

Illusions or Denied Opportunities? A Case Study on Unaccompanied  
Senegalese Migrant Minors in Spain

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**Abstract:**

This research analyzes the situation of unaccompanied Senegalese migrant minors in Spain. The study begins by setting out an explanatory framework that gives an account of relevant migration theories to analyze the dynamics of migration movements as well as the historical changes of migration flows. In a later stage, the authors outline the political, social and economic context of the sending and receiving countries in question (Senegal and Spain) as well as migration routes between the two states. Finally, the international, regional and national legal framework for the protection of unaccompanied migrant minors is briefly clarified. In the subsequent qualitative research, the authors analyze what sources of information and what access to information Senegalese migrant minors have before, during and after their migration project to Spain. Through semi-structured interviews, the impact of social networks as well as patterns of chain and circular migration on the individual migration process of the minors are examined. The questions at issue are whether the minors are drawn by illusions of an idealized life in Europe or if they face an initial situation of denied opportunities in Senegal, but also later in Spain. The authors conclude that both illusions as well as denied opportunities play a role in the migration project of young Senegalese migrants in Spain.