public. Hammed's perceptions of the significance of Migrants as Messengers thus seem to contradict the campaign's intended objectives as laid down in the project policy. Nevertheless, together with his colleagues, he succeeded in running the campaign event as expected, and he looked relieved once it was finally over. Despite its demands, he found economic stability in his job as a campaign implementer. Still, his actions and remarks make his stance on the MIC confusing.

At the same graffiti event, passersby were invited to contribute brush strokes to the mural. A crowd of children and young people gathered around the lively group of professional artists and campaign "volunteers". The volunteers were Senegalese who had spent time in North African countries and were returned to Senegal by the IOM or who had attempted to reach Europe via sea but were pushed back by border control authorities. Upon their return, they engaged in campaign activities. Artists and volunteers mixed vibrant colours in large buckets and sketched on the wall. A sense of excitement filled the air. IOM staff and volunteers offered cups of tea to those who stopped by. It was a pleasant occasion for the local community and an opportunity to come together to decorate the old, grey, cracked wall of the neighbourhood primary school. Some young people sat in a circle not far from the wall to listen to the stories of a few campaign volunteers. Among them was Biraago. He recounted to participants how he risked his life trying to escape a detention centre in Libya after falling victim to human traffickers who had imprisoned him. Further tragic events led to the failure of his migration plan and his return to Senegal by the IOM. Biraago's narrative was emotionally distressing, leaving both him and his listeners unsettled. It was not the first time I had listened to Biraago's story during MaM events. Sitting in the circle with others, I wondered why he would continue to share his story if it recalled such trauma. What motivated him to do this, considering he received no compensation apart from a modest reimbursement for travel expenses? After Biraago's testimony, a young woman firmly stated that those who attempt to migrate

are well aware of the risks. Another girl commented indignantly that young people cannot be blamed for migrating, as there are no job opportunities in Senegal: "How can you stay here and do nothing? How can you look at your parents, who need your help to survive?" A mix of sadness, frustration, hopelessness, and anger circulated among participants. Nearby, other young people joyfully painted the wall. Such a contrast made the campaign event emotionally messy. How did these contrasting emotions affect the young people present?

Migrants as Messengers, graffiti activity, February 2021, © Cecilia Schenetti

Migration information campaigns[2] are an instrument of public policy. They represent a specific type of public information campaign that governments deliberately use to influence the beliefs and behaviours of large audiences to achieve desirable policy outcomes (Atkin & Rice, 2012; Weiss & Tschirhart, 1994). As "soft power" tools of governance (Williams, 2020), public information campaigns attempt to persuade their audiences to adopt what is considered the "right" behaviour in matters of, for example, public health, the environment, or road safety. Public campaigns generally target the citizens of the funding government. But MICs are different. They target potential migrants in their countries of origin, aiming to dissuade them from crossing borders, or they target non-citizens in destination countries, encouraging their voluntary return "home" (Pécoud, 2023; Cleton & Schweitzer, 2021; Balty et al., 2021; Fine & Walters, 2022).

MICs have become a priority for governments in the Global North. In Europe, they

[2] I use the abbreviation MICs to refer to migration information campaigns. In this thesis the terms migration information campaigns, migration campaigns and campaigns are used interchangeably.

express the commitment of EU institutions and member states to combat disinformation and provide potential migrants with "reliable and objective" information about reaching Europe through illegal routes (European Commission, 2018). The primary assumptions underlying MICs are that populations in migrant-sending countries either lack information or rely on inaccurate information and that they are unaware of the rules governing the entry of non-citizens into European countries. The idea is that if properly informed and made aware of the risks, potential migrants will reconsider and eventually give up their plans to migrate. In other words, with the right information, they will make the right decisions. A secondary assumption is that MICs are more likely to be trusted by aspiring migrants than other sources of information available to them. Yet, there is little evidence of the impact and effectiveness of these campaigns (Browne, 2015; Cham & Trauner, 2023; Tjaden et al., 2018). Rather, MICs are proven to be based on flawed assumptions and therefore have limited influence on migration decisions (Alpes & Nyberg Sorensen, 2015; Schans & Optekamp, 2016; Beber & Scacco, 2022).

Nevertheless, since the 1990s, countries such as Australia, the United States, and those in Western Europe have increasingly invested in information campaigns to raise awareness among populations in migrant-sending and transit countries, including those in Central and Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and Central America, about the risks and dangers of human trafficking, smuggling, and undocumented migration (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007; Andrijasevic, 2007; Schloenhardt & Philipson, 2013). Funding states contract organisations to run MICs in specific target countries. Among those, the IOM serves as the leading service provider of MICs (Pécoud, 2010). According to official EU policy discourse, MICs aim "to inform" potential migrants about the realities of irregular migration, the consequences of violating migration procedures, the living conditions of undocumented migrants in destination countries, and how to enter the EU legally (European Commission, 2015). MICs claim "to raise awareness" among targeted audiences about the negative consequences of irregular migration and the challenges they may face in European societies. Furthermore, MICs strive "to counter" existing migration narratives by "educating" populations in the Global South about false hopes and about life-threatening situations that aspiring migrants may encounter if they engage with smugglers.

In short, MICs promote messages of failure and misfortune, highlight precariousness and exclusion, and depict images of exploitation, suffering, and death, all consequences of irregular migration. MICs emphasise that life in Europe is not how people imagine it to be. In contrast, life in origin countries is portrayed as offering possibilities for development and success. MICs thus urge aspiring migrants to consider staying "at home" (Schans & Optekamp, 2016; Pécoud, 2010; Brekke & Thorbjørnsrud, 2020).

Campaign messages are conveyed via multiple tools of communication, ranging from traditional print media, such as billboards, flyers, and comic books, to multimedia

web-based platforms, social media, broadcast media, and in-person outreach activities like theatre, movie screenings, community workshops, and public debates featuring personal testimonies (Giancaspro, 2025; Heller, 2014; Musaró, 2019; Rodriguez, 2017). By diversifying their communication methods, which allow for different types of information to be shared, MICs enhance their capacity to reach a broad audience with their messages.

While in public policy discourse, MICs are presented as a coherent measure, the two opening vignettes show that MICs are messy and full of contradictions. The events described in the vignettes took place between Europe and West Africa as I followed the development of MICs from their ideation in the Netherlands to their implementation in Senegal. The involvement of multiple actors, including Dutch policymakers, Senegalese staff members of the IOM, professional artists, and young Senegalese people, some with migration experience, illustrates how MICs rely on many individuals to take shape. Understanding how MICs are conceived by their funders, put into practice by local organisers, and perceived by the targeted population is central to this thesis. Specifically, I explore the *lifecycle* of MICs, namely the three phases through which a migration campaign comes into existence, progresses, and reaches its endpoint: ideation, implementation, and reception. I analyse MICs' lifecycle, focusing on the perspectives of the various actors between the Netherlands and Senegal who engage with and give form to these campaigns. Throughout my research, I observed how the different actors interpret MICs' purposes and messages differently, and how MICs produce ambiguous positions, resulting in sometimes confused and contradictory interpretations within and between groups of actors. As mentioned in vignette 1, European policymakers may opt to invest in MICs to control migration flows and to protect the lives of potential migrants, but at the same time, they also recognise the impossibility of fully achieving these objectives. Senegalese staff from implementing organisations may aspire to migrate themselves, yet they organise campaign events and contribute to the dissemination of messages that encourage people to remain in Senegal. Like Hammed, local staff may also view MICs as opportunities to host community debates on migration issues, while Senegalese youth participate in events that are simultaneously entertaining and disheartening, in which they recollect traumatic experiences and draw attention to their concerns.

This thesis explores how European campaign initiators, local campaign implementers, and young campaign receivers in Senegal navigate the contradictions they encounter in "making campaigns". Through analysing their various tasks, reactions, and perceptions, this dissertation adds to the scholarship on MICs by showing how, along the chain of actors, campaign messages are created, translated, and received by different groups. I focus on the Netherlands as it has made substantial investments in MICs abroad, and on Senegal as, over the last two decades, it has been a key target country for many EU-funded MICs. In the following section, I present a review of the literature on MICs, which serves as the basis for this thesis.

1.2 Migration Information Campaigns in the literature

1.2.1 MICs: a tool for migration governance

In recent decades, migration scholars, particularly those in the fields of migration management and border studies, have focused attention on MICs. A consensus has emerged within these fields that MICs are a pre-emptive policy measure Western states use to govern migration from afar in their efforts to immobilise populations from the Global South (Pécoud, 2010; Watkins, 2017). MICs are a tool of remote migration control, one among many strategies countries of the Global North use to externalise the management of borders to the territories from which migrants originate (Casas et al., 2011). Remote control means extra-territorial control aimed at restricting access to territorialised human and civil rights (FitzGerald, 2020). In fact, as part of European states' ongoing efforts to filter and restrict migration flows, MICs contribute to the shifting spatialities of border enforcement by extending the influence of funding governments to countries in the Global South. This results in a dispersed form of control over individuals before they reach territorial borders, which scholars have referred to as the softer side of border governance (Williams, 2020) or a *soft tool* of border externalisation (Van Dessel, 2021). The idea of soft highlights how MICs operate as a neoliberal industry for symbolic bordering, spreading persuasive emotional messages in everyday environments in target countries to restrict the movement of specific populations (Cappi & Musaró, 2023; Williams, 2020; Musarò, 2019). As symbolic bordering practices, MICs regulate mobility through storytelling and mediated representations that shape social imaginaries and public opinion about migration to fit the logic of securitised care (Chouliaraki & Georgiou, 2020). Campaigns use non-coercive tools to filter preferred and unwanted types of migration, to establish who belongs and who does not, to determine who should move and who should stay immobile, and to select who is considered worthy of saving and who is not. Thus, the softer infrastructure of MICs is deeply intertwined with colonial logics of exclusion, meaning that the campaign's operations and messages actively reinforce and expand historical patterns of colonial thinking regarding national belonging and who is considered an insider or outsider (Coddington, 2024a). *Soft/symbolic* instruments of border enforcement complement *hard* measures of EU border externalisation, which include the militarisation of migration routes, border fences, patrolling operations, detention centres, and the criminalisation of smuggling (Casas et al., 2011; Van Dessel, 2021).

To get their message across, scholars have pointed out that MICs frequently appeal to the emotions. By employing affective discourses, messages, and images, MICs function as instruments of affective border governance (Williams & Coddington, 2023; Savio Vammen & Kohl, 2023; Williams, 2020). Specifically, personal narratives about the dangers of migration and visual representations of migrant suffering, death, and deportation help to

evoke emotions of fear, anxiety, horror, hopelessness, shame, and familial guilt in those whose mobility the MICs aim to curb (Watkins, 2017; Vammen, 2021; Musaró, 2019). Various studies have shown the way campaign-driven discourses depict irregular migrants as naïve, vulnerable victims in need of rescue from unscrupulous, profit-driven smugglers who exploit their desperation for personal gain (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007; Cappi & Musaró, 2023; McNevin et al., 2016). Campaign materials also depict potential migrants as reckless individuals who waste their family's resources on risky migration attempts that are likely to fail, thereby jeopardising their families' well-being and disregarding the development concerns of their local community. Presented as life-saving activities, MICs are claimed to serve the interests of prospective migrants. But in highlighting the traumatic experiences of migrants and the despair of family members, MICs also shift the responsibility for misfortune onto the migrants themselves, who are made culpable for their own criminalisation and death. By neglecting to provide balanced information about rights and to recognise that irregular migration is a result of strict border policies, the affective discourse from MICs positions migration as the cause of failure, misfortune, and exploitation.

MICs have been described as programs of "aspiration management" for their intentions to control the physical and aspirational mobility of young people (Heidbrink, 2023). In this view, MICs attempt to immobilise youth in countries of the Global South by containing their migratory desires and localising their aspirations through messages about the duty "to stay home" and to develop their own country. In addition, the numerous "local stories of success", imbued with patriotic sentiment, that MICs propagate, testify how "to stay" is a viable alternative to migration. This aligns with Landau's definition (2019) of MICs as a strategy of "containment development" which seeks to generate sedentary African subjects and exclude them from mobile lives and global desires. Although sedentarisation strategies are not new (Bakewell, 2008), Landau makes clear how the containment imperative has been revived with MICs. Ultimately, MICs are designed to naturalise sedentarism by geographically localising Africans' desires and imaginations in Africa (Landau, 2019). By framing undocumented migration and the transport of irregular migrants as a violation of the natural order, others have explored how MICs seek to reinforce moral geographies that view the bordered nation-state system as righteous while casting irregular migration as sinful. Regular migration is seen as right, moral, and fair, and irregular migration as wrong, immoral, and unfair (Watkins, 2020; Freemantle & Landau, 2022). In addition, the glorification of staying home helps MICs to encourage what Pécoud calls "a culture of immobility" among targeted communities (Pécoud, 2012). The aim is to stifle even the imagination of migration and for potential migrants to internalise the borders that the EU fails to effectively control on the ground (Heller, 2014; Pécoud, 2012), so that borders become embodied in the moving bodies of populations deemed "undesired" (Mbembe, 2019). The aim is to instil patterns of self-discipline among potential migrants to dissuade them from moving (Pécoud, 2013; Brändle,

2022; Oeppen, 2016; Bartels, 2021).

Hence, the affective narratives, representations, and messages that MICs disseminate are far from neutral. Watkins explains how one campaign's narrative is strategically constructed by the Australian government to normalise a spatial imaginary that deters irregular migration to Australia. By linking Australia to danger, death, interception, and detention, and by linking migrant countries of origin to safety and financial stability, MICs create symbolic associations between people, space, and place to make migration undesirable and to influence the behaviour of potential migrants (Watkins, 2017). Others have described how campaign discourses contribute to the victimisation and stigmatisation of individuals who migrate through irregular pathways (Van Dessel, 2021; Brändle, 2022). The term "smuggler" is used by campaigns as a synonym for "trafficker", resulting in a confusion of vocabulary that contributes to the criminalisation of migration as organised crime (Musaró, 2019). On the other hand, the structural conditions, persistent disparities, and restrictive policies that drive people to undertake perilous journeys in the first place are not addressed by campaign interventions (Bartels, 2021). This adds to the construction of "unwanted migrants", which produces norms of exclusion across targeted communities. In short, this body of work has shown how MICs use affective registers and moralising narratives to shape the aspirations, perceptions, imaginations, and subjectivities of potential migrants to discourage them from moving (Williams, 2020; Heidbrink, 2023; Heller, 2014; Watkins, 2017; Savio Vammen & Kohl, 2023).

The dual rhetoric of awareness-raising and deterrence in which migration information campaigns appear deeply rooted can be explained by the interconnection between the humanitarian and securitising logics inherent in migration control policies. From a safety-security perspective, "the irregular migrant" is presented in campaign discourse both as life in need of protection and as a security threat to be protected against (Williams, 2016). Therefore, whilst using rhetoric that focuses on the well-being of prospective migrants, MICs pursue control-oriented objectives (Pécoud, 2010). All this addresses a broader scholarly debate concerning the dual nature of care and control inherent in humanitarian forms of governance (Pallister-Wilkins, 2015; Williams, 2015). Here, the question is how the humanitarian logic aligns with and can be instrumental in implementing restrictive and exclusionary migration policies that regulate borders and bodies (Cuttitta, 2018; Little & Vaughan-Williams, 2017). The scholarship suggests that migrant safety and border security are goals that can be achieved simultaneously as both are rooted in a humanitarian rationality that justifies border enforcement while also exhibiting "compassionate care for distant others" (Williams, 2016). Thus, to care for the lives of people on the move functions as a "technology of border enforcement" that helps to ensure state sovereignty (Williams, 2015).

The coexistence of a politics of care grounded in solidarity and one of control based on inequality can be expressed, scholars have argued, through the concepts of humanitarian reason (Fassin, 2012) and humanitarian border (Walters, 2011). Humanitarian reason follows

relations of power that establish a hierarchy in the value of human lives (Fassin, 2007), and in a border setting, humanitarian rationality works "to reproduce exclusive categories of life" of those deserving care (Pallister-Wilkins, 2017, p.89). This paradox of care and control is embedded in the work of the humanitarian government, whose practice is moved by sentiments of sympathy and concern for order when dealing with the lives of undesired others, for example, undocumented migrants (Fassin, 2012). Hence, humanitarianism operates through the simultaneous existence of a politics of care and reception and of practices of exclusion and rejection. The humanitarian border consists in the proliferation of humanitarian aid and services providing different forms of care to migrants along the militarised borders of the Global North (Walters, 2011; Williams, 2015); crucial is what some have called humanitarian borderwork, which refers to those practices implemented at the border to relieve the suffering and prevent the deaths of people who are defined as in need of care (Pallister-Wilkins, 2017). At the same time, humanitarian borderwork intervenes in violent border areas that produce state-exclusive territorial spaces in the first place. Hence, the humanitarian border remains "a site of ambivalence and undecidability" (Walters, 2011, p. 144), even for those enforcing it who must navigate the paradox of protection: between protecting individuals and protecting borders (Pallister-Wilkins, 2015). The humanitarian-security nexus also characterises MICs as contemporary practices of remote border management, explaining the involvement of both state and humanitarian actors in MICs (Van Dessel & Pécoud, 2020). The following section reviews the literature that focuses on the implementation and reception of MICs, bringing into focus the various actors involved in these phases.

1.2.2 MICs in practice: implementation and reception

MICs are not only tools of EU migration policy, they also involve processes of implementation and reception that engage a broad range of societal actors. While some scholars have viewed campaign initiatives as static modes of governance, others have focused on how governance manifests in practice, highlighting the local dynamics of campaigns and the effects they have on target populations. Campaigns aimed at countering irregular migration are typically carried out in countries of origin by NGOs and international organisations, but their messages are conveyed by a variety of local actors. The latter are viewed by donors as key to both mobilising the community and making campaign messages more credible, and their involvement is recommended to enhance the campaign's effectiveness (Seefar, 2021). Local governmental actors, development workers, journalists, returnees, influencers, artists, theatre groups, and civil society organisations have been increasingly engaged in recent campaigns (Jinkang et al., 2022; Rodriguez, 2017; Maâ, Van Dessel & Savio Vammen, 2022; Glyniadaki et al., 2025; Shaidrova, 2025). Scholars described these local actors as "intermediaries" due to their presumed insider position within the communities targeted by campaign communications (Maâ et al., 2022). Intermediaries, especially return migrants, are viewed by MICs as

reliable sources of information for their "peers", and they are thereby expected to significantly reduce the audience's intentions to migrate (Dunsch et al., 2019). Furthermore, through the real-life testimonies shared by returnees, researchers have pointed to the way MICs evoke a certain emotional identification in the audience (Balty et al., 2021). The use of individual stories to discourage illegal migration has also been seen as part of MICs' commodification of voices within a burgeoning migration industry, which may result in experiences of exploitation on behalf of returnees (Marino et al., 2023).

Some studies discuss how local actors' agendas align or conflict with campaign goals. In Senegal, where EU-funded MICs are frequently implemented, local youth gain access to both material and symbolic resources through their participation in awareness-raising initiatives, which also offer potential pathways to employment within campaign implementing organisations (Rodriguez, 2017). Similarly, an association of Senegalese women aligns itself with the discourse created by European campaign funders to secure resources for the association and negotiate their positions within migration policy discourse (Bouilly, 2010). Conversely, members of a Senegalese urban culture association joined activities designed to raise awareness in order to advance a geopolitical critique of Europe from within (Abrahams, 2013). Through MICs, local actors may become active participants in the policing of migration, promoting externally driven policies to their advantage (Shaidrova, 2025), while at the same time, their interventions can transform or even subvert the campaign's intended messages (Rodriguez, 2017; Maâ, 2021).

Borderwork is carried out by a variety of state and non-state actors, including citizens and non-citizens (Rumford, 2008; Pallister-Wilkins, 2017; Sinatti & Vos, 2019). For example, scholars have shown how local intermediaries in countries where MICs are carried out actively engage in borderwork by envisioning, constructing, maintaining, and erasing borders across different spatial scales (Maa et al., 2022; Vammen, 2021). As a specific form of work, borderwork involves discursive and practical labour that relies on physical constructions and material infrastructures (Frowd, 2018), and it involves (non)representations and narratives of border deaths (Sinatti & Vos, 2019). Borderwork is thus pervasive and composed of everyday practices (Savio Vammen, Cold Ravnkilde & Lucht 2022). The simultaneous creation and dissolution of borders characterises borderwork as a "messy" and ambiguous practice (Sinatti, 2022) that produces interrelated spaces of control and contestation (Savio Vammen et al., 2022). The borderwork produced by campaign efforts to deter migration has been described as "humanitarian" (Pécoud, 2023) and "affective" (Vammen, 2021; Savio Vammen & Kohl, 2023).

Scholars have also given attention to the way MICs have been received by local audiences. They have explored the information practices and knowledge of potential migrants, as well as how their attitudes toward migration, their aspirations, and their decisions are influenced by their perceptions of risk (van Bemmel, 2020; Fiedler, 2020; Richardson, 2010;

Fleay et al., 2016; Heidbrink, 2023). While MICs claim that target populations lack information, studies have shown that they obtain information through various channels, such as personal transnational networks and social media, which generate discourses and imaginaries on migration. Thus, MIC-promoted messages intervene as just one source of information in contexts where other narratives on migration are already rooted (Trauner et al., 2023). Scholars have argued that target audiences are not passive recipients of campaign messages and interventions but active agents who critically assess MICs, much like they do with other sources of information. They assess risk, gather and interpret a variety of information, and subsequently make decisions (Richardson, 2010; Fiedler, 2020; Brekke & Thorbjørnsrud, 2020). Some researchers have described, for instance, how aspiring migrants view the information provided by MICs as biased because it often aligns with the interests of funders who seek to deter their migration, causing them to perceive campaign information as unreliable (van Bemmel, 2020; Oeppen, 2016). Instead, they primarily rely on trusted social networks and smugglers for information and focus more on attaining their goal of reaching Europe than on the risks involved (Vammen et al., 2021). African would-be migrants filter the information coming from MICs not by ignoring the risks but by weighing them against the opportunities offered by migration (Carling & Hernández-Carretero, 2011). The long-term rewards often outweigh the short-term perils of migration. Similarly, Fleay and colleagues (2016) found that prior to and during their boat journeys to Australia, asylum seekers may choose to block out news that negatively impacts their chances of reaching their destination.

It may be that potential migrants do lack information about specific dangers and human rights violations. In this case, they may regard MIC as valid and credible sources but still do not heed their advice (Vammen et al., 2021). Although aspiring migrants' awareness of risk is high, their aspirations remain unaltered, and they still choose to undertake dangerous journeys in the hope of reaching Europe. In this context, scholars have shown that the risks are considered an integral part of migration journeys (Caso & Carling, 2024; Alpes & Sorenson, 2015; Hernández-Carretero & Carling, 2012; Mbaye, 2014; Heidbrink, 2023). These findings align with Cham and colleagues' (2025) discussion on the divergence between the messages conveyed by EU campaigns and the migration narratives held by youth in the Gambia. Gambian young people continue to view migratory journeys to Europe as pathways to a better life and to rich opportunities, despite being exposed to campaign messages which emphasise the risks and dangers they may encounter. They use predestination arguments to counter campaign messages, believing that whatever will happen to them, including dying during an irregular journey to Europe, is a plan of God (Cham, 2024). Furthermore, exposure to information about risk may lead people to prepare better for migration journeys (Gueye, 2024). This suggests that the initiators and recipients of MICs have differing perceptions of what constitutes a well-informed decision, what is a risk worth taking, and what drives individuals to migrate (van Bemmel, 2020; Fiedler, 2020). In other words, the receivers' per-

spectives indicate that official campaign policies are based on simplified categories of legal and illegal migrants and that they overlook the structural factors that prevent people from moving legally and their diverse motivations for embarking on illegal migration journeys (Pagogna & Sakdapolrak, 2023).

Essentially, the body of literature focusing on the campaign-receiving side challenges the assumptions of MICs. While potential migrants may be better prepared to face the challenges of migration if properly informed, MICs are unlikely to discourage people from moving. Their underlying assumptions have little to no basis in the realities of prospective migrants; therefore, the efficacy of campaigns as deterrence strategies is questionable. Building on these studies, the following section elaborates on how this thesis contributes to the existing literature on MICs.

1.3 Studying the *lifecycle* of migration campaigns: contributions and research questions

Although research on MICs has significantly increased over the past twenty years, theoretical and methodological gaps continue to exist. In this section, I highlight these gaps and explain how my thesis addresses them and contributes to scholarship on MICs. First, this thesis is innovative in how it looks at migration campaigns in their full cycle. Unlike most research, which has either focused on MICs as a strategy of Western migration governance or on their operations in countries where they are implemented, this study views MICs as composed of consecutive stages shaped by a chain of interconnected transnational actors. The actions of a range of actors must be considered to gain a comprehensive picture of the existence and realisation of migration campaigns. I propose to use the metaphor of the *lifecycle* to help understand the three stages involved in making a campaign, namely its conception, implementation, and reception. This facilitates the exploration of the lived experiences of numerous individuals directly engaged in the creation, development, and completion of a MIC, where completion coincides with the reaching of an audience. Considering MICs as a process and taking their lifecycle as the object of study is useful for overcoming static understandings of MICs and bringing into focus their social dynamics. Such an approach enables analysis of the imagination work, translation work, and emotional work needed for campaigns to exist, all of which have often been overlooked. Examining the work by which campaigns are made offers insights into the contradictions that initiators, implementers, and receivers encounter in their efforts to justify MICs, put them into practice, and respond to their discourses. It is important to acknowledge the multiple messages and interpretations emerging from campaign spaces, as well as to understand how and why MICs are sustained or disrupted. Investigating the *lifecycle* of MICs allows me to consider the whole campaign chain of actors and to illustrate how campaign messages are created, translated, and transformed along the cycle according

to different interests and interpretations. In doing so, I provide an understanding of MICs as contentious and ambiguous, made of contradictory logics, which come to life and are shaped by the often-invisible work of multiple actors.

Second, as the opening vignettes suggest, studying the *lifecycle* of MICs requires methodological tools to understand the three stages of the process as it evolves in various locations, identify the numerous actors involved, and capture their spoken and unspoken experiences. Although Europe's externalised migration policies are fundamentally transnational, they are seldom researched from both the geographical areas concerned. Furthermore, existing research primarily relies on short-term fieldwork or on interviews or on analyses of media content, discourse, and representations used by MICs. By contrast, I use a multi-sited research design to collect empirical data in contexts where MICs are initiated, implemented, and received by multiple actors. Such a methodological approach entails following the multiple actors who partake in the realisation of campaigns and allowing for the investigation of campaign breadth. Furthermore, my long-term ethnographic study is original for my extensive observation of the local African context in which MICs develop. It helps to deepen our understanding of local dynamics, including the social dynamic contexts of MICs in countries of origin and the agency of implementers, as well as the intangible aspects and hidden effects of MICs on target populations.

Third, my thesis is innovative in its focus on the real people who make policy, not just on the policies they make. While studies have conceptualised MICs as forms of migration governance, as reviewed above, little is known about the actual policymakers who initiate MICs on behalf of European governments (but see Optekamp, 2016; Van Dessel, 2024). Furthermore, while scholars have examined how MICs function alongside detention, deportation, and border security in their efforts to curtail irregular migration, the perspectives of the European actors who support these MICs as an alternative to other migration control measures have been overlooked. This thesis contributes to the literature on MICs as a tool of European migration governance by examining the justifications that individual EU policymakers provide for funding MICs in migrant countries of origin. MICs may allow Western governments to be seen to be doing something to prevent arrivals and migrant deaths, thus shaping their own public opinion (Oeppen, 2016; Coddington, 2024b). Yet the contradiction between messages aimed at deterring migration and the stated goal of providing information raises questions about the ethics and role of European states in using these political instruments (Brändle, 2022; Bishop, 2020; Brekke &Thorbjrnsrud, 2020). I add to this debate by investigating how EU policymakers make sense of and explain to others and themselves the double discourse of care and control of both people and borders, that is, how they navigate the intertwined humanitarian and securitarian logics in which MICs are embedded. My analysis of how campaign initiators justify the need for MICs informs us about the imaginaries they hold regarding their role, MICs as a policy measure, the target audience, and the

context in which MICs originate and are received. Understanding these imaginaries extends our knowledge of the rationales in which MICs are rooted and that enable their continuous production.

Fourth, my thesis gives new attention to the implementation of MICs by highlighting the paradoxical positions of campaign intermediaries in countries of origin and their contributions to MICs. As other scholars have noted, insufficient academic attention has been paid to the local implementation of MICs (Pagogna & Sakdapolrak, 2023). Studies on awareness campaigns in target countries exist, yet understanding their practical workings could benefit from further investigation into the perspectives of the various social actors who carry out campaign activities. While some groups of local actors have been researched for their roles as intermediaries within MIC structures, the local employees of implementing organisations have received little attention (Cham & Trauner, 2023). In her analysis of IOM's on-the-ground practices of migration management in Morocco, Bartels (2017) argues that the projects of MICs are contested and negotiated in local contexts, emphasising the role of local actors in actively shaping policy outcomes. Whereas previous studies discuss how MIC logics provide people in regions of departure with agency (Bartels, 2017; Rodriguez, 2017), this thesis looks at how such agency manifests. Such an exploration is relevant for explaining the paradoxical situation of actors who contribute to disseminating messages that promote restrictions on their own freedom of movement and that of their community members. In analysing why and how local staff perform their work of translating campaign policy into practice on behalf of implementing organisations, I discuss how intermediaries simultaneously promote, transform, and contest campaign messages. In other words, I focus on how, in performing their role, local implementers reconfigure or contest (soft) borders; that is, how they do or undo borderwork. My analysis enhances understanding of their ambiguous stance and helps to elucidate how conflicting logics at work in campaign implementation play out.

Fifth, I explore how people targeted by campaign messages are affected. While scholars have highlighted the limited influence MICs exert on their receivers, there is a scarcity of empirical research regarding the audience's experiences (Optekamp, 2016). Current studies on campaign reception predominantly rely on interviews with members of the campaign target audience, often emphasising how the information they receive and their awareness of risks influence aspirations and decisions to move (Fiedler, 2020; Fleay et al., 2016; Richardson, 2010; van Bemmel, 2020). Thus, the literature to date has examined the effects of policy narratives on migration behaviour in order to question the efficacy of campaign interventions. Rather than focusing on the effects, or lack thereof, that MICs have on the target audience's migration practices, I examine affective reactions to activities promoted by MICs to illustrate the multiplicity of effects these campaigns have on local populations beyond migration aspirations. The long-term ethnographic fieldwork I conducted among Senegalese young people participating in MICs allowed me to observe the non-material and non-verba-

lizable effects campaigns have on them. An ethnographic approach is vital for better understanding the realities of the young people targeted by campaigns and for challenging how they are represented in the prevailing policy campaign discourse. Thus, my thesis expands the limited knowledge of campaign receivers by providing empirical data on the less visible effects of MICs, including the circulation of emotions that affect receivers' bodies.

Against this backdrop, this dissertation addresses the following research question: *How are MICs imagined, implemented, and received by EU and Senegalese actors between the Netherlands and Senegal?* To answer this broad question, I have broken it down into the following sub-questions, which I explore in the three empirical chapters of this thesis:

1. How do EU campaign initiators justify the need for campaigns? What do their justifications reveal about the imaginaries they have of themselves, their subjects, and the different contexts in which they operate? (Chapter 3)
2. Why do Senegalese citizens help to implement campaigns in Senegal? How do they perform their role as local intermediaries? (Chapter 4)
3. How do Senegalese youth respond to MICs? What do their reactions reveal about the affective registers and non-material effects of MICs? (Chapter 5)

To address these questions, I draw on multi-sited research I conducted in the Netherlands and Senegal. This multi-sited research design facilitated the inclusion of multiple actors across geographical boundaries and helped me provide a comprehensive account of the different stages of MICs that are essential to a migration campaign. My research involved qualitative semi-structured interviews with respondents in the Netherlands and 15 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Senegal (see Chapter 2 for further details). The following section elaborates on the conceptual framework I use to address my questions.

1.4 Conceptual framework

To understand MICs from the perspectives of the multiple actors involved in their ideation, implementation, and reception, I engage with a number of concepts, the key ones being *imaginaries, broker, speech act, affect and emotion*. I apply these concepts to analyse, respectively, the justifications provided by campaign initiators (imaginaries), the way Senegalese implementers translate the discourse of international funders into terms that make sense to local people (brokers and speech acts), and the responses elicited from campaign receivers (affect and emotions).

The concept of *imaginaries* helps me to analyse campaign initiators' justificatory work, that is, how they justify MICs. My understanding of this concept is informed by work by a number of scholars. The first is Charles Taylor's (2002) study on Western modernity as

a new moral order which can be understood through a specific kind of social imaginary. The term "social imaginary" refers to how individuals envision their social lives. Imaginaries are both social and personal; they consist of interconnected sets of collective representations that relate to specific issues underpinning the moral and sensory modes guiding people's way of being in the world (Meyer, 2015). In her analysis of Ghanaian popular moviemaking as a powerful sensational form, Birgit Meyer examines how movies use imagination to attune to personal and collective imaginaries tied to religious life. As cultural models, collective imaginaries are widely shared implicit schemas of interpretation (Strauss, 2006) that sustain social life and "call into being a world of lived experience that is taken as real by those participating in it" (Meyer, 2015, p.14). While established cultural understandings create dominant shared imaginaries among a self-identified group, other views within the same group may remain unshared, resulting in alternative imaginaries. Nonetheless, imaginaries are collectively held and institutionally stabilised, which means they have a concrete location in material objects, institutions, and practices (Strauss, 2006; Meyer, 2015). In the context of asylum policymaking, Mayblin argues that "policy imaginaries" represent discursive formulations of ideas meant to simplify the phenomena that policy measures aim to address. As comprehensive narratives that point to feasible policy solutions, policy imaginaries are "institutionally embedded, morally distancing ways of viewing the world" (Mayblin, 2019, p.2). Thus, these imaginaries are central to how processes of migration governance are established institutionally (Fine & Walters, 2022). Ultimately, what people identify as relevant depends on the meaning systems they can access and draw upon, and imaginaries serve as a sense-making tool (Taylor, 2002; Meyer, 2015). By identifying the imaginaries of EU policymakers who initiate MICs, we gain insights into the rationale behind the creation of migration information campaigns and the worldview it reflects. This is crucial for understanding how they interpret and reconcile the double discourse of MICs, which involves simultaneously caring for and controlling potential migrants, and how, in doing so, they sustain or challenge MICs.

I use the concept of *broker* to understand the role that local implementers occupy as intermediaries between the funders of MICs and campaign recipients. In the second vignette at the start of this chapter, the local implementer from IOM, Hammed, who was responsible for running the street art activity, acts as a broker, a *bridge*, between the executive management of the IOM in West Africa, where the campaign was designed, and the local Senegalese setting, where the campaign materialised and targeted the local community. Senegalese citizens who promote messages that aim to contain people's desires to migrate take on a paradoxical position. To understand why they do so and how they perform their roles as MIC implementers, I incorporate the notion of the broker from the anthropology of development literature into my analysis. Brokers find themselves between the different worldviews of the many people and institutions involved in development programs (Mosse & Lewis, 2006). On the one hand, they carry out the tasks expected of them, conveying to the local population

the solutions proposed by the development institution they work for. On the other hand, they play an active role in shaping development project, advancing their own perspectives as well as those of others, which may diverge from the original agendas set by the donors (Mosse & Lewis, 2006; Bierschenk et al., 2002). They bridge project donors and beneficiaries through their work of translation. In practice, brokers strategically translate the discourse of international funders into terms that make sense to and benefit local actors. In doing so, they demonstrate their understanding of the two value systems. Brokers require specific competencies, including rhetorical, organisational, and relational skills, and they need to master the cultural codes of the social fields they navigate. This mastery is necessary for the roles they play and, at the same time, for the project's success (Bräuchler et al. 2021; Epple, 2021; Desai, 2006; Shrestha, 2006). But because the straddle different social worlds, their roles are often marked by ambiguity. The ambiguous roles that brokers occupy in the development field provide them with opportunities for political action, as well as for future employment, social status, and recognition (Mosse & Lewis, 2006; Rossi, 2006; Bierschenk et al., 2002). Thus, their intermediation enhances the possibilities for transformation, reinterpretation, or alteration of the dominant order (Bierschenk et al., 2002).

Here, the concept of the *speech act* is important. The work of translation in which brokers engage can be understood through the lens of the speech act, which implies not just the reaffirmation of campaign norms but also the possibility of change, subversion, and resistance. The concept of the speech act was initially introduced within the philosophy of language to argue that language carries out actions (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Such a notion helps us to understand how individuals utilise language to perform acts that, under certain conditions, can endure change (Loxley, 2006). Judith Butler expanded on the concept when analysing gender as a socially constructed process that proceeds through repetitive public performative speech acts (Butler, 1988). Thus, gender is constituted by these speech acts rather than being an inherent part of an individual's identity. How individuals perform speech acts through language and bodily actions over time consolidates norms of what gender is (Butler, 1988). At the same time, in the repetitive performative character of gender resides the possibility for a different sort of repetition, one that subverts gender norms. Consequently, in repeating and re-enacting speech acts, individuals find cracks to break free from and contest dominant norms of exclusion. In the context of MICs in Senegal, local implementers' work of translation involves normalising or resisting dominant campaign discourses.

The last important concepts I engage with in this thesis are those of *affect* and *emotion*. These help me to analyse the different reactions exhibited by campaign receivers, including in the form of bodily acts and written texts that they display during campaign activities. The affective dimension of MICs has been addressed by previous studies. Building on those, my analysis discusses the emotional labour of Senegalese youth as they engage with the discourse propagated by MICs and examines the non-material effects it has on them. While

affect refers to a body's ability to sense, move, or respond according to the flow of forces that it encounters (Gress & Seigworth, 2010), I follow Ahmed in understanding emotions as affective states and collective cultural practices constructed in social interactions and constitutive of social worlds (Ahmed, 2014). Emotions are experienced in the body as affect, but they do not inherently belong to the body; instead, they move within fields of relations and "stick" to and affect bodies. The movement of emotions in social relations constructs subjectivities, connections, and boundaries, resulting in processes of community building and othering (Ahmed, 2014). Emotions are central to making sense of the world as they are objects of knowledge and processes through which individuals experience and interpret the world around them, shape their subjectivities, and anticipate future actions (d'Aoust, 2014; Svašek & Skrbiš, 2007). It follows that emotions are tools of meaning-making that help shape a particular worldview, making them political and a force with which to challenge or maintain relations of power (Svašek, 2005; Wetherell, 2012; Ahmed, 2014; Fox, 2015). This dissertation follows Ahmed's invitation to consider how emotions work. Unlike other studies that have discussed the affective character of MICs by looking at their communication content, I focus on the affective reactions individuals exhibit when engaging in campaign activities to discuss the effects of the affective registers of MICs. Examining how MICs are emotionally received is essential for understanding their impact on their audience and the affective registers youth use to respond to campaign discourse. My thesis thereby helps to enrich ongoing academic discussions on the affective governance of migration and its contestation. In the next section, I provide the background for this research by describing the Netherlands and Senegal as examples of European and African countries where MICs are initiated and implemented.

1.5 Background: The Netherlands and Senegal

MICs appear to be a well-established practice of the Dutch state. Among EU member states, the Netherlands is especially committed to financing and implementing MICs abroad. Since 2007, the Dutch government has invested in campaign initiatives through different ministries. The most prominent campaign, which was considered "very successful" in reaching a broad audience, was *Surprising Europe*, funded in 28 countries by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 2007 and 2016. This multimedia campaign used a TV series and a website featuring testimonies by migrants in Europe to provide potential migrants with "a more realistic view of the dangerous journey to Europe and life as an (illegal) migrant in Europe" and to present return as an option for undocumented migrants living in Europe. Between 2019 and 2022, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs invested 14 million euros in the campaign Migrants as Messengers, targeting seven West African countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025). Practitioners consider *Migrants as Messengers* to be an innovative campaign because

of its 'peer-to-peer' communication approach (Dunsch et al., 2019), which has also received some academic attention in recent years (Vammen, 2021; Marino et al., 2023; Glyniadaki et al., 2025). Other Dutch ministries also fund MICs, though not all are well-known. Between 2013 and 2016, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment funded the campaign *Labor Migrants*, which aimed to inform potential Polish, Bulgarian, and Romanian migrants about the labour market and fraudulent employment agencies before they moved to the Netherlands. The goal was to manage the expectations of potential migrants. In 2013-2014, the Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V) of the Ministry of Justice and Security ran a MIC in Afghanistan on the risks and consequences of irregular migration to Europe. In 2016, the DT&V funded another campaign in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that focused on the return of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in the Netherlands. To implement MICs, the Dutch government cooperates with various partners, depending on the project and context. These partners range from international organisations, such as the IOM, UNHCR, and UNICEF, to NGOs, private media and communication companies, embassies, and other EU member states.

In addition, the Netherlands is an interesting case due to its prominent role in promoting the European Commission's vision for a common information strategy among member states, one that delivers consistent and unified messages (European Commission, 2019a). In 2018, the Information and Awareness Raising Campaigns Working Group (INFO WG) was established under the European Migration Network (EMN) at the initiative of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose representative served as co-chair during its initial years (see Appendix A for an overview of key moments in the development of EU campaign policy). The INFO WG gathered EU member states, EU institutions, and international organisations to strengthen cooperation on MICs, with the aim of preventing migrant smuggling and reducing irregular migration to the EU (European Commission, 2019b). The group facilitated knowledge exchange among the various actors regarding best practices for implementing MICs and promoting collaboration. The working group also catalogued the MICs funded by each member state. Between 2015 and 2019, the MICs organised by different member states totalled 104, while 25 campaigns were managed by EU institutions (European Migration Network, 2019). The working group's efforts addressed the lack of coordination and competing interests among MICs initiated by various member states (Van Dessel, 2024). Drawing on the experience gained from participating in the INGO Working Group, the Netherlands formulated "golden rules" for conceiving and organising effective migration awareness campaigns in future.

Countries in West Africa are frequently the target of EU migration campaigns. In Senegal, in particular, MICs are common. The table in Appendix B provides an overview of EU-funded MICs implemented in Senegal since the 2000s. While this overview does not include my sample, it points to the frequency and continuity of MICs in Senegal. MICs rose

sharply following the "boat crisis" in 2006, which helped to focus public attention on West African migration to Europe. Senegalese irregular migration primarily occurred via the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea to Italy or through Morocco to the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. But since 2006, the progressive tightening of European borders has pushed an increasing number of West African people, including Senegalese, to undertake the perilous journey across the Atlantic Ocean in an attempt to reach Spanish shores, with many losing their lives (Willems, 2008; Tall & Tandian, 2010). Local fishermen have played a key role in enabling boat migration, mobilising their skills in support of both smugglers and migrants (Sall & Morand, 2008). The so-called "pirogue phenomenon" (mbëkk-mi in Wolof) received broad media coverage both in Europe and in Senegal, featuring images of wooden fishing boats overloaded with passengers arriving in severe conditions at the coast of the Canary Islands, approximately 1500 kilometres from Senegal's southern coast (Mayault, 2017). Half of the 31,000 migrants arriving in Spain via sea in 2006 were Senegalese citizens (IOM, 2020), while in the same year, 1000 out of 7000 African migrants who died during the crossing were Senegalese (Mbaye, 2014).

Amid rising immigration restrictions, Senegalese youth cultivated a culture of migration characterised by the motto *Barça wallah Barsakh* (Willems, 2007; Ba, 2007). Generally translated as "Barcelona or death", the slogan was coined by boat migrants to express that if they could not reach Europe (Barcelona), they would rather die than return to Senegal (Mbaye, 2014). However, this slogan was widely used by the media to portray aspiring boat migrants as reckless "kamikaze" (Hernández-Carretero & Carling, 2012), naïve victims driven by courage and ingenuity, with a misguided imagination of Europe as a paradisiacal "elsewhere", an imagined "El Dorado" about which they knew little (Degli Uberti, 2014). Yet, rather than clinging to fantastic and enchanted imaginaries about migrants and Europe, recent narratives among Senegalese people portray travelling to Europe as an experience continuous with daily life, one that may involve risking death at sea, but that could also provide access to multiple opportunities (Mbaye, 2014; Degli Uberti & Riccio, 2017).

Although independent migration among Senegalese women exists, migration is still a predominantly male activity (Mazzucato et al., 2015). The boat migrant is generally a single man, aged between 20 and 29 years old, from the Wolof ethnic group, and belonging to the Mouride Islamic brotherhood. Senegalese migrants include students and university graduates, urban workers without professional qualifications, young fishermen, craftsmen, and small traders from the urban and coastal areas of Senegal (Mbow & Tamba, 2007). Senegalese youth perceive migration as a valid way to escape a condition of existential immobility in which they feel trapped and which hinders their economic development and the reproduction of social and family relationships. Migration out of Senegal represents a strategy to cope with the rising rate of unemployment and to overcome economic marginality (Tall & Tandian, 2011). Moreover, young people consider migration a path to social adulthood. It is a way of

affirming their independence from their parents and of gaining the financial resources they need to marry. It is a way to gain social status and become respectable men (Prothmann, 2018). Taking the boat is also valued—it symbolises a personal quest and responsibility for one's own destiny as well as family solidarity and generosity (Ba & Ndiaye, 2008; Degli Uberti, 2014). At the same time, young Senegalese migrants find themselves pawns in a profitable scheme that exploits their marginal and desperate position (Melly, 2011), where their only option is to put their lives at risk.

Boat migration brought a shift in migration governance. It saw strengthened cooperation between European and Senegalese stakeholders in the fight against irregular migration (Jegen 2020). The arrivals on the Spanish coast were considered by the EU to be "massive", "clandestine", and harmful to Europe (Aguillon, 2020). At the same time, the risks, abuses, and human rights violations migrants were exposed to, and the many human lives lost at sea, made these clandestine flows a humanitarian concern. Securitisation of migration was enacted through restrictive control measures, including, since 2006, maritime patrols off the Senegalese coast by the European border and coast guard agency FRONTEX aimed at intercepting and pushing back boats of migrants (FRONTEX, 2006). Other measures included bilateral agreements that Senegal signed with France, Spain, and Italy to facilitate the return and readmission of West African deportees in exchange for development aid. Nevertheless, irregular migration from Senegal continued, with 19,235 registered arrivals by sea in Italy, Greece, and Spain between January 2016 and March 2019, alongside hundreds of documented deaths each year; the real number of deaths is undoubtedly much higher as many boats disappear (Dimé, 2020; IOM, 2025). The EU's commitment to discouraging irregular migration from Senegal was renewed in 2016 with the New Partnership Framework with Third Countries, which designated Senegal as one of five priority countries (Collett & Ahad, 2017; Jegen, 2020; Bernardini, 2018). After signing this framework, European actors assumed a more active role in managing migration by, among other strategies, linking development aid to security-oriented objectives. Senegal became one of the primary beneficiaries of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), which was set up at the Valletta Euro-Africa Summit in 2015 to tackle "the root causes" of migration. The EUTF has since promoted programs to enhance economic opportunities in countries of origin and incentivise people to stay. Among those, campaigns providing information on "how to achieve success locally" have been a focus. From 2015 to 2019, more than 120 billion CFA francs, approximately 182 million euros, were spent on projects and programs to curb irregular migration from Senegal (Dimé, 2020).

Although boat migration has dominated the public discourse, up until 2007 most Senegalese migrants entered Europe legally and became irregular by overstaying their visas (Beauchemin et al., 2018; de Haas, 2007). High-risk migration through sea or desert routes to Europe is a relatively recent phenomenon; thus, the condition of irregularity represents a

new political construction for the Senegalese population. This means that irregularity is not a natural status but a condition produced by legal frameworks and changes in immigration policies that have restricted legal entry routes (Vickstrom, 2014; De Genova, 2002). In contrast, regularised internal, intra-regional, and international migration has long been a part of Senegal's history (Tall, 2008; Maher, 2017). For decades, migration has impacted Senegalese society, transforming family structures and shaping urban centres and rural villages, leaving behind visible markers of success (Sinatti, 2009; Melly, 2011). In the context of West African migration literature, the pursuit of new opportunities through migration, before the existence of the post-colonial state, is frequently associated with the figure of the adventurer (Bredeloup, 2013). By the early 1990s, the modou modou had come to be recognised as a pioneer of Senegalese migration to Europe (Degli Uberti, 2014). The modou modou is a rural migrant, an expert trader willing to self-sacrifice and work hard for the well-being of his family. He manages to earn enough money abroad and to return to Senegal (Riccio, 2005). The ambivalent yet rather celebratory discourse surrounding the figure of the modou modou makes him a symbol of success, and he is celebrated in songs, films, and popular culture. These socio-cultural representations, together with the global connections and transnational exchanges African youth have today, contribute to imaginaries of emigration to the West as a path to obtain social prestige and of the migrant as an actor of development. Imaginaries may thus guide individual choices and induce aspiring migrants' desire to combine local realities with global possibilities (Willems, 2014; Mbodji, 2008).

In mid-2024, 741,400 Senegalese people lived abroad, slightly more than 4% of the total population of 18 million (Migration Data Portal, 2024a). Emigrants play a significant role in the Senegalese economy, with remittances accounting for 10.6% of GDP in 2020 (Migration Data Portal, 2024b). Throughout the colonial and early post-colonial periods, France and nearby African nations were the primary destinations for Senegalese migrants. International migration remained predominantly directed toward African countries, but by the 1970s, Spain and Italy, followed by the US from the 1990s, emerged as alternative destinations, leading to an increase in extra-continental mobility (Beauchemin et al., 2018). In Europe, this new migration arose from the demand for low-skilled labour needed to support rapid economic growth in Southern European countries and the less restrictive entry conditions compared to France, along with the periodic regularisations of irregular migrants that these countries implemented (Tall, 2008; Maher, 2017). However, with the Schengen agreements in the late twentieth century and the introduction of EU visa regimes in the early 2000s, travel to Europe became increasingly inaccessible for most Senegalese nationals. In response to growing restrictions and economic crises in the fishing and agriculture sectors, Senegalese individuals needed to adapt their strategies to realise their migration projects (Beauchemin et al., 2018).

1.6 Thesis overview

This thesis is article-based, which means that the three empirical chapters (3-5) were written as stand-alone articles that have either been published or are currently under review in international peer-reviewed journals. At the time of writing, Chapters 3 and 4 have been published while Chapter 5 is under revision. The three empirical chapters are preceded by the methodology chapter, in which I present my research design, sites and sample, and the methods I used to collect and analyse data, and in which I reflect on positionality and ethical considerations. Each empirical chapter includes its own introduction, theoretical framework, methodology, analytical sections, and conclusion, with each discussing a sub-question of the broader research problem. This leads to some inevitable overlap (for example, explanation of methods) but I have tried to keep it to a minimum. I have edited the published chapters to ensure consistency of style in the thesis.

Chapter 3 examines how European policymakers and development workers who initiate migration information campaigns to discourage irregular migration from African countries to Europe justify these interventions. Based on my qualitative interviews, I analyse the justificatory discourses of campaign initiators to illustrate how these actors navigate the contradictory intentions of MICs, which represent both a form of humanitarian care and a means of border control. Campaign initiators justify MICs by emphasising the need for objective information, claiming that MICs do no harm, and supporting the idea that MICs foster local development as an alternative to migration. This chapter argues that these justifications are constructed from the imaginaries that initiators hold of themselves, of MICs, of potential migrants, and of the target local context. Imaginaries are full of contradictions; however, they drive the production of MICs and help sustain the moral legitimacy of restrictive migration governance by instrumentalising care to achieve control.

Chapter 4 analyses the paradoxical position of local campaign implementers in Senegal who contribute to MICs aimed at curbing the mobility of the Senegalese population. Drawing on 15 months of ethnographic fieldwork and using the Tekki Fii campaign as a primary case study, the chapter looks at the work of translation that local implementers do as brokers between the policy and practice of MICs. Through the conceptual lens of the speech act, I examine how local implementers simultaneously engage in borderwork by reinforcing discourses of immobility and utilise their position to pursue personal and community interests, contest dominant campaign narratives, and promote alternative messages. The chapter highlights the ambivalent position of local implementers as active agents in the enactment, transformation, and contestation of MICs.

Chapter 5 focuses on the way MICs are received, examining how Senegalese youth react to campaign activities. It discusses MICs as affective spaces where various affective registers are mobilised, bringing into focus the often-overlooked circulation of emotions and

their effects on campaign audiences. Using ethnographic data collected among campaign participants in Senegal, my analysis highlights the non-material effects of MICs, revealing the emotional burden they impose on young people and the way they lead to protest. I argue that MICs inflict emotional violence on the young people they target, constructing them as "unwanted Others". Senegalese youth, on the other hand, articulate messages of protest. They call for social and mobility justice and the need to address underlying structural conditions in Senegal rather than solely focusing on migration risks. Finally, this chapter highlights how MICs reinforce exclusion and North-South power imbalances, while Senegalese youth struggle for social change and justice.

The conclusion summarises the main research findings and discusses the broader theoretical and methodological contributions of my thesis to the study of migration campaigns. It also reflects on the limitations of my study and offers suggestions for further research.

MIC Migrants as Messengers, caravan tour, day 5, June 2021, © Massow Ka

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

2.1 Introduction

I started following the information campaign of *Migrants as Messengers* (MaM) online via the social media pages of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in West and Central Africa. According to the campaign funders I interviewed in the Netherlands as part of my research, the IOM's social media communication aimed to raise awareness of the dangers of irregular migration among potential African migrants. Among others, return migrants, youth leaders, theatre actors, and singers were featured in various posts, videos, and images, expressing their concerns on migration risks, the challenges West African migrants face, the hardships of daily life for African youth, and the need for local development. When in Senegal in 2021, I met some of the people I had seen in MaM's social media posts when I participated in the various activities across the country organised by the local IOM team to spread campaign messages. These activities included social gatherings with artistic performances, graffiti displays, workshops, presentations, and public conversations and were attended by a mixed audience. A separate IOM office in Europe oversaw the campaign's overall coordination, while the Dutch government provided funding.

My research involved tracing the multiple actors who contribute to the realisation of MICs from different locations, attending to the various activities that MICs entail, and understanding how different messages emerge from the roles and experiences of the people who engage with MICs. This chapter discusses the multi-sited ethnographic methodology I employed to research MICs and the challenges I faced as I navigated their dynamic, multi-sited, and multi-actor environments. I first illustrate the research design I used to study the *lifecycle* of MICs as they emerge between the Netherlands and Senegal. I explain how I approached and mapped the field of campaign making in both countries (section 2.2). Next, I describe how I followed MICs across various sites in Senegal and outline the characteristics of the sample (section 2.3). I then present the methods I used to collect, record, and analyse data (section 2.4), before elaborating on the ethical considerations that guided the research process (section 2.5). Throughout the chapter, I reflect on how I came to hold multiple positions and how aspects of my identity manifested and affected my fieldwork. As the researcher's positionality is pivotal to ethnographic representations, reflecting on how my positionality influenced interactions in the field and shaped my line of inquiry is important to fully understand my interpretations of the research findings and to acknowledge my situated and partial production of knowledge (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Lichterman, 2017).

[3] Seefar is a private "social enterprise" that provides services to governments concerning issues of irregular migration, human trafficking and poverty. The company has specialized in the design and the implementation of strategic communication programs to achieve behavioural change among target populations, including information campaigns to deter migration.

2.2 Research design: how to study the lifecycle of MICs

A comprehensive study of MICs requires understanding the three phases of their lifecycle: ideation, implementation, and reception, which involve multiple actors - from European policymakers to Senegalese implementers to audience members – and a complex flow of ideas. I adopted a qualitative multi-sited research design guided by a simple principle: "to follow the message" that MICs disseminate across multiple sites (Marcus, 1995). This methodological approach is well suited for studying cross-border flows of ideas and the trans-border networks along which they travel (Mazzucato, 2009). It was invaluable for exploring the flows of messages that traverse a chain of actors between the Netherlands and Senegal, and it allowed me to study diverse MICs and to take into account the experiences of the multiple actors who are part of MICs' lifecycles.

From February 2021 to May 2022, I undertook 15 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Senegal, where MICs are frequently implemented. Ethnography is the most appropriate methodology to investigate the phases of campaign implementation and reception as it involves first-hand empirical investigation of people's actions and accounts in everyday contexts over an extended period of time (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). The open-ended and exploratory orientation at the core of ethnography enabled me to discover and observe the social world of MICs, including their social configuration, functioning, arrangements, and affective aspects, through prolonged involvement in people's lives (Olivier de Sardan, 2009). This time-intensive and immersive research approach fostered my development of an ethnographic sensibility, that is, an "attunement to worlds shared via participant observation that extends beyond parameters of a narrowly defined research question" (McGranahan, 2018). My "being there" (Borneman & Hammoudi, 2009) facilitated a better understanding of the complex perspectives and interpretations of the many actors involved in making and attending migration information campaigns.

2.2.1 Exploring MIC ideation in the Netherlands

The Netherlands was the site where I examined the first phase of the lifecycle, namely campaign ideation. Dutch policymakers are the primary actors responsible for the ideation of MICs, including their conception and allocation of funds. Due to COVID-19 restrictions that prevented in-person meetings, I approached policymakers online and used qualitative online interviewing to gather data on their perspectives. One of my supervisors facilitated initial contact with five Dutch policymakers through her professional affiliations, while two more were recruited via a snowball technique. In section 2.4, I elaborate on the data collection I conducted in the Netherlands and how it differed from the ethnographic fieldwork I carried

out in Senegal.

2.2.2 Mapping the MIC landscape in Senegal

Migrants as Messengers: Scene 1
We arrive at the village hall in the afternoon. Miname is the third municipality that the IOM team travelled to today. It is one of the thirty localities in the region of Thiès that the IOM aims to reach during its 20-day mission to brief local authorities about the upcoming Migrants as Messengers campaign in their commune. When I joined the four local IOM staff members, they had already completed half of the mission. However, the IOM team's tight schedule of daily visits to the many targeted municipalities enabled me to attend numerous sessions with local authorities during the days of the mission in which I participated. In Miname, we are welcomed into a waiting room. We sit and wait. In the meantime, I inform Moussa, one of the IOM staff, that I would not be joining him and his colleagues for the next two days of their mission. I have just discovered that Seefar [3] will launch "The Migrant Project" in Mbour the following day, and I have decided to go there instead. From Mbour, I will head to Dakar for a good night's sleep at home and return to Thiès the following evening, prepared to join a few more days of visits to other municipalities. Moussa agrees with my plan and wishes me luck.
June 4, 2021. Municipality of Miname, Region of Thiès, Senegal.

Upon my arrival in Senegal, it quickly became clear that the landscape of MICs was highly dynamic, characterised by long-term and frequent activities across a vast geographical area. The simultaneous occurrence of multiple campaign events in different locations presented me with the methodological challenge commonly faced in multi-sited research of what to focus on (Mazzucato, 2020). Where should I go? Which event should I join? Which MIC should I prioritise? To address these questions, I often had to make on-the-spot decisions based on intuition and improvisation, as is common in ethnographic research (Olivier de Sardan, 2009). The choices I made helped determine what I recorded as data and what I left out. This meant that the data on MICs that I gathered would always be selective and partial, ultimately reflecting my intuition about what might become meaningful events for my research.

My sudden decision to step back from the IOM's preparatory campaign mission to attend the inaugural public event of The *Migrant Project* helped me to map the various MICs active in Senegal, including the organisations and individuals involved, and to monitor the numerous activities occurring over time and across different locations. For instance, attending the *Migrant Project* event offered me valuable insights into the private company *Seefar*, which specialises in providing strategic communication services to governments regarding migration deterrence. *Seefar* has emerged as an important new player in the migration awa-

reness-raising sector, while the IOM is widely recognised as the leading organisation in this field (Van Dessel, 2021; Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007). Engaging with multiple implementing organisations also helped me to recognise differences, similarities, and connections (or lack thereof) among MICs and helped to diversify my sample (Appendix C).

My mapping of the diverse MICs and the actors involved in them resulted in a dual categorisation: one based on the specificities of each MIC (Table D.1) and the other emphasising social actors' participation across multiple MICs (Table D.2). This categorisation of actors informed my understanding of MICs in three ways. First, it underscored the concentration of EU funding and the competitive nature of the migration awareness-raising industry in Senegal. Implementing organisations compete for funding, target areas, and actors to execute their campaign activities. Similarly, for local development workers, singers, graffiti artists, and theatre performers, MICs present a lucrative competitive opportunity and a chance for professional advancement, thus intensifying competition for jobs. This raised questions regarding the expertise developed by international and local organisations as they embark on campaign projects, the range of skills necessary for individuals to carry out campaign work, and the career paths the awareness-raising sector enables. Secondly, my categorisation of MICs enabled me to appreciate how competition might become collaboration and the same individuals might be active in multiple projects. The *Contre-Courant* MIC, which I discovered during my fieldwork, was initiated by an independent European artist and financially supported by the IOM on the condition that it include four members of the IOM-operated MIC *Migrants as Messengers* in its initiatives. In this case, collaboration via financial and human resources from an established campaign implementer (IOM) facilitated the realisation of a new campaign. Collaboration among MICs also had some practical advantages for my fieldwork. For example, I could converse with the four MaM members while participating in the activities of *Contre-Courant*, which was enriching not only in terms of interactions with research participants but also for keeping informed about upcoming MaM events and so for planning future field activities. Thirdly, my categorisation revealed the way MICs move along a chain of actors, each of which seems necessary to its functioning. Presumably, the MaM caravan tour would not have taken place in a targeted commune without the official authorisation of its mayor. The fact that MICs are a collaborative effort raises questions about how individuals perceive their roles and responsibilities and how the network of actors influences the transmission, translation, and disruption of messages circulating within and beyond campaign spaces. Hence, mapping the many actors involved in MICs across time was crucial in order to follow the message.

2.3 Fieldwork sites and sampling

Migrants as Messengers: Scene 2

After a while, we are welcomed into the municipal office of Miname by the mayor. Fatima begins by formally introducing herself to the mayor as a representative of the IOM, before introducing her colleagues, including me. I sit quietly, bothered that I have been incorrectly introduced as a member of the IOM team. Fatima continues by explaining the purpose of the visit and providing the mayor with a general overview of the MaM campaign. A colleague follows up by asking the mayor about the local youth groups active in the community and the spaces available to host the campaign event. The mayor listens quietly. Only after the IOM staff have presented their agenda points, does the mayor express his gratitude for the visit and respond to their questions. A discussion, primarily in Wolof, takes place among those present on the practicalities of implementing the IOM initiative. Once the arrangements are finalised, the IOM team thanks the mayor for his collaboration and returns to the car. On the way to our next stop, I express some frustration at not having fully grasped the conversation. Hammed explains that as campaign staff, they are required to conduct these courtesy visits to targeted communes with the goal of fostering positive relationships with the local authorities and securing cooperation for carrying out the campaign. Finally, Hammed puts on his headphones and closes his eyes. Sitting in the back, I do the same. We remain quiet, both exhausted from the day, until we reach the next commune.

June 4, 2021. Municipality of Miname, Region of Thiès, Senegal.

2.3.1 Following MICs across Senegal

My main field sites were determined by the locations where MIC events were hosted and, as is common in ethnographic research, were discovered as my research progressed (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). Although I was based in the capital Dakar, where many MICs were held throughout my fieldwork, many others took place outside Dakar, in urban and rural areas, requiring me to travel to different locations. Zones of research included various Dakar neighbourhoods; the localities of Pikine, Guediawaye, Yeumbeul, Thiaroy sur Mer, and Mbao on the outskirts of Dakar; the cities of Rufisque, Toubab Dialao, Thiès, Mbour, Saint Louis, Tambacounda, and Ziguinchor; and numerous rural villages in the region of Thiès, Saint Louis, and Casamance (see maps on pages iii, iv). MICs took place in community centres, cultural centres, youth associations, secondary schools, radio stations and recording studios, village squares and open-air spaces, the offices of local authorities and international organisations, and conference halls in hotels and office buildings. These sites constituted the social field of MICs and were at the core of my data collection (see Appendix F for details on the activities that took place in these sites). The online space, particularly the social media

platforms of MICs, served as a secondary research site where I observed communications surrounding campaign events. The online communications contributed to my analysis of how the voices of campaign recipients are reported and silenced, which I discuss in Chapter 5.

Travelling to and from research sites sometimes posed challenges, primarily due to the practical arrangements needed for conducting fieldwork, and there was often a trade-off between limited and extensive interactions with the many individuals involved in MICs. I frequently needed to travel with campaign implementation teams, as MICs were held in remote rural villages that I could not reach independently. However, accompanying the implementing team was not merely a practical necessity; it represented a crucial part of my fieldwork, as a key goal was to understand their perspectives (section 2.3.3 elaborates on this point). Sharing a car ride allowed for many insightful conversations and exchanges with campaign staff. But at the same time, spending so much time with the organisers could be potentially disadvantageous. For example, I was often mistakenly perceived as being part of their team, as the scene 2 above recalls. There was also the risk of being prevented from extensively engaging with the local hosting community before and after campaign events. As fieldwork progressed and my research focus sharpened, I came to better understand how to navigate interactions with various groups of participants to collect the data I sought. This involved setting priorities and adjusting my focus of observation, which I elaborate on in section 2.4.1.

2.3.2 Sample and selection of MICs

My research sample includes 16 MICs (Appendix C), which I selected according to three criteria. Firstly, I chose MICs based on how official documents defined their objectives. I sought MICs that aimed "to inform" or "to educate" or "to raise awareness" on the risks and realities of irregular migration and on alternatives to migration, as well as "to improve" narratives on migration, to share experiences of "local success", and "to break" existing imaginaries about Europe and migration. This criterion helped me to identify even those campaigns that may not have been recognisable as such on first instance. For example, I chose to include in my sample one campaign (no. 8) formally presented as a film festival, but which ultimately served a similar purpose to the other MICs I observed, that of "sensitisation". Secondly, the MICs in my sample had to be funded by either an EU nation-state or the European Commission. Besides, almost all MICs (except no. 10) were organised by an international organisation or a non-governmental organisation legally registered in Europe and operating in Senegal. Lastly, each campaign had to host at least one public or private event that I could attend and observe during my time in Senegal. However, I chose to include in my sample two MICs (nos. 14 and 15) whose activities I did not directly participate in. The reason to do so was that I could gain insights into these two campaigns through in-depth conversations with

their implementers and material disseminated online.

Of the 16 MICs, I followed 12 (nos. 1 to 12) closely throughout my fieldwork and these are at the core of my analysis. One MIC (no. 1) was a matched sample that I followed from its ideation in the Netherlands to its realisation in Senegal. A matched sample is helpful when analysing networks of people who engage in trans-border exchanges (Mazzucato, 2009). This case provided an opportunity to explore the workings of a complete chain of campaign actors and how their distinct positionalities influenced their interpretations of the same project. With MICs 13 to 16, I faced access restrictions and could only observe them to a limited extent. In one case, the campaign I aimed to follow ended soon after I arrived in Senegal, preventing me from studying it in depth (no. 13). Two other MICs occurred in remote locations, which I chose not to visit in order to focus on campaigns taking place simultaneously in more accessible areas (no. 14 and 15). COVID-19 regulations prevented me from participating in the events of another campaign, as attendance was limited and other participants had priority (no. 16). Nevertheless, these MICs still provided me with valuable insights and sparked questions I could investigate further in the context of other campaigns. Moreover, I typically participated only in those campaigns I was aware of beforehand rather than in the MIC social events one often encounters in Senegal simply by walking down the street. This may have reduced my discovery of new MICs and the diversity of my sample. But it also enabled me to focus on certain MICs over an extended period, gaining deeper insights into their development and the individuals involved. My sample of MICs was in some sense made more diverse by the range of actors involved, which helps to highlight the field's polyvocality (Olivier de Sardan, 2009); on the other hand, the sample shows how MICs were similarly designed and shaped by social actors carrying out similar tasks (see Appendix D).

2.3.3 Accessing the field: getting close to MIC local implementers

In order to study MICs, I had to contact key individuals involved in running campaigns and to maintain continuous access to campaign activities taking place in Senegal. I consolidated access to various MICs by establishing a trusting relationship with at least one employee from each implementing organisation, who subsequently became the gatekeeper for that specific campaign's activities throughout my fieldwork. With formal organisations such as IOM, gatekeepers were the individuals who granted me official permissions from within the organisation. I reached out to gatekeepers in various ways, depending on the particular MIC. I connected with the local implementers of *Migrants as Messengers* through a series of contacts that began with the campaign funders in the Netherlands. In this instance, the chain of actors adhered to both the hierarchy of campaign-making and the hierarchy inherent in the functioning of organisations such as the IOM. Approaching individuals in senior positions within the organisation was advantageous for accessing other employees and, ultimately, campaigns on

the ground. Consequently, individuals throughout the chain served as key informants while also enabling the observation of the entire campaign's operations. In cases where an organisation ran multiple campaigns (e.g. the IOM was managing four MICs during my fieldwork), I identified and kept in contact with the primary coordinator for each of them. Another way I approached gatekeepers was through my personal network, drawing on previous experience I had working in Senegal with an Italian NGO. Given that Italian-based NGOs have been particularly active in implementing MICs in Senegal, my access to the close-knit Italian community residing in Dakar proved beneficial. Lastly, accidental encounters throughout fieldwork led me to meet other campaign implementers and access campaign events. As fieldwork relationships developed, actors lower down the MIC organisational hierarchy, such as performers, became gatekeepers for specific campaign activities.

Accompanying campaign implementing teams, as in the case of the IOM mission described in my vignette above, was beneficial. Through many informal conversations, I gained valuable insights into organisational details, the choices made when running MICs, and the expectations that local staff had for specific activities. I could ask for their reflections after campaign events and observe their everyday work decisions, besides asking for translation of observed interactions. Additionally, sharing long working days with the IOM staff made me realise the endurance required to run and follow MICs. I quickly empathised with Hammed's need for rest between meetings. The physical fatigue I experienced from constant travel, repetitive meetings, and the numerous daily tasks that demanded attention helped me to understand the pressure local implementers faced in their jobs. This influenced my interpretation of their work, which I analyse in Chapter 4.

Although I was a researcher, people in Senegal did not always see me that way. Given that NGO staff at Dakar headquarters were predominantly white Europeans and encounters with white participants at campaign sites were unusual, local authorities and members of hosting communities sometimes perceived me as a coordinator of MICs. The fact that I came from a university in the Netherlands, the country that funded a major MIC I followed in Senegal, also led some of my interlocutors to associate me with the campaign promoters. Being viewed as someone close to the MIC coordinators was challenging, as I had to navigate local expectations, maintain good relationships, and fulfil my role as a researcher without propagating campaign messages. Facing this ethical dilemma involved some emotional labour. For instance, when Fatima introduced me to the local authorities as part of the IOM team, I felt compelled to say nothing, despite my annoyance at being inaccurately presented as an IOM staff member. The meeting followed an implicit script rooted in formality, seniority, and institutional authority. I sensed that intervening to correct Fatima would have disrupted this script, potentially undermining the IOM team's efforts and disrespecting the existing hierarchical structure. Consequently, despite feeling somewhat uneasy, I chose to remain silent in the interests of positive collaboration with local implementers and respect and sensitivity

for their work. This ultimately helped to build the trust necessary for conducting meaningful research.

Being a white European also sometimes triggered comments from youth attending campaign events, such as: "You Europeans come here [to Africa] with no problem, while African people cannot go there [to Europe]!" Youth in the audience would often address me with questions like "Why do you want us to stay?" or "Why do you come here?" My answer would signal to them my independence from the campaign organisation and distance from its mission: "To me, you can do whatever, what do you want to do?" Or "I don't know, maybe *they* think many people from here migrate, but I am a student, I *just* follow them…". I felt disturbed by comments that assumed my involvement in promoting the idea that Senegalese people should stay in Senegal, and I too was uncomfortably outraged by our unequal access to mobility rights that MICs were discursively reinforcing and which I was embodying by being in Senegal. Yet, reflexivity about one's own emotional entanglements helps uncover the uneven power relations at play in field interactions (Wajsberg, 2020), and how people respond to the presence of the researcher is in itself informative and can become central to analysis (Venkatesh, 2002). By confronting me with their questions and comments, Senegalese youth protested against the injustice of mobility regimes and the hypocrisy of campaign discourse, which marked their experiences as campaign receivers. I elaborate on this point in Chapter 5 of the thesis.

2.3.4 Characteristics of research participants

To study the lifecycle of MICs, I conducted my research with three main groups of research participants. The first is the group of campaign initiators and comprises seventeen Western policymakers and development workers. Seven live in the Netherlands and work for the Dutch government and ten work in Senegal for international organisations or European institutions (Table E.3). The differences in their specific roles, locations, and knowledge of the Senegalese context render initiators a non-homogeneous group. Yet, I grouped them together based on their similar responsibilities for designing campaign policy and strategy, allocating funds to various campaign projects, and managing the execution of those projects in line with their institutional roles. Their perspectives are analysed in Chapter 3.

The second group consists of local campaign implementers, namely twenty Senegalese people working for organisations responsible for running MICs in Senegal (Table E.4). They have similar socio-economic backgrounds, and most received a higher education. Although they work for different organisations, including the IOM, NGOs, and a private company, the majority are employed on a short-term contract. Their work involves coordinating, organising, and supporting the on-the-ground execution of campaign activities, as discussed in Chapter 4.

The third group is made up of Senegalese youth who are targeted by campaign communications, whom I refer to as campaign receivers. Campaign receivers include both youth who actively participate in multiple MICs in various ways, such as helping with the organisation and running of the events, publicly witnessing their migration experiences, or delivering artistic performances, and young spectators who attend campaign events as an audience without specific assigned tasks. I focused on twenty-five return migrants, so-called MaM volunteers (excluding one person), and twenty-one artists, including actors and singers. I also interacted with twenty-three young spectators and students from the high schools where MICs took place (Table E.5). The heterogeneity of campaign recipients is crucial for the analysis and to illustrate how, despite their varying degrees of involvement with MICs and their pre-assigned tasks, young people in Senegal are generally affected by a discourse that comes from Europe, to which they respond in various ways. Young people's experience of MICs is at the centre of Chapter 5. Although I focused on youth, the variety of MICs and their often public, social nature provided opportunities to interact with a heterogeneous audience.

2.4 Methods: data collection and analysis

In the following sub-sections, I expand on the primary methods I used to gather data, participant observation and interviews, and how I applied these methods in different contexts as I followed MICs between the Netherlands and Senegal. In doing so, I reflect on the challenges I encountered and the multiple positions I occupied as I conducted ethnographic research.

2.4.1 Ethnography of MIC social events and the multiple positions of the ethnographer

Migrants as Messengers: Scene 3
We reach the centre of Miname, the seventh village to host the Migrants as Messengers caravan during its 30-day tour. Like the days before, the campaign team unloads the bus and starts setting up the stage. I assist them with arranging the chairs for the audience. Meanwhile, the IOM staff discuss the final details with representatives of the local community. In a corner, the eldest volunteers prepare tea and invite a few local women to join them. Two other volunteers walk around the village to invite locals to the upcoming event. Two other volunteers put up the campaign banners, someone installs the speakers, while the others rest on a mat under a tree. A crowd of villagers is drawn in by the music from the loudspeakers. Adults take a seat and children dance on stage at the invitation of the campaign animator. More adults join in, clapping their hands to the rhythm of the music while children run about, jumping on and off the stage. I wander around, feeling a bit overwhelmed by the loud, vibrant

scene. Then Alex from the IOM suggests I sit in the front row to signal that the event is about to begin. I do as I am told and sit beside Moussa, Alex's colleague.

As the sun sets, the event officially starts. On stage, volunteers and actors perform a theatrical play. I stand slightly to the stage's right and ask a small group of teenagers what they know about the event. We begin to chat quietly. The play continues with volunteers acting out their experiences of torture in Libyan prisons. Before I realise it, we are surrounded by a crowd of curious children and other young people eager to contribute to our conversation. The seated audience turns towards us; by then, we have become a big, noisy, chatty group, distracting everyone from the performance, including the performers on stage. An IOM staff member and a volunteer see me as the cause of the turmoil, and they both gesture for me to shut up and sit down. Feeling uncomfortable, I keep still while trying to hush those around me to avoid causing more disturbance. But the children begin to laugh, making it difficult to restore a quiet atmosphere and redirect attention to the stage. From the other side of the stage, Anna, another MaM volunteer, has noticed my struggle, and as soon as I glance at her, she approaches us. With an authoritative tone, she scolds the noisy children, who disperse, and, in a calm and gentle voice, she explains to the teenagers in Wolof that I am a researcher interested in their thoughts on migration. We thank Anna and resume the conversation as the actors on stage continue their performance. The next day, I did not join the caravan; I remained alone at the shared accommodation and wrote up my field notes.

June 25, 2021. Day 7. Village of Miname, Region of Thiès, Senegal.

This scene describes what took place during a particular campaign event, highlighting how I came to be embedded in the field. In this section, I discuss the diversity of activities that defined my fieldwork and my positioning as a participant observer of MICs. I conducted participant observation at many public and private MIC events. I categorised the activities I attended according to the three main phases of the campaign cycle in Senegal: preparation, implementation, and evaluation (Appendix F, Tables F.6, F.7, F.8). Additionally, I observed other events, such as radio programs and community gatherings, that were indirectly connected to MICs (Table F.9). At MIC activities, I focused my observation on the various aspects of the campaign's creation and social context, including interactions among participants, the flow of conversations, the artistic presentations, the location, the materials and objects used, the sounds, and the overall environment. As is common in ethnographic research, my observations tended to become more focused as fieldwork progressed (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). By attending the same event multiple times, I was able to view it from different perspectives and gather detailed observations of the various aspects of the campaign, deepening my understanding of its scope. Yet, events were never truly identical; repeated observation of performances that at first sight appeared to be similar helped to provide new

insights and expand my initial research problem (Olivier de Sardan, 2009). For instance, continuous examination of the attitudes and speeches of local campaign implementers and receivers informed me about how they (in)consistently executed tasks and fulfilled their roles and how, through their actions, they shaped campaign messages and undertook emotional labour.

Being a participant observer at MIC events was challenging as these are often socially, physically, and emotionally intense gatherings. Public campaign events include graffiti days, school sessions, itinerant caravan tours, theatre performances, concerts, discussion forums, and project launches. These are dynamic social environments filled with numerous incidents and interactions that often take place simultaneously. Campaign sites are frequently crowded, bustling, and noisy, with people spreading out across the space and participating in a range of activities, as described in the vignette above. Situations evolve rapidly, accidents happen. Campaign gatherings are also relatively fleeting, bound to a specific time and place. How are we, as ethnographers, to observe such social events? And how does attending to their social, affective, and physically demanding environments affect us and our research process?

Given the ephemeral nature of MIC events, I prioritised engaging with young audience members, as I would not have the opportunity to connect with them otherwise, unlike the organisers I frequently talked with. I normally chose to engage only a small number of young participants at each event, as I aimed for a reasonably thorough exploration of their experiences as recipients of the campaign. Becoming an active participant helped me gain insight into young people's perspectives. For example, during one of the graffiti days organised by an MIC, I painted a public wall along with young people from the neighbourhood, following the graffiti artists' instructions (Table F.7 has more on what these events involved). What I found to be an enjoyable, creative, and leisurely activity allowed me to explore how the local youth perceived and responded to MICs and helped me to understand their motivations for participating, or not participating, in events. I was better able to interpret their reactions to MICs by gaining some insight into their socio-economic contexts and personal experiences.

The dynamic and hectic nature of MIC events inevitably led me to miss things, and I was unable to follow up with the many people who participated. At the same time, viewing MICs as contextual experiences prompted me to question what occurs afterwards, what is remembered, and what lingers after campaigns have ended. I explored these questions by monitoring how MICs communicated online and by asking research participants to reflect on their engagement with past MICs.

My position as a white PhD student, with an Italian passport, living in the Netherlands was a privileged one. I had travelled comfortably to Senegal and was never a target of campaign messages, unlike the Senegalese people I interacted with at MIC events. This marked me as an outsider for the whole duration of my fieldwork. At the same time, being

a participant observer at MICs led me to occupy multiple situated, relational, and shifting social positions that evolved over time and contributed to my interpretations (Reyes, 2020). I observed various performances and discourses expressed through contrasting affective registers. While the dancing and loud music immersed me in a festive atmosphere, the harrowing images from documentaries and the tragic stories that numerous participants enacted provoked emotional distress within me. This emotional dissonance prompted me to ask: *What is this event really about?* Striving to attune myself to the affective space of campaign events was essential to understanding something that is often overlooked: the affective depth of the MICs and their non-material effects on local populations. I discuss this in Chapter 5.

I assisted in the practical realisation of MICs in various ways. I was often busy transporting chairs and other materials, organising the space before the event and tidying up afterwards. I was also frequently asked to help by looking after performers' valuables while they were on stage, running errands for the campaign team, and lending my phone so they could take pictures. Being a helper in this way informed me about the labour people were expected to carry out and the hands-on work required of them. Moreover, assisting campaign performers informed me about how they were affected by some of this mundane work. Little things could be quite stressful. This became apparent when a MaM volunteer confided that the IOM staff member had asked him to take photographs of the event in which he was performing. The challenge of capturing images while on stage caused frustration and stress for the volunteer, who subsequently sought my assistance. By taking photographs for him, I was able to alleviate some of the pressure that volunteers faced from the IOM, and I gained insights into the campaign's operations.

My continual involvement in repetitive, animated, and busy social events, which frequently entailed lengthy journeys and extended periods away from my home in Dakar, brought the risk of exhaustion. Campaign tours lasting several weeks demanded physical resilience and energy to manage busy schedules, endure challenging living conditions, cope with sleep deprivation, and maintain social interactions over an extended period. I also needed emotional endurance to deal with the sensitive and emotionally charged discussions at campaign events. Returning home for a night between campaign events or opting out of an event after several days of fieldwork were minor acts of self-care that helped to prevent physical, social and emotional exhaustion. Skipping a day of the tour allowed me to catch up on field notes, but it also helped me to catch my breath.

2.4.2 Observing MIC participants in informal settings

In addition to participating in organised MIC events, I also observed the unfolding of campaigns in more informal settings that allowed for deep hanging out (Geertz, 1998). During multi-day itinerant campaigns, I would converse with implementers and volunteers about their experiences of joining the campaign, as well as the various concerns, interests, and

motivations that influenced their involvement. I gained insights into the everyday aspects of campaign-making, which included pre-activity briefings, planning sessions, and even activity design, which informed me on how messages were created, disseminated into, and received. I also enjoyed free time and recreational moments with people. Sharing evenings of music, cups of tea, and afternoons at the beach with different MIC teams helped me to sense the affective mood surrounding the campaign's implementation and its effects on the work and well-being of organisers and receivers. Spending time with research participants encouraged the free flow of thoughts and allowed for emotional reactions to emerge. We would often discuss personal issues that were difficult to verbalise in other circumstances.

I also hung out with participants outside of campaign contexts. We sometimes went on short trips, walked around the city, spent unstructured time together on weekends, met at a café or restaurant, joined social events, or spent religious celebrations together. On these occasions, our conversations on migration and campaign-making helped me gain a deeper perspective on people's perceptions of campaigns, how perceptions evolved, and how they were influenced by a range of factors. We could chat about MICs from a distance, and I gained insights into the behind the scenes lives of campaign participants and how their discourses diverged from the official campaign narrative they appeared to embrace in other contexts. All this enhanced my understanding of the ambiguities and contradictions my participants faced in being part of MICs.

Whether in informal MIC settings or other daily life contexts, sharing recreational activities, vulnerabilities, and unstructured time with my Senegalese interlocutors was crucial to building meaningful and trusting relationships. Within these relationships, I was a young, single *toubab* woman. In Senegal, Toubab means European and is used primarily for French, white people. But its broader meaning is to act and think "as the westerner, without God but with Xalis (money), lacking solidarity, tolerance, moderation, hospitality and dignity (the main Senegalese values)" (Riccio, 2005, p.108). In other words, in its everyday use, toubab is an appellation for every white person, but it also negatively denotes those Senegalese individuals who are "westernised". Being white was a constant marker of my difference from my Senegalese interlocutors, as were the distinct economic and life opportunities available to us.

However, in the eyes of many, I was perceived as "less of a toubab". There are various reasons for this perception. It stemmed from my genuine interest in the people I met and my willingness to join campaign tours where meals, space, and time were shared over multiple days. I was also seen as hospitable as I welcomed people into the house I shared with a young Senegalese woman and her sisters, and people appreciated the affection and gratitude I showed towards those who cared for me. Furthermore, my commitment to learning the local language, my simple lifestyle, and my belief in God set me apart from many Europeans living in Senegal, whose lives starkly contrasted with those of ordinary Senegalese people.

Some of my research participants saw me as a *doom* (daughter), a *rakk* (younger sister), a *xarit* (friend).

Being regarded as a daughter or a sister, along with the nurturing friendships I formed, founded on genuine and willing engagement, created space for some level of reciprocal care. As an unmarried foreign young woman, I was initially seen as someone to care for, look after, and instruct about socio-cultural norms. My interlocutors provided me with material and emotional support by, for example, opening their homes, making sure I was comfortable and healthy wherever we travelled, checking on me with regular phone calls, teaching me the language and how to make tea, showing me around, and answering my many questions. In a way, the support and care I received from the people around me were essential enablers of my research. If Anna had not intervened to restore calm at the *Migrants as Messengers* campaign event reported in the scene above, I would not have been able to resume my conversation with the young people in the audience. Through her intervention, Anna showed her support for my work as a researcher. For my part, I cared for people by welcoming them, offering emotional support and advice, and covering expenses for transport, meals, and accommodations.

Overall, I built solid, lasting relationships that enabled me to make in-depth observations but that also enriched me personally and went beyond the scope of my research. Throughout the research process, I was, and still am, someone with undeniable privileges. The simple fact that I am the only actor writing about field relationships underscores the power imbalances intrinsic in ethnography. However, I am still less knowledgeable about the socio-cultural context and the interactions I observed than my respondents, which underscores the fluid and contextual nature of power dynamics in field relationships.

2.4.3 Interviews

Qualitative interviews were another method I used for this research. My approach to interviews varied depending on the type of research participant. For the group of campaign initiators, interviews were my primary method of data collection due to the difficulty of engaging long-term with respondents in multi-sited fieldwork (Mazzucato, 2009). I conducted online interviews in English with seven Dutch policymakers located in the Netherlands, as well as in-person interviews with ten development experts working for EU institutions or international organisations based in Senegal. I conducted the latter set of interviews using Italian, French, or English, which I later translated (Table E.3). I developed an interview guide to explore how campaign initiators interpreted their work. Topics included initiators' designated tasks, the practical steps and decision-making processes involved in MIC creation, perceptions of campaign messages, how these messages were developed and distributed, and how initiators imagined campaign recipients and their needs (Appendix H).

For the local campaign implementers, semi-structured interviews complemented the participant observation I describe above. I interviewed twenty individuals whose tasks included the organisation and implementation of campaign-related activities (Table E.4). While some of my questions addressed the overall experience of working in a campaign-implementing organisation, other questions were tailored to each respondent and focused on the specificities of the MIC they were part of. Interviews were conducted in French and took place at respondents' homes, offices, or public spaces such as restaurants and cafés. All translations provided in the text are my own.

In the case of campaign receivers, I interviewed eighteen volunteers of the MIC *Migrants as Messengers*, some of whom also contributed to the running of other campaigns (see Table B.2). I also interviewed nine performance artists, of whom five were professional theatre actors and four were singers (Table E.5). Interviews with MaM volunteers and artists were conducted in French, mostly in respondents' homes, and followed an interview topic guide that I developed progressively based on the knowledge I gathered through participant observation at MIC activities and the many interactions I had with the same participants in other contexts. Having experienced specific events together with participants, I was better able to contextualise, relate to, and understand their comments when conducting interviews. Moreover, by the time the interviews took place, I had already established a relationship of trust with all respondents, which facilitated a friendly and intimate atmosphere that helped to address more sensitive matters in our conversation. For example, I could address contradictions, surprising statements, and unexplained choices I had observed.

I did not formally interview the young people who were part of MIC audiences, including those who participated in graffiti days, caravan tours, forums, school activities, and project launches. Instead, I engaged in informal conversations with them, as these were best suited to the social contexts in which we met.

2.4.4 Recording, organising, and analysing data

For the entire duration of my fieldwork, I recorded my observations in field notes and noted methodological reflections using various tools (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). I used a fieldwork log to keep track of my daily doings. Activities such as workshops, forums, team meetings, training sessions, and campaign events at schools typically require participants to sit at a table, which allowed me to write notes by hand in real-time. After each activity, I elaborated on my notes by adding further reflections and formulating questions that I would investigate further in conversation or that would help to direct future participant observation. This process of recording notes and formulating new questions was an important, albeit challenging, step in my analysis. On occasions, such as during caravan tours, meetings with local authorities, graffiti days, theatrical performances, concerts, and project launches, it was dif-

ficult to write notes on the spot. Hence, I often jotted down key sentences and memos on my phone and expanded on them as soon as possible, for example, during the long journeys back from and to campaign sites. Although I attempted to make comprehensive notes after each field day, it proved challenging to do so while spending weeks on tour alongside participants. Yet, as the caravan events happened in the afternoon or evening, I often spent a few hours typing notes on my laptop every morning. This was crucial to identifying what to follow up on and what to enquire further about in future, while it also signalled my role as a researcher to the campaign team.

I decided against audio recording interviews to prevent potential discomfort for the interviewees. Instead, I recorded a few public conversations and radio broadcasts conducted in Wolof that I could not fully understand, which were transcribed into French by my research assistant, Marietou Ndiaye. I also documented MICs in their various phases and forms through photographs and videos, and I collected additional materials produced in the context of MICs, such as songs, texts, theatre scripts, flyers, booklets, and official project documents. Additionally, I had an intern for one semester in autumn 2021 who, as part of her own academic studies, catalogued photos, videos, and written statements that MICs in Senegal had posted on their social media platforms since 2019 (Appendix G illustrates part of this material). Her work was not only helpful in organising a considerable amount of data, but it also demonstrated the type of content and language MICs used in their online dissemination. While participating in live MIC events, I observed the discrepancy between online descriptions and actual occurrences on the ground, which deepened my understanding of the silencing and manipulative mechanisms employed by MICs, which I discuss in Chapter 5.

I conducted an initial phase of analysis during fieldwork when I took time to transcribe interviews, re-read my field notes, and select what to share with my supervisors. In doing so, I added reflections and comments to my initial observations and identified patterns within the data that I developed into themes. Once I returned from Senegal, I organised all the material, including field notes, project documents, and visual material, according to the specific MIC and its implementing organisation. When MICs undertook many or long-term activities, I made sub-folders to categorise the different types of activity. I had files for each MIC and each research participant, and I used spreadsheets to visualise the connections among the organisations and actors involved (leading to the creation of Appendix B). This visualisation also helped to group my fieldwork activities according to the various formats and media used by the MICs I followed in Senegal. I typed up my handwritten notes (eighteen notebooks) into separate campaign files, and I made connections between different campaign cases before I proceeded with a second phase of analysis using both inductive and deductive coding. I coded manually, partly using pen and paper while reading hard copies of my field notes and partly by highlighting digital field note files with different colours. Reading scholarly literature while also reading field notes helped me to formulate codes that connected

theoretical approaches to the themes that emerged in the field. Subsequently, I created separate documents in which I compiled coded data relevant to a specific theme and its various sub-themes. Adopting an iterative approach to analysis, I refined and narrowed the themes that would become the focus of my three empirical chapters.

2.5 Ethics

Before starting fieldwork, I submitted an application to the Ethics Review Committee of Maastricht University, in which I reflected on the ethical considerations of my research. In the document, I elaborated on issues related to confidentiality, informed consent, potential risks for participants, and data protection. The Committee approved my application (Reference number ERCIC_219_01_10_2020). Being affiliated with a research group at Cheikh Anta Diop University (UCAD) in Dakar and collaborating with a local supervisor ensured that I remained sensitive to varying contextual knowledge about what is ethical in research in the Senegalese context. In the remainder of this section, I address issues of confidentiality, consent, and other ethical behaviour in the field.

I took various steps to ensure confidentiality and consent. In all writing, I used pseudonyms for participants and omitted details that could make them identifiable. I informed policymakers in the Netherlands about the purpose of my research and implications of their participation using an information letter (Appendix I) I emailed them when I first approached them, but I refrained from requesting that they complete and sign consent forms at that stage in order to facilitate the recruitment process. However, I did obtain written consent if they responded positively to my email. During my fieldwork in Senegal, I approached consent orally as a dynamic process by engaging in continuous dialogue with participants about my research and its objectives. Processual consent is most appropriate for long-term ethnography as relationships between researchers and participants evolve and the context of their interactions may change (Düvell et al, 2010). Reminding my participants of the purpose of my visit to Senegal and the motivations behind my interest in their work was essential to ensure that consent was given and maintained over time. To remind participants of my role as a researcher, I often wrote notes or worked on my laptop in visible areas, such as common spaces in our shared accommodation during campaign tours. I also informed participants of my collaboration with the university in Dakar and mentioned my regular visits to my local supervisor to discuss my research progress. Reaffirming my identity as a student was essential to prevent being perceived as working for European governments. For this reason, during the campaign event described in scene 3, I intentionally stood by the young people I was conversing with, regardless of the disruption we were causing and the discomfort that accompanied it. By doing so, I distanced myself from the campaign structure and reaffirmed my role as a researcher. Oral consent helped reduce the risk of seeming threatening and made

respondents feel less vulnerable, given that signatures are often associated with legal documents and government bureaucracy (Düvell et al, 2010). Opting for oral consent also showed sensitivity towards potentially illiterate respondents.

I viewed ethical behaviour as a posture I sought to maintain towards my participants in accordance with the context we found ourselves in. Such a posture implied, firstly, the need to be discreet and to show respect for others and prevent them from feeling uncomfortable or vulnerable. Often I needed to be mindful of when to discuss a particular topic and when to avoid it, especially as more people joined the conversation. I often refrained from asking questions I sensed would create tension in the campaign teams, although I noticed that certain things went unsaid. For instance, although return migrants involved in the *Migrants as Messengers* campaign knew each other and the IOM staff, they did not share every detail of their experiences in the project with others in the group, particularly when competition over assigned tasks affected group dynamics. Likewise, IOM staff would not disclose to every returnee or member of the audience the challenges they encountered in their work. I would enquire further about such unvoiced concerns at the appropriate moment. I also initially chose not to disclose too much about my critical stance towards the work of some MIC-implementing organisations. One reason for doing so was to preserve cordial relations, which were essential for continued access to the field. Yet, the more I participated in MICs, the more I became aware of the insincerity and absurdity of their mechanisms and how forms of injustice and exploitation were being produced, not only discursively but also in the practical functioning of MICs. I began to express my criticism more openly. By expressing my disagreement and indignation at how performers had been treated, I made it clear that I was not a neutral observer. I also supported the critical remarks that young people in the audience made towards MICs by verbally manifesting my approval of their statements. My critical remarks might have threatened my relationships with local implementers. However, the same criticisms were often made by the implementers themselves, and to expose myself meant showing solidarity with them as well. At the same time, implementers advised me to avoid expressing my opinions in ways that might jeopardise the work of the campaign group they coordinated. Therefore, I usually shared my critical observations with participants in one-on-one conversations after campaign events, rather than in group settings throughout.

Secondly, maintaining an ethical stance required me to practise empathy. Being attuned to people's effort, energy, and emotions was essential to alleviating potential discomfort and gathering accurate data. However, my primary aim was to avoid overburdening individuals who were repeatedly placed in distressing situations by having to relive their traumatic migration experiences publicly. I chose not to directly pose questions about someone's migration attempts, as the experiences of many return migrants were so painful. Instead, I opted to inquire about their experiences of narrating their stories to an audience, offering my encouragement and support when participants exhibited negative emotions. In this way,

I sought not to replicate the emotional harm inflicted on participants by MICs, while also expressing my own resistance.

Thirdly, throughout my fieldwork, I aimed to stay aware of my role as a migration researcher within the migration and border industry and to consider the real possibility that my research might cause harm. I believe it is ethically essential to avoid reproducing the discourse of anti-migration campaigns in any manner, including by refraining from carrying gadgets and materials that display a campaign's slogans and embody its ideals. Some members of campaign teams sometimes expected me to wear campaign-branded T-shirts or caps while accompanying them to radio broadcasts or community gatherings. Underlying such expectations was their intention to make me feel welcome and part of the group. Although I accepted these gadgets when offered, I rarely wore campaign T-shirts in public. This went unremarked and was not considered a problem by the organisers, who finally saw me as a welcome outsider. Not wearing gadgets helped me minimise the risk of imposing Eurocentric policy categories and narratives on my Senegalese research participants and prevented me from restricting my research focus to campaign policy frameworks (Stierl, 2022). My intention in refusing the political categorisation of Senegalese people as potential migrants who need to be governed by European actors was to avoid becoming complicit in the disciplining of Senegalese migration. Hence, I aimed not to harm campaign participants.

2.6 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have discussed the methodological and ethical considerations that guided my research. The multi-sited and ethnographic approach of this research allowed me to follow the multiple actors involved in the three phases of the lifecycle of MICs and to capture how messages travel and are (trans)formed across multiple sites. Using different scenes from the campaign "Migrants as Messengers," I have reflected on how I navigated the dynamic social worlds of migration campaigns in Senegal and how I came to hold multiple positions while carrying out data collection. Despite the challenges I encountered, I aimed to adopt an approach that captures different aspects of MICs, including the diversity of actors involved, the forms campaigns take, and the sites where these are carried out, while I tried not to reproduce potentially harmful political categories.

MIC Migrants as Messengers, Caravan Tour, Day 20, July 2021, © Massow Ka

CHAPTER 3

Navigating contradictions: justifications and imaginaries of the initiators of European migration information campaigns[4]

[4] A slightly revised version of this chapter has been published as:
Schenetti, C., Mazzucato, V., Wyatt, S. & Schans, D. (2025). Navigating contradictions: justifications and imaginaries of the initiators of European migration information campaigns. *International Migration*, 63, e13366. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.13366

3.1 Introduction

> "What is the goal of migration campaigns?" I asked Peter, a European civil servant working in Dakar. He answered, "It is very contradictory: to stop people from arriving and to save people from dying"
>
> (Development expert, 5 April 2022).

European efforts to govern migration from the Global South have intensified in recent years. Among migration governance policies, migration information campaigns (MICs) have multiplied and are increasingly receiving funding from the European Union and its member states (Trauner, Cham & Caleprico, 2022; Schans & Optekamp, 2016). As the quote above shows, bureaucrats who contribute to conceiving migration campaigns find these policy measures embedded in contradictory narratives of migration control and migrant protection.

Information campaigns to prevent human trafficking and stem undocumented migration were launched in countries of the Global South in the early 1990s (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007). EU-sponsored campaigns assume that 'potential migrants'[5] lack information about the risks of undocumented migration or rely on false information. This is the rationale behind the claim of MICs to deliver reliable information to make people aware of the dangers of irregular journeys and reconsider their migration plans. Thus, MICs are formulated and implemented in a field of tension between awareness-raising and deterrence, responding to humanitarian and security interests (Pécoud, 2010; Schans & Optekamp, 2016).

Heidbrink (2023) discusses the types of emotion-laden messages and images that campaigns mobilise to manage the perceptions of potential migrants and thus to contain their migratory aspirations before they cross territorial borders. The analysis of local responses to such messages reveals the disconnection between risk awareness and decision-making, showing how the audience distrusts campaign information (Carling & Hernández-Carretero, 2011). Other studies have examined campaign dissemination strategies, including community-led events, cultural activities, and social media communication (Rodriguez, 2017; Musarò, 2019). In addition, the realisation of MICs has been examined from the perspectives of a variety of intermediaries, including international organisations (Bartels, 2021), local development actors (Rodriguez, 2017; Schenetti & Mazzucato, 2024), civil society groups

[5] In this article we use 'potential migrants' as this is the term used in campaign official documents and by campaign initiators. However, we believe this term to be problematic because it assumes that all people in the Global South want to migrate and recalls media images of African mass migration to Europe (de Haas, 2008).

(Bouilly, 2008), and migrants (Maâ et al., 2023; Marino et al., 2023). To date, research has focused on issues of governmentality, the emotional content of campaigns, how campaigns affect social relationships locally, and the intermediaries who shape the practice of migration policies on the ground. Yet, so far, little is known about the subjective perspectives of people who design such policies. We define 'campaign initiators' as EU national public officials and international organisation officers who are EU or Canadian citizens, tasked with designing, funding, and monitoring the implementation of MICs. Some initiators may believe in the utility of campaigns, while others may face personal dilemmas and contradictions when executing policies of which they are critical. This article examines the following questions: How do EU campaign initiators justify the need for campaigns? What do their justifications reveal about the imaginaries they have about themselves, their subjects, and the different contexts in which they operate? We contribute to a broader discussion on the paradoxical coexistence of care and control in migration governance by shedding light on the subjective experiences of those responsible for designing and monitoring migration policies. Specifically, the focus on the stated justifications for MICs contributes to understanding how individual policymakers navigate and make sense of the contradictory rationalities of humanitarianism and border enforcement that are embedded in campaign policy.

EU member states are expected to justify MICs for three main reasons. First, public information campaigns are usually directed at a state's citizens to shape public attitudes and behaviours to achieve desirable social outcomes (Weiss & Tschirhart, 1994). MICs are instead addressed to non-EU citizens, often former colonial subjects, meaning that EU countries need to justify the legitimacy of intervening in third countries. Second, a campaign-implementing government must justify its public spending, even more so when campaigns have little effect on dissuading people from moving (Caso & Carling, 2024; Oeppen, 2016; Cham & Trauner, 2023). Third, governments must explain their border control policies, as different governmental bodies often contest these, even if citizens may not. We, therefore, examine how European civil servants working for EU governments and international organisations articulate their individual justifications in their daily work. We are also interested in how they grapple with the potential contradictions in their justifications and the ways in which their professional roles and personal views are intertwined.

We focus on Dutch policymakers and European development experts working in Senegal for international organisations or EU agencies. The Netherlands has implemented MICs abroad in recent decades, initially with funding from the Ministry of Justice and Security. Yet, cooperation agreements between EU and African countries have been explicitly tied to measures for migration control, resulting in migration, security, and development becoming increasingly intertwined policy domains. Hence, as in other European states, Dutch-led migration campaigns are funded by development aid disbursed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Senegal is an ideal African country on which to focus, given that its migration part-

nership with the EU has led to significant resources being invested in MICs in pursuit of the EU's agenda to deter 'irregular' migration. Curbing Senegalese migration is deemed important to prevent people from dying in their attempts to reach the Canary Islands, a Spanish archipelago 1500 km from Senegal, often on wooden fishing boats (Ngom, 2018).

The next section presents the concepts underlying our theoretical framework: humanitarian governance, justificatory talk, and imaginaries. We then describe the methodology. In the following section, our analysis shows that campaign initiators justify campaigns in three main ways: campaigns meet the need for information, campaigns do no harm, and campaigns have a positive message. These justifications are grounded in particular imaginaries campaign initiators have about themselves, their work in migration governance and campaign audiences. Justifications are sometimes internally contradictory as campaign initiators navigate and attempt to reconcile their professional roles and personal views. We end with conclusions and avenues for further research.

3.2 Humanitarian governance, justificatory talk and imaginaries

We build on the literature concerned with humanitarian governance, borderwork, and MICs, and we analyse the 'justificatory talk' of campaign initiators to understand the imaginaries they hold. We consider the imaginaries of campaign initiators to originate from and operate according to humanitarian reasoning (Fassin, 2012). While humanitarian intervention is normally associated with the work of non-governmental organisations in contexts of disasters and humanitarian crises, we regard humanitarianism as a logic that European states adopt to rationalise and manage the migration of third-country citizens to Europe (Stierl, 2018). Governments that appeal to humanitarian reason deploy moral sentiments to legitimise their practices towards vulnerable populations. Moral sentiments appeal to reducing the suffering of other human beings and form the basis for a politics of compassion, through which many people derive meaning from the world (Fassin, 2012; Pallister-Wilkins, 2015). Yet, the discourse and practice of compassion are based on relations of power that establish a hierarchy in the values of human lives. This can lead to the politics of compassion becoming a politics of inequality enacted by repression (Fassin, 2005).

Humanitarian reason is used in migration governance to frame and justify border enforcement while at the same time allowing for the demonstration of compassionate care for distant others. In other words, caring for the lives of people on the move functions as a technology of border enforcement and ensures state sovereignty (Williams, 2015). Thus, paradoxically, humanitarian and securitising logics are conjoined elements of migration management (Little & Vaughan-Williams, 2017). We locate migration campaigns within this

emerging care dimension of contemporary border control regimes (Williams, 2015; Pallister-Wilkins, 2015). We agree with conceptualisations of MICs as 'soft instruments of border externalisation' (Van Dessel, 2021) and tools of a new territorialisation of migration control (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007; Watkins, 2020). To understand the coexistence of seemingly opposed logics of care and control at play in campaign policy, we deploy the concept of 'moral borderwork' (Richter, 2022). Specifically, the labour that campaign initiators conduct as members of a humanitarian government has two dimensions. First, it is intended to relieve the suffering and death of people crossing borders; and second, to compensate for the increasingly violent and restrictive border regimes (Walters, 2011). Such discursive and practical labour is 'borderwork' in the sense that it produces, maintains, and transgresses borders. It is 'moral' in how it raises and handles social concerns and invokes sentiments to legitimise practices of migration governance (Richter, 2022). We consider how references to morals construct the 'justificatory talk' campaign initiators give to legitimise policy on MICs.

Justificatory talk refers to socio-political and discursive acts of legitimation that government authorities perform to cast controversial policies as beneficial for society and to seek normative approval for these policies (Rojo & van Dijk, 1997). A key strategy is to demonstrate that policies adhere to a moral order, supposedly agreed upon by the majority. Dimensions of discursive legitimation include justification of the policy itself, representation of events as 'facts', and recognition of the authority of the actor claiming that a particular policy is legitimate. When discursive legitimation happens in the day-to-day work of policymaking and implementation, it operates as an act of self-legitimation. Individuals assert a distinctive identity by describing themselves in their institutional position, which justifies the actions they undertake (Barker, 2001). We look at these different dimensions of legitimation in the justificatory discourses of campaign initiators.

We interpret initiators' justificatory talk in order to understand the different imaginaries they hold of themselves, of 'potential migrants', and of the realities they both live. Taylor (2002) defines social imaginaries as the ways in which people imagine their social existence in relation to other people. As such, social imaginaries mediate collective social life and, as collective representations, are based on a common understanding of issues that enable collective practices and ensure a shared sense of legitimacy. Imaginaries are shared by a large group of people and support moral schemes and sensory modes that regulate people's way of being in the world and of making this world (Meyer, 2015). Thus, imaginaries function as sense-making tools that generate a world of lived experience that is taken as real by those participating in it. In other words, imaginaries are a mode of actuality, and when they are recognised as collective, they serve to reproduce and consolidate norms regarding how we understand the world and our place in it (Foucault, 1986). We consider the justificatory talk of campaign initiators to be the object and the site of imaginaries, as well as the means through which imaginaries are established and reproduced. We look at how the making of MICs is

grounded in particular ways of imagining campaign initiators, the work that campaigns do, and the people that campaigns target.

3.3 Methodology

The first author collected data using semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Interviews were conducted in multiple sites with two groups of respondents: policymakers in the Netherlands and European development workers in Senegal. We initially focused on policymakers, but when conducting fieldwork, we realised that development workers in Senegal operated within the same Western institutional setting charged with funding and designing migration campaigns in countries of the Global South. Both groups consisted mainly of highly educated white Westerners whose tasks were to define the policy strategy and the methodological framework of campaign implementation. Despite differences in locations, the tasks performed, and the degree of familiarity with the socio-cultural context of Senegal, we analyse both groups together given their similar institutional functions. This allows us to analyse the full diversity of justifications given by all involved in campaign production.

We interviewed seven Dutch policymakers working either for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs or for the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security. The fourth author facilitated access to participants due to her professional affiliation with the Ministry of Justice and Security. Interviews were conducted online due to pandemic restrictions between November 2020 and January 2021. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and were conducted in English. Respondents were selected based on their experience working on the implementation of migration campaigns abroad. Their tasks include allocating funds, setting the terms of collaboration with implementing agencies, evaluating project proposals and fixing guidelines for good campaign practices.

The second group consisted of ten research participants, either European or Canadian nationals. They worked in Dakar for EU-state institutions or international organisations as heads of units, project managers, migration officers, or communication experts tasked with directing the implementation of campaigns in Senegal on behalf of European donors. In practice, they contributed to the design of campaigns when requested to do so by the funder, and they oversaw their implementation, occasionally on-site, but mostly from the headquarters of their respective organisations in Dakar. Access to this second group was facilitated by members of the first due to liaisons between funders and implementing organisations. Moreover, the positionality of the field researcher (and first author), who had previous professional experience in the development sector in Senegal, influenced access to the field and the process of data collection.

Semi-structured interviews and informal conversations were conducted with respondents from this second group between January 2021 and May 2022, when the first author

conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Senegal. Interviews were conducted in English, French or Italian depending on interviewee preferences, and all quotes below were translated by the authors. Respondents have been given pseudonyms to facilitate reading. Our analysis is based largely on the interviews and conversations; however, long-term immersion in the everyday lives of people involved in campaigns informed our understanding of the experiences of campaign initiators. In particular, campaign events attended by officials in their institutional capacity are important for the analysis.

To ease recruitment, we gained participants' consent orally. We obtained ethical clearance from our university's ethics committee before the start of data collection. Data analysis employed both deductive and inductive coding, through which we identified key themes.

3.4 Justifications

Three main justifications for migration campaigns emerged from the discourses of campaign initiators: need to inform, do no harm, and promote development. We discuss these in turn below.

3.4.1 It is a moral duty to provide objective information

The first justification provided by campaign initiators is that campaigns play a crucial role in informing potential migrants and providing them with *objective* information. This justification has three dimensions: availability of information, truthfulness, and self-legitimation of the authority of campaign initiators.

The first dimension relates to the availability and reliability of information. Claudia, a campaign initiator based in Dakar, endorsed the campaign goal of informing potential migrants because she sensed information was scarce and that people distrusted the information available to them:

> "It is a matter of hopelessness but also a matter of ignorance. Why would people living in villages know about the violence of the journey [to Europe]? They might say, 'you are telling me lies to discourage me from going'. Maybe somebody understands that it is not so easy to reach [Europe]. I understand the meaning [of doing campaigns]" (Development expert, 21 April 2022).

This example of Claudia's justificatory talk points to imaginations about the campaign's target audience, which is consistent with what we observed in other interviews: the audience is imagined to be uneducated and living in misery in peripheral rural areas. They are perceived as marginalised and excluded from the circulation of ideas, global interconnections and the possibilities these create. They are also pictured as unaffected by the transnational networks

they are effectively part of. Even when aspiring migrants have access to information on the dangers of irregular migration and know the risks (Trauner et al., 2024), campaign initiators imagine them to be suspicious of their sources.

According to several initiators, information campaigns are still needed because there is a gap between what aspiring migrants are told and the reality. Such an information gap emerges because, as Sara, Claudia's colleague, explained:

> "Many migrants, when they return [to Senegal], do not talk about the failures of their migration path. Only the stories of those who made it [in Europe] are told".

Therefore, campaigns are meant to provide "an alternative message" to the stories that "successful" migrants in Europe tell people back home. The need for alternative messages is at the heart of the initiator's justificatory discourse. This discourse evokes an image of migrants as unreliable sources of information who exclusively propagate stories of success, and it depicts migration as something to be assessed either as a successful or a failed experience. Campaigns aim to educate potential migrants about the hardships and dangers of migration, remedy the lack of information, and correct misinformed populations. Hence, campaigns are imagined as benefiting the audience.

If potential migrants are provided with good information, campaign initiators imagine that they will change their behaviours. The campaign *Migrants as Messengers* (MaM), funded by the Netherlands and implemented in West Africa by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), claimed "to facilitate safe and informed migration choices among potential migrants" (IOM, 2023). Amalia, part of the campaign coordination team, defined *informed choices* as those that prove "a shift of attitude" and lead towards "behavioural change". Similarly, Heleen, who managed the campaign's fund, explained that:

> "Behavioural change is when there is increased knowledge and risks internalisation. People realise the risks of being exploited on the way, of being trafficked, of the possibilities for ending up in detention facilities in European countries, and [they] increase the[ir] knowledge of alternatives and possibilities available in their origin country. Behavioural change is also measured based on people postponing migration plans" (Policymaker, 10 December 2020).

Along with her colleagues, Heleen presumes a causal relationship between the information that campaigns provide and the campaign audience's decision not to migrate. Presented as educational tools, campaigns instruct on the risks of exploitation, trafficking, and detention, as well as on alternatives to migration at home. It is imagined that potential migrants will abandon any intentions to move once they are in possession of this knowledge. This

imaginary suggests that migration choices are driven by information and are unaffected by other factors, contingencies, and uncertainties. In other words, the targeted people are conceived of as rational actors whose migration choices are ideally affected by the information they acquire through campaigns. This leads to the view that migrants who embark on irregular journeys to Europe overlook the risks and overestimate their chances of success.

Moreover, initiators concurred with the idea that knowledge transfer and its effectiveness are measurable, and that the campaign is deemed successful when people choose to stay in the country of origin. This does not mean that everyone has to stay. As Heleen explained, the campaign's success:

> "Is not defined by the whole population being reached by the campaign changing their behaviour. If 20% does, that is already a success. (...) When people who are fully informed still move, it is a matter of human nature. We do not expect everyone to follow this information, and even if they take the risks, if they take steps to minimise the risks, that is a success" (Policymaker, 10 December 2020).

Funding for migration campaigns is justified by their expected effectiveness. A campaign is deemed effective and worthwhile when at least some among the target group stay in the country of origin. Campaign initiators imagine borders to be porous and that their work involves reducing this porosity, which means reducing departures to Europe. Simultaneously, Heleen's quote indicates initiators' belief in the primacy of human mobility over attempts to control it. Migrants are considered to always have a choice. They may decide to stay, and if they leave, they are seen as having the power to reduce the risks they encounter on the way. Hence, the success of the campaign is presumed to depend on the migrants' agency.

The second dimension of the justification about the moral duty to provide information is the apparent 'truthful nature' of the information campaigns provide. The presumption that campaigns are trustworthy sources of information emerges from claims about objectivity. This imaginary omits how people, societies, and power dynamics shape information and blur the boundary between facts and values. Instead, it establishes a hierarchy among sources of information potential migrants have access to, in which campaigns are imagined to be more reliable than other sources. According to Daan:

> "Objective means to inform them, not in a scary way, on what happened to others who migrated to Europe, and to [get people to] take into account the [slim] chances of getting asylum in Europe and the job possibilities in [their] origin country" (Policymaker, 17 December 2020).

Here, objective information about life realities in Europe is generally addressed to African migrants. Carolien, one of Daan's colleagues, specified that objective information is about

"the tough life in Europe for undocumented migrants" and that "it is not fun to live in Europe without papers". These policymakers presume migrants are not aware of the hardships of undocumented living in Europe. They also often envisage that potential migrants may be attracted by the possibility of receiving asylum in Europe but consider them as not deserving asylum and posing potential threats to the asylum system.

A third dimension of justification emerging from campaign initiators' discourses on the need for migration campaigns lies in the self-legitimation of their own authority and morality. Chris explained how providing campaign funding is seen as a moral duty that European governments have towards populations from the Global South:

> "Still, telling them about the risks, about the dangerous journeys to the Canary Islands by boat, that is also our obligation as EU [members], to give them objective information about what could happen. It is a moral obligation because they think if they come here, they can [achieve] everything, which is definitely not the case for many migrants…" (Policymaker, 27 November 2020).

This quote captures what emerged from other interviews about campaign initiators imagining themselves, and the institutions they represent, to be driven by a sense of morality. This even manifests in the duty to prove West African migrants wrong. Initiators often believe West African potential migrants have distorted ideas about their possible socio-economic achievements in Europe and ignore obstacles and failures that are likely to occur. This stems in part from campaign initiators' picture of Europe as an exclusive space, inhospitable for many, that holds very few opportunities for African migrants. By having an over-optimistic view of their chances in Europe, migrants could possibly damage the host society. Campaign initiators feel obliged to correct such overly optimistic views. At the same time, as Chris acknowledged, initiators are aware of the restricted mobility faced by some populations:

> "If there are no alternatives—because, for example, not all the Senegalese youth would qualify for a visa—they would probably still take the boat to the Canary Islands, 'the big' route. People who have all the information will still go. Even when they are fully informed, they migrate. But we have the obligation to say that not everything is as rosy in Europe" (Policymaker, 27 November 2020).

This discourse seems contrary to the idea initiators support that informed people would abandon their plans to move. Yet, their justification for organising campaigns lies in the obligation to present an 'ugly' Europe. This imaginary, which involves efforts to inform potential migrants of the ugliness, helps to preserve the self-representations of the campaign-funding government, showing how the latter operates according to a sense of moral responsibility to protect 'unaware migrants'; hence increasing the legitimacy of what it does. In this way, MICs are necessary irrespective of whether migrants are fully informed, migration risks are

reduced, or campaigns are effective in stopping migration. Campaigns also have symbolic and moral value (Oeppen, 2016).

3.4.2 Campaigns do no harm

The second justification campaign initiators give for the migration campaigns they organise is that campaigns do not harm, unlike other policy measures European governments employ to manage migration. The view that campaigns are an innocuous tool makes them a better policy option, as Carolien explained:

> "Campaigns are better alternatives in the policy context because no violence is involved and because people do not encounter risks when taking part in campaign initiatives or watching it on social media" (Policymaker, 11 December 2020).

Such justificatory discourse, shared by other initiators, assumes that campaigns do not endanger their audience. This is tied to an imaginary of harm as physical and a threat to biological life. But while they may do no physical harm, campaigns often provide representations of harms suffered by migrants en route to Europe, which are emotionally violent. Campaign initiators deem potential migrants better able to retain information when there is "an emotional component" to be found in the testimonies, videos and representations about traumatic migration experiences that campaigns stage (Musarò, 2019; Heller, 2014). This seems contradictory to the claim discussed above that campaign information is objective. Yet, Carolien clarified that not every emotional image is acceptable in campaign communication. For example, the Dutch government requested the removal of a picture showing a shark eating migrant bodies. The picture was posted on social media by an NGO to discourage migration via sea. She considered that picture "disgusting". Some efforts to elicit an emotional response are not tolerated, whereas others are purposely part of campaign communications (Williams, 2020). These are considered not to entail psychological violence, emotional risks or other unintended consequences for the audience's well-being.

Campaigns' lack of coercion respects both economic interests and the interest that the campaign-funding state has in governing migration:

> "Campaigns are cheaper alternatives compared to other policy strategies used to restrict migration, and nobody is hurt with campaigns, there are no problems, no bad feelings if it doesn't work. [Though] it is almost impossible to calculate if it works, no harm is done. (...) Nobody can be against it because it is about informing people, and nobody wants people to die" (Policymaker, 27 November 2020).

Regardless of whether campaigns are effective in stopping people from moving, Chris's quote indicates these are legitimate policy strategies. Their legitimacy stems from their assumed

harmlessness, the unanimous consent they generate, their cheap cost, and the lack of trouble they cause initiators. This makes campaigns the preferred tool. Similarly, Peter said:

> "An awareness-raising campaign is relatively soft, not so controversial. It is preferred over another policy tool because it does no harm. It responds to a logic of protection, meaning we have to compensate for previous regulations which did not work and instead brought bad consequences for migrants, such as violation of [their] human rights (...) We see people dying, so we ask what we can do to prevent death. So, I understand why there is a focus put on the risks" (Development expert, 5 April 2022).

These quotes resonate with Oeppen's (2016) argument that governments implement campaigns in order to be seen to be doing something to control their borders while maintaining a humanitarian image. The subjective perspectives add to how initiators imagine campaigns as remedies to the violence that interventions such as the securitisation of migration routes, pushback operations and deportations exert on migrants. In other words, campaigns are pictured as a humanitarian response to border violence, possibly saving lives, and initiators imagine themselves almost as humanitarian actors opposed to the institutions that violate migrant rights.

At the same time, the idea that campaigns are relatively uncontroversial does not mean initiators imagine that campaigns go entirely uncontested or that they fail to find problems with campaigns themselves. Justificatory discourses help campaign initiators to deal with doubts they have about the effectiveness of campaigns and to mitigate their criticisms of migration injustice. Thus, the relevance of campaigns is challenged and other policies to facilitate the mobility of West Africans to Europe are argued for, as Peter pointed out:

> "You can inform them, but let's be honest, there are very few opportunities for a legal path to migrate. So, what are we doing with these campaigns? Just a campaign does not have much value (...). We should take our own responsibility, for example, in facilitating circular migration, which is something we do not talk about in migration policy" (Development expert, 5 April 2022).

On the one hand, he wishes for a different mobility system and believes it is the responsibility of EU nation-states, such as the one he works for, to enable it. Yet, when interviewed, he added: "The injustice is not something we can un-do here in Senegal, and it also gives frustration here. It must be tackled in Brussels". This illustrates how, on the other hand, he does not see himself in the position of making substantial changes. Nevertheless, he acknowledges the need to alleviate the mobility restrictions of African citizens with more just conditions. Similarly, Chris said:

> "There should be alternatives and other open channels for migration, labour migration and other possibilities for people to reach Europe. There are not so many ways, it is

> not easy. The only way is to use the boat to the Canary Islands. You can apply for a visa ten times, but if you do not get it (…) the illegal way is the only way" (Policymaker, 27 November 2020).

Suggesting that other stakeholders, including EU institutions in Brussels, take the lead in promoting the mobility of West African citizens enables policymakers to address the inconsistency between the issue of safe travel they recognise as significant and the limited capacity of their own institutional positions to effect meaningful improvements in this area. In this way, they avoid cognitive dissonance.

Thus, initiators' personal views do not always coincide with their professional ones. Another example of this emerged when Claudia and Sara were asked to comment on the text of a call for a campaign proposal. The call expected the successful contractors to develop campaigns in West Africa that would "contrast migration culture", "deconstruct the myth of migration at all costs", and "promote the cultural change necessary to reduce irregular migration". Claudia said:

> "We did not write it [the call]. I would have not used that wording (...). You work in a structure, and you must adapt to that. When you work for a government agency, there are strategic guidelines, and you accept them if you want to work there otherwise, you pull yourself out" (Development expert, 21 April 2022).

Sara added: "It is a project of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is a matter of international politics based on closing borders". They thus legitimise their actions by adhering to the political directives of the institutions they work for, although they personally do not fully agree with them. This contributes to the perception they have of their jobs as civil servants who have to adhere to a democratically established political position while they navigate the hierarchical power structures they are part of and, at times, critical of.

3.4.3 Campaigns send positive messages and bring development

The third justification initiators give for MICs is that these campaigns disseminate positive messages and bring development to countries in the global South. Carolien, said:

> "An information campaign is a better way to tackle root causes of migration because it advocates for alternatives in origin countries to boost local development" (Policymaker, 11 December 2020).

In this discursive legitimation, campaigns are imagined as tools for development, and development is imagined to reduce migration. Frequently, campaign initiators advocate for young people to enrol in professional training at home or invest in local businesses as alternatives

to migration. They see these alternatives as leading to a sustainable future and consider that young people will find migration unattractive if they have a source of income. In essence, campaign initiators imagine that the people targeted by campaigns will not move if they have a job in their home country. The campaign MaM calls the local opportunities it promotes "safe alternatives" to dangerous migration routes, and it claims its "positive message" will help West African youth to succeed and live safely and with dignity at home. This imaginary features a romanticised (West African) country of origin where there are no risks in staying and where life offers success and safety and is so more desirable.

Amalia, working for the IOM in Dakar, explained that the organisation launched the website *Waka Well* "to advertise local opportunities and to fill the information gap". According to the coordination team, this online portal complemented the activities MaM did on the ground and represented "an action to reach optimistic responses" from the audience. Optimistic responses imply that the campaign's target audience seriously considers possible alternatives to migration and believes these alternatives to be empowering. The justification that campaigns promote empowerment depends on a representation of Senegal as a country that has plenty of opportunities but on Senegalese youth being unaware of such opportunities. It also suggests that potential migrants can be viewed as beneficiaries whose needs and aspirations are met by the information campaigns provide. Such representations omit subjective perspectives of what an opportunity might be, and they ignore context-specific and individual views on feeling empowered. Indeed, narratives of migration campaigns are detached from the realities of the targeted individuals (Trauner et al., 2024). In Amalia's view, "when they [potential migrants] feel empowered, they will change behaviour", meaning potential migrants will abandon their aspirations to migrate once they are reached by empowering forms of communication. However, the website *Waka Well*, supposedly circulating empowering forms of communication, was never mentioned during IOM campaign activities in Senegal that the first author attended during fieldwork. Therefore, despite the IOM employee claiming the website was a positive tool and an improvement in the making of campaigns, she ignored its actual utility and how the audience would benefit from it. Thus, her justification lies in a presumed positive impact yet irrelevant to assess.

The idea that campaigns spread positive messages about alternatives to migration was used by campaign initiators to justify the effectiveness of their campaign making, contradicting their own scepticism about the value and effects of campaigns mentioned in the previous section. Sara, who worked for a European development agency in Dakar, believed her agency was doing a better job than other organisations because, in addition to sensitising people to the dangers of migration, their projects also invested in local development. The "IOM (...) does sensitisation, but what is the alternative [it proposes]?" Such a perspective was shared by her colleagues, who considered themselves agents of positive change because the campaign they helped design and coordinate not only raised awareness of risks but also

raised awareness of local development opportunities.

Anna, one of Sara's colleagues, justifies the agency's approach to awareness-raising by calling on "local stories of success". The agency created video clips presenting the life stories of young Senegalese who decided to stay in Senegal instead of moving abroad and who made a name for themselves because of their talents and individual achievements. The clips showed young people committed to the nation and to becoming successful entrepreneurs. With their positive life experiences, the protagonists of these stories of success invited other youth, identified as disillusioned potential migrants, to believe in themselves and their capabilities and to invest in the place where they grew up, emphasising it was possible to succeed in Senegal. These successful Senegalese youth thus served as campaign messengers and made them inspiring role models for others. According to the campaign promoters, the message of these stories was that others, including the non-Senegalese public, could also become successful and exemplary individuals. The more youth excelled professionally, the more opportunities to travel abroad they would have because their success would make them attractive to the international job market. From these stories, a picture emerged of *successful migrants* whose mobility depended on their own hard work. A mobile future was attainable for people who behaved responsibly, stayed in Senegal, worked hard, cultivated success and only then applied for the visas that would allow them to travel. Hence, migration was imagined as an earned privilege and individualistic project, while irregular migration was seen as the result of a lack of motivation and patience. Yet, campaign initiators also recognise the limited possibilities for Senegalese youth to travel legally, as mentioned in the previous section. But Anna refused to call it a migration campaign. Instead, she said: "We give examples of those who have made [successful] paths" as alternatives to migration. "At the base of it all, is their free will to decide." Her statement reflects the development agency's imagination of Senegalese youth being able to choose freely and being fully responsible for their own choices and destiny. This emphasises individual motivations and personal ambitions but ignores the structural economic constraints youth face in Senegal and the socio-cultural context affecting their decisions to migrate, contrary to what initiators acknowledged in other situations.

3.5 Discussion and conclusion

European states are increasingly funding information campaigns to discourage irregular migration from West Africa to Europe. This article contributes to recent literature on MICs by examining the perspectives of European policymakers in the Netherlands and development workers in Senegal who design and manage migration campaigns. Our analysis focuses on campaign initiators' justifications for enforcing such policy, showing their different imaginaries. In taking the subjective level of campaign making seriously, we bring to the fore how

initiators navigate and attempt to reconcile contradictory logics of care and control they see embedding their work. We identified three main justifications: the need for "objective" information, campaigns do no harm, and campaigns send positive messages and contribute to economic development. From the justificatory talk of campaign initiators, we identified four main kinds of imaginaries. These relate to themselves as initiators of campaigns, campaigns as tools to prevent irregular migration, the context in which campaigns are produced and received, and the so-called potential migrants who are the target of campaigns.

Campaign initiators think of themselves as following humanitarian and moral principles as they develop campaigns that aim to stop West African citizens from departing for Europe and reduce migrant deaths. They imagine their actions to have a positive impact and to compensate for the violence of EU migration regimes. At the same time, their awareness of the restricted mobility for African populations and their claims for policies to alleviate such restrictions reveal that they also imagine EU institutions at large as responsible in some way for reducing mobility injustice. Even though some initiators may see themselves as carrying out their professional tasks, they do not always agree personally with the political framework of which they are part.

As humanitarian and educational interventions, campaigns do no harm in the eyes of campaign initiators, in contrast to the violent measures used to control borders. Initiators believe migration campaigns to be educational and empowering tools that provide objective and measurable information, contributing to local development and benefitting the targeted people. This makes campaigns a better source of information and thus also a better policy option, despite initiators being aware that potential migrants mostly rely on other sources. Paradoxically, they question the effectiveness and the validity of campaigns as solutions to irregular migration while imagining their work as non-violent makes it more acceptable for individual initiators. Moreover, similarly to IOM staff members implementing MICs in North Africa (Bartels, 2021), our respondents imply that development programs are intended to deter and are tools for potential migrants' self-improvement, increasing their chances to succeed in life. West African origin countries are depicted as safe, presenting opportunities for youth to succeed in life and are seen as the place where youth can contribute to development. In contrast, Europe is represented as a hostile place with few opportunities for migrants.

Campaign initiators imagine the campaign target audience as uneducated and marginalised, having incorrect or misleading information, and unaware of the dangers of irregular migration and of their prospects of making a living in Europe. This imaginary depoliticises potential migrants and portrays them as naïve victims. It neglects the knowledge of migration risks that they possess and their agency in preparing for migration journeys (Ngom, 2018). But at the same time, potential migrants are also imagined as rational subjects who are free to choose their own futures. Once they receive *objective* campaign information, it is assumed that they will reconsider any plans they had for risky journeys to Europe and will look to se-

cure jobs in their country of origin. Through goodwill, hard work, entrepreneurial spirit, and a sense of responsibility for their community, they will achieve success and gain the option of undertaking legal overseas travel. In this imaginary, potential migrants are responsible for making themselves deserving and legitimate. Consequently, the view that illegitimate migrants are to blame for their own failures is reinforced. Although potential migrants may be fully informed, they may still decide to embark on irregular migration journeys because they lack other options. In this case, initiators imagine their mobility to be intrinsically part of the human experience, beyond forms of control and risks, and to push back the injustice of mobility regimes.

We have focused on campaign initiators. However, besides Trauner and colleagues' (2024) analyses of narratives, little research has been done on how locally rooted migration imaginaries intersect with those propagated by campaigns. Further research could investigate youth's perspectives and how their imaginaries differ from those of European campaign initiators. This would give important insight into the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of MICs. Moreover, further research could compare different groups of campaign initiators. During our research, we noted that development experts in Senegal seemed to be better able to frame campaign projects according to the local context than policymakers based in the Netherlands. Further research could investigate how proximity to campaign implementation might make a difference in the imaginaries that implementers have of the target audience.

Overall, our analysis illustrates the ambiguities campaign initiators experience in the positions they occupy. Consequently, their imaginaries contain contradictions. The imaginaries we observed show a worldview (Taylor, 2002) in which MICs are a tool of humanitarian government. This is guided by the responsibility to assist others and the moral principle to preserve life and show compassion for other human beings (Stierl, 2018; Fassin, 2012; Walters, 2011). Compassion is manifested in the enforcement of paternalistic practices of 'containment development' that normalises sedentarism by curbing migratory aspirations and localising the desires and aspirations of African people (Landau, 2019; Heidbrink, 2023). Hence, as members of a humanitarian government, campaign initiators carry out moral borderwork as they discursively reinforce the exclusion of African youth from mobility and raise social concern on the need for information, invoking sentiments of care for potential migrants instrumental to producing borders and legitimising practices of border control (Richter, 2022).

At the same time, the moral dimension of borderwork exemplifies the co-existence of contradictory logics in the ways that "social concerns are raised, reproduced, and handled in the borderwork complex" (Richter, 2022, p. 1432). While other scholars have mentioned the donors' scepticism on campaign effects (Bartels, 2021), we argue that collective imaginaries become institutionally rooted and enable practices of migration control (Mayblin, 2019), but individual campaign initiators do not completely align with institutional imaginaries

and remain aware of the underlying injustice related to the mobility of certain populations. However, their criticisms do not seem to affect policymaking or disrupt global migration hierarchies. Individual policymakers have limited possibilities for contestation within the governmental apparatus, and through their justificatory talk, they try to reconcile the inner contradictions to make sense of their own position. Yet, their justifications for MICs reproduce power imbalances that maintain relations of inequality between EU campaign-funding states and potential migrants in West Africa. According to this worldview, the funding state has the authority to *protect* and bring *development*, while West African citizens need to be *instructed* and must stay to *develop* Africa. Thus, initiators' justifications contribute to sustaining the legitimacy of migration policy in ways that instrumentalise care and turn compassionate bordering into *repressive soft bordering*.

MIC Migrants as Messengers, Caravan Tour, Day 10, June 2021, © Massow Ka

CHAPTER 4

Doing and contesting borderwork in Senegal: local implementers of migration information campaigns[6]

[6]A slightly revised version of this chapter has been published as:
Schenetti, C., & Mazzucato, V. (2024). Doing and contesting borderwork in Senegal: local implementers of migration information campaigns. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 50(12), 2803–2821. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2024.2323670

4.1 Introduction

European states increasingly fund information campaigns in West African countries to discourage young people from trying to migrate to Europe. On the one hand, these campaigns aim to raise awareness of the dangers of irregular migration and to help 'potential migrants' make informed decisions. Hence, campaigns claim to protect people before they move and to reduce migrant deaths. On the other hand, campaigns' aim to contain migration from the global South and reduce arrivals in Europe defined them as "soft" borders. Migration information campaigns thus operate in a field of tension between awareness raising and deterrence (Schans & Optekamp, 2016), reflecting the dichotomies of care and control in the global governance of borders.

European-funded migration campaigns are run by a range of NGOs and international organizations among which the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the main actor. Campaigns take different forms and may involve theatre performances, video testimonials, billboards, graffiti, community events, video clips, songs and social media posts. These media are used to convey the message that it is not worth risking one's life in the attempt to reach Europe and that life "at home" is full of opportunities. While such messages appeal to young people's sense of responsibility, many assume that 'potential migrants' lack information about the dangers of irregular migration and the tough conditions undocumented migrants face in Europe. One assumption would-be migrants are not well informed is that they rely on false information from smugglers (Schans & Optekamp, 2016), and the reason European states have increasingly been willing to invest in information campaigns is that they believe information from Europe will be considered more reliable than other sources of information migrants depend on.

However, research has shown that campaigns are ineffective in preventing people from moving (Browne, 2015; Heller, 2014). Even when would-be migrants deem information credible and are fully aware of the dangers, they tend to downplay the negative aspects of the journey and are willing to take high risks (van Bemmel, 2020). 'Potential migrants' also often distrust the institutions that fund and implement migration campaigns, which has encouraged these institutions to rely on local figures to act as the messengers of the campaign, on the assumption that the target audience will trust the information more if it comes from their peers. Local figures engaged in campaigns include return migrants, diaspora groups, and local influencers such as famous hip-hop artists.

Yet, campaign implementing organizations still need staff on the ground to ensure activities are realized according to project policy and objectives. In other words, they need intermediaries in countries of origin who are able to bridge the interests of campaign funders and those of the target population. However, local intermediaries face a paradoxical situation when they engage in campaigns that aim to hinder the exact mobility that they aspire to for

themselves and for their fellow citizens. This article investigates this paradox by asking why Senegalese citizens help to implement campaigns in Senegal and how they perform their role of local intermediaries. In this way, we better understand the apparent contradictions underlying migration campaigns and we fill a gap in the literature on how campaigns function in places of departure (Pagogna & Sakdapolrak, 2021; Gazzotti, 2019). Moreover, we contribute to the literature on borderwork by identifying local staff members of campaign-implementing organizations as a new group of non-state actors doing borderwork. We consider campaign intermediaries as borderworkers in their acts of negotiating the creation of borders where borders are not desired by local populations and in the way they contribute to reconfigure, and contest, European 'soft' externalised borders.

Ethnographic fieldwork was conducted over 15 months with organizations running migration campaigns in Senegal. Senegal was chosen for this study because of the intensity of the migration campaigns that have been run in the country since 2006 when boat migration to the Canary Islands intensified following the progressive tightening of European borders (Maher, 2017). Consequently, many young men lost their lives at sea in the attempt to reach Europe (Willems, 2007). This migration was spurred on by precarious socio-economic conditions that have inhibited Senegalese youth from establishing independent livelihoods since the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s (Beauchemin, et al., 2018; Tall & Tandian, 2010). In a context where even people with a tertiary education faced challenges finding employment, migration offered Senegalese youth hope and the promise of work and social prestige beyond the uncertainty (Zingari et al., 2023). In 2007, in collaboration with the IOM, Spain launched the first migration information campaign "Don't risk your life for nothing" with television advertisements in Senegal warning about the dangers of irregular migration (Schans & Optekamp, 2016). The prevention and reduction of irregular migration from Senegal has been a priority for the EU and individual member states ever since, resulting in numerous campaigns in Senegal that take various forms ranging from social media, to theatre plays and film screenings.

Within this landscape, we chose *Tekki Fii* (Stay Here) as the main case study for the analysis. We chose this campaign in order to give a detailed account of how local actors position themselves in such campaigns while giving due attention to the context within which they are embedded. Although campaigns can take many forms, the detailed study of Tekki Fii sheds light on a more general question of why local actors participate in campaigns that propagate messages that limit their own mobility that they aspire to. The campaign was financed with European funding and carried out in Senegal by several NGOs. European development aid became increasingly tied to European migration governance (Jegen, 2020; European Commission, 2017) with many NGOs having to navigate different goals and interests. The intermediation between funders and beneficiaries is a common practice in Senegal where development projects are many and development work is seen as a springboard for

political careers and a strategy for social mobility (Bierschenk et al., 2002).

Section one, below, discusses the literature on migration campaigns, brokerage and speech acts that build the analytical framework. The second section presents the research methodology. Section three analyses how local staff play the role of brokers to bring gains for themselves and for their community while complying with the campaign's message of immobility. Section four discusses how local staff criticize dominant campaign narratives and create alternative messages through agentic performances. For ease of exposure, we chose to present compliance and resistance to campaign initial intents as two distinct acts campaign implementers perform. This allows to show how contradictory behaviours are performed within the same campaign by the same local staff. In reality these two acts mix and intertwine within the same events as implementers negotiate their roles in campaigns. The final section concludes.

4.2 Borderwork, brokers and translators, speech acts

Below, we consider the borderwork that local campaign implementers do and how they act as brokers and translators between policy and practice. As researchers have shown, migration information campaigns are instruments of EU border externalization (Van Dessel, 2021) that are used to control unwanted migrants (Pécoud, 2010; Nieuwenhuys, & Pécoud, 2007) by spreading affective and emotional messages to persuade them not to migrate (Musarò, 2019; Heller, 2014). The work that goes into such anti-migration efforts, which takes place beyond EU territorial borders, is known as 'borderwork' because it constructs and erases borders (Rumford, 2008; Savio Vammen et al, 2022), affirming or contesting an inclusionary/exclusionary geography. Starting from the concept of borderwork, this study looks at the 'discursive and practical labour' (Frowd, 2018) that goes into the production, maintenance, and even transgression of borders (Richter, 2022). In this case, the border is enforced by the strategic circulation of information in an attempt to manage people's perceptions of migration, hence it is 'soft' and invisible (Williams, 2020).

Borderwork as a concept recognizes the local agency of citizens, and not only of state actors, to engage in the everyday (re)production and undermining of borders across different spatial scales. Actors performing borderwork include humanitarian agencies and intergovernmental organizations such as the IOM (2014; Frowd 2018), government return counsellors (Cleton & Schweitzer, 2021) and civil society actors in destination countries (Sinatti, 2022), and youth leaders (Rodriquez, 2019), women's associations (Bouilly, 2010), and community-based agents in receiving countries (Maâ, et al, 2022). To address a gap in the literature, this research focuses on the experiential dimension of borderwork (Savio Vammen et al, 2022) by investigating how borderwork is done by Senegalese citizens who help run migration campaigns in Senegal on behalf of EU-funded NGOs and international

organizations. It explores their interests and motivations to engage in border management as well as to contest it. The importance of considering non-state actors as borderworkers lies in understanding their efforts to reconfigure or contest state-enforced borders and in their transformative work that may challenge relations of power within migration regimes.

Studies have pointed out the dual nature of borderwork, the opposing forces that are simultaneously present that make it by nature contradictory (Sinatti, 2022). Engaging in borderwork inevitably entails both constructing and resisting border controls. For example, while youth leaders in Senegal actively contribute to the execution of anti-migration campaigns, they refrain from encouraging others to stay (Rodriquez, 2019) in a context where migration is often considered the better option (Alpes, 2012). In the same vein, migrants who send messages to persuade others not to migrate may oppose campaign control objectives because of their own experience of border violence (Maâ et al, 2022). Yet, how the socio-structural position of such intermediaries shapes their borderwork has received little attention, though exceptions can be found in the studies on peerness between migrant intermediaries and the target audience of migration communication activities (Maâ et al, 2022; Vammen, 2021). The Senegalese field staff who are employed by NGOs and international organizations perform borderwork while they navigate the interests of campaign initiators and campaign audience. They must take into account the position they occupy at the interface of different world views and knowledge systems and acknowledge their role as translators between international agencies and local communities (Mosse & Lewis, 2006; Long, 2001).

We consider the Senegalese citizens working on EU-funded migration campaigns to be 'brokers'. The concept of broker was developed to study the work of intermediation of local actors in development aid projects in the global South (Mosse & Lewis, 2006). The primary task of brokers is to translate the problems and needs of local communities in terms that coincide with the solutions advanced by development institutions (Bierschenk et. al, 2002). Brokers' ability to translate from one register to another defines them as "translators" (Mosse & Lewis, 2006). Translators need rhetorical and relational skills to translate contradictory interests and values in ways that allow different meanings to become understandable and useful for actors on both sides of the brokerage chain (Bierschenk et al, 2002; Bräuchler et. al, 2021; Epple, 2021; Knodel, 2021). Thus, the work of translation in development projects produces congruence between problems and interventions (Mosse & Lewis, 2006). The concept of translation is useful for understanding how campaigns come into being through the translation work of local campaign implementers to turn campaign policy into acts. In this way we investigate their agency to reiterate or transform campaign intentions. Ethnographies of development show in the work of brokers the coexistence of "public" and "hidden" transcripts (Scott, 1990). The former refers to brokers' capacity "to conform to the roles ascribed to them by dominant discourses" (Rossi, 2006, p.29), needed to maintain official representations and the legitimacy of the project. Brokers' abidance to project goals preserves their

social and professional identities and may improve opportunities for their personal gain in the form of economic revenue, social recognition, and professional advancement (Bräuchler et al, 2021). The hidden transcript instead refers to discourses and practices that validate, counter or transform the public transcript (Scott, 1990). Brokers do not simply follow normative scripts (Bierschenk et al, 2002). They are active agents who translate project implementation strategically according to their own goals and resources and in interaction with others on the ground (Bierschenk, 1988). Brokers in development learn 'to play the game' according to a variety of rules (Bierschenk et al, 2002, p. 21) and to benefit from the ambiguity that comes from their structural position and their work of translation.

We use the concept of performative speech act to analyse how translation is done. Speech act allows uncovering how brokers manifest their acts of translation and the hidden transcripts these acts entail. The notion that language is 'performative' was first introduced in the field of linguistics to indicate that language 'does action' and may bring about change (Austin, 1962). In gender studies, Butler later extended the idea, using the concept of 'speech act' to analyse gender as a socially constructed process that proceeds through repetitive public, performative, bodily, and linguistic acts (Butler, 1988). The performance of speech acts is repeated through time, resulting in the consolidation of norms that constrain gender identity and enforce a system of control. Yet, acts can be repeated differently through dissonant or disruptive gestures that break from conventional representations. In fact, the very character of the performative resides in the possibility of contesting a norm's reified status (Butler, 1988) through subversive repetition that produces counter discourses. In this way speech acts have the power to contest and transform hegemonic representations of gender.

Recent ethnographic studies have used the lens of performativity to analyse practices that return migrants engage in to appropriate the 'returnee identity' (Shaidrova, 2023) and to narrate themselves as agentic while navigating normative discourses of return and masculinity (Strijbosch, Mazzucato, & Brunotte, 2023). Looking at brokers' speech acts helps us to better understand how they enact 'soft' borders by reproducing campaign discourses of mobility control and how they see themselves acting in accordance with such control measures. At the same time, analysis of their performative speech acts explains how staff members make use of their agentic translation and ambivalent position to subvert and contest the dominant discourse of migration campaigns and to push an alternative message. This study sheds light on hidden components of migration campaigns important to understand how campaigns are translated into the different goals and ambitions of the many people they bring together and how local campaign implementers' work of translation reinforces or transforms campaign policy.

4.3 Methodology

This article is based on 15-months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Senegal from February 2021 to May 2022 by the first author while the second author obtained the research grant and facilitated the embedding of the research within a Senegalese academic institution. Both authors wrote the article together. Fieldwork was conducted in urban and rural areas where migration information campaigns were organized. The main field sites were the cities of Dakar, Thiès, Mbour, Ziguinchor, and Saint Louis. The periphery of Dakar and villages in the region of Thiès also hosted campaigns regularly. Access was secured first by approaching civil servants of the Dutch government, responsible for the funding of one major campaign in Senegal. They facilitated access to the team of the IOM running campaign activities in Senegal. The positionality of the field researcher was also key to accessing campaigns. Campaigns were often implemented by NGOs that the field researcher was familiar with because of previous working experience in the development sector in Senegal. The researcher's relationship with campaign coordinators and the data collected were therefore influenced by the researcher's general knowledge of NGO operations and of the position of local staff within them.

Fieldwork involved long-term immersion in the daily lives of campaigns, their makers, and participants. For this article, we focus on a sample of twenty local staff, fourteen male and six female, aged from their mid-twenties to early forties, who were employed by the IOM, NGOs or by the enterprise Seefar to coordinate and assist the implementation of migration campaigns in Senegal. Eighteen were Senegalese, while two had other African nationalities, hired under local contracts. They had similar socio-economic backgrounds and their education varied, although most had acquired a bachelor's degree from a Senegalese university and eleven participants had a master degree, four of which were obtained from universities abroad. Many of them had a good command of English and management skills, and their expertise was in the fields of administration, communication, development, economics, and territorial governance. Despite being highly qualified, the majority considered mobility hard to access and did not travel regularly outside of Senegal. They all gained a monthly salary and had short-term contracts, ranging from six to thirty- six months, depending on the duration of the campaign they were recruited for. By the end of the campaign, only five people in our sample were working for the same organization as at the start of our fieldwork, of which four were working for NGOs. As stability of work may influence one's perspective on the campaigns, each time we refer to a participant, we specify the sort of contract they had.

The main methods of data collection were participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and informal conversations. The latter took place at the organizations' headquarters or while sharing meals, accommodation, and car trips with staff members. Interviews were conducted at respondents' places of work, at their homes, and in cafés and restaurants. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee of our university. Names

used for participants are pseudonyms and informed consent was gained orally as a continuous process during the fieldwork period. Moreover, the field researcher was embedded within a local university and her local supervisor informed her about ethically accepted practices for conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Senegal.

At migration campaign sites, which included community centres, neighbourhood open-air areas, and the headquarters of cultural associations, participant observation focused on campaign activities in their diverse forms. These included community public events with a broader audience such as debates, graffiti-making, theatre plays, movie screenings, concerts, forums and workshops as well as radio broadcasts and podcast recordings. Return migrants were often invited to volunteer testimonials of their migration experiences and engage in discussions with the audience on migration issues. The main targeted audience was young people, although the community at large of the locality where campaign events took place was encouraged to participate. In some localities the audience was made mostly of women and children. Campaigns lasted a day or sometimes took place over several days as part of a broader programme.

The campaign *Tekki Fii* was chosen as the main case study for this article to be able to deeply contextualize the performance of campaign brokers. While our analysis focuses on the work of a campaign coordinator, Mr. Faye, our findings are supported by data collected at other campaigns implemented in Senegal. Among those are the *Migrants as Messengers* campaign, implemented by the IOM with Dutch funding and *Projet Migrant* directed by the private company Seefar and funded by the Spanish government. *Tekki Fii* started at the end of 2020 and lasted twenty months, had a multi-actor approach and included campaign staff with diverse contractual arrangements. While the NGO where Mr. Faye worked oversaw the implementation of the project following the specifications in the project document, campaign messages, media, and interventions were supposedly defined by a network of civil society actors consisting of local entrepreneurs and return migrants. Yet, the campaign gave vague instructions on how exactly these local actors were meant to discourage migration and on what their actual messages should have been. This network of local actors was not just the means through which the campaign was performed, but also part of the target group that the campaign was aimed at.

Data were collected in English, French, or Italian and written in field notes. When public campaign activities happened in Wolof, limiting the researcher's understanding of the observed interactions, audio recordings were taken which, were later translated to French by an assistant. Analysis proceeded through an initial phase of manual open coding built on a selection of themes and sub-themes emerging from the data. Coding was also informed by our analytical framework which became more refined after repeated readings.

4.4 Doing borderwork: playing the part of campaign broker

Mr. Faye was a coordinator of the migration information campaign Tekki Fii. This was not his first assignment in the organization; but it was the first time he had led a communication programme. He was the only member of the staff available, so he could not choose whether to carry out the task despite his discomfort and lack of familiarity with the field of campaigns. In fact, when the campaign was organized, Mr. Faye had no other duties for the NGO, leaving his only one option if he wanted to stay. Amongst his tasks, Faye was responsible for the organization of a two-day forum on 'youth employment and migration'. The forum was structured around panel discussions and artistic performances, and the aim was to raise awareness about the risks of irregular migration and inform youth about alternatives that would allow them to succeed professionally in Senegal.

In order to organise this forum, Mr. Faye arranged a meeting with members of the campaign network. The meeting gathered representatives of three urban culture associations, the president of one artistic association, one member of a returnees' association, and one radio journalist. During the meeting, Faye stated that the role of his NGO was to assist and by no means to replace the local actors in deciding how to carry out the event. He explained that the aim was to stay faithful to the project guidelines in enacting an awareness-raising campaign. In his view, this meant that the goal was not to make a 'big concert' for pure entertainment, even though some famous rappers had been invited to perform, but 'to sensitize' youth. Faye proposed that the panels focus on themes of entrepreneurship and 'successful stories' as alternatives to migration. This suggestion followed the project documentation and the discussions the local actors had previously had.

That day the main concerns of the organizing team were with setting the agenda and discussing practicalities. The content of the messages to disseminate, the script of the plays, and the details of panel discussions were ignored and remained vague. Faye formulated the titles of the panels and decided which panellists to invite in consultation with the journalist.

The practical and discursive work Mr. Faye performed to translate the Tekki Fii forum from institutional intention to action was an act of borderwork that he used for personal and communal advantage. The vignette above describes one practical step Faye took to ensure the forum occurred according to the project's guidelines: he mobilised representatives of the campaign multi-actor network to discuss the logistics and terms of reference for the event. This was his task as local broker of the campaign. In initiating the meeting, he sought to further the campaign's objective of making local actors the messengers of awareness-raising and

deterring discourses. By doing so, he was following the official instructions of the campaign to propagate the idea that migration is an undesirable and dreadful choice. He also stimulated the interest of cultural associations involved in participating in the forum in ways that coincided with the solutions that the campaign proposed, which involved passing on trustworthy, easy-to-access, and appealing information on irregular migration. In bringing together social actors, Faye's act of translation assisted the campaign to reach its goals. His actions can thus be seen as borderwork (Rumford, 2008). He helped to produce and maintain symbolic borders that kept Senegalese youth in their country of origin. In fact, the multi-actor network constituted part of the infrastructure on which borders rely for their functioning (Frowd, 2018). Faye enabled this network, thus contributing to curbing youth mobility and enhancing externalised European borders.

By promoting the participation of civil society groups and making them accountable for the event, Faye embraced the project's initial idea that members of the campaign network are potential migrants themselves, hence one of the target groups of the campaign, and he enlisted civil society groups in borderwork. The campaign was designed to make this network of local actors responsible for caring for their peers by making them aware of the risks they would encounter when migrating without papers. However, the intersection of humanitarian principles of care with border control, intrinsic in migration campaign interventions, makes the work that Senegalese civil society groups performed simultaneously borderwork, part of the effort to produce and maintain borders (Frowd, 2018). As such, not only are migrants and returnees used as human deterrents (Vammen, 2021; Andersson, 2014) but also grassroots groups like cultural associations and social actors like journalists.

Nonetheless, as a development worker, who, in his institutional capacity, implemented campaign activities, Faye knew he acted as broker between different groups. Using his ability to translate, he matched the interests of the project with the interests of local associations in such a way that the latter could benefit. He was able to redistribute project resources as demanded by the leader of one cultural association so that artistic performances would receive more funding than was initially decided on. Moreover, he let the cultural associations decide on the performers to invite and the songs to sing, as well as the audience to target, to ensure performers gained visibility and rewards.

In the meeting to organize the forum, Faye appropriated campaign discourse: his language reproduced the official script and campaign policy delineated in the project guidelines. These stated the commitment to provide 'correct and complete' information about existing opportunities in Senegal and about the risks and failures of irregular migration using the participatory process as communication strategy. Such discourse argues for sedentary life in Senegal and the containment of migration. Faye made clear that the members of the campaign network would take the lead in realizing the forum, while the NGO was there to assist. The multi-actor network and the NGO had a common goal, 'to sensitize', Faye stated.

In saying this, he decided to conform to the role of broker ascribed to him by dominant policy discourses (Rossi, 2006) and validated the campaign. He chose to abide by the rules that campaign implementing institutions had set and like other coordinators he actively promoted the campaign message in different ways. One simple way was by wearing t-shirts and carrying gadgets with the logo "stay here" during public campaign events. According to Tafa, a young man employed by one of the NGOs implementing *Tekki Fii*, wearing campaign logos was to safeguard the staff's professional position rather than claiming public recognition for their work and its meaning. He, like others, wore campaign-branded t-shirts exclusively at campaign events, as he was expected to. In his private life he did not desire to embody campaign words and symbols nor to be associated by others to the campaign message. It would not make him proud. Instead, he used the t-shirts' as pyjamas. Thereby, local staff reduced their role to mere project implementation and made their ability to influence the process seem irrelevant, as Faye said:

> "I had a programme of activities to do, and I was just carrying these out. (...) There are certain rules to follow, and you work to reach the indicators. It is what you need to give an account of" (Faye, NGO long-term contract, 15 March 2022).

At the same time, Faye, like other local campaign staff, benefited from the work he did in various ways, one being economically. In taking on the coordination of the Tekki Fii campaign and the forum, Faye acquiesced to the requests of his NGO that he goes beyond his field of expertise in order to keep his post, and with it he secured a salary. Thus, campaign work represents for staff an opportunity for their economic improvement. This was also acknowledged by Ibrahima, a Senegalese man working for the same campaign:

> "We are a piece of the game. You are obliged to play to get by, to make a living. If you do this, you have opportunities to find a job. It is problematic. You feel a little bad. You go against your beliefs. The NGO pushes you to do it. (…) Some people think that you gain a lot in the NGOs. But then the project ends and bye..." (Ibrahima, NGO short-term contract, 2 April 2022).

In a country with high unemployment rates, the work of broker is one of the rare opportunities to maintain an already acquired social position (Bierschenk et al., 2002). Ibrahima was moved by self-interest to enhance his chances of keeping his job and finding future employment. Despite the precarious conditions and feeling compelled to perform according to specific instructions, Ibrahima took on 'the campaign game' and complied with its rules, with the aspiration for economic recognition. In his personal trajectory brokerage remained a livelihood strategy, despite the vulnerability given by his short-term contract.

As brokers, Faye and Ibrahima aligned themselves strategically with the work of campaign coordinators. They pursued their own perspectives and goals (Bierschenk, 1988),

one being economic security, though this sometimes came at the cost of their own beliefs. Ibrahima believed migration campaigns were neither effective nor favourable, but rather followed "a logic of domination and exploitation"; yet he worked to implement them. This paradoxical situation makes him a morally ambiguous subject positioned in between opportunism and struggle for change (Bräuchler et al., 2021).

Local campaign implementers could also gain immaterial resources from their work. Hammed was an IOM local staff employed with a short-term contract to assist the implementation of the information campaign *Migrants as Messengers* (MaM) in Senegal. He was able to gain professionally and personally from the meetings he had with local mayors on a mission to inform them about the upcoming occurrence of MaM in their villages. The mission gave him the opportunity to sharpen his argumentative skills, using both French and Wolof, in convincing local authorities of the relevance of the campaign. Such skills promised to advance his career as broker (Bierschenk et al., 2002). In addition, visits were occasions to gain knowledge of local authorities' perceptions of the IOM and their understanding of its work. He saw this, as well as the knowledge he gained from debates on migration with local communities at campaign events, as a source for personal growth rather than a necessity for his job.

The practical and discursive labour campaign staff performed shows the contradictory intentions of campaigns both to protect people and to control their mobility, which places their borderwork between development and securitization (Frowd, 2018). During a visit to a local municipality soon to host the MaM campaign, local IOM employees said that "it is good to inform", "it is a moral duty to inform on risks", "it is not about forbidding", "life is better at home", and "returnees are better messengers". The repetition and enactment of these slogans actualized the campaign and reinforced the campaign's ambiguous purposes, but also justified the need for campaign intervention. The continuous funding of campaigns consolidated the norm that people in Senegal must be guided to make better decisions regarding migration and should be encouraged to stay in Senegal. Over time, and with the continuity of campaigns implemented in Senegal, this norm generated what Hammed called 'a culture of sensitization' among the Senegalese population. The promotion of this 'culture' had implications for campaign staff who were meant to explain what sensitizing entailed. Hence, by involving local authorities and members of cultural associations to act as messengers who are familiar with sensitization and had supposedly internalized its message, both Faye and Hammed in their work of translation were able to leave parts of their communication vague. In the meeting to organize the forum Faye did not explain what 'sensitization' entailed, he failed to make the 'project guidelines' explicit, and he overlooked the content of panels and theatre scripts. Similarly, when informing local mayors, Hammed did not elaborate on what the message of 'the migrants' was. With messages often vague one must question to which extent the local populations discipline themselves to fit European migration priorities.

The next section starts by describing how the campaign forum unfolded and continues with an analysis of speech acts by campaign implementers who contested the dominant message and pushed for alternatives.

4.5 Contesting migration campaigns: creating an alternative message

The campaign forum happened exactly two months after Mr. Faye had held the organizational meeting with representatives of the campaign network described above. The forum took place in an urban highly populated area. It was a public event, though most of the participants had received personal invitations. It gathered together the campaign funder, NGOs, Senegalese territorial authorities, representatives of civil society organizations, cultural associations, and young people from the area. Faye had assigned the task of inviting the audience of young people to a city councilor, while he invited local authorities such as the mayor and others and guest speakers. The representative of the European funding agency was also present.

On the morning of the first day, Faye was busy managing the practicalities and logistics of the event, so he did not attend the first panel discussions; he did not feel his presence was needed— discussion was going to happen anyway. Afterwards a participant told him that one panellist, a successful Senegalese female entrepreneur Faye had invited, had delivered what seemed to be an inappropriate speech. She had condemned western countries for exploiting African resources and imposing international cooperation agreements only driven by their economic interests. Her tone intensified as she captured everybody's attention. Then she encouraged young people to rebel against such an unjust exploitative system and to migrate to expand their knowledge.

Her intervention raised tensions among the participants. However, Faye was convinced her provocation was exactly what made for 'a good debate', and 'you cannot exclude political debate when you invite institutional figures'. After the other panellists had finished their speeches, people from the audience spoke. Some echoed the woman's criticisms. A young man encouraged youth not to hang around because, regardless of the economic hardship people might experience in Senegal, it is possible to become 'heroes from zero'. But to achieve this, 'we have to stop these meetings, we have to stop these workshops, these forums, if you want Senegal to be one of the most developed countries". A male student sitting in the audience stood up to address local authorities and the forum funders: "I also want you to show young people the path to take to succeed; we cannot tell someone to stay here without giving them anything".

In the afternoon of the same day, a theatre troupe performed a play on migration. Faye had selected a troupe that had already created a play. He did not have the time, nor the money, to support the creation of a play from scratch, and he had simply glanced over the script rather than properly checking its content. He also knew the troupe used the so called 'theatre forum' approach, which entails interaction with the audience. The play, it turned out, discussed the social conditions of youth in Senegal and migration in general, and the ensuing discussion with the audience did not produce a clear message of deterrence, nor one condemning irregular migration.

Through their speech acts, local campaign staff like Faye break from the conventional discourse of migration campaigns and find ways to promote alternative messages. In their work of translation they find space for themselves and for others to perform subtle forms of "everyday resistance" (Scott, 1990).

The agentic translation of Faye is made of speech acts that have three key features: intentional absence, selective invitations, and disinterested collaboration. Firstly, on the day of the forum, Faye did not attend the panels and appeared unconcerned about any conversation between invited speakers and the audience. The instructions he received on how to conduct the event did not specify whether he had to supervise the panels. The result of his absence, however, was a lack of control over the debate and individual contributions. Yet, the conversation he had afterwards with the participant who had told him about the entrepreneur's 'inappropriate' speech showed that he did not disapprove and that his absence did not imply a lack of interest about the issues being discussed at the panels. Rather, he chose not to participate to avoid being put in the position of having to intervene in order to meet the expectations of western funders and local authorities 'to neutralize' the tone of the debate if it would get too heated. He did not want to interrupt speakers. Consequently, different voices emerged, including those that departed from the event's aim of raising awareness about the possibilities of local employment for youth as alternatives to irregular migration. The woman entrepreneur and the two men in the audience who spoke brought attention to three interlinked issues that surround socio-economic and political debates at the national and international level: first, the unsound neoliberal economic policies that cause socioeconomic disparities in Senegal; second, the ineffectiveness of migration campaign forums to contribute to the country's development; and third, the injustice that campaigns perpetuate by attempting to keep youth in Senegal while not providing them with the means to make a living at home. Their speeches ignored the humanitarian and migration management agendas of campaigns, instead breaking with the intended messages and denouncing the injustice of a hegemonic system that increases vulnerabilities for the Senegalese population without proposing solutions.

The second feature to notice about Faye's speech acts is the selectivity of his invi-

tations. As campaign coordinator, Faye had some discretion regarding whom to invite, and he chose to encourage the participation of foreign and local institutional figures. According to Faye, their presence inevitably led the audience to raise political issues, which some saw as provocative but which for Faye generated "good debate". He not only welcomed critical contributions, such as the one by the entrepreneur, but intended them to emerge through her invitations to local actors. It was particularly important for Faye that youth's critical voices were addressed to local authorities, as he said in an interview:

> "Civil society and NGOs must put pressure on the state. We can, for example, invite state agents to the forum as we did in X. This is important. [They need to hear] what we say 'in the street': 'you must revise your youth politics and the collaborations with EU states on mobility" (Faye, NGO long-term contract, 15 March 2022).

Here, he refers to the power NGO employees like himself have in targeting specific audiences, such as state agents. By inviting them, he ensures they will be the receivers of messages condemning social injustice that counter traditional campaign messages discouraging migration. By deciding not to obstruct the debate and inviting a certain audience, Faye found fissures where he and others could challenge migration management.

Campaign activities can thus be used by both the audience and local implementers to advocate for change. Omar, a Senegalese man in his 30's with a university degree who worked as 'migration advisor' for the campaign *Projet Migrant*, but who also advised the Senegalese government, said in an interview:

> "Migration is a matter of social democracy. (...) It is a game of actors, and everyone has their interest. For me, it is a matter of ethics to give the floor to people; if we were not putting on pressure and trying as civil society actors to make a plea to influence social politics, it would not make sense. I feel like a middleman who channels what he has learnt from the community to influence the political process" (Omar, private company, short-term contract, 11 March 2022).

The alternative message that emerges is that grassroots knowledge should influence migration policy in a process that Omar has the power to facilitate because of his position as broker. Debates around migration campaigns among the local population become tools that campaign implementers can use to extract grassroots knowledge, channelling it towards local forms of advocacy to influence migration policy-making in Senegal. In the process, campaigns are transformed from events whose sole intention was to inform potential migrants of possible dangers into events that democratize migration debates in Senegal.

The third notable aspect of Faye's speech acts is in his disinterested collaboration with the theatre company. Out of convenience and because the campaign document was vague about which theatre groups to chose, he selected a theatre troupe that had already deve-

loped a play on migration. He was not interested in the creation of a play exclusively for the campaign, he did not express an opinion on the script, and he did not see the play in advance. Hence, the play was not moderated in any way. However, Faye was aware that the theatre company used 'forum theatre', a technique where the actors engage with the audience, enter into dialogue with them, and prompt them to identify with the characters and evaluate their behaviours. His lack of control over the play and the discussion the theatre group facilitated, which Faye could foresee, led an alternative discourse to become prominent.

The play told the story of a Senegalese father who spent the money of his wife's *tontine*[7] on the boat journey for his daughter to travel to Spain, after a long discussion with his wife on who among their children should go. The parents then received a letter from their daughter informing them of the hardship she encountered in Spain and her desire to return to Senegal. The parents replied, reminding their daughter of the investment they had made in her journey, and of the promises she had made to send them goods, to pay their pilgrimage to the Mecca, and to take them to Europe. If she returned without having satisfied these requests, she would no longer be welcome in the family home.

In the forum theatre, the audience was asked to evaluate the behaviour of the characters. Participants in the discussion were particularly concerned with the role of the migrant daughter. What emerged was a positive assessment of her character. People saw her as moved by a desire to financially support her parents and recognized that the hierarchical family structure in Senegal did not allow her to object her parents' decisions. In the eyes of some young people in the audience, she appeared as a victim of poverty and of irresponsible parents willing to sell family assets to fund the undocumented migration journey of their children (Tall & Tandian, 2010). While the parents were blamed for chasing material wealth and social status at the expense of their children, the migrant daughter proved mindful and eager to return home instead of suffering in Europe. Through the forum theatre, Senegalese youth reclaimed the space that campaigns use to deter migration and to manage the perceptions of potential migrants (Heller, 2014). Young members of the audience used the theatre to put forward other messages. They condemned social expectations and parental pressure that impose on Senegalese youth models of success and forms of economic responsibility. Social success is achieved with migration or when youth are able to provide for their parents. They criticize the sense of exclusion and shame they suffer when they fail to succeed. Policies to restrict mobility have made these expectations a constraint for youth rather than a support in pushing them out of vulnerability (Zingari et al., 2023). During the debate after the play

[7] An informal savings and credit association usually used by women in Senegal. Participants contribute equally to a common pool of money and with a system of rotation they are eligible to take the whole sum.

youth claimed their agency to make their own decisions, whether they stay, move or return to Senegal.

Faye attended the forum theatre but did not participate in the conversation. Local implementers do, however, contest campaign aims and interventions and promote their own solutions in very explicit terms:

> "We must rethink our intervention, as an NGO, so as to make a better societal impact. The lack of life prospects pushes people to migrate. The heavy bureaucracy makes it hard for business to flourish. There is a need for a politics to help youth. (…). Politics for circular migration is the solution. Youth will always look for other routes to go if you close the borders. We, the NGOs, we must stop this game. We must take a clearer position, because we are the ones doing things on the ground; we must advocate. (…) They will continue to fund if you, the NGO, accept the funds" (Tafa, NGO short-term contract, 21 March 2022).

Tafa's resistance to campaign interventions lies in his different interpretation of things and a sense of responsibility, as someone working for an NGO that runs migration campaigns, to reverse course by advocating for other solutions, including policies for youth employment and circular migration. But for NGOs to change course would mean campaign implementers ceasing to comply with the funding system that keeps them alive and renegotiating their role. Aware of the socio- economic context in which campaigns are implemented, Tafa does not believe in their effectiveness because he knows that migrants have agency to overcome measures of control. His contestation of campaign aims is an expression of his political agency.

4.6 Conclusion

EU-funded migration campaigns to discourage Senegalese youth from embarking on arduous journeys to Europe need local intermediaries in Senegal to facilitate the circulation of their messages. This article has examined the paradox of local staff members' participation in the implementation of campaigns that aim to restrict the very migration they aspire to. It has explored how campaign intermediaries act as brokers through their translation of campaign official intentions into acts. We conceptualise their work as borderwork, and identify them as a new group of non-state actors borderworkers. Focusing on one particular campaign but complemented by our knowledge deriving from fieldwork with other campaigns, we have highlighted the seemingly contradictory behaviours of local campaign intermediaries and showed that their performance is enabled by their agentic work of translation.

Brokerage is embedded in the borderwork of local campaign staff. They abide by their roles in a moral migration governance by conveying campaign messages containing warnings on the risks of illegal migration and promoting sedentarism and return as desirable,

implicitly calling for immobility (Fine & Walters, 2022). As such, local staff contribute to campaign infrastructure and messages aimed at keeping youth in Senegal and thereby help to normalise restrictive migration policies imposed on populations in the Global South. At the same time, local staff consider themselves as mere implementers and engage in opportunistic behaviour. Playing the role of brokers allows them to gain economically, advance professionally, and develop personally. As translators, they are also able to help local actors such as artists who volunteer in campaigns, by meeting their requests for economic resources and for personal initiatives.

If on the one hand campaign messages have the clear goal of restraining mobility of Senegalese youth, on the other hand local implementers find fissures in their work that give space to multiple interpretations of campaign messages and make migration campaigns polysemous. These fissures are created by vague campaign instructions, the participation of many local actors in performing campaigns, and campaign projects being at odds with the realities on the ground. We showed that translation takes shape in intermediaries' speech acts which make room for possible plural messages.

Their speech acts manifest forms of resistance. Faye, who was the focus of the vignettes, enabled forms of resistance through the choices he made along the way about how to organise and carry out the campaign forum and when to absent himself. He deliberately decided not to participate in debates, selected specific guests, and gave little thought to the play. These speech acts created room for resistance as manifested in statements by youth in the audience as well as campaign staff. These effectively transformed the intended purpose of the campaign and sent messages that contested or moved beyond awareness-raising and deterrence debates. Alternative messages focused on socioeconomic disparities, the impediments youth experience on the path to social adulthood, the ineffectiveness and inadequacy of EU-funded campaign initiatives, and the call to democratise migration issues. Borderwork performed by local campaign implementers is difficult to see. It is often hidden or composed of absences, silences or things that are let to happen. Our focus on the work that implementers do through their speech acts has unveiled the often hidden aspects of borderwork.

This study combined the notion of brokerage, and translation as inherently part of it, and the concept of 'performative speech acts' as developed and applied in development studies and gender studies, respectively. Bringing these concepts together helped us to understand the borderwork of local Senegalese campaign implementers. Brokers occupy a position at the interface between campaign policy makers and the potential migrants that policy makers target. Their intermediation operates through their translation work. The lens of performativity showed how brokers promote campaign aims but also engage in speech acts to resist and transform campaign dominant discourses and to push alternative messages.

Our findings contribute to the emerging body of literature on migration information campaigns and borderwork by exploring how campaigns function from the perspectives

of employees within implementing organisations, who have received little attention in the literature. We add this group of actors to those one might define as border workers. Sinatti (2022) argues that borderwork is "messy", as it is driven by opposing forces that operate simultaneously to construct and resist borders. While she acknowledges these contrasting acts as part of the natural duality and intrinsic character of borderwork, we emphasise the agentic capacity of border workers to shape such opposing forces. Campaign implementers in Senegal perform according to contradictory interests, and their performative speech acts result in the simultaneous reproduction and transgression of borders. This happens because of their, albeit precarious positions as brokers who utilise the fissures they find in campaign instructions and implementation, to agentically use or contest campaign intentions.

In examining local implementers' acts to reify and perpetuate the very same borders they aim to contest, we acknowledge the absurdity of the situation they are part of. Yet, their position as brokers and the local context in which they operate allow local campaign implementers to challenge relations of power of migration regimes. They contest the unidirectionality of campaign communication by channelling grassroots knowledge that campaign initiatives produce to a different audience than envisaged by funders, namely local authorities. Yet, despite their efforts to contest the official discourse, local implementers also use campaigns as employment to deal with precarious livelihoods and in so doing propagate the ideas that campaign funders wish to spread. Whether the contestations are enough to minimise the work of propagating anti-migration narratives leaves open the question of whether global hierarchies of migration regimes are, in the end, destabilised.

MIC Migrants as Messengers, Caravan tour day 20, July 2021, ©Massow Ka

CHAPTER 5

The affective registers of migration information campaigns: emotional violence and responses from Senegalese youth[8]

[8] A slightly revised version of this chapter has been published as:
Schenetti, C. (2025). The affective registers of migration information campaigns: emotional violence and responses from Senegalese youth. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2025.2532714

5.1 Introduction

Since 2005, following the implementation of restrictive immigration policies by European states, boat migration from Senegal has intensified, and many young people undertake the extremely dangerous voyage to the Canary Islands (Mbaye, 2014; Maher, 2017; Poeze, 2013). Fatal shipwrecks off the Senegalese coast still happen frequently (Mixed Migration Centre, 2024). The apparent inability to stop unwanted migration flows has led EU states to launch migration information campaigns (MICs) in Senegal and other countries as a new tool to control migration (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007). By promoting messages regarding the dangers of migration, the harsh realities of undocumented life in Europe, and strict migration policies, MICs aim to raise potential migrants' awareness and dissuade them from departing (Schans & Optekamp, 2016). The following vignette provides an example of an information campaign in action.

In June 2021, I joined the MIC Migrants as Messengers (MaM) on its 30-day caravan tour to inform Senegalese people about the risks of irregular migration to Europe. Members of the implementing organisation, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), accompanied a group of "volunteers" and professional actors through various rural villages to perform a theatre production inspired by the lived migration experiences of the volunteers. Each day, in every village, the caravan stopped, and the same play was staged. One day, I could not hold back my tears. On stage, Coumba, a MaM volunteer, was acting out a tragic scene of a woman almost drowning at sea trying to reach Spain by boat. Her anxious talking, restless movements, and the turbulent waving of a cloth around her made the scene unsettling, and the distress she evoked created a terrifying emotional atmosphere for those attending the event. Some of the MaM volunteers present had had similar horrific experiences while trying to reach Europe: they had been hit by storms, intercepted by the authorities, pushed back or repatriated soon after arrival by EU border patrols, and they often witnessed the death of travel companions. Some explained to me that the emotional weight of these memories made them reluctant to discuss their migration experiences during campaign events openly. In the audience were children, youth, women, and men; many stared silently at the stage, mesmerised by the emotional intensity of Coumba's acting. Their watchful eyes were filled with sadness and fear as the scene invoked painful memories, anxiety, and a sense of loss for family and friends who had died or gone missing during efforts to migrate. But at the same time, the audience exhibited a sense of joy throughout the event, seemingly captivated by the dance performances and music and the festive and celebratory mood. The distressing experience, masked by the cheerful party environment, made the campaign event emotionally unsettling for its participants.

This scene illustrates how MICs are deeply affective spaces. For both the performers and the audience, the campaign event and the interactions that unfold within it are emotionally charged. Recent studies have shown how MICs strategically mobilise emotions as an instrument of migration governance (Williams, 2020). MICs employ affective registers to manage people's desires, influence decision-making, and govern their (im)mobility (Watkins, 2017; Musarò, 2019; Heller, 2014; Savio Vammen & Kohl, 2023; Vammen, 2021). Researchers have mostly examined campaigns' affective dimensions by analysing campaign design, media content, and the deterring intentions of funding and implementing organisations. This article adds to the existing literature by investigating components of MICs' affective registers that have been overlooked. Specifically, it analyses how the emotions circulating within campaign spaces perpetuate violence against people in the audience and how young people protest such violence. The article highlights unseen emotional effects and questions the dominant approach to campaign evaluation, which neglects both the emotional impact of MICs and the violence they inflict on their target population. Furthermore, by analysing Senegalese young people's expressions of protest, this research contributes to understanding their perceptions of social justice.

I draw on data collected over fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in Senegal, a country to which the EU has invested significant resources in recent decades to curb irregular migration (European Commission, 2016). My research participants were youth aged fifteen to thirty-five (African Union, 2006) and included spectators and campaign performers like Coumba, whose (re)migration MICs aim to prevent. The next section reviews the literature on MICs and presents the concepts of affect and emotion that provide the analytical framework of this study. It is followed by a description of the methodology I employed. The analysis is divided into two sections, each starting with an ethnographic vignette, and each discussing the emotional burden of MICs and how young people manifest resistance through their emotional responses. The conclusion summarises the contributions this article makes to the literature on MICs.

5.2 Emotions and affective migration campaigns

Some literature on MICs examines how emotion-laden messages are strategically mobilised to affect the desires, perceptions, and intimate spaces of potential migrants' everyday lives, with the aim of making a difference in their decision-making (Williams, 2020; Heller, 2014; Musarò, 2019; Watkins, 2017). With their affective registers, migration campaigns are a typical example of aspiration management (Heidbrink, 2023). They operate "practices of containment" that seek to exclude African subjects from mobile lives and global desires (Landau, 2019). Moreover, the triggering of emotion plays a vital role in the production and performance of European border spectacles and enables MICs to work as a form of affective

border governance (Vammen, 2021; Williams & Coddington, 2023). As such, MICs show how affect and emotions are crucial to migration management and its techniques of exclusion (Bissenbakker & Myong, 2019; Griffiths, 2024; Strasser & Sökefeld, 2024; Schenetti et al., 2024).

However, much literature has focused on campaign strategies, not on how campaigns are received emotionally and how they impact their audiences. Some researchers have explored the effects campaigns have on local narratives, aspirations, and practices of migration (Pagogna & Sakdapolrak, 2023; Trauner et al., 2024). Others have looked at how prospective migrants employ risk-mitigation strategies and have questioned the effectiveness and usefulness of MICs (Fiedler, 2020; Gueye, 2024). Yet, except for Savio Vammen & Kohl (2023), little research focuses on receivers' emotional responses to MICs. Building on this scholarship, I examine the overlooked circulation of emotions that produce MICs as affective spaces and the reactions of campaign audiences. In doing so, I go beyond a focus on the affective registers employed in campaign designs and messages and foreground the multiplicity of local effects and responses by young viewers.

The affective turn challenged the hierarchical dualism of rationality and feeling that had defined the debate on emotions in Western societies, arguing instead that what humans feel, and not only their reasoned choices, plays a significant role in shaping the world (Clough & Halley, 2007). Burgeoning approaches to affect aim to integrate the cognitive and the affective in order to dissolve oppositions such as bodily and non-bodily; yet definitions of affect and emotions remain heterogeneous and contradictory (Penz & Sauer, 2020). In this article, affect is understood as a body's abilities to sense, move or respond depending on the flow of forces, otherwise known as emotions, that the body encounters (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). As such, affect exists in instinctive, pre-social corporeality. On the other hand, emotions are defined as socially formed feelings and cultural expressions that manifest in the body as affect (Penz & Sauer, 2020). Within this debate, this study draws upon literature emphasising the role emotions play in affecting bodies and subjectivities, social worlds and relations of power (Ahmed, 2014; Fox, 2015; Svašek, 2005). I do not separate affect from emotions, as such a distinction risks cutting emotions off from the lived experience of being and having a body (Ahmed, 2014). Hence, emotions are understood as affective states that are felt within the body but do not positively reside within the body (Ahmed, 2014; Svašek, 2005). Despite the differences between affect and emotions, in this article, the terms affective and emotional are used interchangeably.

Rather than considering emotions as individually experienced and interior feelings, I follow Ahmed's conceptualisation of emotions as collective, social, and cultural practices that have the capacity to affect bodies. Social environments and interactions produce emotions that, through repetition over time, affect bodies (Ahmed, 2014). Emotional responses, as socially constructed processes, vary according to cultural context, location, and history,

while memories, imagination, expectations, and aspirations also shape emotional encounters (Svašek, 2005). According to Ahmed (2014), emotions are intentional and relational, and, through repetitive circulation, they accumulate affective value over time, "sticking" to certain bodies, objects, or ideas that bind individuals together. These flows of emotions in both human and non-human interactions construct subjectivities, connections, and boundaries that shape the identities of "Us" and "Others". Feelings that cultivate a sense of belonging, what Vrabiescu & Anderson (2024) call ethical emotions, can also contribute to exclusionary practices. Thus, processes of othering, racialisation, and exclusion arise from emotional reactions to others (Ahmed, 2014; Bonilla-Silva, 2019).

Emotions are *about something*, and they *do things*. Emotions feed into processes of meaning-making that ultimately make them a form of cultural politics (Ahmed, 2014). Affective dynamics influence our perceptions and understandings of society, and emotions actively shape the world we live in and how we understand our position within it. In other words, how we feel contributes to shaping the world. Through emotional processes, individuals apprehend and interpret their environment, make decisions, envisage action, and shape their subjectivities (Svašek & Skrbiš, 2007; Ahmed, 2014). Emotions are objects of knowledge and can be a driving force for social action, challenging or maintaining and legitimising relations of power (D'Aoust, 2014; Bonilla-Silva, 2019). Emotions are embedded in power and, therefore, contribute to politics and protest in a way that "we feel our way" (Ahmed, 2014).

I investigate emotions through the affective reactions that young people attending campaign events manifest in embodied acts, written texts, or silences. Looking at their affective responses helps us to focus on the more subtle and unspoken effects of emotions, allowing us to understand how emotions are complicit in normalising state violence (Ahmed, 2014) and the role they play in making techniques of migration control even more oppressive. At the same time, through the lens of emotions, we apprehend youth's protests at social inequalities and perceptions of (in)justice. Therefore, focusing on affective reactions in the analysis of MICs is crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of campaign measures and a more complete view of their effects.

5.3 Methodology

Data were collected during 15 months of ethnographic fieldwork that I conducted in urban and rural Senegal between February 2021 and May 2022. Field sites were selected based on the locations where campaign events were being held, and access was secured by approaching staff members of international organisations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and EU-funded NGOs in charge of coordinating, organising, and im-

plementing campaign-related activities in Senegal. The core ethnographic material used in this article was collected through participant observation. Ethnographic data of two key IOM campaigns – *Migrants as Messengers (MaM) and CinemArena (CA)* – provide the foundation for the vignettes I employ in the analysis, though my analysis was also shaped by the activities of the other fourteen MICs I observed during my fieldwork.

Much of my data comes from podcast recordings and *caravan tours* run by the IOM. Caravan tours visited various localities over consecutive days, with each stop featuring radio programmes, theatre and artistic performances, dance competitions, video screenings, and conversations aimed at disseminating anti-migration messages. I joined six caravan tours for a total of forty-four days. I also had informal conversations with twenty-four MaM volunteers before, during, and after campaign events. Moreover, I draw on activities organised by the IOM at seven high schools around the country as part of the two MICs. At each school, the number of students attending ranged from 50 to 100, depending on the facilities available. Activities lasted a couple of hours and included speeches from IOM staff, testimonies from volunteers, video screenings, quiz games, and performances by students. My observations centred on the content and environment of the events, as well as the interactions between students and the MIC team. I made audio recordings of fourteen short texts, including poems, spoken word pieces, essays, and theatre scripts created by the students. These texts were subsequently transcribed by a local research assistant for analysis. Names are pseudonyms, and informed consent was collected orally according to the ethical guidelines of Maastricht University.

Individuals of all ages attend campaigns, though I focused on youth between 15 and 35, acknowledging that youth is a socially constructed category whose boundaries are shaped by context-specific social expectations and cultural perspectives on roles and responsibilities rather than biological age (Honwana, 2012). The diversity of the campaign settings I analysed allows me to highlight the heterogeneity of young campaign receivers, including both students and "MaM volunteers". Referred to by the IOM as "returnees" – individuals who attempted to migrate irregularly without success or were returned to Senegal by the IOM after brief stays in other African countries or Europe – MaM volunteers are officially designated as "the messengers" of the IOM campaign. They perform at public events and convey their firsthand experiences of migration. Yet, implicitly, they are meant to be discouraged from re-migrating. This does not disregard the positions that returnees occupy as intermediaries of MICs or their role as social and economic actors in the migration industry (Maâ et al., 2022; Marino et al., 2023) but highlight that they are targets and recipients of campaign messages like those who have never attempted to migrate. Secondly, the diversity of campaign settings enables us to illustrate the diverse responses of campaign participants and, consequently, to include in the analysis the many forms of emotional violence that MICs inflict upon them, along with their various expressions of protest.

The extended ethnographic study allowed me to experience the affective spaces of MICs and observe the circulation of emotions that are often less visible or silenced, highlighting how people are affected by campaigns. Throughout my fieldwork, I experienced a range of entangled emotions that shaped my actions and interactions with the people I met. I was not a neutral spectator, but "felt my way" through moments of campaigning. By placing myself within the emotional geography of the field, I reflexively engaged with my emotions to question the affective registers of MICs as well as the positionality, power relations, and categories that we, as researchers, are also confronted with (Laliberté & Schurr, 2016).

5.4 The affective registers of MICs

The following analysis is structured into two sections. The first section examines the emotional burden of MICs and how participants strive to resist this. It begins with an ethnographic vignette that resumes the *Migrants as Messengers*' scene from the introduction and elaborates on the experiences of five female MaM volunteers who share their migration stories in different ways during the campaign events. The second section presents an ethnographic vignette based on the activities conducted in secondary schools as part of a collaboration between *Migrants as Messengers and CinemArena*. I analyse the emotive communication that students use to protest various forms of injustice. The analysis is followed by a discussion of how the campaign's affective space is infused with violent emotions that are intentionally produced by the campaign system and that are in dissonance with the affective registers young people mobilise to call for social justice.

5.4.1 The emotional burden of participating in MICs

In performing a person enduring a shipwreck, Coumba ran restlessly all over the stage, jumping, walking on all fours, furiously moving her arms in the air, then covering her face with her hands and holding herself tight. She cried while doing so. Her facial expression was tense and her voice rough, as she screamed louder and louder in fear of being knocked over by a wave: "The boat is sailing, it is dark and freezing cold … My goodness! It looks like our boat will soon be taking on water, the boat is taking on water... the boat is taking on water…". Finally, she rolled on the ground and her shouting suddenly stopped. She lay exhausted, her body motionless on the stage floor, and the audience was left wondering if she was still alive. Coumba was expected to perform the same scene on thirty consecutive days during the MaM caravan tour, but one day, feeling unwell from the exhausting task, she refused to go on stage.

During another MaM tour event, Nafissatou, a MaM volunteer, was on the verge of crying when she told her audience about her recent return to Senegal: "I left [Senegal] for my mother, to help her [financially], but I had difficulties [abroad]. I am ashamed to even say it". She often spoke with a timid, trembling voice, avoiding eye contact with the audience. She kept her testimonials brief and offered little detail about her life abroad.

Bintou, in contrast, who also joined the MaM tour as a volunteer, was quite thorough in her account. One evening, she told the audience:

> *I heard that there was a boat leaving for Spain. I asked around about leaving. I was in a forest where there was nothing to eat or drink. I got up at 4 a.m. every morning to get away from the police. I tried once and the police caught us by the boat. ... The second time, we capsized, and I was underwater. I tried 6 times, and I saw people die. I was afraid of corpses. I saw people go mad, injured... It is really painful.*

Bintou appeared tense, her posture stiff and her expression sombre, and by the end of her testimonial, she was crying. Nafissatou stood silently beside her, holding her hand and staring at the floor as her friend spoke.

Each day of the tour, Anna, another volunteer, moderated the conversation with the audience. One day, she started by saying: "We have seen the difficulties faced by young people in the desert or the sea. In October and November [2020], we saw more than 300 people die within a week, and that is very sad". Some of the youth in the audience were indignant at Anna's comment. They expressed concerns about widespread unemployment in Senegal, a tight labour market, unpaid work, and the high costs of visas for Senegalese citizens. These social injustices, they said, create unequal travel opportunities and force many individuals to undertake dangerous journeys. Confronted with angry spectators, Anna tried to ease the tension: "Young people must be patient. They can start by investing [in Senegal] in small businesses". But in a conversation we had before the caravan tour, Anna mentioned that she empathised with the young people in the audience, as she too was unemployed and facing financial difficulties. She continued to believe that leaving Senegal was her best option, and she was actively planning to migrate. She did not believe that the campaign effectively prevented people from migrating, and she did not see MaM bringing any significant positive change to the lives of Senegalese people, including her own. But she could not mention any of that in public, which left her feeling frustrated. One day, as soon as the event was over, Anna hurried to the bus and sat alone. When I found her there, she was crying, her face in the shadows, and did not utter a word. When we met the week following the end of the caravan tour, Anna looked exhausted. She told me she regretted joining the campaign tour.

Aida was another young MaM volunteer who was asked by IOM to participate in a podcast. When she explained to me a few days later what happened, Aida was furious. She said she felt treated like "a puppet". "They just want a short witness account from us returnees, and that's it. They come, they want to know something, we cry, and then they leave. One must not take advantage of migrants". She felt exploited and did not gain anything from participating in the podcast. She was also irritated at having to travel during peak hours and pay a higher fare for her taxi. She arrived home late, tired, and with little money left from the transport allowance she had received from the IOM. The following day, she felt unwell.

5.4.1.1 Five types of affective responses illustrating the emotional toll

The emotional burden that MICs place on their receivers is considerable, and they react in five main ways. First, performers like Coumba, Anna, and Aida experience physical and emotional pain caused by the heavy emotional labour they engage in when they participate in campaign events. Coumba became so ill that she was unable to perform; Anna was pushed to the brink of exhaustion, which caused her to regret joining the campaign; while Aida's illness highlighted the demands that participating in the campaign podcast placed on her. Like them, several other young volunteers fell sick during or after the 30-day campaign tour. But a sense of pain also emerges during performances. Coumba's restless and then unconscious body, her screams fuelled by the terror of imminent death as the boat fills with water, evoked a profound sense of both physical and emotional suffering as she staged the harrowing experience of a shipwreck. Moreover, pain is a consequence of the emotional labour demanded by the IOM of young people as they re-enact, re- embody, and re-tell their own tragic stories of aborted migration attempts. By repeatedly sharing their migration hardships in public, the campaign uses an affective register made of a range of negative painful emotions that weigh heavily on those who participate. Bintou's testimony sparked anxiety regarding her uncertain survival, fear of police detection and death, as well as grief and desperation at the adverse conditions. Her performance left her visibly distressed and crying on stage.

Second, some MIC participants manifest an overwhelming fragility as they share their stories. When she spoke in front of the audience about the difficulties of her life as a migrant, Nafissatou's voice was shaky and quiet, and she struggled to hold back her tears. Her emotional state was marked by a deep sense of shame over her inability to provide financial support to her mother. The campaign organisers' expectations that she publicly shared a narrative of personal failure and guilt heightened the emotional pressure she, like others who were forcibly returned, once felt during removal (Strasser & Sökefeld, 2024).

A third response to the demands of MIC participation, one that reflects emotional fatigue, is a desire to exit the campaign space. This desire was evident in Anna's case. She

found a quiet spot on the bus and isolated herself to relieve the stress caused by the event. Her distressed emotional state was rooted in feelings of frustration and hopelessness arising from the tension integral to the position she occupied. The IOM expected her, as well as other MaM volunteers, to recount her unsuccessful migration publicly, promote anti-migration messages, and present life in Senegal in a positive light in response to audience criticism of her messages (Vammen, 2021). Yet, she shared with the audience the same financial struggles, the same desire for mobility, and the same scepticism about the campaign. The audience's misunderstanding of the constraints she faced and her position as a volunteer only increased her frustrations. One evening during the MaM caravan tour, Anna was approached by a man who believed she was working for the government and who thought she came "to talk and talk and did nothing and yet was well paid". Comments like this were highly discouraging for volunteers, who only received reimbursement for their travel and accommodation expenses, as they overlooked their difficult migration experiences, the daily hardships they faced, their unfulfilled desires, and their inability to escape a state of social entrapment (Honwana, 2012).

A fourth response involves expressions of grief and sorrow for the loss of loved ones, as well as for young Senegalese lives more broadly. During migration campaigns, deceased individuals are frequently mentioned, and images of dead bodies are shown in videos (Savio Vammen & Kohl, 2023; Heller, 2014; Musarò, 2019). Anna's tone was grave as she recalled one evening the 300 Senegalese young people who lost their lives trying to migrate within just two months. The ambience was further infused with deep heartbreak as a woman in the audience, with a broken voice and a severe expression, intervened: "I am in a lot of pain because my two brothers took the pirogue, and we didn't know about it And since then, we haven't seen them again. Each of them has left a wife and child, and that makes me really sad".

The fifth affective reaction I wish to discuss involves audience criticism of the sudden shift in affective register that campaigns employ as they move from sombre accounts of personal suffering and hardship to loud joyful music and dance. The contrast between the sadness and the playfulness can feel emotionally destabilising and was often interpreted by young participants as disrespectful. The campaign's entertaining approach trivialises their concerns by disguising their needs and emotions with "fun times". One young man told me during a MaM event: "This is folklore, it is useless, and you only learn how to dance". Like him, many viewed the campaign events as irrelevant to their situation. A man attending an evening of the *CinemArena* caravan said to me: "This sensitisation [to the dangers of migration] is a waste of time and money. You don't eat with sensitisation. People come here to talk, and that's it. We will not gain by coming here today". Their responses to campaign events conveyed frustration, resentment, and anger at the costs they incurred and the lack of any real benefits. The costs were also evident in Aida's experience with the campaign podcast, where

not only were her efforts unrewarded, but she lost time, money, and physical and emotional health, which led her to feel exploited "like a puppet".

Critical voices were often silenced by the IOM. This became clear in the context of an IOM podcast featuring Modou, a young man who was invited to discuss his experiences of migrating to Europe and returning to Senegal. As I observed the podcast recording process, I noticed that the final version, which had been edited by IOM, had left out something Modou had said about MICs: "Since when do the *modou-modou* (migrants) come to tell us that leaving for Europe is difficult? Everyone knows it is risky, and everyone has a relative who died along the way ... To raise awareness is an insult". But this was not something that the awareness-raising migration industry wanted people to hear.

5.4.1.2 Resisting the emotional burden

Young people participating in MICs attempt to resist the emotional burden placed upon them. Modou condemned the campaign podcast production with an angry tone, as he aimed to dismantle the offensive and patronising nature of awareness-raising campaigns by responding to the IOM about the long Senegalese history of migration to Europe and the sensitivity and intelligence of Senegalese people concerning migration risks. Aida also expressed her indignation at how her emotional distress was neglected during her podcast recording.

Coumba's refusal to re-enact her shipwreck experience is another subtle form of resistance. As she moved away and sat in a corner while another actor took on her role, she demonstrated disengagement towards the MIC, withdrawing her attention and consent. She thereby challenged the campaign's hierarchy and structure, including the IOM's instructions under which she should have performed for thirty consecutive days. Nafissatou also conveyed a sense of detachment during several campaign radio broadcasts, as she spent her time browsing social media on her phone, stood up, packed her belongings, and prepared to leave before the end, rather than paying attention to discussions and being enthusiastic about her contribution. She chose to keep her speeches concise and superficial at public events, which helped her avoid the risk of being humiliated by her community for returning empty-handed. Young people who observed MIC events and ultimately decided to leave and refrain from participation also conveyed their disinterest in or disagreement with the campaign's messages and objectives.

Even Nafissatou's gesture of holding Bintou's hand as she spoke at a campaign event can be seen as a form of resistance. It was another way to counter the emotional strain. In this unscripted act, Nafissatou heard, acknowledged, and contemplated the suffering inflicted on Senegalese people by violent migration regimes. Feelings of compassion and empathy arose from her expression of solidarity and silent protest against the abuses and injustices her friend had witnessed.

5.4.2 Youth's expression of protest through affective registers

Around fifty students took seats in the classroom when an IOM employee and a few MaM volunteers arrived at the school. The teacher left the room while Alex, the IOM staff member, started the activity: "We are here today to pass on a message of awareness because you are the new generation and should be informed". He encouraged young people to become advocates for campaign messages, as they had the chance that day to learn about the dangerous realities of irregular migration. He added: "So today is about saying jaruko[9] – it is not worth it". After him, Abdou, a MaM volunteer, told the students about his experience in a Libyan prison: "They [the guards] mistreat you and sell you out to other prisons". A second volunteer, Fama, intervened. She pointed out the desperation of Abou's mother when her son left Senegal. His actions caused his mother more trouble than it was worth, Fama asserted. She continued: "Every time they hit you, they call your mother so that she can hear you screaming. Can you imagine that pain?"

Alex proceeded with the screening of a video showing rescue operations at sea off the coast of Libya. "Europe's Migration Tragedy: Life and Death in the Mediterranean", read the title. "This is what death and survival look like", the narrator said, as images of dead bodies floating in the sea appeared on the screen. The students emitted tiny yelps, horrified to see that babies were also among those crowded onto the boat. A deep sadness was palpable in their eyes, and a gloomy mood descended upon the classroom. For a while, no sound could be heard.

The activity continued with the reading of short texts that some students had composed that day. In front of her classmates, a 15-year-old girl read the poem she wrote with one of her peers:

[9] Jaruko= it is not worth it; Jarnako= it is worth it.

Une vie sans vie – A life without life

On vie sans vie	We live without life
On subit sans dire	We suffer without saying
On crie sans bruit	We cry without noise
Notre peur n'est pas la mort	Our fear is not death
Mais la pauvreté	But poverty
Même si tout est vanité	Though all is vanity
Dans un pays d'inégalité	In a country of inequality
Où règne la pression de la société	Where social pressure rules
Nous, Jeunes, victimes de la trahison	We, Youth, victims of betrayal
Sur un chemin sans direction	On a path without direction
Rempli d'annexion	Filled with ambitions
Mais sans réalisation	But without realisation
Au périr de notre vie	At the perishing of our lives
Essuyer les larmes de notre famille	Wiping away our family's tears
Écouter, écouter, écouter	Listen, listen, listen
Il est temps que vous nous écoutez	It is time you listen to us
Si vous pouvez entendre les cris de notre cœur	If you can hear the cry of our hearts
Comprendre notre peur	Understand our fear
Ressentir notre douleur	Feel our grief
Si tu peux voir notre peine	If you can see our pain
Alors prend la peine de répondre à notre appel	Then take the trouble to answer our call
Car c'est juste un rappel	For this is just a reminder
Le rappel qui vous rappel	The reminder that reminds you
Que l'immigration nous appelle	That migration is calling us all

The class listened attentively to her firm voice, and the atmosphere became emotionally charged as instrumental music played softly in the background until a resounding round of applause shattered the mood in support of the message conveyed by their peers' poem. Smiling, the girls returned to their seats as the room buzzed with excitement, filled with laughter and voices. The IOM staff member showed no response, simply passing the microphone to the next couple of students.

At another high school that the campaign visited, a 17-year-old boy read a letter he had written to his mother during the session:

...for this cause is worth leaving, leaving, running away, going because I am fed up with this struggle, leaving because I am fed up with this evil, leaving. Leave, yes, to free yourself, because from birth to adolescence, passing through childhood, I suffered from many circumstances that were sometimes a source of perseverance and endurance, but any excess is harmful. The only solution is to take the boat and travel; I will make it despite the difficulties – "Barça or Barsakh"[10]. I do not care if I get lost in the Mediterranean or sink into the desert heatwave; I will leave at any cost and then come back to assist you. You have done so much for me; this time, it is my turn to pay the price. I will pay back all the tears you have shed. I never run away from my fight, and I will turn it into my weapon. I must leave this country, yes, this country where we live in poverty, obviously for eternity. I did not choose where to be born, dear parents, but I will be the master of my destiny and my future. I will leave this country where the government, yes those who govern us, those who should set a good example, to remain working for the homeland, they are the ones who leave us every holiday to go to the West, they are the ones who have sold us, sold our lands, our seas and all the work of our grandfathers. So, I am going too; I am going home to where my country's wealth is, where my ancestors' blood and sweat are. I am just going to take what they have taken from me. Mum, forgive me; if you find this letter, I will no longer be of this world, but be convinced that I left for a better future; I left to return and serve. If there were favourable conditions, Wallahi[11], I would not leave my home, but if I did, it is for the pursuit of happiness. I am leaving because I am aware that where the lives of some begin is where the lives of others end. See you later, my dear mother, from your son who has caused you so much pain.

Loud cheers erupted, followed by lengthy applause. The IOM staff needed to intervene to restore calm in the classroom before continuing with a special quiz on migration. At the end of each school activity, the IOM posted on its social media pages pictures and videos with short captions describing the content of the event (e.g. film projections, testimonies, debate, quiz). The content of the students' texts and other contributions was never made available online.

With poems and essays, high school students in Senegal respond to campaign messages and images designed to frighten them into abandoning their desire to migrate. When recited in

[10] Barcelona or death.
[11] I swear to God/Allah

front of the class and the campaign implementation team, the texts composed by the students, along with their bodily reactions during activities, evoke sentiments of protest through which they denounce social injustices.

The attention students devote to life in Senegal and their perceptions of migration sharply contrast with the dominant discourse on risks expressed by IOM staff, according to which young people only take risks when migrating irregularly, and educating them about those risks is essential (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007). The speeches of MaM volunteers and the screening of the video underscore the dangers of being trafficked, abused, attacked, imprisoned, tortured, and ultimately dying. By referring to the students as "the generation that needs to be informed", the IOM staff member running the activities assumes that young people lack knowledge about the risks of irregular migration while simultaneously encouraging them to self-identify as potential migrants who may encounter such threats in their lifetime. This hierarchy of risks, claimed in the name of protection, reflects how IOM campaigns neglect the structural conditions that render potential migrants prone to leave Senegal in the first place (Bartels, 2021).

In their responses, young people address the social, political, and economic conditions that contribute to global disparities and the unequal distribution of mobility rights. The injustices that profoundly impact students' reality, their living conditions in Senegal, their roles within the international community and their families are expressed through an affective register composed of a range of emotions. Feelings of subjugation and alienation emerge from the first line of the poem, one of the girls read out, followed by the evocation of grief suppressed in the second and third lines. The heartbreaking letter the boy wrote to his mother conveys a prolonged state of suffering that tests his ability to endure and culminates in exasperation, as his words about being "fed up" suggest. Through a range of emotions, young people ascribe meaning to their daily lives and protest against their precarious situations, against their struggles and the "evils" surrounding them.

Distrust, frustration, anger, and deception arise from young people's perception that the state is enacting unjust neoliberal economic reforms and "selling them out". In the shadows of the global economy, young people feel marginalised and deprived. Moreover, disillusionment arises from the "vanity of all", an inconsistency and absence of meaning. On a "path without direction", young people feel bewilderment as their ambitions go unrealised and failure is imposed. Through a sense of disillusionment, bewilderment, failure, frustration, and anger, they recognise their entrapment in an unequal socioeconomic environment where personal achievement becomes elusive, and their livelihoods and social standing are threatened by a range of social pressures.

Through their dense affective registers, Senegalese students envision action. Presenting migration as compelling is an emotionally charged endeavour. The writers of both poem and letter convey profound sadness, compassion, and commitment as children who perceive

their role as being "to pay the price" and "to return and serve". The poem underscores the fading of life and the students' efforts to comfort by "wiping away our family's tears". The letter alludes to the boy's possible death, as he plans to sacrifice himself through migration for the sake of his potential happiness and that of his family. The separation from his mother evokes sadness, yet it is necessary to "repay her tears" and alleviate her suffering. The guilt and shame campaigns direct at migrants regarding their irresponsible behaviour towards their families (Williams & Coddington, 2023) stand in contrast to students' own sense of duty and self-sacrifice. It is for good reasons that young people decide to risk death on migration journeys (Mbaye, 2014). Rather than accepting responsibility for controlling their own desires to migrate, a responsibility the IOM seeks to externalise to them (Bartels, 2021), Senegalese campaign audiences emphasise that migration is crucial for improving their situations.

Assertively, students communicate that migration is "their calling". Their words are firm:"The only solution is to take the boat and travel", "at any cost", "to free themselves". These expressions generate confidence, self-determination, and relentless perseverance. Their desire to migrate is further fuelled by phrases like "to master one's destiny", "to attain a better future", "to pursue happiness", and "to take (back) what was taken from me". These circulate a sense of empowerment, hope for change, and a sense of purpose. The applause, cheers, and shouts that the class directed at the two students produce empathy and solidarity, illustrating how the emotive actions they envisioned bind the students together. With their emotionally charged voices and gestures, students protest against the IOM's anti-migration discourse and its attempts to normalise sedentarism and stifle their dreams of moving. In stark contrast to statements by IOM staff, young people's message is that "attempting to migrate is worthwhile" as it may lead to positive change, thereby confirming the "positive master narrative" regarding migration that is widespread in West Africa (Trauner et al., 2024). Their demand to be heard—"listen, listen, listen; it is time you listen to us"—reinforces their call against systemic socio-economic injustices that oppress them.

In other words, emotions such as grief, anger, disillusionment, sadness, determination, and solidarity create affective spaces of imagination and possibility that assist youth in resisting their subaltern positioning (Zani & Momesso, 2021). Their subaltern position is inherent in the category of "campaign receiver" and reflects the social deprivation and exclusion experienced by youth as a social category in urban Senegal (Prothmann, 2017). Affective responses, therefore, are political expressions that intentionally challenge power dynamics reiterated by MICs and hold the potential for social transformation (Ahmed, 2014).

5.5 Emotional violence and Senegalese youth's appeal to social justice

The collective affective space of MICs is generated by the circulation of various emotions between implementers, performers, and spectators during interactions in campaign public events. Emotions such as sadness, fear, grief, shame, frustration, discouragement, and anger are produced by the public enactment and narration of traumatic stories and the exposure of Senegalese youth to images, abuses, failures, and evocations of physical violence and death during the campaign activities they attend. The use by campaigns of music and folklore in response to young people's concerns also generates frustration, resentment, anger and feelings of exploitation. Moreover, the hierarchy of risk and the moralising narratives campaigns impose on receivers result in affective responses charged with protest. Hence, as they engage in campaigns, youth bear the burden of significant emotional labour. An appreciation of this emotional burden allows us to observe the violence inherent in migration campaigns and the appeals of Senegalese youth for social justice.

Emotional violence is a fundamental characteristic, not a mere accident, of the MIC system and a defining aspect of its politics. Violence functions through a process of othering, in which affect and emotions play a crucial role in shaping subjectivities (Ahmed, 2014). Participation in migration campaigns makes people sick, sad, grieved, scared, distressed, ashamed, humiliated, frustrated, discouraged, disrespected, and angry. Such emotions "stick" to Senegalese youth, as campaign implementers encourage them to express their traumas. They are placed in uncomfortable situations, their voices silenced, their concerns dismissed and disguised. Audiences are also framed by paternalistic and moralising affective narratives that campaign implementers reproduce, which presume that all Senegalese youth desire to migrate. MICs negatively affect their lives, indicating that EU funders consider a certain level of state-inflicted emotional harm acceptable. Such affective judgment follows a racial economy of emotions (Bonilla-Silva, 2019), which frames Senegalese youth as "the unwanted others" – "potential migrants". This categorisation operates not only through symbolic discursive violence (Bartels, 2021) but also through means of emotional violence.

Senegalese youth emotionally experience, learn from, and interpret the social space and interactions of MICs. Repetitive feelings of fear, sorrow, sadness, shame, grief, hopelessness, frustration, resentment, and anger affect their identities, perceptions of society, and their positions within it (Svašek & Skrbiš, 2007; Ahmed, 2014). Thus, emotionally violent practices come to define them and their reality, legitimising the power relations upon which the campaign system is founded. However, emotions are not immutable (Zani & Momesso, 2021). The refusal to perform, the tendency to omit information, feeling rushed and distracted, leaving before the end, comforting others, condemning the forces of migration campaigns, and writing protest poems produce detachment, disagreement, solidarity, and anger.

These affective registers create alignment among Senegalese youth in their social environments as well as an affective dissonance with the emotionally violent register of campaigns. The affective registers of youth challenge and have the potential to de-normalise the violence inflicted upon them by MICs.

Through emotional forms of protest, Senegalese young people appeal to social justice, which is the foundation of their cultural politics (Ahmed, 2014). Through feelings of subjugation, grief, exasperation, distrust, frustration, deception, failure, and anger, they fight for social justice. They emotionally express resistance to their precarious livelihoods, their marginal position in the international economy, and their social entrapment. Their interpretation of their family role encompasses sadness, compassion, commitment, duty, and sacrifice. At the same time, emotions such as confidence, empowerment, hope, and determination convey resistance to the power structures that restrain their mobility. They call for the equal distribution of capabilities and rights that give people access to mobility and the re-distribution of socio-economic and political power that allows them to stay in Senegal with dignity; in other words, they call for mobility justice (Montegary & White, 2015). Their appeal for social justice lies in the quest to dismantle the structural conditions that put them at risk in Senegal and drive them to migrate irregularly in despair. This is essential to their efforts to improve their circumstances, given that campaign policy does not address the inequalities that sustain the North–South divide (Castles, 2004). However, the potential for transformation is quashed by MIC producers, thereby making MICs a repressive system. This was evidenced in the video of the school activity the IOM shared on its Facebook page, which omitted the reading of the students' poems and texts, thus silencing their voices.

5.6 Conclusion

Migration information campaigns funded by EU states and implemented in countries of the Global South mobilise emotions to govern the mobility and subjectivities of their audiences (Williams, 2020; Savio Vammen & Kohl, 2023). MICs seek to confine desires to national territories and to promote global disconnection (Freemantle & Landau, 2022). This article contributes to recent literature on MICs and affective governance of borders and migration by examining the often- overlooked circulation of emotions within campaign spaces and the effects these have on campaign audiences. By analysing the affective responses of various Senegalese young people who are targeted by campaign discourse, this research adds to academic debate in two ways.

First, it illustrates how campaigns exploit the emotions of their audiences and impose an emotional burden on them. MICs not only employ emotions to "bring the border to life" (Vammen, 2021) and to confine imaginations and people to Africa (Landau, 2019); also, emotions in MICs *are done* violently. This is fundamental to MICs' construction of the exclu-

sionary group of "potential migrants" from African countries, which has the effect of normalising emotional violence. This normalisation explains the disinterest of EU states towards the emotional impact, the emotional harm, of MICs on their target populations. Secondly, this article shows how campaign receivers are not passive recipients of migration management discourses (Pagogna & Sakdapolrak, 2023; Savio Vammen & Kohl, 2023) but rather contribute to the campaign's affective space by mobilising a different affective register. Through their affective contributions, Senegalese youth convey messages of protest that highlight the inadequacy and hypocrisy of campaign interventions and their narrative of sedentarism, as well as the necessity of structural changes in the name of social justice. Taking the emotions of campaign receivers seriously may be a crucial first step towards dismantling the violent campaign apparatus and for EU campaign initiators to take seriously the damaging effects of their work. They can no longer hide behind a veil of ignorance (Scheel & Ustek-Spilda, 2019).

MIC Contre-Courant, theatre rehearsals, August 2021, © Sarita Marchesi

MIC Migrants as Messengers, Caravan Tour, Day 7, June 2021, © Massow Ka

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

EU-funded migration campaigns emerge, develop, and reach their conclusions through a cycle of distinct phases, which I identify as ideation, implementation, and reception. Each is shaped by the situated practices of different actors between the Global North and the Global South. Understanding how MICs are conceived by their European funders, performed by Senegalese organisers, and perceived by the young target audience was the focus of this thesis. Bringing together the lived experiences of the multiple actors involved in the making of MICs helps us to understand how campaign messages are created, transformed, and resisted. MIC contributors may reiterate or contest a campaign's initial intentions, their positions can be ambiguous, and their interpretations can be conflicting. This renders MICs full of contradictions and yet central to how border regimes are produced, navigated, and contested.

I focused on the *lifecycle* of migration information campaigns between Europe and Africa, addressing the research question: *How are migration information campaigns imagined, implemented, and received by European and African actors, from the Netherlands to Senegal?* I employed a multi-sited and ethnographic approach, including a matched sample case of a campaign I tracked throughout its entire cycle. I conducted interviews with seventeen EU campaign initiators, including seven policymakers working in the Netherlands for the Dutch government and ten Western development workers from international organisations and EU institutions based in Senegal. I undertook 15 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Senegal, during which I followed the implementation of 16 MICs. Data collection in Senegal involved participant observation at various MIC events and interactions with their young participants and implementers. Furthermore, I conducted interviews with twenty local implementers, eighteen campaign "volunteers", and nine professional artists who contributed in different ways to realising campaign events and were simultaneously the target of campaign discourses.

In the three empirical chapters, I analysed the perspectives of the multiple actors – initiators, local implementers, and receivers – who play a role in the making of MICs. I used the concepts of imaginaries, brokers, speech acts, affect, and emotions to understand how individual European policymakers justify funding MICs, how Senegalese citizens implement campaigns locally, and how Senegalese youth respond during MIC events. I demonstrated that, as a whole, a campaign emerges from the ways that initiators imagine their roles, aims and target audience, local implementers translate campaign goals into practice, and recipients undertake emotional labour as they participate in campaign events. The imaginaries, speech acts, and affective reactions of campaign participants provide insights into the contradictions they encounter within the campaign cycle. I argued that campaign actors strive to reconcile these contradictions, and in doing so, they create, reproduce, transform, and protest campaign messages according to their different interests, knowledge, and value systems. Overall, this

thesis contributes a nuanced understanding of EU migration campaigns aimed at limiting the mobility of African people by demonstrating how campaigns and their messages are simultaneously supported and contested through the often- invisible work of multiple transnational actors. The thesis helps to explain MICs as messy, dynamic, and contradictory phenomena, rather than a blueprint for effective migration governance. The following sections summarise the main empirical findings, outline my main contributions to the literature, address the limitations of my work, and suggest ideas for possible future research on MICs.

6.2 Main empirical findings

Each empirical chapter in this thesis covers one phase of the campaign lifecycle and highlights the experiences of a specific group of actors: European funders, local implementers, and Senegalese youth. Each chapter addresses a specific sub-question and helps answer the overarching research question.

Chapter 3 asks *how EU campaign initiators justify the need for migration campaigns and what their justifications reveal about the imaginaries they have about themselves, their subjects, and the different contexts in which they operate.* In this chapter, I apply the concept of imaginaries to analyse the justifications Dutch policymakers and Western development experts provided for conducting migration information campaigns aimed at curbing irregular migration to Europe from the Global South. I find that campaign initiators justify MICs in three ways: first, they believe they have a moral duty to provide potential migrants with objective information; second, they regard MICs as doing no harm compared to stricter migration control measures; third, they believe that MICs send positive messages and contribute to development in the countries where they are implemented. These justifications are rooted in imaginaries initiators hold of themselves, their work promoting MICs, the contexts in which campaigns are produced and received, and their target audience, so-called "potential migrants". My analysis shows that initiators' imaginaries are full of contradictions. On the one hand, they imagine upholding humanitarian principles and promoting educational initiatives that will empower people to change their behaviour. On the other hand, they imagine that target populations will often choose to embark on undocumented migration journeys, even when fully informed, due to the lack of legal migration pathways available to them. They question the effectiveness of MICs and they acknowledge the injustice inherent in migration regimes. I argue that through their justifications, campaign initiators attempt to reconcile the contradictions they encounter in implementing a policy they perceive to exist at the intersection of humanitarian and securitarian logics, and they seek to make sense of their institutional position and the work they do. Their imaginaries consolidate a view of MICs as reasonable, harmless, and necessary, legitimising the instrumentalization of care to enforce control.

Chapter 4 examines *why Senegalese citizens participate in implementing campaigns in Senegal and how they perform their role as local intermediaries.* I highlight the paradoxical position of local MIC staff in Senegal who help to disseminate messages that aim to restrict their own mobility as well as that of their peers. Drawing from development literature, I understand the local staff of campaign implementing organisations as brokers whose task is to translate EU policy and goals into practice by running campaign activities on the ground. I analyse their translation work through the lens of speech acts to show how they simultaneously do and contest borderwork. By adhering to project guidelines, local implementers endorse campaign objectives and reap personal benefits. At the same time, they influence and transform campaign messages through subtle speech acts and the strategic choices they make. They create space for alternative messages to emerge, messages that challenge the campaign's hegemonic narrative and bring local perspectives to the forefront. While local implementers contribute to enforcing and normalising soft borders in Senegal, they also engage in opportunistic behaviour and use their position to resist EU policy discourse and push alternative messages. My analysis shows that local campaign implementers are ambiguous subjects whose work both helps to sustain global migration regimes and enhances local struggles for change.

Chapter 5 discusses *how Senegalese youth respond to MICs and what their reactions reveal about the affective registers and non-material effects that MICs have on them.* I analyse the affective reactions that young Senegalese people express at MIC events through actions, gestures, silences, and written texts. To do so, I engage with literature on affect and emotions. The chapter highlights the circulation of overlooked emotions in campaign spaces and calls attention to the non-material and non-verbalizable effects of MICs on the local population. I argue that by expecting people to (re)enact, narrate, and listen to traumatic stories in an apparently festive environment, by encouraging their participation as "volunteers" to impart anti-migration messages despite their scepticism and precarious position, and by silencing critical voices, MICs impose a significant emotional burden on their recipients. Through the violent production of emotions, MICs create the exclusionary category of "potential migrants", whose emotionality is not regarded seriously. Violent emotions "stick" to the bodies of Senegalese youth in ways that construct them as "unwanted Others". Secondly, the analysis reveals that through their affective registers, young Senegalese individuals who participate in MIC activities protest against global disparities and challenge the violent anti-migration discourse, as well as the campaigns' attempts to normalise sedentarism and suppress their dreams of achieving a better future through migration. They bring attention to the inadequacy and hypocrisy of MICs, demanding structural change in the name of social justice.

6.3 Contributions: understanding the contradictions of MICs

This thesis contributes to the study of EU-funded migration information campaigns by providing an understanding of the messiness and contradictions that underpin their existence and make them shifting and unpredictable phenomena. I explored the contradictions in three main ways: 1) by considering the work of multiple actors across two geographical locations in the lifecycle of MICs; 2) by highlighting the ambiguities of the positions campaign actors occupy; 3) by illustrating the polysemy of MICs, that is, the coexistence of multiple interpretations. In the following sub- sections, I elaborate on these three points by integrating findings from the empirical chapters and linking them to relevant bodies of literature.

6.3.1 Multiple campaign actors and the "work" they do

EU migration information campaigns emerge and develop through the work that multiple actors carry out between campaign-funding states in the Global North and campaign-receiving states in the Global South. In the existing migration and border literature, migration campaigns are often conceptualised as forms of migration governance; MICs function as the soft externalised borders of Western states and serve to control migration and restrict access to their territories (Pécoud, 2010; Williams, 2020; Van Dessel, 2021). Other studies have examined campaigns in the countries where these are implemented, bringing into focus local intermediation processes (Bartels, 2017; Maâ et al., 2022; Rodriguez, 2017) and exploring how MICs influence people's knowledge of risks, aspirations, and their decisions to migrate (van Bemmel, 2020; Fiedler, 2020; Fleay et al., 2016; Heidbrink, 2023). Of the three groups of actors who are fundamental to understanding the lifecycle of MICs and their broader effects – the European policymakers who initiate campaigns, the Senegalese implementers who carry out campaign activities on behalf of international organisations, and the Senegalese youth whom MICs target – the first two have received little academic attention, whereas the third has mostly been researched through interviews about their information practices and migration aspirations.

By employing a lifecycle approach and a multi-sited research design, I traced the chain of actors between the Netherlands and Senegal through which campaign messages travel from the funding to the receiving state. In examining the perspectives of these different actors, I have made three main contributions to the literature on MICs. First, I have helped explain the work necessary for MICs to occur and through which they persist and are contested. I have shown that this work involves imagination, translation, and emotion. These forms of work are crucial for understanding how campaign messages are formulated and reconfigured, ultimately influencing the campaign's outcomes. As messages move through

interconnected actors, they are transformed in ways that reflect the contradictions each group encounters in carrying out campaign work, and how these contradictions are reconciled by the different actors in different ways. Thus, by showing how initiators imagine campaigns, how local implementers execute them, and how the target population feels, my thesis has enhanced our understanding of the contradictions inherent in campaign work.

Secondly, the ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in Senegal, while numerous MICs were implemented, was essential for observing forms of campaign work that often go unnoticed when researchers rely solely on quantitative surveys or qualitative interviews, and yet they profoundly affect campaign outcomes and their participants. As I delved into the social environments of MICs, I was able to gain insights into the perspectives of local staff and feel the affective mood of campaign events. Employing an ethnographic methodology allowed me to investigate participants' lived experiences, observe implementers' speech acts, and notice the effects campaigns have on receivers' bodies. By examining the chain of actors, I was also able to clarify their shared responsibility for the materialisation of MICs. By design, MICs rely on formal or informal partnerships among social actors from diverse backgrounds. The development, actualisation, and outcomes of campaign projects depend on the knowledge, expertise, behaviours, and positionalities of all the actors involved. MICs are collective efforts, which means not only that EU funders become increasingly invisible (Cham & Trauner, 2023; Van Dessel, 2024), but also that actors' different interests intersect and that campaign messages become entangled in a way that makes tracing their origin challenging.

6.3.2 The ambiguous positioning of campaign actors

Migration campaigns generate paradoxical subject positions. My research on Dutch policymakers, local Senegalese implementers, and the Senegalese youth who campaigns target revealed that all experience ambiguities in their positions within the campaign cycle. Looking at ambiguous positionalities helped to explain the contradictory discourses, actions, and feelings campaigns produce.

The policymakers who set campaigns in motion operate within a dual discourse that emphasises the need to raise awareness of migration risks while also deterring migration; campaigns are framed as balancing humanitarian and security interests. Campaign initiators view this dual discourse as embedded in campaign policy and, consequently, as encompassing their own work. At the same time, their interpretations are influenced by personal convictions which may challenge the initial policy discourse. I have demonstrated that while they justify the need for MICs, campaign initiators maintain a discourse rife with contradictions due to their role establishing initiatives with seemingly conflicting objectives – to provide care and to control migration – , which they find challenging to reconcile. My thesis thus adds

to our understanding of the humanitarian government as an ambivalent entity. Previous research has shown that the humanitarian rationale operates through the simultaneous enactment of a politics of care and one of exclusion (Fassin, 2012). In the context of migration governance, this entails making migrant safety and border security concurrently attainable goals (Pallister-Wilkins, 2015; Williams, 2015, 2016; Little & Vaughan-Williams, 2017). My research adds to scholarly debates by showing that MICs, as a humanitarian form of migration governance, are constructed and consolidated by the imaginaries of individual policymakers.

Local implementers play ambiguous roles as brokers between the funders and targets of campaign initiatives. Through the lens of speech acts, I explored the way their translation work encompasses fulfilling their roles as organisers, pursuing personal gain, and allowing space for the local population to contest hegemonic discourses. Previous studies have focused on how people in migrant-sending countries actively engage with MICs (Maâ et al., 2022; Rodriguez, 2017; Bouilly, 2010; Bartels, 2017; Vammen, 2021). By emphasising how local implementers navigate the contradictory interests tied to their positions, including their role in facilitating activities that seek to contain their own aspirations to migrate and those of their peers, my findings show what local campaign intermediation entails. My research allows us to understand how MICs are unpredictable political events where hegemonic powers of migration governance are both reinforced and disrupted by local actors.

The Senegalese youth who attend MICs also often find themselves in ambiguous positions. As my analysis has shown, they experience conflicting emotions at campaign events, which have contrasting effects on them. While scholars have discussed the affective dimension of campaign discourse and images (Savio Vammen & Kohl, 2023; Musaró, 2019; Heller, 2014), I have highlighted the dissonant affective registers used during campaign events in efforts to define receivers' subjectivities. Senegalese youth make sense of their reality through the emotionally violent register employed by MICs. MICs combine entertainment and troubling moments, generating discomfort, suppressing young people's voices, and overlooking their concerns. In response, youth use their own affective registers to express resistance and protest against the hypocrisy of campaign projects and forms of injustice. My findings contribute to the scholarly debate on the affective governance of migration through MICs (Williams & Coddington, 2023; Williams, 2020; Savio Vammen & Kohl, 2023) by demonstrating that emotional violence and the protest it provokes are integral components of MIC governance. I have explored the non-material and the less visible, yet nonetheless meaningful, emotional effects of MICs, which are crucial for fostering a better understanding of receivers both as subjugated subjects and empowered protesters within the campaign apparatus.

6.3.3 The polysemy of MICs: the coexistence of contradictory worldviews

Campaign initiators, local implementers, and receivers create, transform, and contest campaign messages. Such a generative process makes migration campaigns polysemous. This polysemy points to the coexistence of a range of contradictory messages and interpretations within the same individual and among groups of campaign participants working on the same MIC. I have shown this coexistence by centring the analysis on the imaginaries of individual campaign initiators, acts of translation by local implementers, and the affective responses of the campaign target audience. Understanding campaigns' polysemy has two important implications. First, it helps explain how the worldviews held by the multiple groups of actors involved in MICs are grounded in contradictions. Second, it shows how the different worldviews of campaign actors align with or diverge from one another. Worldviews are the ways individuals understand themselves in relation to others and help explain why they behave and interpret things in specific ways.

In Chapter 3, I found that European policymakers who formulate campaign policies and allocate funding view the provision of information to populations in the Global South as a moral and humanitarian duty that European states have to prevent departures to Europe and reduce migrant deaths. They believe that MICs are harmless and indeed benefit local populations by fostering development in their countries of origin, where opportunities for success are more readily available than in Europe. Furthermore, EU campaign initiators often view potential migrants as misinformed yet able to abandon their plans to migrate once they are made aware of the risks they would face. At the same time, they recognise that potential African migrants have limited options and harbour doubts about the effectiveness of MICs in curbing migration to Europe. The contradictions in policymakers' views highlight the tension behind the conception of MICs. Identifying this tension provides insight into the internal incoherence of MICs as a migration policy and how individual policymakers may envision different approaches to managing human mobility compared to the ones they actually adopt.

Campaign implementers embody contradictory worldviews and navigate various interests as they do their job. On the one hand, they perpetuate EU discourse and contribute to the normalisation of restrictive migration policies imposed on African populations. On the other hand, the often vague instructions they receive regarding campaign activities, combined with the inadequacy of campaign projects for the local context, prompt them to find ways to transform the campaign's intended goals, leading to the emergence of alternative messages. These messages address socioeconomic disparities in Senegal, the obstacles youth face in attaining social adulthood, the limitations of EU-funded MICs, and the commitment to democratising migration in Senegal. They contest or move beyond the awareness-raising and deterrence discourses of MICs. Thus, the agentic work of translation that local implementers perform reflects their interpretation of MICs as opportunities they can leverage for

personal and communal benefit while also enabling forms of resistance. Understanding how implementers interpret the multiple contradictory significances of MICs is crucial for fully grasping why they do what they do as brokers.

The worldviews of Senegalese youth are constructed by recurrent feelings of fear, sorrow, sadness, shame, grief, hopelessness, frustration, resentment, and anger as well as confidence, empowerment, hope, and determination. These emotions are produced by the public enactment and narration of traumatic stories, exposure to representations of migrant misfortune and death, and acts of resistance and protest. Youth are subject to emotionally violent practices upon which the campaign system is founded and through which they interpret reality. At the same time, youth communicate messages about the inadequacy and hypocrisy of campaign interventions as well as the necessity of structural changes to bring about social justice. They believe MICs do not significantly contribute to improving their precarious livelihoods in Senegal, and migrating to Europe despite all the risks remains a way for them to resist structures of power that restrain their mobility. The belief that boat migration is a way to break free and that MICs are futile is exemplified in the Wolof slogan *Barça wallah Barsakh*, which continues to circulate among Senegalese youth. MICs thus create an affective space composed of conflicting emotions, including violence and protest. My thesis enhances our understanding of the non-material effects of MICs on their audience and of how Senegalese youth perceive their place in society through contrasting emotionally charged registers.

6.4 Limitations and avenues for further research

Despite contributing new findings to migration campaign studies, this thesis has limitations that deserve attention. In this section, I outline some of these and discuss ideas for future research. First, my research is limited in its focus on three groups of actors. During fieldwork, I observed that campaigns involve other actors, including local authorities, elderly community members, and professionals from the creative industry. Yet, for practical reasons and due to a lack of time, I was unable to gain in-depth insights into the experiences of all these other participants. Future research might give attention to these various other stakeholders. For instance, ethnographic studies could investigate how local authorities and community members at large perceive their roles as "hosts" and help to prepare campaign events in their locality, as well as by inquiring about their reflections during and after events. One might also consider the role of the Senegalese state. Focusing on Senegalese authorities operating at various administrative levels would enhance our understanding of how migration policy in Senegal is co-produced by European and Senegalese actors. What stance does Senegal adopt regarding the implementation of MICs in its territory, given their intention to reduce migration and the fact that the state benefits from the remittances that migrants send? Such research might provide insights into how the Senegalese state may challenge and obstruct the implementation

of EU-funded MICs, thereby revealing how the Senegalese government navigates the tension between externally driven and domestic interests linked to its political agenda on migration.

A second limitation of my thesis is my focus on the life of MICs. Additional research might well be undertaken on their death and what they leave behind. I identified the reception phase as the endpoint of MICs, the moment when campaign communications reach the target audience. However, I did not explore what remains after a campaign has run its course. Future studies could focus on the memories participants hold of the campaign events they attended and how campaigns are recounted through videos and photographs. Investigating the traces that MICs leave behind, for instance, on social media, could provide insights into how campaign messages continue to circulate and affect those who encounter them long after the anticipated duration of campaign projects.

While conducting my fieldwork, I noted that certain implementing organisations aimed for campaign projects to endure beyond the funding period. For instance, the IOM supported the creation of ASMI (*Association Sénégalaise de lutte contre la Migration Irrégulière*) as a vehicle for organising awareness-raising events in Senegal once the IOM campaign Migrants as Messengers had concluded. ASMI was comprised of return migrants who had previously served as "volunteers" for MaM. But it organised few events during my fieldwork, making it hard for me to closely monitor the work of the association. Moreover, the events I did attend were still financed by IOM, and ASMI had yet to achieve self-sufficiency in funding for its activities or develop partnerships with other funders. Nevertheless, it would have been interesting to explore the discourse promoted by ASMI and how its members tended to reproduce or diverge from the approach employed by the IOM in the MaM campaign. Future research might take a longitudinal approach to trace the social life of the association and its involvement in the migration and awareness-raising industry in Senegal.

Another limitation of my work is my focus on MICs that were funded by European stakeholders. But information campaigns are also organised by local activist-led organisations independent of foreign funding. Further studies on locally driven awareness campaigns could enrich our understanding not only of the active role local actors play in contesting and reshaping Eurocentric migration policies (Vammen, 2024) but also of how EU-funded MICs appropriate and instrumentalise local narratives for specific political ends. Among the Senegalese individuals I encountered at campaign events during my fieldwork, some believed that raising awareness and informing the population about the risks of irregular migration to Europe is primarily a pan- Africanist concern. Preventing the loss of family, friends, and community members to migration remains a priority for many Senegalese people, who are deeply committed to the well-being of their communities. Moreover, the message that African youth should "stay to succeed" may align with a discourse of solidarity and local resistance, one that refuses the idea that it is only possible "to make it" by moving North. The same message is also promoted by donor-driven development projects. Hence, Senega-

lese opponents of irregular migration could well be motivated by objectives that are quite distinct from those that are central to EU migration governance in Senegal. Future research could explore how a locally driven discourse promoting life in Senegal emerges in contexts of everyday life. Such discourse may express alternatives to current hegemonic practices of development and migration control, or they may draw on a cultural discourse that existed long before EU awareness-raising initiatives became popular in Senegal. Attention could be given to how a discourse of nationalism affects Senegalese youth, including former migrants, and the broader social dynamics that may transform, among others, migration practices.

6.5 Conclusion

While I have shown many inherent contradictions of MICs, these campaigns persist. This suggests that they hold some form of value. EU states continue to invest in initiatives aimed at preventing migrants from entering their territories. Campaigns remain active in target countries. EU- sponsored organisations rely on the expertise and knowledge of their local staff to implement projects successfully, and they exploit local sociocultural infrastructures to run their activities. Consequently, populations in African countries continue to be exposed to a discourse that highlights the risks and disadvantages of migration and encourages them to stay home and serve their country. Through their imaginaries, speech acts, and emotions, the various groups of campaign actors produce ways of understanding what migration is, whose knowledge and interests should be considered, and which policies, interventions, or struggles are needed to deal with the various issues migration involves.

Campaign actors interpret things in contradictory ways, but at the same time, their worldviews reveal that they find ways to reconcile these contradictions and to maintain the legitimacy of their actions and of the campaign work they undertake. Although individual European policymakers may challenge campaign policy, their criticisms do not turn into open contestation. On the contrary, their imaginaries give substance to and reinforce the category of the undesired potential African migrant in need of information and whose mobility should be contained to foster development in their country of origin. The belief held by campaign initiators that European states have the authority and responsibility to protect potential migrants legitimises practices of border control and the emotional violence these entail. It also reflects neocolonial power structures embedded in migration governance, where control over mobility becomes a means to gain economic and political influence. This (soft) repressive system is, to a certain extent, supported by the work that local implementers undertake in their role as intermediaries on the ground. They enable campaign infrastructure and messages aimed at keeping young people in Senegal, motivated by the economic benefits and other advantages they may gain from acting as campaign brokers. By promoting the dissemination of paternalistic and moralising affective narratives, implementers help to normalise restricti-

ve migration policies imposed on populations in the Global South. At the same time, local implementers resist the campaign's externally driven discourse. How they alter the discourse and push for change remains subtle. Yet, they provide spaces for the local community to contest migration regimes and broader social injustices. In fact, some Senegalese young people whom MICs target express their resistance and protest against the campaign's hegemonic discourse, pushing back the violence inflicted upon them. They refuse to accept interventions aimed at stopping them from moving and the socio-economic and political powers that oppress them if they stay.

Migration campaigns as a political tool have a clear goal: to prevent people from undertaking undocumented migration journeys and thus reaching Europe. However, campaigns evolve through the contributions of numerous actors, resulting in multiple interpretations of what campaigns entail and should aim to communicate or achieve. This makes MICs dynamic and mutable. They are contradictory and unpredictable phenomena, both practically and emotionally. As MICs are simultaneously endorsed and challenged by those who conceive, implement, and experience them, they appear as contentious and ambiguous projects, highlighting the fragility of migration policies that EU member states execute abroad. The fragility of MICs stems from their numerous contradictions, being constantly contested and the inconsistencies between their imagined outcomes and the experiences on the ground. While contestations to MICs often remain subtle, imperceptible, and ineffective, they may have the potential to disrupt the campaign system in the future. But sometimes MICs are also disrupted in more conspicuous and vocal ways, as some Senegalese youth involved in this research showed. Young people reclaim the space of MICs and reframe the discourse according to their own perspectives. Any effective migration policy needs to take their views into account. Now, it is time for us to listen:

After rehearsing the play for the campaign event, the young actors share with me their concerns on pressing social issues: "The system is broken. We expect the state to provide financial support for young people's projects. But here [in Senegal] you need to know the right people if you want to progress. That is why it is more convenient to do things informally", Papa says. His friend Samba highlights the difficulties youth have in finding employment. His fishing community has been badly affected by recent developments in the fishing industry: "So many people now risk their lives in illegal ways to find fish". Marie points to issues of mobility: "It is complicated to get passports or visas; only if you have the right contracts [at the embassy] can you make it [safely]". Malick intervenes: "Why can you Europeans come here without a visa, and we cannot even move?! Things must change".

MIC Migrants as Messengers, Caravan Tour, Day 7, June 2021, © Massow Ka

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Overview of the key moments in European migration policy regarding MICs

Year	Key moment / legislative text	Description
1999	European Council of Tampere	Within the Tampere program, the European Council for the first time mentions launching **information campaigns about the real possibilities of legal immigration and the prevention of all forms of human trafficking**. To be implemented in close cooperation with countries of origin and transit, these information campaigns respond to the need for more effective management of migration flows. It is generally acknowledged that the external dimension of EU migration policy began with the Tampere Council in 1999.
2002	European Council of Seville – Global Plan to combat illegal migration and human trafficking	The Action Plan for preventing and combating illegal immigration and human trafficking within the European Union aims to define a common and integrated approach across several areas. Among the measures proposed for controlling border crossings, **awareness campaigns in countries of origin are mentioned as a tool "to curb illegal migration**".
2006	Joint Africa-EU Declaration on Migration and Development	The Joint Africa-EU declaration emerges from the Tripoli Conference, which aimed to establish a comprehensive partnership between African and European countries in managing migration and development. **Information campaigns are identified as tools for cooperation designed to inform potential migrants about legal migration pathways and employment opportunities available in the destination countries, as well as to raise awareness of the risks and dangers of illegal migration and exploitation by trafficking networks.**
2015	Valletta Summit on Migration	The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) was established to support projects and activities aimed at addressing the root causes of irregular migration in the long term and improving migration management in the short term. This includes opening legal migration and mobility channels, enhancing protection and asylum systems, and combatting irregular migration, migrant smuggling, and trafficking in human beings. **Migration information campaigns in targeted African countries are among the many initiatives funded by the EUTF**.
2015-2020	EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling	The plan addresses the commitment of the EU against migrant smugglings amidst the consequences of the migration crisis. It states that **"raising awareness of the risks of smuggling and of irregular migration is crucial for preventing prospective migrants […] from embarking on hazardous journeys**". Information campaigns and the use of media by the EU are fundamental to create a **"counter-narrative" with regards to irregular migration to disseminate what are deemed to be "true" facts about coming to Europe through illegal routes**. The Commission states its intention to launch such campaigns in collaboration with "key countries of origin or transit" drawing lessons by campaigns ongoing in African countries.
2016	New Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration	The Commission envisions a more comprehensive partnership with third countries regarding information sharing and databases, judicial cooperation, financial investment, and collaboration on visas, asylum, and readmissions. Western Africa is viewed as a key region for irregular migration to Europe; therefore, **Senegal** is identified as one of the priority countries under the EU's New Partnership Framework with Third Countries, among others. In Senegal, dialogue is ongoing concerning migration-related issues,

		which should be strengthened, particularly in light of providing economic opportunities and reducing irregular flows. To achieve this, funding provided by the EUTF is mobilised.
2017	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)	The AMIF fund aims to support actions that contribute to the efficient management of migration flows and the implementation, strengthening, and development of a common Union approach to asylum and immigration. Within AMIF, the Commission adopted the 2017 Annual Work Program, which included a **Call for Proposals for funding information and awareness-raising campaigns in specific African countries**. In particular, the campaigns funded by this call aim to **dissuade migrants from leaving their countries of origin and migrating irregularly to the EU while encouraging them to choose legal migration routes**. This effort also seeks to reframe the discourse to counter the narrative of people smugglers and traffickers by informing potential migrants about the risks of irregularly entering the EU, highlighting the dangers of the journey, and showing the reality of living conditions in the EU.
2018	Managing migration in all its aspects: progress under the European Agenda on Migration	The document provides insights regarding EU migration management since the adoption of the agenda. Information campaigns are mentioned in relation to the EU's effort to counteract migrant smugglers. The document states that "**over EUR 23 million have been devoted to information and awareness raising since 2015" to fight "disinformation" and provide "potential migrants with reliable and objective information".** It also states that in the future, awareness-raising actions will focus on constructing counter-narratives.
2018	EMN Information and Awareness Raising Campaigns Working Group (EMN INFO WG)	The European Migration Network initiated the Info Working Group to support knowledge exchange among EU Member States, EU bodies, and external experts, such as international organisations, **for the conception and implementation of migration information and awareness-raising campaigns in origin countries aimed at preventing migrant smuggling and reducing irregular migration flows to the EU as well as providing objective information about EU migration and asylum policies**.
2020	New Pact on Migration and Asylum	The Pact aims to create a new framework for action to tackle migration phenomena at the EU level and offers a holistic approach regarding the tools necessary to achieve this, from asylum applications to the sharing of information between Member States and between Member States and third countries, as well as cooperation with countries of origin. Here, the EU states that the support provided would include border control measures as well as development initiatives to increase the resilience of third countries and address the root causes of migration flows. **Information campaigns and "strategic communication" about irregular migration routes and legal alternatives are part of these measure**s.
2021-2025	A renewed EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling	The action plan draws lessons from its predecessor in the struggle against migrant smuggling. It envisions tighter cooperation between EU actors and third countries. The plan states the **EU's commitment to fund awareness-raising campaigns against migrant smugglers in hotspot countries of origin and further stresses the need "to counter the fake narrative promoted by criminal networks"** by enhancing and continuously promoting information campaigns. Since the first action plan, the Commission has developed a "toolkit of best practices" to make the campaigns as efficient as possible.

Appendix B: Overview of MICs implemented in Senegal since the 2000s[18]

Year	Name	Funded / Implemented by	Description
2006	Women against irregular migration	Funded by international donors / *Le Collectif des Femmes pour la lutte contre l'immigration clandestine de Thiaroye-sur-Mer*	The Collective mobilized Senegalese women who have lost family members to raise awareness about the dangers of irregular migration to Europe through workshops and media initiatives.
2007	Don't risk your life for nothing	Spanish government in conjunction with Senegalese authorities / IOM and a local advertising agency	A TV information campaign, supplemented by radio and print messages, warning the Senegalese population about the dangers of irregular movement and the hard living conditions in Europe for African migrant. The campaign communication also reminds people of their value in their home country.
2007-2016	Surprising Europe	European Return Fund and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs / IOM, JvdW film Amsterdam, Stichting Jongens van de Wit, and photojournalist Ssuuna Golooba	Web platform and television series showing experiences from legal and illegal migrants from Africa living in Europe.
2011	Aware and safe migration between Italy and Senegal	Italian Ministry of Interior / IOM	This project focused on the importance of regular and safe migration for Senegalese nationals.
2013-2014	Project for the Prevention of Irregular Migration in Dakar and its Suburbs (PROPEMI)	Belgian Immigration Office / A local NGO (DEMNGALAM) in cooperation with local authorities	The project aimed to present the dangers of irregular migration, raise awareness on the risks associated with smuggling or trafficking, and inform about changes in national migration or return policies. Other objectives included providing information about legal migration opportunities and local employment or business opportunities in Senegal.
2016-today	Aware Migrants	Italian Ministry of Interior / IOM (Rome)	The multimedia campaign, targeting 16 African countries, including Senegal, was launched in English, French and Arabic. It features personal narratives of migrants about the dangerous journey they undertook across the desert and the Mediterranean to reach Europe. Through multiple activities, which included debates with return migrants, artistic workshops, public events and the production of a series of radio programs, Senegalese women gathered to brainstorm on messages around migration issues.
2016	Odysseus 2.0	European Union and the Italian Ministry of Interior / Professional video makers	Pictures and videos were disseminated on social media to illustrate the primary migration routes from West Africa to Europe, as experienced by migrants travelling to Libya and Europe from various African countries.
2016-today	CinemArena	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation /	An itinerant caravan bringing cinema to local communities to raise awareness about the risks and dangers of undocumented

[18] The MICs listed in the table were not part of my research sample but provided contextual insights that informed my study.

		Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and IOM	migration. Theatre performances, workshops, thematic debates and concerts are also organized to discuss issues of migration.
2016-2017	Choisir en toute connaissance – West Africa Emergency Initiative	AICS Consortium of Italian NGOs in Senegal	In the context of the regional program 'emergency and migration, ' five projects were implemented to reduce the causes of irregular migration, promote better living conditions in Senegal and other West African countries, support local development, and assist people in making informed decisions.
2016-2018	*Toog Sabab Tekki* (Stay, engage, succeed)	Italian Ministry of Interior / NGO ARCS	As part of the PONTI project, representatives from civil society groups were invited to design an information campaign to raise awareness about the educational and professional opportunities, employment possibilities, and training available to young people and women in Senegal, as well as to inform on the risks of irregular migration.
2017-2019 1st phase	Migrants as Messengers[19]	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs / IOM	Return migrants share their migration experiences through videos and public social gatherings to discourage their peers from embarking on irregular journeys to Europe.
2017-2021	Réussir au Sénégal	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) / German Development Agency (GIZ) in partnership with IOM and numerous civil society organizations.	As part of a broader project aimed at job creation and enterprise development, several awareness-raising activities on the risks of irregular migration and the prospects for success in Senegal were organized.
2018-2019	Redemption Song	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Italian NGO LVIA	Through a wide-reaching awareness campaign in five West African countries (Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Niger), and in collaboration with the African diaspora in Italy, the project aimed to raise awareness among young Africans of the risks of irregular migration. The goal was to encourage them to avoid undertaking highly dangerous journeys and instead take advantage of the opportunities available in their own countries.
2020-2022	Starting over by staying – *Nun Nooy Sénégal – Toog Tekki Fii* (We Are Senegal – We Stay and Succeed Here)	AICS Consortium of organizations led by an NGO ACRA	The project aimed to create and enhance opportunities for populations in the regions of Sédhiou and Kolda (Senegal) and Gabu (Guinea-Bissau)—areas of origin of migration flows—by focusing on youth employment (ages 18–35) and the reintegration of return migrants. It also aimed to raise awareness in Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, and Italy on the risks of migration and the opportunities available in the countries of origin.

[19] The second phase of the campaign Migrants as Messengers was included in my research sample.

Appendix C: Sample of Migration Information Campaigns

	Campaign Name	Funder	Implementer (Coordinator)	Timeframe	Places of implementation
1	**Migrants as Messengers (MaM)**	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs	IOM - Regional Office for West and Central Africa	2019-2022 (2nd phase)	**Senegal** (regions of Dakar, Thiès, Tambacounda, Kolda) - Ivory Coast, The Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone
2	**CinemArena**	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation through AICS	IOM Country Office (Senegal)	Jan 2021- June 2022	**Senegal** (regions of Dakar, Saint Louis) Ivory Coast
3	**MIGRA – Togg Tekki** Migrazioni, Impiego, Giovani, Resilienza, Auto-impresa[20]	AICS (AID11659)[21]	NGO LVIA	Nov 2020- June 2022	**Senegal** (regions of Dakar, Ziguinchor) Guinea, Guinea-Bissau
4	**The Migrant Project**	Spanish Government	Seefar (private company)	May – Nov 2021	**Senegal** (regions of Dakar, Mbour)
5	**Contre-Courant** (Counter-Current)	IOM and private funds	Independent artist with IOM	May – Dec 2021	**Senegal** (region of Dakar)
6	**Nouvelles Perspectives** - Mythes et réalités, contre-discours et narration partagée pour une meilleure connaissance des risques et des alternatives à la migration irrégulière[22]	European Commission: AMIF 2019 (Call AMIF-2019-AG-CALL)	NGO COSPE	Feb 2021 - Jan 2023	**Senegal** (regions of Dakar, Ziguinchor) Italy, France, Belgium
7	**Tekki Fii** (Stay Here) Develop Employment in Senegal	European Commission - EUTF	Delegation of the European Union in Senegal	May 2021	**Senegal** (regions of Kolda, Sedhiou, Ziguinchor).
8	**Global Migration Film Festival** (GMFF) West and Central Africa Edition	European Commission, IOM, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs	IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa – Awareness Raising Unit	Nov-Dec 2021 (6th edition)	**Senegal** (regions of Dakar, Thiès), Chad, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Ivory Coast, Guinea, The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone.
9	**Empowering young people** in Africa through media and communication	AICS Dakar	Communication Office of UNESCO Dakar	Jan 2021 – Jan 2022	**Senegal**, Mali, Niger, Guinea-Conakry, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon.

[20] Stay and succeed. Migration, Employment, Youth, Resilience, Self-enterprise

[21] 2019 Emergency initiative to protect vulnerable populations, displaced persons, refugees, irregular migrants and return migrants in Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, The Gambia and Mali.

[22] New Perspectives - Myths and realities, counter-discourses and shared narratives for a better understanding of the risks and alternatives to irregular migration

10	**Toog Tekki Thi Sama Rew** (Stay and Succeed in My Country)	IOM Country Office (Senegal)	Local communication agency	June-July 2021	**Senegal** (region of Dakar)
11	**Foo Jem** (Where are you going)	AICS Regional Program on Emergency and Migration (2016-2017)	AICS Dakar with urban culture association	2017 – 2021	Produced in **Senegal** Online dissemination and radio broadcast in Senegal
12	**Yenna**	EU-IOM Joint Initiative (1st phase) Government of the Netherlands through COMPASS initiative (2nd phase)	IOM - Regional Office for West and Central Africa	2021 – on going	Online platform https://www.yenna.org/en
13	**Diaspora in Action** – Mobilised Senegalese diaspora for awareness raising on irregular migration	EU Commission: AMIF 2018 (Call AMIF-2018-AG-INTE-5)	NGO ACRA	Dec 2020 – Mars 2021	**Senegal** (regions of Sedhiou, Kolda, Dakar, Fatik) Belgium, Spain, Italy
14	**Investir dans l'Avenir** – Protection, formation et emploi pour les migrants de retour, les migrants potentiels et les mineurs non accompagnés au Sénégal, Gambie, Guinée Bissau[23]	AICS (AID 11659)	NGO VIS	Feb 2020 – Sept 2021	**Senegal** (region of Tambacounda) The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau
15	**Vivre et Réussir chez Moi** - Développement local et territorialisation des politiques migratoires au Sénégal[24]	AICS and Fund Banca Intesa	NGO VIS	Jan 2020 – Nov 2021	**Senegal** (regions of Kaolack, Tambacounda)
16	**The Origin Project**	AECID and Waldensian Church of Italy	Open Arms	2019-2021	**Senegal** (region of Dakar)

[23] Investing in the Future - Protection, training and employment for return migrants, potential migrants and unaccompanied minors in Senegal, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau
[24] Live and Succeed at Home - Local development and territorialisation of migration policies in Senegal

Appendix D: The multi-actor approach of Migration Information Campaigns

Table D.1: The actors involved in each MIC

Migration Campaign	Function (e.g. task, role…)	Institution / Actor responsible
Migrants as Messengers	Funder	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	Headquarter coordination and management	IOM - Geneva Office
	Management and coordination Definition of the project strategy in West Africa Creation of digital content Dissemination and outreach	IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa, Awareness Raising Unit
	Evaluation and studying impact: defining evaluation methods, collecting data, conducting analysis, writing reports	IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa, GMDAC Local coordinator for data collection Enumerators Academic review board
	Organising, coordinating and implementing activities in Senegal	IOM Senegal Office, Communication Team
	Focal Point: assisting the implementation, contact with local communities, promoting the mobilisation for events	IOM Staff Members based in the different regions
CinemArena	Funder	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation through Agency for Cooperation and Development (AICS)
	Headquarter coordination and management	IOM Rome Office
	Organising, coordinating and implementing activities in Senegal	IOM Senegal Office, Communication Team
MIGRA	Funder	AICS
	Management and formulation of project guidelines	AICS Dakar, Communication Office
	Project coordination	NGO LVIA
	Project partners responsible for organising and implementing activities	NGOs: CISV, COSPE
The Migrant Project	Funder	Government of Spain
	Organising, coordinating and implementing activities in Senegal	Seefar (private enterprise)
	Assisting the implementation of activities on the field	'Migration Consultants' (employed by Seefar)
	Support to the running of campaign activities	CDPS - Centre Départemental d'Éducation Populaire et Sportive (Senegal Ministry of Youth)
	Group targeted by campaign communication	Fishermen
Contre-Courant	Funder and coordination	IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa; IOM Senegal Office
	Project leader responsible for the ideation and coordination	Independent artist based in Senegal
	Director of theatre play	IOM consultant
	Performing at campaign events	Professional dancers and musicians

	Writing theatre script	Script writer and translator
Nouvelles Perspectives	Funder	European Commission
	Project coordination in Italy and in Senegal	NGO COSPE
	Project partners responsible for assisting the implementation of activities, including training journalists, monitoring media coverage on migration, supervising the research	European Federation of Journalists Italian Association of Journalists and Press Franco-Senegalese association Diaspora association (based in Italy)
	Conducting research to advise the project	UCAD, Study Centre for Information Science and Techniques
Tekki Fii	Funder	European Commission
	Coordination, elaboration of communication strategy and monitoring the implementation	Delegation of the European Commission in Dakar
	Organisation of activities on the field	Local communication agency
	Partners advising youth on training programs, employment opportunities, and funds to support businesses in Senegal (governmental agencies)	Bureau de Mise à Niveau des entreprises (BMN) Agence de Développement et d'Encadrement des PME (ADEPME) Positive Planet International (PPI) Accompagnement des Jeunes vers l'Emploi au Sud du Sénégal (AJESUD) Fonds de Financement de la Formation professionnelle et technique (3FPT) L'Agence Nationale d'Insertion et de Développement Agricole (ANIDA)
Global Migration Film Festival	Funder	European Commission, IOM, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	Regional coordination and responsible for organising the project launch in Senegal	IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa, Awareness Raising Unit
	Assisting the coordination by organising events	IOM Senegal Office, Communication Team
	Attending the project launch	Representatives of the funding institutions
	Producing films selected for the festival	Directors
Empowering young people in Africa through media and communication	Funder	AICS Dakar
	Regional coordination and implementing activities in Senegal	UNESCO Dakar Office
	Receivers of funds to produce media content on migration issues	Media groups (tv, radio stations, newspapers..)

Table D.2: The actors engaging in multiple MICs

Actors	Function (e.g. task, role…)	Migration Campaigns
MaM Volunteers	Senegalese individuals who have experienced migration, attempted migration, or were returned to Senegal after migration attempts. They are a target of campaign messages: by engaging them as active volunteers campaigns aim to curb their future attempts to migrate. They are trained by the IOM to become *messengers* of campaign communication. They assist the implementation of campaign activities by sharing personal testimonies publicly, producing digital content, and supporting the implementing organisation's work. They talk at radio programs and perform in theatre plays during campaign events to discourage youth from migrating and engage in discussions on migration with the audience.	Migrants as Messengers CinemArena GMFF Contre-Courant Toog Tekki Thi Sama Rew **(5)**
Singers **Slammers** **Rappers**	These artists produce music videos or perform live at campaign public events on the invitation of campaign organisers. Their lyrics address the challenges faced by undocumented migrants, the courage to return home, and the hardships of daily life in Senegal. They sing about the resilience, endurance, and empowerment of youth in the face of adversity, as well as about youth's determination to change their circumstances. Additionally, some artists are invited to participate in radio programs and podcast recordings, where they discuss their engagement with MICs and elaborate on how their music explores themes connected to migration.	Migrants as Messengers CinemArena MIGRA Nouvelles Perspectives Tekki Fii Empowering young people Foo Jem Yenna Investir dans l'avenir **(9)**
Graffiti Artists	Artists expert in the making of graffiti. They guide the creation and painting of graffiti art in the context of campaign events. A toolkit on how to organise awareness-raising campaigns using graffiti art is promoted online (Yenna platform).	Migrants as Messengers MIGRA Yenna **(3)**
Professional Theatre Actors **Theatre Companies**	Actors involved in the creation, or the facilitation of the creation, and performance of theatrical productions at campaign events. As part of its awareness-raising strategy in West Africa, IOM developed a guide outlining various approaches to social theatre, which was distributed online through the Yenna platform.	Migrants as Messengers CinemArena MIGRA The Migrant Project Contre-Courant Nouvelles Perspectives Tekki Fii Yenna Diaspora in Action Investir dans l'avenir Vivre et Réussir chez Moi **(11)**
	Representatives of organisations, including collective of Mothers, cultural associations, return migrants, diaspora associations, youth associations and advocacy groups. They are co-creators, hosts, guests and participants to MICs' events. They also contribute to the production of campaign material to disseminate online. They are creators, performers and receivers of campaign messages.	Migrants as Messengers CinemArena MIGRA The Migrant Project Contre-Courant Nouvelles Perspectives Tekki Fii

Members of Civil Society Organisations		GMFF Empowering young people Foo Jem Diaspora in Action Investir dans l'avenir Vivre et Réussir chez Moi The Origin Project **(14)**
Local Authorities **Religious Leaders**	Authorities include heads of departments, prefects, mayors, chiefs of villages, representatives of the Ministry of Interior and representatives of the Directorate General of Senegalese Abroad of the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They act as hosts of campaign events, they welcome the campaign team, direct them to the appropriate location for the event, they facilitate the contact with youth leaders of the area, and they also attend events. Generally, they facilitate the realisation of MICs. They can also be considered receivers of campaign messages.	Migrants as Messengers CinemArena MIGRA The Migrant Project Contre-Courant Nouvelles Perspectives Tekki Fii GMFF Diaspora in Action Investir dans l'avenir Vivre et Réussir chez Moi The Origin Project **(12)**
Youth Leaders	Senegalese individuals acting as 'contact points' between the campaign team and the local community hosting the event. They are responsible for assisting the implementing organisation with inviting the community, facilitating events, and offering practical support. They are also invited to radio programs and podcast recordings in the context of MICs to talk about their commitment to local development and their achievements in economic business. In some cases (forums) they are invited to be part of panel discussions to share their experiences as local entrepreneurs. They are carriers and receivers of campaign messages.	Migrants as Messengers CinemArena MIGRA The Migrant Project Contre-Courant Nouvelles Perspectives Tekki Fii GMFF Empowering young people Toog Tekki Thi Sama Rew Foo Jem Yenna Diaspora in Action Investir dans l'avenir Vivre et Réussir chez Moi The Origin Project **(16)**
Youth	Young Senegalese individuals who make up the audience of campaign events; the primary group targeted by the campaign's messages. They physically attend campaign events and are also targeted by online communication.	
Members of the Local Community	Including children, teenagers, women, man and elderly. They attend campaign events as part of the audience. They are the secondary target of campaign communication.	
Media and Communication Experts	This group includes journalists, photographers, videographers, reporters from local TV stations and press outlets, as well as radio hosts and communication agencies. They participate to MICs and are responsible for documenting the events through articles, photographs, videos, and reports for online distribution and wider communication. Radio hosts lead programs to discuss the work of MICs. At times they are specifically invited by campaign organisers to document events, other times they independently decide to join, or they are invited as guests. Journalists are also targeted by some MICs for specialised training on media coverage of migration.	
Technical Support Team	In charge of arranging the logistics, catering, practicalities, transport, and sound for the realisation of campaign social activities.	

Appendix E: Research Participants

Table E.3: Overview of Campaign Initiators: Western policymakers and development workers (group 1)

	Name[25]	Gender	Position	Function
1	Chris	M	Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands - DMB	Senior Policy Officer
2	Daan	M	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands - DSH	Senior Policy Officer
3	Carolien	F	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands	Senior Policy Officer
4	Willem	M	Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands – DT&V	Senior Adviser
5	Sophia	F	Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands - DT&V	Senior Adviser
6	Femke	F	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands - DSH	Policy Officer
7	Heleen	F	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands - DSH	Policy Officer
8	Peter	M	Embassy of a European member state	Secretary Regional Migration (West Africa)
9	Amalia	F	IOM - Regional Office for West and Central Africa	Project Manager
10	Cloe	F	IOM - Regional Office for West and Central Africa	Project Manager
11	Emma	F	IOM - Regional Office for West and Central Africa	Project Manager
12	Claudia	F	Agency for Development and Cooperation of EU member state	Migration Officer
13	Sara	F	Agency for Development and Cooperation of EU member state	Migration Officer
14	Anna	F	Agency for Development and Cooperation of EU member state	Communication Officer
15	Celine	F	Office of the EU Delegation in Dakar	Project Manager
16	Mirko	M	UNESCO Dakar Office	Project Manager
17	Gaia	F	IOM - Rome Office	Project Manager

[25] In **bold** I highlighted the respondents who were interviewed. The same applies in the tables below E.4 and E.5

Table E.4: Overview of Campaign Local Implementers: Senegalese development workers (group 2)

	Name	Gender	Age	Education	Type of contract	Organisation
1	Mareme	F	25-35	MA degree from university abroad	Short-term	IOM
2	Alex	M	25-35	MA degree from university abroad	Short-term	IOM
3	Hammed	M	25-35	MA degree from university in Senegal	Short-term	IOM
4	Moussa	M	25-35	BA degree from university in Senegal	Short-term	IOM
5	Bakari	M	25-35	BA degree from university abroad	Short-term	IOM
6	Amy	F	25-35	MA degree from university in Senegal	Short-term	IOM
7	Momar	M	25-35	-	Short-term	IOM
9	Babacar	M	25-35	MA degree from university abroad	Short-term	IOM
10	Aziz	M	25-35	-	Short-term	IOM
11	Fatima	F	25-35	-	Short-term	IOM
12	Sokhna	F	35-40	BA degree from university in Senegal	Short-term	IOM
13	Faye	M	40-45	MA degree from university in Senegal	Long-term	NGO
14	Ibrahima	M	25-35	MA degree from university abroad	Short-term	NGO
15	Tafa	M	25-35	MA degree from university in Senegal	Long-term	NGO
16	Nogaye	F	25-35	Professional training in Senegal	Short-term	NGO
17	Abdou	M	25-35	Professional training in Senegal	6-month	Private company
18	Anta	F	35-40	MA degree from university in Senegal	Short-term	Private company
19	Cheick	M	25-35	MA degree from university in Senegal	6-month	Private company
20	Omar	M	25-35	MA degree from university in Senegal	6-month	Private company

Table E.5: Overview of Campaign Receivers: Senegalese youth performing at/or attending MICs (group 3)

	Name	Gender	Age	Role	Migration Information Campaigns
1	Mariama	F	30-35	Theatre actress / slammer	Migrants as Messengers
2	Ibra	M	30-35	Theatre actor	Migrants as Messengers
3	Fatoumata	F	25-30	Singer	Migrants as Messengers / CinemArena
4	Maimouna	F	30-35	Singer / slammer	Migrants as Messengers / CinemArena / IOM-promoted events / Empowering young people in Africa
5	Idrissa	M	30-35	Singer	MIGRA
6	Faty	F	25-30	Slammer	Migrants as Messengers / CinemArena / IOM-promoted events
7	Malik	M	30-35	Theatre actor	Contre-Courant
8	Papa	M	30-35	Theatre actor	Contre-Courant
9	Penda	F	25-30	Theatre actress	Contre-Courant
10	Hawa	F	35-40	Choreographer	Migrants as Messengers
11	Samba	M	30-35	Theatre actor / musician	Contre-Courant
12	Binta	F	20-25	Theatre actress	Contre-Courant
13	Souleymane	M	40-45	Theatre actor	Contre-Courant
14	Marie	F	25-30	Theatre actress	Contre-Courant
15	Youssef	M	25-30	Singer / rapper	Tekki Fii / Empowering young people in Africa / IOM-promoted events
16	Amath	M	25-30	Theatre actor	CinemArena / International Migrant Day
17	Oumou	F	30-35	Graffiti artist	MIGRA / Empowering young people in Africa
18	Bacary	M	30-35	Graffiti artist	MIGRA
19	Ngone	F	25-30	Graffiti artist	MIGRA / IOM-promoted radio program
20	Maguette	M	35-40	Graffiti artist	Migrants as Messengers
21	Boubou	M	35-40	Graffiti artist	Migrants as Messengers
1	Anna	F	35-40	MaM Volunteer	MaM / CinemArena / GMFF / Other IOM-promoted events
2	Oumy	F	35-40	MaM Volunteer	MaM / CinemArena / GMFF / Togg Tekki Thi Sama Rew / Other IOM-promoted events
3	Soda	F	45-55	MaM Volunteer	MaM / Contre-Courant / GMFF / Other IOM-promoted events
4	Khoudia	F	45-55	MaM Volunteer	MaM / CinemArena / Other IOM-promoted events
5	Aida	F	25-30	MaM Volunteer	MaM / CinemArena / GMFF / Togg Tekki Thi Sama Rew / Other IOM-promoted events
6	Fanta	F	25-30	MaM Volunteer	MaM / GMFF / Other IOM-promoted events
7	Salimata	F	25-30	MaM Volunteer	MaM / Other IOM-promoted events
8	Mama	F	25-30	MaM Volunteer	MaM / GMFF / Other IOM-promoted events
9	Massamba	M	25-30	MaM Volunteer	MaM / CinemArena / GMFF / Contre-Courant / Togg Tekki Thi Sama Rew / Other IOM-promoted events
10	Abdou	M	30-35	MaM Volunteer	MaM / CinemArena / GMFF / Togg Tekki Thi Sama Rew / Other IOM-promoted events
11	Sileymane	M	30-35	MaM Volunteer	MaM / CinemArena / GMFF / Togg Tekki Thi Sama Rew / Other IOM-promoted events
12	Biraago	M	25-30	MaM Volunteer	MaM / CinemArena / GMFF / Togg Tekki Thi Sama Rew / Other IOM-promoted events
13	Daawur	M	30-35	MaM Volunteer	MaM / CinemArena / Contre-Courant / GMFF / Togg Tekki Thi Sama Rew / Other IOM-promoted events
14	Djily	M	25-30	MaM Volunteer	MaM / Other IOM-promoted events
15	Hamady	M	25-30	MaM Volunteer	MaM / Other IOM-promoted events
16	Idy	M	30-35	MaM Volunteer	MaM / Other IOM-promoted events
17	Jibo	M	30-35	MaM Volunteer	MaM / GMFF / Other IOM-promoted events
18	Kalidou	M	25-30	MaM Volunteer	MaM / CinemArena / Other IOM-promoted events
19	Fama	M	35-40	MaM Volunteer	MaM / CinemArena / Contre-Courant / Togg Tekki Thi Sama Rew / Other IOM-promoted events
20	Moor	M	25-30	MaM Volunteer	MaM / CinemArena / Other IOM-promoted events
21	Coumba	F	30-35	MaM Volunteer	MaM / Other IOM-promoted events
22	Pathe	M	25-30	MaM Volunteer	MaM / Other IOM-promoted events
23	Seydou	M	25-30	MaM Volunteer	MaM
24	Bintou	F	25-30	MaM Volunteer	MaM
25	Modou	M	25-30	Return migrant	IOM-promoted event
1	Thierno	M	25-30	Spectator	Contre-Courant
2	Aliou	M	25-30	Spectator	Contre-Courant
3	Khalil	M	25-30	Spectator	MaM
4	Ismaila	M	25-35	Spectator	Empowering young people in Africa through media and communication
5	Jules	M	25-30	Spectator	CinemArena
6	Arona	M	25-35	Spectator	CinemArena
7	Ansou	M	25-35	Spectator	CinemArena
8	Odette	F	15-20	Spectator	CinemArena
9	Bachir	M	15-20	Spectator	MaM
10	Iris	F	15-20	Spectator	MaM
11	Lala	F	15-20	Spectator	MaM
12	Robert	M	25-30	Spectator	MaM
13	Diop	M	15-20	Spectator	MaM
14	Papis	M	15-20	Spectator	MaM
15	Zeyna	F	15-20	Spectator	MaM
16	Moise	M	20-25	Spectator	MaM
17	Salif	M	30-35	Spectator	MaM
18	David	M	30-35	Spectator	MaM
19	Adama	M	25-30	Spectator	MIGRA
20	Aicha	F	20-25	Spectator	MIGRA
21	Penda	F	20-25	Spectator	MIGRA
22	Mbaye	M	25-30	Spectator	Tekki Fii
23	Sofia	F	15-20	Spectator	Tekki Fii

Appendix F: Fieldwork Activities

Table F.6: Overview of the activities aimed at preparing the realisation of MICs

OBSERVATION OF CAMPAIGN PREPARATION					
Activity	**Campaigns**	**Description**	**Actors involved**	**No. of activities[26]**	**Location - site**
Theatre Workshop	Migrants as Messengers	Creating and rehearsing a theatre play to be performed at campaign events.	Professional theatre actors Musicians, dancers MaM volunteers Staff of implementing org. Technical support team	11 (of 13)	Ouakam, Dakar – Cultural centre
	Contre-Courant			Artistic residency of 6 consecutive days.	Toubab Dialao, Thiès – Hotel/cultural space
Team Meetings	Migrants as Messengers	Internal meetings to discuss the progress of the project, raise concerns and plan future activities.	IOM staff MaM volunteers	2	Les Almadies, Dakar – IOM office
'Preparatory mission': Meeting local authorities	Migrants as Messengers	IOM staff visited the communes designated to host the campaign to brief local authorities about upcoming activities.	IOM staff Local authorities	9 meetings	Municipalities in the region of Thiès – City halls
	CinemArena			2	Saint Louis – Prefecture, government local office
Simulation	The Migrant Project	Staff from the implementing organization conducted simulation sessions. They practiced how to give consultations to campaign target audience on migration decisions.	Seefar staff Young people (invited in the role of guinea pigs)	1 day	Mermoz, Dakar – Impact Hub, co-working space
Workshop	MIGRA – Toog Tekki	A network of engaged actors met to discuss themes, formats, communication tools and content of future campaign activities, and arrange practicalities for their realisation.	NGO CISV staff Members of Civil Society Organisations	3	2 online 1 Guediawaye, Dakar – Cultural Centre Léopold Sedar Senghor
Graffiti	Migrants as Messengers	Preparing the activity by sketching the graffiti design on the wall to paint and by surrounding the design with tape.	IOM staff Graffiti artist MaM volunteers Youth leaders	1 day	Petit Mbao, Dakar – Wall of a youth association seat

[26] The number refers to all the campaign-organised activities, all of which I attended. When I did not attend all events, the total number is indicated in brackets.

Table F.7: Overview of the activities aimed at implementing MICs

OBSERVATION OF CAMPAIGN IMPLEMENTATION					
Activity	**Campaign**	**Description**	**Actors involved**	**No. of events**	**Location - site**
Podcast Recording	Yenna	A young Senegalese man was invited by the IOM to share his experience as a migrant in Europe and his journey of returning to Senegal through a recorded interview. The interview was later transformed into a podcast for the online platform Yenna, aimed at providing practitioners with insights into awareness-raising practices.	IOM staff (3) Young man - return migrant (1) Technical support team (1)	1	Les Almadies, Dakar – Private house
Training	Migrants as Messengers	The IOM organized a two-day training session for four MaM volunteers, focusing on conducting, recording, and editing interviews about personal migration stories, as well as producing videos featuring return migrants.	IOM staff (3) MaM volunteers (4)	2 consecutive days	Pikine, Dakar - Hotel
		A professional trainer with experience in self-employment and business creation gave MaM volunteers a training on entrepreneurship. The training included exercises in personal business designing and presentations.	Trainer (1) MaM volunteers (10)	3 consecutive days	Les Almadies, Dakar – IOM office
Graffiti	Migrants as Messengers	The events centred on the joint creation of graffiti art on a public wall. Professional artists led the process, while some MaM volunteers encouraged neighbourhood youth to participate and try their hand at painting. Meanwhile, other volunteers engaged in dialogues about migration-related topics with youth passing by, aiming to discourage them from leaving Senegal undocumented.	IOM staff (4) MaM volunteers Graffiti artists (2) Youth leaders Youth Members of CSOs Media and com. experts Local authorities Local community	2	Yarakh, Dakar – Wall of a primary school Mbao, Dakar – Wall of a youth association seat
	MIGRA – Toog Tekki	The two-day event was a community gathering that featured diverse activities: a graffiti workshop introducing youth to the history of graffiti and enabling them to experiment with various styles; live hip-hop performances organised by a youth urban culture association; a screening of the documentary *Origin* by the NGO Open Arms, showcasing personal success stories and development in Senegal followed by interactive audience discussions and speeches by local political leaders; and collaborative graffiti creation.	NGO staff Graffiti artists Members of CSOs Youth Local community Media and com. experts	1 (divided in 2 days)	Yarakh, Dakar – Socio-cultural centre and the wall in front of the centre.
Radio Broadcast	CinemArena	For each radio broadcast, the IOM invited various guests to participate in discussions. During the broadcasts, the radio host, IOM staff, and guests—often including return migrants, artists, or young members of local associations—explored topics such as the goals and key messages of the CinemArena campaign and IOM's objectives, the causes and impacts of migration, the dangers of irregular migration and the violence	Radio host + technical team IOM staff MaM volunteers Singer and slam artists Members of CSOs (youth socio-cultural associations)	5 (4+1)	4 in Dakar – same radio studio (national frequency) 1 in Rufisque – community radio (frequency dedicated to area of Rufisque)

		migrants face during transit, strategies to foster development in Senegal, alternatives to migration and the role of the state, approaches to support the reintegration of returnees, and how to care for the families of migrants living abroad. Return migrants were encouraged to share their personal stories before, during, and after migration, reflecting on the decisions they made along the way. Additionally, songs produced by IOM were broadcast live during the programs, and in some cases, the singers performed them on air.	Youth leaders Return migrants		
	Toog Tekki Thi Sama Rew	In collaboration with the IOM, the mobile radio station of a youth communication platform hosted a broadcast featuring discussions with return migrants and young entrepreneurs. The program addressed topics such as the factors driving youth migration, the challenges of life in Senegal, the role of the Senegalese state in tackling youth unemployment, the spread of misinformation about migration, and the difficulties of traveling safely for Senegalese citizens.	Radio host + technical team (2) MaM volunteers (2) Youth leaders (2)	1 (other 3 were recorded and made available online)	Dakar – in the garden of an education institute
	Migrants as Messengers	As part of an itinerant campaign, community radios hosted a series of broadcasts. During these programs, the radio host engaged with MaM volunteers, discussing the overall objectives of the MaM campaign to discourage irregular migration, their motivations and dedication to raising awareness, and their personal experiences of living abroad or attempting to migrate.	Radio host + technical team IOM staff (3) MaM volunteers (4)	5	5 localities in the region of Thiès - Studios of five community radios
Theatrical Performance	Migrants as Messengers	After two weeks of rehearsals, the IOM organised a public event for the group of volunteers and artists to perform the theatre play they had created in front of an audience. This marked the first public performance of the play, which would be staged multiple times in the future. The event served as a social gathering, with moments of music and dancing.	IOM staff MaM volunteers Theatre actors Dancers, musicians Media and com. Experts Technical support team Youth Local community	1	Ngor, Dakar – Open air square in front of a youth cultural centre
Workshop	MIGRA – Toog Tekki	The workshop aimed to facilitate the exchange of experiences and discussions on journalistic practices related to documenting migration within the Senegalese context. Prior to the discussion, representatives from NGOs and other organisations with expertise in campaigns, communication, and journalism gave brief presentations. They shared insights on the projects they have implemented and the key lessons they have learned.	NGOs project partners Representative of project funder Media and com. experts Researchers	1	Dakar - Centre d'Etudes des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information (CESTI) of the University Cheik Anta Diop
	Nouvelles Perspectives	Two meetings were organised to discuss 'the media coverage of migration' and how to build capacities of Senegalese journalists.	NGOs and partners of the project Media and com. experts	2	Dakar - CESTI

MIC in high school	Migrants as Messengers and CinemArena	The activities at high schools were a collaborative effort between two campaigns. At each school, students attended sessions led by IOM staff, who discouraged them from embarking on dangerous migration journeys, while return migrants shared their personal and challenging experiences related to their migration attempts. A documentary was screened, students took part in a quiz with prizes, and they created and performed short plays, written pieces, and poems. In some cases, professional slam artists performed their texts on migration related topics.	IOM staff MaM volunteers High school students Slam artists Technical support team Teachers (not always present)	7 (of 10)	Multiple high schools in the regions of Dakar and Thiès -Classrooms/ open space outside the school building
Itinerant Caravan Tour	Tekki Fii	The 3-day campaign included panel discussions on 'training and youth employment; information stands; concerts; community conversations. A mobile unit of the campaign travelled to four rural villages where information sessions about employment in loco as alternative to migration were held.	Communication agency Project Partners Singers Youth leaders Youth Local community	3 consecutive days	Ziguinchor – Open air space 4 rural municipalities in the region of Ziguinchor – Open air space
	Migrants as Messengers	Caravan 1. The campaign team embarked on a multi-day tour, visiting various localities. Each day followed a similar schedule: music played to attract the local community while the team set up the stage. Children were invited to dance, followed by a rapper performing songs about migration. Volunteers and actors presented a theatre play, complemented by firsthand accounts of irregular migration with the to discourage others from migrating. This was followed by a debate with the audience, the screening of a short film, and concluded with a final round of music and entertainment.	IOM staff MaM volunteers Theatre actors Singers/rappers Media and com. expert Technical support team Youth leaders Youth Local community Local authorities/ religious leaders	14 events over 17 days In total the tour lasted 30 days and included 28 events	Rural municipalities in the region of Thiès – Open air spaces The second caravan visited and organised events in 9 of the 30 localities where the first caravan had travelled some months before.
		Follow-up Caravan. As part of the second MaM caravan, volunteers and IOM staff travelled to various localities, where they organised informal discussions ("causeries") with the local community. These gatherings invited residents to listen to the volunteers' testimonies, engage in conversations, and share their perspectives on issues about irregular migration. In some instances, short video clips showcasing the activities of the MaM campaign were also screened.	IOM staff (3) MaM volunteers (4) Youth Local community Local authorities/religious leaders	5 events over 7 days In total the tour lasted 10 days and included 9 events	
	CinemArena	Outdoor mobile cinema initiative travelling to multiple locations for nightly community events. At each location the content of the event included: dance competitions for kids, artistic performances from local groups and rappers, theatre, screenings of documentary (rescue operations at sea) and short videos on the story of an aspiring Senegalese migrant, speeches from local authorities and from IOM staff.	IOM staff MaM volunteers Singers/rappers Theatre companies Youth leaders Youth Members of CSOs Local community	4 events over 6 days In total the tour lasted 24 days and included 11 events.	Diender; Bayakh (rural villages in the region of Thiès) -Open air space Hydrobase; Rosso (region of Saint Louis) -Open air space

			Local authorities/religious leaders		
	Contre-Courant	The campaign centred on the performance of a theatre play to raise awareness about the dangerous migration routes that many West African migrant undertake and discourage undocumented migration to Europe.	Project Creator Play director Theatre actors Musicians, dancers MaM volunteers Media and com. Experts Youth leaders Youth Local community Local authorities/religious leaders	7 events over 8 days. In total the tour lasted 8 days and included 8 events	Seven localities in the region of Dakar – Open air space/ inside halls of cultural centres
	GMFF	Social gatherings were organised to showcase a selection of films featured in the 2021 edition of the Global Migration Film Festival, an initiative by the IOM. The event also included the screening of two short films created by volunteers from the group. After the films, the audience was invited to listen to testimonies from return migrants and engage in discussions with them on the topic of migration.	IOM staff MaM volunteers Youth Youth leaders Local community	3	Yarakh, Thiaroy (region of Dakar) Thiès (city) -Open air space
Forum	MIGRA – Toog Tekki	The two-day forum consisted of a range of activities. Experts participated in thematic panel discussions, one focusing on the role of media and social networks in portraying migration, and the other addressing the sociological, cultural, economic, and political aspects of migration. A theatre play was performed by professional actors and return migrants, followed by an audience discussion. Additionally, local singers took part in a concert during the event through which they conveyed campaign messages.	Project Coordinator Project Partners staff Representative of the funder Researchers Local community Return migrants Youth Media and com experts Theatre company Singers/rappers	2 days	Ziguinchor – Cultural Centre
		The two-day forum was structured around two thematic panel discussions on 'youth employment and migration' followed by open conversations with the participants. Multiple theatre companies performed stories of migrants and their families to exchange with the audience. A concert with local singers and rappers was also organised.	Project Coordinator Project Partners Representative of the funder Local authorities Local community Youth Youth leaders Media and com experts Theatre companies Singers/rappers Members of CSOs	2 days	Guediawaye, Dakar - Centre Départemental d'Éducation Populaire et Sportive
	Empowering Youth	Title of a 2-day forum titled: « Appui aux médias du Sénégal pour la production et la diffusion de contenus éditoriaux de qualité sur les migrations »	Project Coordinator Project Partners Representative of the funder	2 days	Dakar – Raddison Hotel (inside event venue)

		The forum aimed to sensitise Senegalese journalists and media managers on how to process and access information to promote correct and quality media coverage on migration in Senegal.	Media and com. experts		
Project Launch	The Migrant Project	The event focused on informing the population of Mbour, particularly fishermen, about the launch of the campaign and its upcoming activities. After a tour of the area by car to encourage participation, the event included a short theatre performance, music, and speeches delivered by the project leader, representatives of the fishing community, and local authorities.	Project staff Local authorities/religious leaders Fishermen Theatre company Musicians Youth Local community	1	Mbour – Open air space
	GMFF	The Global Migration Film Festival was kicked off with a public event that included speeches from institutional figures, the screening of two selected films, and a subsequent discussion. MaM volunteers, together with IOM staff, facilitated 'sharing circles,' allowing attendees to engage with volunteers and hear about their personal migration stories. The event also featured a photo exhibition showcasing moments of the campaign MaM. Guests were treated to music, food, and tea.	IOM Director and staff Representatives of EU Delegation office and Dutch embassy Film director MaM volunteers Media and com experts Youth Local community	1	Plateau, Dakar – TRAMES (event venue of artistic and cultural agency)
	MIGRA – Toog Tekki	A private event was organized to premiere the documentary *Feneen*, produced as part of the MIGRA project. The screening was followed by a discussion involving the participants and the documentary's protagonists.	Project coordinator Project partners Representatives of funder Singers/rappers/members of youth cultural associations - protagonists of the documentary Guests, including youth from cultural associations and representatives of EU NGOs	1	Fann, Dakar - Italian Cultural Institute (open air space)

Table F.8: Overview of the activities meant to evaluate one MIC

OBSERVATION OF CAMPAIGN EVALUATION					
Activity	**Campaign**	**Description**	**Actors involved**	**Duration**	**Location**
Collection of Surveys	Migrants as Messengers	In a designated area, enumerators conducted surveys to evaluate the impact of the MaM campaign. The respondents included individuals who had participated in the MaM Caravan 1, as well as others who had not been exposed to any awareness-raising initiatives.	Local coordinator for data collection (IOM staff) Enumerators employed by IOM Local community - members of surveyed households	2 days + 5 days	Thiès city and rural villages in the region of Thiès – private houses

Table F.9: Overview of other activities not officially framed as MICs

OBSERVATION OF OTHER EVENTS					
Activity	**Campaign**	**Description**	**Actors involved**	**No. of events**	**Location**
Radio Program	IOM-promoted initiative for the International Women Day 2021.	The radio emission was titled: "Women's leadership: for an egalitarian future in a world affected by Covid-19".	Radio host + technical support team (2) IOM staff (2) MaM volunteer (1) Singers/ slam artist (3) Representative of Lawyers Association (1)	1	Plateau, Dakar – Radio studio
	IOM-promoted radio emission in the context of a podcast production for the platform Yenna.	The radio emission was titled: "Women and migration: inspiring stories". In the broadcast, a director of a communication agency narrated her experience of producing a podcast titled *Mig'Histories* commissioned by the IOM in which she interviewed five women about their experiences of active citizenship and their views on migration. Two among them also participated to the radio program.	Radio host + technical support team (2) IOM staff (1) Director of communication agency (1) Singer/slam artist (1) Graffiti artist (1)	1	Plateau, Dakar – Radio studio
Podcast Recording	The activity was funded by the French Embassy in the context of an initiative to promote 'gender equality'.	The participants of the podcast discussed issues related to female migration. Three female MaM volunteers were invited to share their stories of migration.	Radio host (French association - 2) IOM staff (2) MaM volunteers (3)	1	Plateau, Dakar - Institut Française
Graffiti	IOM and ASMI (*Association Sénégalaise de lutte contre la Migration Irrégulière*). The activity received funds from European Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF).	Members of ASMI, in partnership with a French collective, organised and coordinated the painting of a school wall. Passersby were encouraged to participate and try their hand at painting. Additionally, ASMI facilitated a debate with local community members to share messages about sedentarism, aiming to discourage migration to Europe.	IOM staff ASMI members (MaM volunteers) Members of 'Street Art Sens Frontieres' (French art collective) Singers Members of CSOs: Women Association, Alumni association, Elderly of the Neighbourhood Local authorities	2 days	Pikine, Dakar – Wall of a school
Launch of Association	IOM	Institutional event to launch the *Association Sénégalaise de lutte contre la Migration Irrégulière (ASMI)*. The event began with an opening speech from IOM staff involved in facilitating the establishment of the association, followed by speeches from the president, secretary, and other association	IOM staff MaM volunteers and ASMI members Members of CSOs Local authorities Representatives of EU-based NGOS Singers Media and com. Experts	1	Dakar – Place des Souvenirs (inside event hall)

		members. Guests were provided with lunch and had the opportunity to engage in discussions with the association members. The primary objective was to connect potential partners with the association for future collaborations in projects of sensitisation.			
Project Quarterly Meeting	Migrants as Messengers	The institutional event aimed to assess the progress of the MaM project over the past four months and explore potential avenues for future partnerships and activities. IOM staff and volunteers from various regional groups presented the activities they had undertaken and guests suggested possible collaborations and ways for future engagements with the project MaM.	IOM staff MaM volunteers Members of CSOs Local authorities – employment national agency Media and com. Expert Artists	1	Dakar – Place des Souvenirs (inside event hall)
Community Event	IOM	Event organised as part of the IOM 16-day campaign against violence on women. It included a dyeing workshop, an exhibition of local products created by women, grain processing demonstrations, and moments of entertainment featuring music and dance. Additionally, a film from the GMFF selection on the topic of gender violence was screened.	IOM staff (2) MaM volunteers Youth Local community	1	Rufisque, Dakar – Open air space
International Migrant Day	IOM	The public event was organised to celebrate the international migrant day established by the United Nations. The even featured artistic performances, projections of short films directed by MaM volunteers, and a theatre play.	IOM staff MaM volunteers Theatre actors Singers/slammers/rappers Youth Local community Media and com. experts	1	Ouakam, Dakar – Open air space
	DGASE - Direction General d'Appui aux Senegalais de l'Etranger; AECID – Spanish Cooperation Agency	The 2-day event aimed to celebrate the international migrant day; it was the occasion to inaugurate the *Bureau d'Acceuil d'Orientation et de Suivi des migrants* in Saint Louis, part of a new territorialisation of migration policy in Senegal. A fair-like space was organised for various national agencies and organizations to showcase their projects and services to the public. The event also featured theatre and artistic performances and a gala dinner.	Representatives of DGASE Representatives of AECID Institutional partners IOM staff Members of CSOs ASMI members/MaM volunteers Theatre company Media and comm. Experts Youth Local community	2 days	Saint Louis – Open air space
Theatre Performance	IOM	The IOM financed a local theatre company to perform a theatre play on migration.	IOM staff Theatre company Youth Local community	1	Yarakh, Dakar – Open air space

Appendix G: Material produced and disseminated by the MICs included in this research

Songs		
Title	**Singer**	**Performed live at MIC events**
Beugueu Dem	Reema Juuf	MaM / International Migrant Day IOM promoted radio programs
Yoon Bu	Leer Cherifou & Job Sa Brain	International Migrant Day
Yaxa ara	Aida Sock	CinemArena - IOM promoted radio programs
Feneen	Leuz, FULA, Frank Sativa	MIGRA
Stop immigration irrégulière	Big Makhou Djolof	Tekki Fii
Yonou Touki	2MIND	MaM / IOM-promoted events
(short) Films / Documentaries		
Title	**Director**	**Screened at MIC events**
La forêt de Djibril	Thomas Ceulement	Global Migration Film Festival (GMFF) - Launch
Un Avenir incertain	F.G. Ndiaye	GMFF – Launch, event in Yarakh International Migrant Day (Dakar)
Sur mes pieds	A. Ndiaye	GMFF – event in Yarakh International Migrant Day (Dakar)
La quête	Atelier Niamantou	GMFF- event in Yarakh
Stay Up	Aïssata Ouarma	GMFF – event in Thiaroy Community event in Rufisque
Saga	Idil Ibrahima	GMFF – event in Thiès
Un place dans l'avion	Khadidiatou Sow	Caravan tour Migrants as Messengers
Red Cross saving at sea	Sky News	Caravan tour CinemArena School activities
Retour d'enfer		Caravan tour CinemArena
#Origin	Produced by campaign *Origin* by Open Arms	MIGRA graffiti event
Ngor histoire (four episodes)	Produced by the International Organisation for Migration	Caravan tour CinemArena GMFF
Mini-series *Migrants as Messengers*	Produced by Comit Lab (Communication Agency)	GMFF Caravan Migrants as Messengers follow up

Appendix H: Interview topic guides

Group 1: Campaign initiators

Introduction

- What is your current employment position? (ministry, unit, agency..)
- What are your main tasks?

Experiences with MICs

Could you select one campaign you have worked on that you believe has been successful or particularly well-received? Please walk me through it.

- How have you been involved in MICs? Which tasks have you carried out?
- Where did the idea start from and how did it come into being?
- Who were the partners involved? What were their roles?
- Who have you chosen to be part of the campaign and why?
- Did you participate in any MIC activity? What did you think of it?

The message and audience

- Who do you think is the primary audience of MICs? Can you give me specific examples?
- How do you get informed on the targeted audience?
- What do you think is the main message?
- What is the 'counter-narrative' that campaigns want to develop?
- How do you imagine people to react to campaign message and what do you expect from their reactions?
- Why do you think MICs are needed?

The format and media

- What kind of media do you think is more appropriate to spread information and communicate a certain message? Why?
- Why is one medium preferred over another?
- Can you give an example of a campaign using a format you think has failed to reach its goal? Why do you think it failed?
- How do you make decisions on which actors\groups to include in running MICs?

MICs at the EU level

- What do you think about EU joint campaigns?
- Does the Netherlands collaborate with other member states?
- What are the terms of collaboration, and how within the EU are processes and procedures for the production of campaigns mediated and decided?
- *On EMN INFO group:* Why was the NL particularly interested in chairing the EMN INFO group?

Assessment and evaluation

- Do you think MICs are a valuable policy tool?
- Do you think MICs are effective? Why?
- What do you think are the most effective elements?
- Should these initiatives deserve more funding, or should funding be cut?
- How do you think campaigns complement other policies?
- How are campaigns preferred over other policy strategies?

Reflections

- Thinking back about your work: what would you do differently?
- Why do you think MICs are still being carried out even if these are unlikely to be trusted?
- What are the main lessons you draw from your work on MICs?

Group 2: Campaign local implementers

Introduction

- What is your current employment position? Since when.
- What is your educational background/ professional training?

Experience with MICs

- Which tasks have you carried out in MIC X? For what have you been responsible?
- What was the aim of campaign activity Y?
- Can you give me an example of a successful activity? Why was it successful or not?
- What were the challenges?
- How did you contribute to the design of the campaign activity?
- What do you find difficult in these campaigns? What do you like?
- How has your organization been involved in projects of MICs?

The message, audience and media

- What do you think are the main messages MICs convey? How are these messages decided and by whom?
- What images do these messages suggest to you? And how do they make you feel?
- What do you think of the public's reactions to these messages? (public debates)
- Who is the target of these messages?
- How do you choose which people to engage to disseminate the message?
- What kind of media do you think is more appropriate to spread information and communicate a specific message? Why?

Focus on specific MIC activities

- How have you selected campaign participants and/or volunteers/performers? How are tasks assigned? What instructions did you give them?
- What do you think of their performances?
- On what basis do you choose the activities to carry out?
- What do you think was the meaning of graffiti art/theatre performance?
- How do you choose where to conduct campaign activities?
- What was remarkable about activity X?
- What did you do to make the activity Y happen? How was your experience?
- How did you navigate contradictory interests among participants and your team?

Assessing MICs

- Do you think MICs are valuable tools? For what and why?
- Do you think MICs are effective?
- What would you do instead?
- What issues do you see in doing MICs?

Final reflections

- What would you do differently in the MIC you organized?
- What would you like your organization to do/not to do about MICs?
- What lessons do you draw from your experience and work with MIC X?
- How has the MIC affected your view…?

Group 3: Senegalese youth campaign receivers (including MaM volunteers, artists, audience members)

Background information

- Name, age, ethnic group, languages
- Originally from, currently living (location)
- Family in Senegal\ abroad
- Education (schooling\trainings), employment (current occupation)
- Daily activities (household responsibilities), social engagements..

Engagement with MIC

- Coming into contact with MICs
- Motivation / commitment to active engagement
- Experience: challenges and gains
- Expectation and personal interest
- Remuneration
- Migration and return – personal experience
- Ideas of/ relationship with the campaign implementing organisation
- Being ‘a volunteer’

MICs in practice

- Reaction to the event
- Images of migration
- Activities attended / preferences for activities
- Role and tasks performed / instructions received / organizational steps
- Deciding on the agenda of the activity
- Process of creation (e.g. performance) and your contribution
- Purpose of activities
- Gains and losses from participation
- Continuous participation
- Reasons for joining
- Messages vs. your own message
- Repeating the message
- Reactions of the audience / of your family
- Emotional experience

Visibility and effectiveness

- Dissemination on social media of campaign products – reactions and feelings
- Being ‘the face’ of the campaign
- Success of the campaign / effective communication
- Trusting the information

Reflection

- Migration aspirations
- Different forms of MICs
- Overall experience of participating and effects on personal life

Appendix I: Information sheet

Maastricht University

Information on a study about migration campaigns

You are invited to participate in a study carried out by Cecilia Schenetti, PhD student at the faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Maastricht University (UM), in collaboration with Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum (WODC – Research and Documentation Center). The project is funded by the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.

What is this research about?
This research is about information migration campaigns and wants to understand how these come into being and are received. It studies how different people in the Netherlands and in Senegal think about migration and how that influences the production, performance and reception of campaigns. It will do so by looking at the perspectives of the following groups:

- Dutch policy makers who are involved, or have been involved in the past, in any possible way, in the ideation, design and implementation of migration campaigns, regardless of where these take place. What do they think of campaigns as a tool to raise awareness on irregular migration and what is the message these campaigns disseminate?
- Senegalese hip-hop artists who engage in the dissemination of campaign messages through performances at public events in Dakar
- Senegalese youth who take part in campaign initiatives and receive information on the risks of irregular migration. Senegal has been chosen as the focus of this research, as one of the African countries where campaigns are mostly implemented.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in an interview, lasting between sixty and ninety minutes, which can be conducted in person, on the phone, or via online platforms depending on your preference.

The information is confidential and will only be used for research purposes. Your name will be anonymised, and information will be safely stored and only the project supervisors will have access to the collected data.

Your participation is voluntary, you are free to withdraw at any point and you are free not to answer any specific question for whatever reason.

Contact: if you have any questions about the project you are free to contact:

Cecilia Schenetti, PhD student c.schenetti@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Prof. Valentina Mazzucato, first supervisor (UM) v.mazzucato@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Prof. Sally Wyatt, second supervisor (UM) sally.wyatt@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Dr. Djamila Schans, external supervisor (WODC) j.m.d.schans@wodc.nl

For more information about the project please see https://limes.maastrichtuniversity.nl

Appendix J: Glossary: Wolof terms used in the context of MICs

Affaire bi fi la	The business is here
Beugueu dem	I want to go (to leave, to migrate)
Barça wallah Barsakh	Barcelona or death
Bul sank sa bakane bi	Do not waste your life
Dem ak gaal ghi	Take the boat (to migrate)
Duma giss buntu, di jaar ci palan terr	I will not jump from a window if there is a door in the room
Feneen	Elsewhere
Foo Jem?	Where are you going?
Gaal	Boat (pirogue)
Gadday	To migrate
Gëm Na Tekki Fi	I believe in making it here
Jarnako	It is worth it (the risk of migration)
Jaruko	It is not worth it (the risk of migration)
Maa la dig tekki	I promise you to bring wealth
Mbëkk-mi	Boat migration
Modou-modou	It generally refers to Senegalese migrants from the regions of Diourbel, Kébemer and Touba
Nun nooy Sénégal	We are Senegal
Tekki fii	Make it here (in Senegal)
Togg sabab tekki	Stay, engage, succeed
Toog tekki fii	Stay and succeed here (in Senegal)
Toog tekki thi sama rew	Stay and succeed in my country (Senegal)
Tukki takhul tekki	To migrate does not mean to succeed
Tukki pour tekki	Migrate for succeeding
Tukki bou djaroule si yoon	Irregular migration
Yaxa ara	To go and return
Yaakar tekki	The hope to succeed
Yoon bu leer	The right path/way
Yóonu géej	The route of the sea

Impact Section

This section discusses the broader impact of my research for academics and other professionals and presents some policy recommendations. Through my research, I have aimed to achieve academic impact by using various avenues for dissemination and engagement. Two of my empirical chapters have been published in international peer-reviewed journals, and one is currently under review. I have presented my research at five conferences and three workshops, engaging with various networks of scholars[12] from diverse academic disciplines, including migration studies and African studies in both Europe and West Africa. Since I started my fieldwork in Senegal in 2021, I have been a member of the Geography Department at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar (UCAD), where I have had the opportunity to present my research during PhD seminars. This deepened my understanding of the local context where MICs occur. Additionally, engaging with academics in Senegal has been especially significant since they are often excluded from discussions with European actors on migration issues affecting them. Together with Yassin Dia, another PhD student, I organised a seminar within the research theme "Migration, Mobility, Space and Society" of the Geography Department at UCAD to discuss methodological issues with Senegalese researchers regarding Senegalese migration. At the invitation of Professor Bruno Riccio from the University of Bologna, we also gave a collaborative presentation on the theme of "(Im)mobilities, resistance and vulnerabilities" in relation to Senegalese return migration at a seminar organised by the MODI research centre in Bologna. My PhD project was also part of the inter-faculty interdisciplinary doctoral program LIMES, which centred on the theme "The Hardening and Softening of Borders: Europe in a Globalised World[13]". In fall 2023, LIMES hosted a concluding conference for the thirteen PhD students to present the main findings of their research to a broader audience. On that occasion, I shared insights from my research with representatives of LIMES partner organisations, which included academic institutions, governmental agencies, research centres, and policy-oriented organisations. Moreover, participating in the activities of the Migration-Control.Info Project[14] provided me with the opportunity to engage in discussions with, and disseminate my research to, a transnational network of activists, journalists, academics, and anti-racist organisations from Europe and Africa interested in documenting the externalisation of European migration control to African countries.

During my PhD project, I actively engaged with non-academic audiences and pro-

[12] International Migration Research Network (IMISCOE)
European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA)
Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)
Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies (AEGIS)
Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration and Development (MACIMIDE)
[13] https://limes.maastrichtuniversity.nl/index.php/
[14] https://migration-control.info/en/

fessional groups to communicate my research outcomes and contribute to societal debates on the use of migration campaigns. Among these groups were policy-oriented researchers and policymakers. My project included a secondment at the Research and Data Centre (WODC[15]) — where one of my supervisors, Dr. Djamila Schans, is based. Situated in The Hague, the WODC is a knowledge institute based in the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security. It conducts independent scientific research which contributes to policy and public debates regarding matters of justice, security, and migration. Presenting my research to the members of the Asylum and Migration team at WODC was crucial to reflect on the gap between policymaking and the lived realities of campaign audiences, whose experiences I had observed in Senegal. This issue was further discussed during my presentation at the annual *State of the Art Conference*, titled: "*Future in hindsight: from past to future policy*", held by the Ministry of Justice and Security in fall 2023. With my colleague Maha Naami, I contributed to designing a session on the relationship between ethnographic methodology and policy, during which I presented some research findings to Dutch policymakers and practitioners. We argued that an ethnographic perspective can enrich the work of policymakers by providing in-depth, context-sensitive insights into how policies are experienced and interpreted by the people they affect. The reactions to my presentation of people who design measures of migration governance highlighted the different methods and priorities that researchers and policymakers have regarding the study and evaluation of specific interventions in migration control, such as MICs. Nevertheless, participants showed a general openness towards ethnographic research, which fostered a dialogue about the spaces and tools for collaboration and integration of each other's work that policy and academic research can facilitate. Furthermore, I participated in the Science Event "*Return: Factors of Relevance*" organised by the Repatriation and Departure Service of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security in March 2025. Post-doctoral researcher Omar Cham and I engaged with policymakers, practitioners, and other academics by presenting findings from our research on how West African youth respond to messages propagated by EU migration campaigns, highlighting the adverse effects these campaigns have on them. The exchanges we had with the audience made it clear that MICs do not always achieve in practice what they set out to do as described in project documentation. Moreover, some participants were negatively surprised by our critical stance on MICs as potentially harmful interventions, revealing that they were unaware of how MICs function in practice and had different expectations of their outcomes. During the discussion, the policy makers involved in the design and funding of MICs showed an interest in finding

[15] Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Datacentrum

evidence that would validate the policy of MICs, making them a legitimate measure. Our presentation did not provide them with such evidence but instead aimed to question the value of using MICs.

Policy recommendations

European states continue to invest significant resources in migration information campaigns aimed at dissuading populations in the Global South from migrating irregularly to Europe. Although MICs have become a popular policy tool in the EU's migration management toolbox, the findings of this research show that MICs are a contested phenomenon and fail to achieve their objectives. They involve many contradictions, and there are many inconsistencies between expected outcomes and what actually happens on the ground. These research findings have led me to develop a number of policy recommendations.

Future policies should seriously consider the assumptions and imaginaries underlying MICs. My research shows that the ideas held by European policymakers differ from the lived realities and interests of the populations targeted by campaigns. MICs involve myriad contradictions, do not take account of the social realities faced by people in the Global South, and instead generate emotional violence and resistance. Some Senegalese youth who participate in campaign events raise questions of social justice, socio-economic inequalities, and rights to mobility. In addition to mistrusting the information MICs provide, they make it clear that campaigns are unhelpful and fail to make any meaningful contribution to their overall situations. If European policymakers aim to make a difference, they should first listen to the concerns of the populations they seek to target and recognise how these populations have been negatively affected by MICs.

Moreover, the socio-economic realities and the mobility injustice that confront people in Senegal deserve some policy attention. An information campaign alone is insufficient to tackle structural issues of poverty and unemployment in African countries, the demand for low-skilled workers in Europe, or the lack of pathways for legal migration. This is well known by all campaign actors. However, MICs tend to preach about legal routes and economic possibilities in an abstract manner while doing nothing to make them a reality. Rather than investing in campaign events that mix fun with emotional distress, European states should consider adopting more inclusive migration policies, such as open legal migration pathways to allow the mobility of more people. While information might improve the chances of saving lives, only the provision of visas and access to safe migration pathways can make a real difference. Access to legal channels would also address Europe's need for a diverse range of workers. Moreover, European states could invest in African economic development and collaborate with origin countries to create lasting opportunities for youth to access the labour market and enjoy sustainable livelihoods in their country of origin.

By overlooking the situations of the people they aim to target, MICs fail to be ef-

fective. Moreover, the assessment of the impact of MICs should encompass a broader scope than merely focusing on how migration aspirations are altered. European policymakers continue to find justifications to support MICs and have increasingly funded evaluation studies to achieve the well-designed campaign and identify the most effective practices. In other words, policy interest in finding the best way to make MICs work remains strong. But most evaluation programmes have so far been carried out by campaign funders or implementers. While policymakers' interest in evidence-based policy is a positive aspect, there is a need for evaluation studies conducted by independent researchers. This research suggests that MICs involve imagination, actions, and emotions that are often difficult to quantify and, as a result, are frequently overlooked in evaluation studies. These disregarded elements contain multiple forms of contestation, which should also be considered when assessing MICs. Ethnographic research can provide valuable insights into the contested "lives" of MICs.

Future policies should consider discarding MICs in their current form and rethinking their design. One way to approach MICs differently could be to invest in disseminating information that goes beyond simply deterring and instead improves the safety of people on the move. While current MICs seek to highlight the risks of irregular migration, they actually do little to reduce those risks. If the goal of MICs is indeed humanitarian, future campaigns should consider disseminating information on how migrants can stay safe during the irregular migration journeys that many will undertake. The project *Alarm Phone Sahara*[16] could inspire future initiatives. Founded on cooperation between associations and individuals in the Sahel-Saharan region and Europe, Alarm Phone aims to protect lives by assisting people in distress. The project's website provides information about security measures that migrants can take when travelling along dangerous routes to improve their safety, and it provides a phone number they can use in case of emergency. Upon calling, a network of activists in the region mobilises to provide information and, if necessary, to organise rescue operations. European funders might consider investing in civil society networks like Alarm Phone, which have the knowledge and expertise to provide vital assistance to migrants in perilous circumstances.

Another way to rethink MICs is to allow the awareness-raising discourse to emerge from below. This implies dismantling the current campaign infrastructure and for European funding institutions and international organisations to step back and rethink their participation. In other words, it requires European states to acknowledge that even without their economic support, the local population is more than capable of doing the job they believe is

[16] https://alarmephonesahara.info/en/

theirs to do. In Senegal, there is a local discourse of growing importance on the violence and risk of death migrants face on their journeys to Europe. People from Senegalese, as well as from other West African countries, do not need MICs to inform them of these risks. Senegalese youth and return migrants openly denounce the violence people face while crossing borders. They publicly advocate for the freedom of movement, equal rights, and change in migration regulations. They are also committed to improving living conditions in Senegal to make it more attractive for youth to stay. On these issues, youth associations such as *Boza Fii*[17] organise events, which sometimes take the form of itinerant caravans used by traditional MICs, to raise awareness and encourage dialogue among the population. In addition to these public forms of communication, discussions about irregular migration are also prevalent in private settings, such as within families and among friends. Policymakers should not seek to dominate discourses on migration that grassroots initiatives such as *Boza Fii* contribute so much to. By perceiving potential migrants as knowledgeable actors, policymakers could also start treating them as equal subjects whose ideas might effectively contribute to reaching common goals, such as helping youth to contribute to Senegalese society and economy.

[17] https://bozafii.org

English summary

Introduction

European states are increasingly funding migration information campaigns (MICs) in countries of the Global South to discourage irregular migration to Europe and to promote life at home. Assuming people in migrant-sending countries lack information, MICs claim to provide accurate details about undocumented migration in order to raise awareness about the risks involved and to prevent people from moving under such conditions. MICs use various communication tools to spread deeply emotional messages and images of migrant suffering, death, and deportation in an effort to manage the perceptions and desires of potential migrants. Using a humanitarian rhetoric that emphasises the well-being of prospective migrants, MICs serve as tools to control population mobility and have been described as practices of remote border management, namely *soft borders*.

While research on MICs has significantly increased over the past twenty years, much has focused either on MICs as a strategy of Western migration governance or on their operations in countries where they are implemented. However, no studies trace MICs from beginning to end. This thesis provides a comprehensive understanding of the *lifecycle* of MICs. It provides an analysis of the three phases through which a migration campaign comes into existence, progresses, and reaches its endpoint: ideation, implementation, and reception. It does so by examining the perspectives of multiple actors between the Netherlands and Senegal who engage with and give form to MICs. It explores how MICs are conceived by European funders and policymakers, implemented by Senegalese organisers, and perceived by the young target population in Senegal. The overarching research question addressed by this thesis is: *How are MICs imagined, implemented, and received by key actors between the Netherlands and Senegal?*

By examining the work that multiple actors carry out to make MICs, this dissertation discusses how initiators, implementers, and receivers navigate the contradictions they encounter within the campaign chain and how they create, translate, and receive campaign messages. This is important for better understanding how and why MICs are sustained or disrupted. I contribute to the scholarship on MICs by providing an understanding of MICs as contentious and ambiguous, composed of contradictory logics, which come to life and are shaped by the often-invisible work of multiple actors.

I focus on the Netherlands as it has made significant investments in MICs abroad, and on Senegal, a key target country for many EU-funded MICs over the last two decades. I employed a multi-sited ethnographic research design guided by a simple principle: "to follow the message" that MICs disseminate across multiple sites. My primary methods were participant observation and interviews. I conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews in the Netherlands and completed 15 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Senegal, during whi-

ch I observed the implementation of 16 MICs in various locations, including rural villages, community centres, youth associations, radio stations, and secondary schools. Long-term ethnography enabled me to observe the social worlds of MICs, including their social configurations, functioning, arrangements, and affective dimensions.

Research findings: the ideation, implementation, and reception of MICs

Each empirical chapter focuses on one of the three stages of the campaign lifecycle – ideation, implementation, and reception – and considers the perspectives of multiple campaign actors. Throughout the thesis, I engage with several concepts, the key ones being *imaginaries, brokering, speech act, affect, and emotion*. I apply the concept of imaginaries to analyse the justifications provided by campaign initiators. The notions of brokering and speech act help me understand the way Senegalese implementers translate the discourse of international funders into terms that make sense to local people. Affect and emotions are crucial to the responses elicited from campaign receivers. Overall, these concepts are useful in understanding how campaigns are created, transformed, and resisted.

Chapter 3 examines *how European policymakers and development workers who initiate migration information campaigns justify these interventions*. Based on qualitative interviews, I find that campaign initiators justify MICs in three ways: first, they believe they have a moral duty to provide potential migrants with objective information; second, they regard MICs as doing no harm; third, they believe that MICs send positive messages and contribute to development. These justifications are rooted in imaginaries initiators hold of themselves, their work promoting MICs, the contexts in which campaigns are produced and received, and their target audience, so-called "potential migrants". But initiators' imaginaries are full of contradictions. On the one hand, they imagine upholding humanitarian principles and promoting educational initiatives that will empower people to change their behaviour. On the other hand, they imagine that target populations will often choose to embark on undocumented migration journeys, even when fully informed, due to the lack of legal migration pathways available to them. Campaign initiators attempt to reconcile the contradictions they encounter in implementing policies that they perceive to exist at the intersection of humanitarian and securitarian logics. By viewing MICs as reasonable, harmless, and necessary, their imaginaries legitimise the instrumentalisation of care to enforce control.

The following two chapters move the focus to Senegal. **Chapter 4** asks *why Senegalese citizens participate in implementing campaigns in Senegal and how they perform their roles as local intermediaries*. Drawing from development literature, I understand the local staff of campaign implementing organisations, including NGOs and International Organisations such as IOM, as brokers whose task is to translate EU policy into practice by running

campaign activities on the ground. I analyse their translation work through the lens of speech acts to show how they simultaneously promote, transform, and contest campaign messages. By adhering to project guidelines, local implementers endorse campaign objectives and gain personal benefits. At the same time, they influence and transform campaign messages through subtle speech acts and the strategic choices they make. They create space for alternative messages to emerge, messages that challenge the campaign's hegemonic narrative and bring local perspectives to the fore. While local implementers contribute to enforcing and normalising soft borders in Senegal, they also use their position to resist EU policy discourse and push alternative messages. This chapter highlights the paradoxical position of local MIC staff in Senegal, who are involved in disseminating messages that aim to restrict their own mobility as well as that of their peers. It demonstrates that they are ambiguous subjects whose work both supports global migration regimes and advances local struggles for change.

Chapter 5 investigates how Senegalese youth, who are a key target audience, respond to MICs and how emotions—often overlooked in migration policy discussions—circulate within campaign spaces. Drawing on ethnographic data, the chapter examines young people's actions, gestures, and silences during campaign events. MICs emerge as affective spaces where various emotional registers are mobilised, and they produce violent effects. I argue that campaigns inflict emotional violence by compelling youth to (re)enact and listen to traumatic narratives and silencing dissent. Through these practices, MICs present Senegalese young people as "unwanted Others," while emotions "stick" to their bodies in ways that reinforce exclusion and North–South power hierarchies. The chapter also highlights how Senegalese youth articulate affective forms of protest against these dynamics. By resisting anti-migration discourses and challenging the normalisation of sedentary lifestyles, they advocate for mobility and social justice and demand structural change rather than moralistic warnings. Their emotional responses thus become a means of political expression and critique, destabilising the very narratives that MICs seek to impose.

Conclusion

Overall, this thesis advances the study of EU-funded migration information campaigns by offering insights into the complexity and contradictions that underpin their existence. A key contribution of the thesis is its analysis of the various forms of *work* that allow MICs to persist and be challenged. As campaign messages circulate from funding to recipient states, they are imagined, translated, and emotionally charged with different meanings. This work is carried out by various actors who interpret, modify, and sometimes oppose the original objectives of the campaigns. Rather than functioning as static instruments of migration governance, MICs are evolving and contested projects shaped by the interests of a range of actors. In other words, my analysis shows that MICs are polysemic — imbued with multiple, often contradi-

ctory meanings that circulate across and within the groups involved. Recognising this polysemy is key to understanding how MICs operate in practice and what effects they produce.

Campaign initiators, local implementers, and recipients each operate within worldviews that are internally conflicted and paradoxical. Yet, they navigate and reconcile these tensions in ways that allow them to preserve the legitimacy of their roles. As a result, MICs persist—serving both political and symbolic functions for EU states that aim to discourage irregular migration and externalise border control. However, beneath their surface, MICs are sites of ongoing tension and negotiation. While much of this contestation remains subtle or contained, it carries the potential to become disruptive. At times, it emerges visibly and audibly, as seen in the actions of Senegalese youth who reclaim campaign spaces and reframe the discourse on their own terms. These acts of resistance reveal the hypocrisy of the MIC system and emphasise the urgent need for migration policies to listen to and engage with the lived realities and perspectives of those they aim to target.

Nederlandse samenvatting (Dutch summary)

Inleiding

Europese staten financieren in toenemende mate migratie-informatiecampagnes (MIC's) in landen in het mondiale Zuiden om irreguliere migratie naar Europa te ontmoedigen en het leven in het thuisland aan te bevelen. Deze campagnes veronderstellen dat mensen in landen van herkomst zich baseren op foutieve informatie over ongedocumenteerde migratie en de risico's die hieraan verbonden zijn. Deze campagnes beweren dat ze accurate informatie verschaffen en dat ze door bewustzijn te creëren over de risico's, mensen ervan weerhouden te vertrekken. MIC's maken gebruik van uiteenlopende communicatiemiddelen om zeer emotionele boodschappen en beelden van migratieleed, zoals dood en uitzetting te verspreiden, met als doel de percepties en verlangens van potentiële migranten te sturen. Door middel van een humanitaire retoriek die de nadruk legt op het welzijn van toekomstige migranten, fungeren MIC's als instrumenten om de mobiliteit van migranten te controleren. MIC's zijn beschreven als vormen van grensbeheer op afstand en als zachte of symbolische middelen van grenshandhaving.

Hoewel het onderzoek naar MIC's de afgelopen twintig jaar aanzienlijk is toegenomen, richtte het onderhavige onderzoek zich grotendeels op deze campagnes als strategie van westerse migratie-managment, óf op hun uitvoering in de landen waar zij worden geïmplementeerd. Er zijn echter geen studies die het traject van MIC's van begin tot eind volgen. Dit proefschrift beoogt een volledig inzicht te verschaffen in de *levenscyclus* van MIC's. Het biedt een analyse van de drie fasen waarlangs een migratiecampagne tot stand komt, zich ontwikkelt en haar eindpunt bereikt: ideevorming, uitvoering en ontvangst. Dit gebeurt door de perspectieven te onderzoeken van meerdere actoren tussen Nederland en Senegal die betrokken zijn bij het vormgeven van deze campagnes. Dit proefschrift onderzoekt hoe MIC's worden bedacht door Europese financiers en beleidsmakers, uitgevoerd door Senegalese organisatoren, en ontvangen door de doelgroepen in Senegal. De centrale onderzoeksvraag luidt dan ook: *Hoe worden MIC's bedacht, uitgevoerd en ontvangen door sleutelactoren in? Nederland en Senegal?*

Door het werk te analyseren dat verschillende actoren verrichten om MIC's tot stand te brengen, laat dit proefschrift tevens zien hoe initiatiefnemers, uitvoerders en ontvangers omgaan met de tegenstrijdigheden die zij in de campagneketen tegenkomen, en hoe zij boodschappen creëren, vertalen en ontvangen. Dit is van belang om beter te begrijpen waarom en hoe MIC's standhouden of juist onderbroken worden. Ik draag bij aan de literatuur over MIC's door deze te beschouwen als betwiste en ambigue fenomenen, samengesteld uit tegenstrijdige logica's, die tot leven komen en worden gevormd door het vaak onzichtbare werk van verschillende actoren.

Ik richt mij op Nederland, aangezien dit land aanzienlijke investeringen heeft ge-

daan in MIC's in het buitenland. Senegal is gekozen omdat het de afgelopen twee decennia een belangrijk land is geweest van vele door de EU gefinancierde campagnes. In tegenstelling tot eerdere studies, die zelden zowel een Europees land als een Afrikaans land in hun analyse betrekken, heb ik gekozen voor een multi-sited etnografisch onderzoeksontwerp. Dit betekent dat ik me heb laten leiden door een eenvoudig principe: "het volgen van de boodschap" die MIC's op verschillende plaatsen verspreiden. Mijn belangrijkste methoden waren participerende observatie en interviews. Ik voerde kwalitatieve semigestructureerde interviews in Nederland en deed vijftien maanden etnografisch veldwerk in Senegal, waarin ik de implementatie van zestien campagnes volgde. Deze langdurige vorm van etnografisch onderzoek stelde mij in staat de sociale werelden van MIC's te observeren, waaronder hun sociale configuraties, functioneren, organisatievormen en affectieve dimensies.

Onderzoeksresultaten: ideevorming, uitvoering en ontvangst van MICs

Om mijn centrale onderzoeksvraag te beantwoorden, heb ik drie deelvragen ontwikkeld die in de drie empirische hoofdstukken van dit proefschrift aan bod komen. Elk empirisch hoofdstuk richt zich op één van de drie fasen van de levenscyclus van een campagne – ideevorming, uitvoering en ontvangst – en neemt de perspectieven van meerdere actoren in beschouwing. In dit proefschrift werk ik met verschillende concepten, waarvan de belangrijkste zijn: *imaginaires, makelaar (broker), taalhandeling (speech act), affect en emotie*. Het concept imaginaires gebruik ik om de rechtvaardigingen van campagne-initiatiefnemers te analyseren; de begrippen makelaar en taalhandeling helpen mij te begrijpen hoe Senegalezen de discoursen van internationale financiers vertalen naar termen die lokaal begrijpelijk zijn; affect en emoties zijn cruciaal voor het begrijpen van de reacties van de ontvangers. Deze concepten zijn in het algemeen nuttig om te zien hoe campagnes worden gecreëerd, getransformeerd en betwist.

Hoofdstuk 3 onderzoekt hoe Europese beleidsmakers en ontwikkelingswerkers die migratie-informatiecampagnes opzetten deze interventies rechtvaardigen. Op basis van kwalitatieve interviews stel ik vast dat initiatiefnemers MIC's op drie manieren legitimeren: ten eerste geloven zij een morele plicht te hebben om potentiële migranten objectieve informatie te verschaffen; ten tweede beschouwen zij de campagnes als onschuldig en niet-schadelijk; ten derde menen zij dat MIC's positieve boodschappen uitzenden en bijdragen aan ontwikkeling. Deze justificaties zijn geworteld in *imaginaires* die initiatiefnemers hebben over zichzelf, hun werk met MIC's, de contexten waarin de campagnes worden geproduceerd en ontvangen, en hun doelpubliek, de zogenaamde "potentiële migranten". Maar deze *imaginaires* zitten vol tegenstrijdigheden. Enerzijds zien zij zichzelf als verdedigers van humanitaire principes en als promotoren van educatieve initiatieven die mensen in staat moeten stellen hun gedrag te veranderen. Anderzijds gaan zij ervan uit dat doelgroepen vaak toch kiezen

voor een irreguliere migratieroute, zelfs met volledige kennis van de risico's, omdat legale migratiekanalen ontbreken. Campagne-initiatiefnemers proberen deze tegenstrijdigheden te verzoenen door hun beleid te situeren op het kruispunt van humanitaire en veiligheidslogica's. Door MIC's te beschouwen als redelijk, onschadelijk en noodzakelijk, legitimeren hun *imaginaires* de instrumentalisering van zorg om controle af te dwingen.

De twee volgende hoofdstukken verleggen de focus naar Senegal. **Hoofdstuk 4** vraagt waarom Senegalese burgers deelnemen aan implementatie campagnes en hoe zij hun rol als lokale intermediairs invullen. Vanuit de ontwikkelingsliteratuur beschouw ik het lokale personeel van uitvoerende organisaties als makelaars wier taak het is om EU-beleid om te zetten in praktijk door campagnes lokaal te organiseren. Hun vertaalwerk analyseer ik via de lens van taalhandelingen: zo laat ik zien hoe zij boodschappen tegelijk uitdragen, transformeren en bekritiseren. Door de projectrichtlijnen te volgen onderschrijven lokale uitvoerders de doelstellingen en profiteren zij persoonlijk. Tegelijk beïnvloeden en hervormen zij de boodschappen door subtiele taalhandelingen en strategische keuzes. Zij scheppen ruimte voor alternatieve boodschappen die het dominante Europese dominante narratief uitdagen en lokale perspectieven naar voren te brengen. Terwijl zij bijdragen aan het afdwingen en normaliseren van "zachte grenzen" in Senegal, gebruiken zij hun positie ook om het Europese discours te bekritiseren en alternatieven te formuleren. Dit hoofdstuk benadrukt de paradoxale positie van lokaal MIC-personeel: zij verspreiden boodschappen die hun eigen mobiliteit en die van hun leeftijdsgenoten beperken, maar ondersteunen tegelijk de lokale strijd voor verandering. Het toont hen als ambigue subjecten wier werk zowel mondiale migratieregimes ondersteunt als lokale weerstand voedt.

Hoofdstuk 5 onderzoekt hoe Senegalese jongeren, de belangrijkste doelgroep van de campagnes, reageren op MIC's en hoe emoties – vaak genegeerd in migratiebeleid – circuleren op de plekken waar campagnes plaatsvinden. Op basis van etnografische gegevens analyseer ik de handelingen, gebaren en stiltes van jongeren tijdens evenementen. MIC's tonen zich daarbij als affectieve ruimtes waar verschillende emotionele registers worden gemobiliseerd, vaak door het laten zien van geweld. Ik betoog dat deze campagnes emotioneel gewelddadig zijn door jongeren te dwingen traumatische verhalen te (her)beleven en aan te horen, terwijl afwijkende stemmen het zwijgen wordt opgelegd. Zo construeren MIC's de Senegalese jeugd als "ongewenste Anderen", terwijl emoties zich aan hun lichamen "hechten" op manieren die uitsluiting en Noord-Zuid machtsverhoudingen versterken. Het hoofdstuk laat tevens zien hoe jongeren affectieve vormen van protest articuleren tegen deze dynamieken. Door anti-migratiediscoursen en de normalisering van een sedentair bestaan te bevragen, bepleiten zij mobiliteit en sociale rechtvaardigheid en eisen zij structurele verandering in plaats van moraliserende waarschuwingen. Hun emotionele reacties worden zo een vorm van politieke expressie en kritiek, die de narratieve destabiliseert die de MIC's trachten op te leggen.

Conclusie

Deze thesis draagt bij aan de studie van door de EU gefinancierde migratie-informatiecampagnes door inzicht te bieden in de complexiteit en tegenstrijdigheden die hun bestaan onderbouwen. Een belangrijke bijdrage van dit onderzoek is de analyse van de verschillende vormen van werk die het mogelijk maken dat MIC's blijven voortbestaan en tegelijkertijd worden betwist. Naarmate de campagnematerialen zich verplaatsen van de financierende naar de ontvangende staten, worden ze voorgesteld, vertaald en emotioneel geladen met uiteenlopende betekenissen. Dit werk wordt uitgevoerd door diverse actoren die de oorspronkelijke doelstellingen van de campagnes interpreteren, aanpassen en soms tegenwerken. MIC's functioneren niet als statische instrumenten van migratiebeheer, maar zijn evoluerende en betwiste projecten die gevormd worden door de belangen van verschillende betrokken partijen. Met andere woorden, mijn analyse toont de ambiguïteit van MIC's: ze bevatten meerdere, vaak tegenstrijdige betekenissen die circuleren binnen en tussen de betrokken groepen. Het erkennen van deze ambiguïteit is essentieel om te begrijpen hoe MIC's in de praktijk werken en welke effecten ze teweegbrengen.

Initiatiefnemers van campagnes, lokale uitvoerders en ontvangers opereren elk binnen wereldbeelden die intern conflicterend en paradoxaal zijn. Toch navigeren en verzoenen zij deze spanningen op manieren die hen in staat stellen de legitimiteit van hun rollen te behouden. Daardoor blijven MIC's bestaan en vervullen zij zowel politieke als symbolische functies voor EU-lidstaten die erop gericht zijn irreguliere migratie tegen te gaan en grenscontroles te externaliseren. Onder de oppervlakte zijn MIC's echter plekken van voortdurende spanning en onderhandeling. Hoewel veel van deze tegenstellingen subtiel of beperkt blijven, dragen ze het potentieel in zich om ontwrichtend te worden. Soms worden ze zichtbaar en hoorbaar, zoals blijkt uit de acties van Senegalese jongeren die campagneruimtes terugwinnen en het discours herdefiniëren op hun eigen voorwaarden. Deze verzetshandelingen onthullen de hypocrisie van het MIC-systeem en benadrukken de dringende noodzaak dat migratiebeleid luistert naar en zich engageert met de geleefde realiteiten en perspectieven van degenen op wie het gericht is.

Résumé en français (French summary)

Introduction

Les États européens financent de plus en plus des campagnes d'information sur la migration (*Migration Information Campaigns*, MICs) dans les pays du Sud Global afin de décourager la migration irrégulière vers l'Europe et de promouvoir la vie dans le pays d'origine. À partir de l'hypothèse selon laquelle les populations des pays d'émigration manqueraient d'informations, les MICs affirment fournir des informations précises sur la migration clandestine afin de sensibiliser aux risques encourus et de dissuader les départs. Ces campagnes utilisent divers outils de communication pour diffuser des messages fortement émotionnels et des images de souffrance, de mort et de déportation des migrants, dans le but de façonner les perceptions et les désirs des personnes envisageant de migrer. En recourant à une rhétorique humanitaire qui met en avant le bien-être des futurs migrants, les MICs servent en réalité d'outils de contrôle de la mobilité des populations et ont été décrites comme des pratiques de gestion frontalière à distance ainsi que comme des « frontières douces ».

Bien que la recherche sur les MICs se soit considérablement développée au cours des vingt dernières années, elle s'est principalement concentrée sur les MICs en tant que stratégie de gouvernance migratoire occidentale ou sur leur mise en œuvre dans les pays ciblés. Toutefois, aucune étude n'a retracé ces campagnes de leur conception à leur réception. Cette thèse vise à proposer une compréhension globale du *cycle de vie* des MICs. Elle propose une analyse des trois phases par lesquelles une campagne de migration est conçue, se déploie et atteint son terme: l'idéation, la mise en œuvre et la réception. Pour ce faire, elle examine les perspectives de multiples acteurs, entre les Pays-Bas et le Sénégal, qui conçoivent, mettent en œuvre et donnent forme aux MICs. Elle explore la manière dont les campagnes sont imaginées par les bailleurs et décideurs européens, mises en œuvre par les organisateurs sénégalais, et perçues par la jeune population ciblée au Sénégal. La question de recherche centrale est ainsi la suivante: *Comment les MICs sont-elles imaginées, mises en œuvre et reçues par les principaux acteurs entre les Pays-Bas et le Sénégal ?*

En étudiant le travail accompli par ces différents acteurs pour mettre en œuvre les MICs, cette thèse analyse comment les initiateurs, les opérateurs et les destinataires composent avec les contradictions rencontrées tout au long de la chaîne de la campagne, et comment ils créent, traduisent et reçoivent les messages. Cette analyse est essentielle pour mieux comprendre pourquoi et comment les MICs se maintiennent ou se fragilisent. Je contribue à la littérature sur les MICs en montrant qu'elles constituent des dispositifs contestés et ambigus, composés de logiques contradictoires, qui prennent vie et sont façonnés par le travail souvent invisible de multiples acteurs.

Je me concentre sur les Pays-Bas, qui ont consenti d'importants investissements dans les MICs à l'étranger, et sur le Sénégal, pays cible majeur de nombreuses MICs finan-

cées par l'UE au cours des deux dernières décennies. Contrairement aux études précédentes, rarement menées entre l'Europe et l'Afrique, j'ai adopté une démarche ethnographique multi-située, guidée par un principe simple : « suivre le message » que les MICs diffusent sur plusieurs sites. Mes méthodes principales ont été l'observation participante et les entretiens. J'ai mené des entretiens semi-directifs aux Pays-Bas et effectué quinze mois de terrain ethnographique au Sénégal, durant lesquels j'ai observé la mise en œuvre de seize MICs dans divers lieux : villages ruraux, centres communautaires, associations des jeunes, stations de radio et des écoles. Cette ethnographie de longue durée m'a permis d'observer les mondes sociaux des campagnes, notamment leurs configurations sociales, leur fonctionnement, leurs agencements et leurs dimensions affectives.

Résultats de recherche : l'idéation, la mise en œuvre et la réception des MICs

Chaque chapitre se concentre sur une étape du cycle de vie de la campagne – idéation, mise en œuvre et réception – et prend en compte les perspectives des différents acteurs impliqués. Tout au long de la thèse, je mobilise plusieurs concepts clés : l'imaginaire, l'intermédiation, l'acte de langage, l'affect et les émotions. J'utilise le concept d'imaginaire pour analyser les justifications avancées par les initiateurs ; les notions d'intermédiation et d'acte de langage m'aident à comprendre la manière dont les acteurs sénégalais chargés de la mise en œuvre traduisent le discours des bailleurs internationaux en des termes qui parlent aux populations locales ; et l'affect ainsi que les émotions sont essentiels pour saisir les réponses des destinataires des campagnes. Ces concepts permettent de comprendre comment les campagnes sont créées, transformées et contestées.

Chapitre 3 analyse comment les décideurs politiques européens et les agents de développement qui initient les campagnes justifient ces interventions. À partir d'entretiens qualitatifs, je montre que les initiateurs justifient les MICs de trois manières : premièrement, ils estiment avoir le devoir moral de fournir aux migrants potentiels une information objective ; deuxièmement, ils considèrent que les campagnes ne causent aucun tort ; troisièmement, ils pensent que les MICs transmettent des messages positifs et contribuent au développement. Ces justifications s'ancrent dans les imaginaires que les initiateurs entretiennent d'eux-mêmes, de leur travail de promotion des campagnes, des contextes dans lesquels elles sont produites et reçues, et du public cible, c'est-à-dire les « migrants potentiels ». Or, ces imaginaires sont traversés de contradictions. D'un côté, les initiateurs s'imaginent défendre des principes humanitaires et promouvoir des initiatives éducatives capables de donner aux individus les moyens de changer leur comportement. De l'autre, ils pensent que les populations ciblées choisiront souvent de migrer clandestinement, même en étant pleinement informées, faute de voies légales disponibles. Les initiateurs tentent de concilier ces contradictions en percevant

leurs politiques comme situées à l'intersection des logiques humanitaires et sécuritaires. En considérant les MICs comme raisonnables, inoffensives et nécessaires, leurs imaginaires légitiment l'instrumentalisation du « care » à des fins de contrôle.

Les deux chapitres suivants recentrent l'analyse sur le Sénégal. Le **chapitre 4** s'interroge sur les raisons pour lesquelles des citoyens sénégalais participent à la mise en œuvre des campagnes et sur la manière dont ils remplissent leur rôle d'intermédiaires locaux. En m'appuyant sur la littérature du développement, je considère le personnel local des organisations chargées de la mise en œuvre — y compris les ONG et les organisations internationales telles que l'OIM — comme des intermédiaires chargés de traduire les politiques européennes en pratiques concrètes sur le terrain. J'analyse leur travail de traduction à travers le prisme des actes de langage afin de montrer comment ils promeuvent, transforment et contestent simultanément les messages de la campagne. En respectant les directives des projets, les acteurs locaux valident les objectifs des campagnes et en retirent des bénéfices personnels. En parallèle, ils influencent et transforment les messages par des actes de langage subtils et des choix stratégiques, ouvrant ainsi la voie à des discours alternatifs qui contestent le récit hégémonique de la campagne et mettent en avant les perspectives locales. Tout en contribuant à l'application et à la normalisation des « frontières douces » au Sénégal, ils utilisent leur position pour résister au discours politique européen et promouvoir des messages alternatifs. Ce chapitre met en lumière la position paradoxale des personnels locaux des MICs au Sénégal : ils participent à la diffusion de messages visant à restreindre leur propre mobilité ainsi que celle de leurs pairs, tout en soutenant des luttes locales pour le changement. Il montre qu'ils sont des sujets ambigus, dont le travail à la fois soutient les régimes migratoires globaux et alimente des résistances locales.

Le **chapitre 5** explore la manière dont la jeunesse sénégalaise, cible privilégiée des campagnes, réagit aux MICs, ainsi que la façon dont les émotions – souvent négligées dans les politiques migratoires – circulent dans ces espaces. S'appuyant sur des données ethnographiques, il examine les actions, les gestes et les silences des jeunes pendant les événements de campagne. Les MICs apparaissent comme des espaces affectifs où divers registres émotionnels sont mobilisés, produisant des effets violents. Je soutiens que ces campagnes infligent une violence émotionnelle en contraignant les jeunes à (ré)écouter et rejouer des récits traumatiques, tout en réduisant au silence les voix dissidentes. Par ces pratiques, elles construisent la jeunesse sénégalaise comme des « Autres indésirables », tandis que les émotions viennent s'attacher à leur corps de manière à renforcer les logiques d'exclusion et les rapports de pouvoir Nord-Sud. Le chapitre met également en lumière la manière dont les jeunes expriment des formes affectives de protestation face à ces dynamiques. En résistant aux discours anti-migratoires et en contestant la normalisation de la sédentarité, ils revendiquent la mobilité et la justice sociale, et appellent à des changements structurels plutôt qu'à des avertissements moralisateurs. Leurs réponses émotionnelles deviennent ainsi un mode

d'expression politique et critique, déstabilisant les récits mêmes que les MICs cherchent à imposer.

Conclusion

Dans l'ensemble, cette thèse fait progresser l'étude des campagnes d'information sur la migration financées par l'UE en mettant en lumière la complexité et les contradictions qui sous-tendent leur fonctionnement. Une contribution majeure de ce travail réside dans l'analyse des différentes formes de travail qui permettent aux MICs de se maintenir tout en étant remises en question. À mesure que les messages circulent des bailleurs de fonds vers les États destinataires, ils sont imaginés, traduits et investis de significations changeantes. Ce processus est porté par une pluralité d'acteurs qui interprètent, modifient ou contestent les objectifs initiaux des campagnes. Plutôt que d'être de simples instruments statiques de gouvernance migratoire, les MICs apparaissent comme des projets évolutifs et disputés, façonnés par des intérêts multiples et parfois divergents. Mon analyse met en évidence la polysémie des MICs : elles véhiculent une multiplicité de significations, souvent contradictoires, qui circulent entre et au sein des différents groupes impliqués. Initiateurs, exécutants locaux et publics cibles portent des visions fragmentées et parfois paradoxales du monde, mais chacun parvient à concilier ces contradictions pour préserver la légitimité de son action. Reconnaître cette polysémie est essentiel pour comprendre le fonctionnement concret des campagnes et les effets qu'elles produisent.

Les initiateurs des campagnes, les exécutants locaux et les destinataires opèrent chacun à partir de visions du monde traversées de tensions internes et de paradoxes. Pourtant, ils parviennent à naviguer à travers ces contradictions et à les concilier de manière à préserver la légitimité de leur rôle. En conséquence, les MICs persistent — remplissant des fonctions à la fois politiques et symboliques pour les États de l'UE, qui cherchent à décourager la migration irrégulière et à externaliser le contrôle des frontières. Toutefois, derrière leur apparente cohérence, ces campagnes sont des lieux de tensions et de négociations constantes. Si une grande partie de ces contestations reste subtile ou contenue, elle porte en elle un potentiel de rupture. Parfois, cette contestation devient visible et audible, comme en témoignent les actions de jeunes Sénégalais qui se réapproprient les espaces de campagne et redéfinissent le discours selon leurs propres termes. Ces actes de résistance révèlent l'hypocrisie du système des MICs et soulignent l'urgence, pour les politiques migratoires, d'écouter et de prendre en compte les réalités vécues et les perspectives de celles et ceux qu'elles visent.

About the author

Cecilia Schenetti was born in Correggio, Italy, on 8 March 1994. She completed her Bachelor's in Arts and Culture from Maastricht University in 2016. As part of her studies, she spent one semester at the Institut d'Études Politiques Sciences Po in Bordeaux. In 2017, Cecilia pursued a Master's in Globalisation and Development Studies at Maastricht University, during which she developed her interest in migration studies. Her Master's thesis examined how young asylum seekers in the Netherlands experience periods of waiting, exploring the strategies they employ to navigate a state of social and geographical immobility. The research was based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted with a group of unaccompanied minors living in Maastricht. After completing her studies, Cecilia gained research experience working as a data collector for the ERC project 'HOMInG', led by the University of Trento, which explored experiences of home-making among migrant communities in London. Afterwards, she worked for an NGO in Dakar where she assisted the implementation of development projects related to the socio-economic reintegration of return migrants and the internal displacement of young people in Senegal. In 2020, she began her PhD at Maastricht University within the EU co-funded research programme 'LIMES – The Hardening and Softening of Borders in Europe', under the supervision of Prof. Valentina Mazzucato, Prof. Sally Wyatt, and Dr. Djamila Schans. During her PhD, she was seconded to the Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Datacentrum in The Hague. For her research, she conducted over a year of fieldwork in Senegal, during which she was hosted by the Geography Department at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar. Her research has been published in international peer-reviewed journals such as the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, International Migration, and Ethnic and Racial Studies.*

European states finance migration information campaigns (MICs) in African countries to discourage irregular migration to Europe and promote the benefits of staying in the home country. This thesis traces the lifecycle of these campaigns—from their conception in Europe to their implementation and reception in Africa—through a multi-sited ethnographic study conducted in the Netherlands and Senegal. It examines how European policymakers imagine MICs, how local staff in Senegal implement them, and how Senegalese youth, the intended target of these campaigns, receive and respond to campaign messages. This thesis argues that MICs are contested, contradictory, and polysemic projects that develop through the work of imagination, translation, and emotional labour undertaken by multiple campaign actors. In their roles within the campaign chain and the tasks assigned to them, initiators, local implementers, and recipients face paradoxical situations. As they reconcile these paradoxes, MICs gain legitimacy and persist. However, MICs remain sites of ongoing tension and contestation. Much of this contestation is subtle, yet it can become visible and audible, as shown by Senegalese youth who reclaim campaign spaces and reframe the discourse on their own terms. These acts of resistance expose the violence and hypocrisy within the MIC system and call for policies that seriously take into account the experiences and perspectives of the people they aim to target.