The Back way to Europe

A case study about why young men in Gambia are prepared to risk their lives to get to Europe
Abstract
Irregular migration is one of our times challenge and the news about migrants dying in the Mediterranean Sea seems to be more and more common these days. African migrants are risking their lives migrating by routes through the desert on trucks packed with migrants to get to Libya; this route is called the back way. From Libya they are crossing the Mediterranean Sea in small over loaded boats with the hope to reach Italy.

This study focus on young Gambian men who say that they are prepared to risk their life by going the back way in order to reach Europe. Gambia is a small country in West Africa, a country that has been free from violence and war, a peaceful country. Yet the back way is something that is on everybody’s lips in Gambia today and a lot of people, especially young men, are trying to get to Europe through that way. This research is looking into why these young men are prepared to risk their lives to reach Europe; it is showing what it is that make people take their decisions to go. In order to find answers to this, interviews with young men in Gambia has been done and the material have then been analyzed with the help of the push and pull model, the rational choice theory and Charles Tilly’s ideas about durable inequality.

What can be understood from the findings in this research is that people migrate in order to improve their lives. They consider the back way only because that is what is available to them since the legal ways of getting to Europe are few and hard to get for somebody from the developing world. The research also shows that your position in the family and in the society plays a crucial part in the decision of going or not going.

Keywords
Gambia, Young men, Back way, Migration, Irregular migration
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1 Introduction

To migrate is something that is accessible for those who live in the west world, they can do it if they want to while for those who live in the developing part of the world migration is much less accessible. If you want to migrate from the developing world to Europe you often have to depend on the illegal activities and on human smugglers, since the legal ways to reach Europe are few and difficult to get access to. For a young unmarried person from a developing country, who do not have any relations that will bring them back to their country, the obstacles of travelling or migrating is not only the financial ones. Even if they manage to get money to go they do in many cases not get the access to enter the west world. For these people it can seem almost impossible to get even a visitor’s visa to Europe, since the authorities can deny visas based on the perception that the person who gets in to Europe will not return home once the visa has expired (Migrationsverket, 2014). If it is this hard to even visit Europe, one could just imagine the difficulties to migrate in order to improve your life, this issue is in fact giving the human smugglers a business.

Many young people from the developing world are today taking the risk to travel through, what they call the back way in order to reach greener pasture in Europe. Traveling the back way means that you are taking ways that are not legal to travel, that you go without documents like visas and passport. They risk their lives on routes from West Africa through the desert to Libya, from Libya they get in to overloaded boats that will take them to Italy and Europe. They all know that there are risks on the way and that this might cost them their lives, but they do it or want to do it because they have seen others succeed (Gatti, 2013).

The flow of people who travels through the desert on their way to Europe has caused a debate in the world today. Economic migrants and refugees are today taking the same routes and use the same methods to reach Europe. When refugees and migrants take the same routes to reach Europe they create confusion when they arrive to Europe, confusion that is based on that they are difficult to separate from each other. The reason to separate the migrants from the refugees has to do with the asylum rights that the refugees are entitled to (UNHCR, 2014a). A person who is forced to leave their country because of warfare or violations is defined as a refugee and according to the 1951 refugee convention a refugee is someone who:
"owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.” (UNHCR, 2014a)

People who choose to move because they want to improve their lives are defined as economic migrants. In policies the difference between refugees and economic migrants are that those who migrate for economic reasons choose to do so to try to improve their lives while refugees are forced to move to save their lives. The economic migrants are not entitled to the same protection and are not treated in the same way as refugees by international law. The people who move through the back way, both refugees and economic migrants are often the ones referred to as irregular migrants; they are irregular because of the way that they move (ibid).

Europe is doing what they can to try to stop irregular migration by securitizing the European borders. Land borders are controlled and secured today so that the migrants will be stopped and European countries are even securing their borders by giving their African neighbors the equipment to hinder the potential migrants before they even leave their country (Andersson, 2014).

This securitization of land borders seems to increase the kind of migration and illegal activities that it is supposed to be decreasing. More and more people are relying on the human smugglers to get to Europe and there is an increase activity of smuggling and smuggling networks especially around the Libyan – Italy border (Andrijasevic, 2009).

The irregular migration that we nowadays hear a lot about are one of our times challenges. The migration is irregular in the sense that the acts are illegal when they cross borders unauthorized, they do not have the requested documentation or the crossing involves smugglers (UNHCR,2014b), which means that the act itself is illegal and not the person.

1.1 Earlier research
The earlier research that has been done within the area migration and irregular migration are done from many different angles. Some research is focusing on the smugglers and the process around smuggling van Liempt and Doomernik (2006) are two of the researchers who are focusing on that. They focus on whether or not the migrants have any saying in the smuggling process. Another author who takes up smuggling, trafficking and irregular migration in her article is Ventrella McCreight (2006). She points out the crimes in smuggling and that the
smuggling and trafficking of humans is what should be considered as a crime while irregular migration should be classified as a situation that should not be punished because it is caused by poverty. There is also research that is focusing on the securitization of land borders and what Europe is doing to hinder the irregular migrants to enter the European countries (Andersson, 2014). Migration patterns and why people migrate is another angel in the vast research about migration. Whitehouse (2013) is one of the researchers that are focusing on that and it is within this area this research will contribute.

1.2 Problem formulation
I will in my study focus on the young men from Gambia who wants to go to Europe and who sees the back way as their only option. I will try to understand what it is that makes them want to go on this life risking journey. My choice to focus on young Gambian men are based on that I have seen and heard that there is an increased amount of young Gambians, and especially young men, who are taking the back way today. I am a frequent visitor to the Gambia and at my last visit in the summer of 2013 I noticed from friends and family that the back way was the topic in many discussions. People were talking a lot about others who left through the back way and also about going the back way themselves. This was something that I never heard at my earlier visits and it made me interested in the issue. The back way is something that seems to be on everybody’s lips in Gambia today, and everybody seems to know people who left through that way. I will in this study focus on the young men in Gambia who want to or are planning to go to Europe this way. I have chosen to focus on the young men since they are the ones who seems to go, there are young women who goes as well but the majority of going, or wanting to go is the young men.

1.3 Purpose and research questions
The purpose of this study is to try to understand and get a better picture of how people, who are willing to risk their lives going the back way, reason about the back way. If there is a better understanding about irregular migration, there can be changes done for the people who are left with the back way as their only option. The back way and irregular migration exists only because people do not have other options. The purpose is to understand their situation and why they want to take the risk in order create knowledge so that there can be a change for this people. I have one main question that I want to answer in this study and that is:
1. Why are so many young men in Gambia prepared to risk their lives in order to get to Europe?

To be able to understand and answer that question I also have to answer the following questions:

   a) Who is it that wants to take the risk of going the back way to Europe in order to seek for greener pastures?
   b) What is it that motivates them to go?
   c) What make the back way an option?

1.4 Relevance
This research is relevant within the field of peace and development since people who risk their lives taking the back way are people just like anybody else. The difference lies in rich or poor, being born on the north or on the south part of the globe or having the right passport or not. People who are from the developing world do not have the same chances to improve their lives and therefore they have to rely on human smugglers to be able to move. This is then a matter of human rights, do people whose only option to migrate is through the back way not have the same right to human rights?

It is also relevant because of the ongoing debate there is about irregular migration from Africa to Europe today. There is an increased amount of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea, going from Libya or Tunisia to Italian islands, these migrants are something that we hear a lot about in the news these days, and some of these people are from Gambia. International organization for migration (IOM, 2014) recently reported on their news site that more than 4000 migrants came to Italy within 3 days all, according to them, from Libya. Many of the migrants’ reaches Italy but it is also many people who never reach Europe, many people die when they are crossing from Libya to Italy. The news that reaches us about this is the reports about boat accidents where many people are involved. What we do not hear about in the news, but what people who have been on the boats tell you are that people die in the boats, they die from being sick or they fall over board, nobody knows how many people it is that have lost their lives like this.

That the amount of people coming to Europe this way has increased like this shows that something needs to be done, people should not have to risk their lives in order to improve their lives and living standard. To understand the root causes why people choose to take the
back way is relevant because it can help to create knowledge so that there can be something done to make the situation better for this people.

More and more people from Gambia are today leaving their country to seek for greener pastures and many of those who are going are taking the back way in order to reach Europe. Gambia is a small country, it has been stable and conflict free for a long time and it is seen as a peaceful country, but the fact that so many people are leaving or planning to leave is a sign that the country is not able to satisfy the population when it comes to survival.

1.5 Contribution
By doing research about young men in Gambia who wants to go to Europe and are prepared to risk their lives to do so, this research will contribute to earlier research about migration. It will show what it is that makes people prepared to risk their lives in order to reach Europe and my hope is that it will contribute to the knowledge about irregular migrants’ situation and their reasons for going. In this study the voices of the young men who are willing to risk their lives are in focus, the young men who are willing to risk their own lives to seek for greener pasture, these are the people who are not free to even travel and see other parts of the world than the one they are from.

This study complements previous research about root causes to migration. By showing what it is that make young men in Gambia prepared to leave their home and their families it will contribute to the knowledge about migration, migration patterns and the root causes to migration and irregular migration. With that knowledge changes can be made in the future so that people instead can migrate safely.

The social system that exists in Gambia and that I will describe in this research is likely to be similar to other West African systems. This is due to the fact that the tribes that lives in Gambia such as Wolof, Mandinka and Fula, also live in other West African countries like Senegal, Guinea-Conacry and Guinea-Bissau (The African Guide, 2014). Because of this their reasons of going might then also be the same; the study can therefore be helpful to future studies about migration pattern in this area.

By contributing with this knowledge together with other research done within the area I hope that migration one day will be equal for everybody no matter where you come from or where you want to go. There is an ongoing discourse about legal ways to Europe and I hope that this study, in its small size can fit in to that discourse and contribute to safe migration ways. For
me free migration is utopia and I hope that this study can be a contribution to that one day free
migration is reality.

1.6 Delimitations
The fact that I have chosen to do my research about young Gambian men that wants to leave
their country by taking the back way in order to reach Europe means that I am not including
the women or the elderly in my study. I am not including the elderly because I am interested
in knowing what the people who wants to go think and how they reason about the back way,
and the people who wants to go are mostly young people, to include the elderly would then
give another approach to the research. The choice to not interview women in this issue is
based on that the women who want to go on this kind of journey are few and they are not as
accessible to get in contact with as the young men. The young women in Gambia have more
domestic tasks to do than the men and are therefore not as accessible for an outsider like me
in the same way as the men are.

I have done all of my interviews with people from the same area/ community which might as
well delimit the results of my study. I have chosen to do my interviews in and around an area
where I know that a lot of young people have left through the back way. I am aware that the
findings could have been different if I included other areas as well.

Since this research is focusing on those who want to do the journey, there is only one side that
is going to be heard in this thesis. There are of course many more sides to this phenomenon,
like the agents who make a lot of money on the migrants or the European Union or African
Unions responsibilities in this matter, this is something that I am not going to look deeper at
in this thesis.

1.7 Limitations
I am aware that the results of this study are based on those who were willing to let me
interview them and that those who I did not get in contact with and those who did not want to
talk might had given me a different result. This might be people who were afraid to talk,
maybe because they were too far ahead in their plans of going and did not want to risk
anything. It might also be those who do not want to go, those who rather stay in Gambia and
build their future there. These people might be unwilling to talk to me because the back way
today is something that everybody talks about and young men are in many cases expected to want to go, it has become the norm for the young men in Gambia. If you do not want to go you have to defend that decision more than if your decision is to go. Because there is such an increased amount of people going, the people who do not want to go needs to be strong and defend themselves against the majority and the expectation that all young men want to go. This might be a reason that I did not get in contact with them. If they were included in the study the result might had been different than it is now.

I am also aware of that the result of the interviews might be affected by the fact that I am a European woman and all the respondents are all men who wish to go to Europe. In the meetings with the respondents I represent Europe, the Europe that many of them so badly want to enter and at the same time the Europe that is denying them visas and will not let them enter, this could affect the interviews in many different ways. The fact that I am a woman and all the respondents are men could affect the interviews since there usually is a difference in status between men and women (Conelly et al., 2000 pp.51-159).

1.8 Ethical consideration
Since my study is a case study based on interviews there are some ethical issues to be considered. First of all it is a sensitive issue to talk about and it might be especially sensitive to talk about that with someone who is an outsider to them. To overcome that issue I made sure to explain to the participants that the purpose of the study is to get a picture of the situation, linked to the research questions above and that I was not there to try to stop anybody from going. I was also clear on that the participation was voluntary and that they were entitled to stay strict anonymous, that they could choose not to answer any of the questions and that they could call off the interview at any time.

While writing the thesis I have to consider the participants and make sure that I treat their stories with respect so that they do not feel as if I am misusing their willingness to talk to me. The participants are also promised to get a copy of the thesis when it is done.
2. Background

I will in this chapter briefly give you background facts about the country the respondents in this study are from. I will explain how the social system and the Gambian society works because the way that they organize their social life, what they value and why they value that is important to be able to understand what they base their decisions on. I will also explain irregular migration and what ways there are to get to Europe as an economic migrant and I will go through some of the earlier research relevant to this research.

2.1 Gambia

Gambia is located in West Africa and is the smallest country on the African mainland. The country reaches about 450 km from the Atlantic coast and is centered around the river Gambia. Except the Atlantic coast in the west, the north, the east and the south is all bordering to Senegal. The population in Gambia is about 1.8 million people and more than half of the population lives under the poverty line, which is under 2 US dollars a day (Globalis, 2014). About 57 percent of the inhabitants live in the city and the life expectancy at birth is 58 years. Only around one fifth of all Gambians are formally employed, and the job opportunities are few. Freedom of speech and freedom of press is something that only exists on paper, and those presses who are criticizing anything or trying to point out the truth are threatened by the government. Gambia has a young population and the youth unemployment is something that they struggle with (Landguiden, 2014). The young population in Gambia lives in conditions where they are not able to contribute to the household economy, they are depending on their parents and they cannot start their own families since they are not able to support even themselves. When talking to the youths in Gambia they all say that those families who have it well are those who have somebody that lives outside the country, someone who send remittances back home for them to survive.

2.1.1 The social system in Gambia

To be able to understand why young men in Gambia are willing to risk their lives by going the back way you have to be aware of how the social system in Gambia works. From having personal connections, from the interviews for this research and from spending a lot of my time with and around Gambians for several years, I have come to understand how the social structure in Gambia is organized and I will here explain that.

The social networks and the family structure are organized in a hierarchic order, in the families it starts with the father who is the head of the household and the one who is in charge. What he says goes and he is the one who is responsible for the household economy,
he is the one who is supposed to bring the money and is responsible for the family’s survival. The mother is subordinated to her husband; she is responsible for the domestic tasks and for the children. It is her responsibility to make sure that there is food every day; she is the one who is supposed to take care of the children’s wellbeing, clothing and behaviour. The first born child (called “taaw” in the local language Wollof) in the family is the one who is supposed to be in charge of the house after the dad, this is especially clear if it is a boy. The first son has obligations to rule the house when the parents are old and when the parents pass away he is the one who should be taking over the responsibility of the house. The first born has the right to tell other siblings what to do and what not to do. The younger siblings are supposed to do as they are told by the older, but they do not have specific obligations towards the family as the first born has. Even if the younger siblings do not have specific obligations like the first born, the boys of the family are in some way expected to contribute to the household economy when they are grown up. The last born (called “chat” in Wollof) in a family with many children are looked after by all the others, both parents and siblings and the youngest of them all is therefore normally given more possibilities than the other children to get for example education. All children in the family are brought up in a society where you are supposed to respect the elders and what your mother and father has done for you is something that you should be grateful of and that if you can you should pay back one day by giving them the peace of mind that they deserve.

The boys in the family have more responsibility towards the parents than the girls have. Normally when boys get married they bring their wives to the family house while the girls are leaving the family house for their husbands when they get married. This makes the boys more responsible for their parents’ survival than the girls.

The social system and the hierarchic order works not only in families but also in other social networks. The older have the right to send the younger to do things for them, such as buy cigarettes or run their errands while the younger are supposed to respect the older because they are older. This is how they organize their society, you are subordinated in one group and superior in another group, the system makes you know your position in the society and you know when to take what position.

Respect is something that is very important in Gambia and one way people earn respect is by their wealth, their wealth is measured by how they look, what you have done for yourself and for your family and if you are successful. If you are successful in Gambia (if you have money) you get respect from the society. Gambians who live in the west world are often
treated with great respect, and thereby treated differently than the local people, when they are home visiting.

2.2 Irregular migration and ways to Europe

People in this world live under different conditions which make their reasons and possibilities to move different. Migration is something that is not accessible for all people, for those who live in the west world migration is more accessible than for those who live in the developing world. If you are coming from the developing world and want to improve your life and living standard by migrating to Europe the legal options are few and the irregular way is in many cases the only option. Families sell land or other valuable properties to send one family member the back way, a journey that often involves human smugglers.

When people are crossing borders unauthorized, when they do not have the requested documentation or the crossing involves smugglers the migration is irregular (UNHCR, 2014b). This means that the act when the person is crossing the border is illegal and not the person.

The irregular migration that we are facing today can as Kostakopoulou (2004) points out, be seen as a by-product of the securitization of the land borders. People are risking their lives in order to reach Europe because there is no legal way for them to enter Europe. People who choose to migrate to Europe to improve their lives or the people who are forced to flee their countries because of warfare or violations do not have any legal way to enter Europe. To be able to seek asylum in Europe a person have to be in a European country. Europe do not give out visas to those countries who are in conflict, which means that people who have the right to seek asylum in a safer country have no other option than to turn to human smugglers to get to Europe (Amnesty International, 2014). The lack of safe ways to Europe affects both the asylum seekers that are trying to get to safer countries and the economic migrant who try to improve their lives.

Member states of the European Union (EU) have since 2004 joint together in order to protect the European borders by land, sea and air, this EU border agency is called Frontex (Frontex, 2014). European Union and Frontex have the last 10 years worked actively to hinder people to come to Europe by boat from Africa. European countries have agreements with African countries when it comes to migration in order to try to hinder the migrants to go from Africa to Europe. Some of Frontex tasks are that together with African authorities patrol in the
Mediterranean Sea in order to stop the migrants before they reach Europe, Frontex is also the ones coordinating the return of the irregular migrant that has entered Europe (Amnesty International, 2014).

2.3 Earlier research
The research that is done about migration and irregular migration is vast and it is done from many angles and one of the angles is human smuggling. There are many studies done about human smuggling and trafficking which all could somehow fit in to my study since the people who go the back way in most cases has to rely on human smugglers. Van Liempt and Doomernik (2006) are some of the researchers that have written and published articles about human smuggling, out of the migrants, who has been smuggled stand point. In this article van Leimpt & Doomernik (2006) look at whether or not the migrants themselves do have a say in where they want to end up or if the smugglers are the ones deciding their destination. Ventrella McCreight (2006) is in her work focusing on smuggling, trafficking and irregular migration, her point of departure is within criminal justice and crimes of smuggling.

A lot of focus about irregular migration is on the symptoms of migration, when the migration becomes a problem and this is then putting the actual root cause why people migrate in a shadow, which is something that Betts (2006) points at in his research. The irregular migrants are seen as a threat to the state security and international migration as a phenomenon is often brought to attention when accidents happen that involve migrants, like when boats overloaded with migrants sink in the Mediterranean Sea, and the focus in the media is then often about the fact that these migrants cross the sea and try to reach Europe illegally. Some research point out that irregular migration is a by-product of the securitization and laws that are made to control migration (Kostakopoulou, 2004).

When International migration is discussed it is often focusing on the receiving countries and the effects it has on those countries, Akokpari (2006) on the other hand is in his study focusing on the effects that international migration has on Africa’s development.

Whitehouse (2013) is in his research looking at migration patterns in Africa and especially on why people migrate from Mali to Brazzaville in Congo to start businesses. Why do they migrate from one poor country to start a business in another poor country? He points out that the social network is a pull-factor for migrating; he argues that for Malians to start a successful business in Mali is almost impossible because of the strong social networks and the
obligations towards members and that the claims from these members outweigh the benefits of a healthy economy. He also shows in his research that Malians would do business and make money on jobs that they would not do at home. This might be jobs that are not respected in the home country, they would not do this job in their country because the family would feel shame but to do the job in another country is okay since nobody knows you there (ibid).

Schram and Soss (1999) made a research about why poor people in America, who survive on benefits, are not migrating. They are looking at previous research about welfare migration and claims that poor people do not migrate from one state to another because of welfare and benefits. They point out that states with generous welfare and benefit system are afraid that poor people will migrate to their state because of their welfare system. In their study they show that this is not the fact, poor people do not tend to migrate because of better welfare system, instead they argue that the welfare migration indicates that it is the social factors that are considered, such as kinships and social networks, when people migrate. They show that the most important factor to migrate was family and friends, who would provide them with needed assistance in raising children and other support. The feeling of being at home is powerful and is what binds families to significant places (ibid).

3. Analytical framework
To analyze the findings in this study and to explain and understand the social structure in Gambia I will use an analytical framework that is built on the rational choice theory, the push and pull model and I will also use some of Charles Tilly’s ideas about durable inequality. By building an analytical framework based on these models I can analyze my findings out of what pushes and pulls people to go and I will see what they base their decision on both by rationality and by the social system that exists in Gambia.

The rational choice theory, the push and pull model, the theory about durable inequality and the complementing questions will help me answer the main research question. The respondents’ reasons of wanting to go will be explained by their life stories and the analytical framework. Rational choice and the push and pull model cannot explain everything but by adding the thoughts about durable inequality I will be able to see the reasons from different angles and thereby answer the research question and understand their reasons of wanting to go in a broader way.
3.1 Charles Tilly’s durable inequality

Tilly is in his work *durable inequality* (1998) arguing that system and society works thanks to that there is categorical inequality. He means that categorical inequality result from the institution of a general, powerful problem-solving organisational, that categorical inequality helps to solve and organize problems. His theory explains how inequality occurs and how it sustains and reproduces in society over time. This theory will be used here to understand how the Gambian society is organised to easier see what it is that the people who choose to go might lose or gain by going.

Tilly argues that durable inequality exists in all kinds of organisations, and an organisation can be a family or another social network such as a neighbourhood. In every social relation there is inequality and Tilly explains durable inequality as an inequality that remains from one social interaction to another.

To understand processes and routines in organisations Tilly uses the concepts “script and local knowledge”, it is through these concepts that people socialise and make the communication works. The script is the thinking model and is where the daily plans are organised and the local knowledge is the knowledge that you learn over time.

Categorical inequality is according to Tilly not necessarily bad; it can provide benefits by simplifying social life. He says that the social system works because of that there are subordinated groups and elite groups. This will be used to explain who is subordinated and who is superior and it will help to understand who it is that can benefit from the system.

Tilly means that the inequality is durable because of 4 causal mechanisms of inequality: exploitation, opportunity hoarding, emulation and adaption.

Exploitation and opportunity hoarding are the primary mechanisms and are crucial in inequalities. Exploitation makes it possible for powerful groups to control valuable labour demanding resources and makes it possible for an elite group to get control over weaker groups; in Gambia’s case the powerful group can be the Gambian government, the embassies and other authorities while the weaker group is the inhabitants of the country.

Opportunity hoarding is the hoarding of opportunities by the non-elite and are when members of a categorically bounded group gets access to a resource that is valuable or renewable. It seeks to monopolize access to the valued resources and will here help to understand the access that people who reaches Europe get through money and thereby they also earn respect.
Emulation and adaption are the secondary mechanisms and they explain why inequality establishes and remains. Emulation is the reproduction of organizational models that is already operating elsewhere and it includes social relations that are equal as well as unequal.

Adaption is a general social mechanism and it keeps system of categorical inequality in place, it will here be used to explain why the system in Gambia is intact. The two main components in adaption are the inventions of procedures that ease the everyday interactions and the elaboration of valued social relations around the existing divisions (Tilly, 1998).

Further Tilly argues that the exploitation by the elite groups, the opportunity hoarding by the non-elite groups together with the reproduction of organizational models and the adaption of valued social relations around the existing divisions is what maintain the categorical inequality. The theory will be used to understand people’s position in the society and what those positions means.

### 3.2 Rational choice theory

The Rational Choice Theory is a theory based on that people think rationally when making decisions that will affect their lives. One of the proponents for the rational choice theory was James S Coleman, who among other things founded the magazine *Rationality and Society*. A magazine where they put focus on works with rational choice perspectives (Ritzer, 2008).

According to Coleman’s way of understanding rational choice it is based on that people act towards a goal and a purpose and that the purpose are formed out of what we value, our pre-understandings and our preferences (ibid). Rational choice look at people’s individual choices, that people make choices that will gain them individually, that people make a cost-benefit analysis before they make a decision to do something, participate in something or to try to change their situation. According to this theory people act collectively only if they can gain something on an individual level. It is often used when explaining criminal acts and why people choose to do criminal acts. The theory is also used to explain why people join groups and act collectively (Conthe-Morgan, 2004).

The choice to use this theory as a part of my analytical framework to understand the research question in this study is based on that people make cost-benefit analysis in life, when they make decisions that will affect their own and their families’ lives. The theory will help me explain why people are willing to take the risk that is involved when going the back way.
People think rationally and participate in collective acts or situations so that they will gain their individual goals, this can be used when explaining why people are willing to take the risk. Many people are leaving Gambia today, which then can be seen as a collective action. The people who are leaving are doing that because they want to improve their own, and their families’ living standard, which then can be seen as an individual goal.

3.3 Push – Pull model
Push-pull factors are often used in migration research and it involves a combination of push factors from the country of origin and pull factors from the country of destinations (Boyle et al., 1998 pp. 67). This model will be used in the analysis to be able to structure the findings in the study. By using this model in the analysis I will be able to see what factors it is that makes people want to go. The push-pull model has been criticized for not been able to explain actual movements, like why a certain group of people migrate to a certain country and so on (Castles & Miller, 2009). The model can show what pushes and pulls people to go but not why certain people tend to move which is why the model will in this research be used as a complement to the rational choice theory and Tilly’s (1998) theory about durable inequality.

4. Methodological framework

4.1 Methodology
This study is a case study with a qualitative approach where the case is the will to migrate by taking the back way and the cases are each life story and the reason that the respondents have for wanting to go. Case studies are used when seeking to understand a certain phenomenon and when you do a case study with interviews you as a researcher have a great chance of getting new variables that you did not think of before, this because the respondents might answer the questions or tell something about a situation that you as the interviewer did not think of before (George and Bennett, 2005). When using a qualitative research approach, researchers do in most cases collect data by themselves; this can be done in different ways and one way is in the field by talking to people and interviewing participants which is what is done in this study. This is an approach where the researcher rather collects data by themselves than rely on findings developed by other researchers (Creswell 2014).
In this study the case is about young Gambian men who say that they are willing to take the back way and thereby willing to risk their lives in order to reach Europe. The study is based on their life stories and their experiences about being a young man in the Gambia and wanting something better for the future. I chose to do a case study based on interviews with young men from Gambia since that method together with the analytical framework seems to be the most appropriate way to find the answers to the research question. By interviewing people instead of relying on secondary sources you know what people said and in what situation they said it which can be important for the result of the study.

When doing interviews you, as a researcher have to be aware of that what the participants tell you are from their point of departure, from their life experience. It is the participant that decides what s/he wants to tell you, what part s/he wants to reveal and what part s/he does not want to talk about. Interviews like this, when you want to hear the participants’ stories have an inwards perspective and it is the life stories and how the participants sees it that is important for the result of the study (Ehn and Öberg 2011). In this study I am interested in knowing what the participants think about traveling the back way it is their thoughts and experiences that I want to hear about, other facts or how other people see it is not relevant for the study. We all experience things in different ways according to what our previous experiences are and in this study I as a researcher have to be aware of that the respondents and I do not share the same life experiences. The respondents are all from a different background, different culture and with all the respondents being men also from a different sex than I am which all have to be considered in the analysis.

4.2 Method
In order to answer my research question I have done a qualitative field study using interviews as my main method to collect data. To be able to get the best results to my study I went to Gambia and interviewed young men there about the back way. I wanted to know what they think and how they reason about the back way, why they want to go or why they do not want to go.

4.2.1 My pre-understandings
Before I left for my field study in Gambia I had a pre-understanding about the back way that I got from talking to people in Gambia and also from reading life stories from people who have been traveling this way. I have a general interest in migration and irregular migration and therefore I have been reading a lot regarding this issue, my pre-understanding is based on what I have heard and read before and I had a good picture about the back way when I started
my field work. The pre-understandings that I had about the people who want to go the back way is that they go on this kind of journey because of poverty, they think highly about Europe and that their plan is to go to Europe and work and then later come back and invest their money in Gambia.

One book that I read was Gattis (2013) book called “Bilal på slavrutten till Europa” which is a book based on the authors and other peoples experience about traveling the back way. Fabrizio Gatti is an Italian journalist who traveled through the back way from Senegal, West Africa and up to Libya together with those migrants who travel that way in order to reach Europe. Gatti put himself in the same situation as the migrants, who are willing to risk their lives for better opportunities in Europe, to be able to see Europe through their eyes. The book “Bilal på slavrutten till Europa” is the result of his and other migrants experience on the journey. The journey that Gatti did is the same journey as the respondents in my interviews say that they are willing to do.

These secondary sources are not peer reviewed or in any way academically written, they are life stories told by people who experienced the journey themselves. I have read them and listened to them only out of my own interest and they are now helping me to get a better understanding about the topic and have contributed to my pre-understanding about the issue.

I do also have an understanding about the social structures in Gambia, how they organize themselves and their social networks in order to make the society work. I do have an understanding about how the social system in the families work, that there is a hierarchic order that they adapt to and organize themselves after and that this hierarchic order function outside the family system as well. The way that the social structure works in Gambia is important to the findings of this study, it is important to understand in what way the social structure and networks work to be able to analyze the result and to understand what they base their decisions on.

4.2.2 Interviews
I have spoken to a few persons that just came to Europe through the back way and crossed the sea from Libya to Italy. I did not interview those who just came to Europe in the sense that it was recorded and transcribed but I had discussions with them regarding their journey. I chose not to do proper interviews with them first of all because the telephone lines where not very good, secondly they were not alone when we talked on the phone and therefore the interruption was too much. But even though I did not do any proper interviews I still got some
valuable facts about the journey, such as how they travel through the desert, feelings they had when entering the boat without a captain and their thoughts about the back way. These facts goes in line with the stories I have been reading about in the books and articles and the stories that I have heard people tell in radio programs that I have been listening to.

In Gambia I interviewed 14 people I did both individual interviews and group interviews. In the group interviews there were between 2 to 15 people in the room. In the group interview with 15 people in the room it was only 5 of them who participated and actively talked and answered questions. I also had group discussions that were more relaxed without a recorder and a notebook. Those group discussions were not at all organized but came from people wanting to know what I was doing in Gambia, when I then told them my reason for being there many interesting discussions about the back way came up. Both the interviews and the discussions was all focusing on their thoughts about going the back way in order to reach Europe.

I chose to do the interviews in a very open way in order to get as much information about their own thoughts and experiences about the issue as possible. By doing the research in this way I was able to get information about the situation in the country and about their situation that I do not think I would have got if I had chosen a more structured approach. As Dalen (2004) points out, the respondents’ words and stories are the material for the study and it is therefore important to listen to what they have to say and try to handle silent moments during the interview. By trying not to interrupt their thoughts in those silent moments I was able to get more information than I was expecting.

All the participants were asked to talk about the back way, in some cases I did not have to ask them much more than just to talk about the issue and in other cases I had to ask questions like:

Why do you want to go?
Do you know anybody who did the journey?
What does those who left tell you about the way?

I chose to do open interviews and I let the participants take control over how the interview should take form. I was the one listening while they were the ones telling, when it was necessary I asked follow up questions but I tried to let them control the conversation as much as possible.
All the interviews took place where the participants could feel comfortable and free to talk; in their home, in their local video club or in the gym. To be in places where the participants felt comfortable made the interviews more relaxed and that might also be important for the result of the interview.

The respondents that I interviewed are all relatively young men most of them between 20-30 years and a few between 35 and 40 years. They are all born and raised in Gambia and they all live within the same area, an area where many of the young men have left the neighborhood for the back way. I interviewed 14 people, 2 of them have experienced this route once before and were in Libya for some time and one respondent did try to go to Europe using another route.

The interviews were between 15 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes long and as mentioned above they took place where the participants felt at home and comfortable. I have also been talking to people about this issue without interviewing them to increase my understanding and knowledge about the situation in the area and to understand their point of departure better. This understanding will be used in the analysis.

Before I went to Gambia I did some research to see if people would be willing to talk to me. When I understood that there would be people to talk to I went there. With the help of friends I was able to get in contact with many young men who were willing to let me interview them about the back way. To use a friend as a gatekeeper who helped me get in contact with the respondents gave me guaranteed access to the field. The difficulties that can occur in the relation friend-researcher was sorted in the way that his part in the research was just to be the gatekeeper and he was not interviewed or involved in the research in any other way. To use a friend as gatekeeper also gave me and the participants the trust and the feeling that I was not a complete stranger to them, which also made the interview situation more relaxed (Fangen, 2011). All the participants that I have interviewed for this study have given me their life stories and their thoughts about the back way in a very open way, which made this study possible.

The findings of the interviews have been analyzed with the help of the analytical framework that builds on rational choice theory and the push-pull model as well as Charles Tilly’s theory about durable inequality. During the process of analyzing the material the respondents and their answers were organized into different groups in order to easier structure and understand the material. These categories are based on what I heard them say and might not
matter to the result of the study, they are based on that many of them said the same thing and used as a tool to help me organize the findings.

5. Research findings
The findings in this study are based on the 14 people that I have interviewed as well as the understandings that I got from being in Gambia and having discussions with people about the back way. I will in this chapter present my research findings and answer the research questions.

5.1 Why are so many young men in Gambia prepared to risk their lives to come to Europe?
In the Gambian society where the majority of the inhabitants are poor the visual factors that push people to go the back way are poverty, lack of job opportunities and lack of freedom; they are not free to speak their mind and if they do they risk to be punished by the government. The economic situation in the country and the youth unemployment is also something that they all suffer from and a reason for them to consider the back way. Because there is nothing to do, no ways of earning money to be able to contribute to their family’s survival they think about going. The young men that I have been talking to are all living in this condition, where they have to rely on their parents for their survival, which is something that they feel ashamed of because a grown man is not supposed to rely on his parents. The youth unemployment is visible when you walk the streets of the town and as one of the respondents said: “If you go down the streets in the middle of the day you see lots of youth men, that’s not normal they are supposed to be working but there is nothing for them”.

These are reasons that so many young men consider the back way, they think that if they stay they will not be able to contribute to the family’s economy. The family’s situation is another push factor. When they consider the back way they thinkrationally out of the society’s expectations, they know that their family’s wellbeing can be improved if they go and that they are supposed to do something about that. The back way is something that many people take these days and many of them succeed. The people who are left reason about the back way as: “if so many people made it before me, why not me?” The rationality in this is that they all have their individual goal; to be able to support their families, which then is based on the society’s expectations and not so much what they want to achieve for themselves. That individual goal can be reached by going the back way together with all the other young men
in the same situation who leaves, which then is a collective action. They weigh the benefits against the lost and make a cost-benefit analysis based on what the society expects from them and what the family will gain if they go.

“If I die on the way then that’s the end of it but if I succeed my family can be happy and for the sake of my family I am prepared to risk my life”, this is how one of the respondents reason when he weigh the good outcomes against the bad ones in going the back way.

5.1.1 Responsibility, shame and guilt
They all say that poverty is one of the main reasons of going and they do refer to the family’s situation when they talk about poverty and mean that they are prepared to go on this journey to try to improve the family’s lives and living standard. They want to go so that they can help their families, and by family they refer to mother, father and siblings. The way that the social system works in Gambia and the way that family structures are built, with the boys of the family having the responsibility over the parents and their sisters survival make them feel frustrated over not being able to contribute. In Gambia the children of the family are the parents’ safety net. The children and especially the boys are their guarantee to survival when they get old and no longer can support the family. The more children a family has the better are their chances to improve their living standard. If one of the children succeeds by migrating or by having a good job then the parents are secured. This is a strong reason for these young men to consider the back way; if they cannot help their family and contribute to the household they feel as if they failed their task.

This family structure is what makes the young men think that it is a man’s responsibility to take care of his parents. They mean that their parents have been supporting them all their lives and now it is supposed to be their turn. They feel frustrated about not being able to contribute to the family’s survival. They mention the shame and guilt they feel waking up in the morning and have to ask their mothers for money to breakfast, the shame of not being able to even buy breakfast for themselves even if they are grown up. One of the respondents put it like this: “I feel sad waking up looking at my family not having anything and not being able to give them something….”.

The feeling they have is based on that they have adapted to the system and the social laws that exist in Gambia, that a grown man is supposed to be able to take care of his parents, and they know what is expected by them. By not being able to do what is expected by them because of the economic situation in the country they now think about other options.
Tilly’s (1998) mechanism exploitation, which makes it possible for the elite group to take control over the vulnerable group of the society, can be seen in the Gambian society. Gambia is democratic only on paper and the government sits with all the power, if you talk or disagree with them you will be punished, which is a way for the government to take control over the vulnerable group of the society (Landguiden, 2014). They can punish people in different ways and it could for example be that they will be put in prison.

The lack of job opportunities is another way for the government to get control, only one fifth of the Gambian population is formally employed and the salaries that people get are not nearly enough to feed a family (Landguiden, 2014).

The respondents in this study all mention that it is hard for them to find a job, even if they have education there are no jobs for them, they talk about that there are no factories and therefore no job opportunities. People might get a labor job, which means heavy jobs that includes carrying heavy loads from boats or carrying cement bags at building places and as one respondent said: “the little money you earn there in one day you end up spending on medicine since your body is paining from the heavy job”. This situation is frustrating and they feel as if it is not profitable to work, as if they do all that heavy job and then only end up with an aching body and no money and therefore the job is not worth the effort.

5.1.2 Pre-understandings
When talking about the job situation one of the respondents said repeatedly: “Europe to is not easy, but at least you get paid for what you work”. This is one of their pre-understandings about Europe, that Europe is fair, that everybody is equal and that Europe unlike Africa have human rights.

Most of the respondents also have a pre-understanding about the problem of getting a visa to go to Europe or anywhere else in the west world. Some of them applied visas, some of them even applied more than once with the same result; a denial based on the believe that if they enter the country of destination they will not leave once the visa is expired. One of the respondents got accepted to a school in a western country but still got rejected when applying the visa based on that they believed that he would not return home once he completed his studies. His story is similar to many others who got all their documents right when applying the visa but still got denied. This visa denial is also a way that the elite group gets power over the subordinated group of the society and a reason for them to take the back way. The
respondents say that they rather invest their money in the back way than putting a lot of money on visa applications since the visa fees are not refundable and if you instead invest the money in the back way you know that you are going somewhere and hopefully you will reach where you aim to go.

5.2 Who is it then that wants to take the risk of going the back way to Europe?
The people who say that they are prepared to go are both people who have completed high school and people who left school at an early age. They are jobless and have no hope for the future in Gambia, they feel as if they do not have anything to lose by going, in worst case they lose their lives but in the best case they win a bright future both for themselves and for their families.

They are the young unmarried men in Gambia who are not the first son of the family and not the last born in the family. They mention their position in the family as reasons of going or not going, those who say that they are prepared to go are those who do not have specific obligations in the house and those who say that they do not want to go use their position as first born as a reason to stay. Those who are the last born say that they want to go, but because of that their older siblings are supporting and helping them they are most likely not going. They have adapted to the social system and they all know their position in the society, both the ones who say that they are going and the ones who say that they are staying are basing those decisions on their position in the society (Tilly, 1998).

They are all part of a social system that is based on inequality and it is the people from the subordinated group in the society that are prepared to go. They all feel that if they stay in Gambia they will never be able to improve their lives while if they go they have a chance of doing that, the exploitation by the elite group and the hierarchic systems in the social networks make certain people prepared to go while others tend to stay. By going the people from the subordinated groups have the chance of paying back to their parents and the chance of giving their future kids a brighter future (ibid). One of the respondents talk about people who left Gambia for Europe and his conclusion is:

“..to my understanding going to Europe is useful it bring changes to someone’s life quicker than hustling in Africa… yea… we have our brothers, sisters our family members there… doing big things here that they were not able to do when they were here with us…” (interview number 8, 10/4-2014)
5.3 What motivates them to go?
All of the respondents have friends who left the back way and they all say that friends who left encourage them to come; they say that the ones who left tell them that the road is tough and that they will manage if they have enough money.

Both the respondents who want to go and the ones who want to stay say that when friends who left post pictures of themselves in Europe on social Medias such as Facebook, it makes them all want to go. They say that they can see that the friend looks good and that he looks as if he has it good where he is. One of the respondents said:

“..if somebody goes and enter Italy the day after he will post on Facebook that: I am in Italy now. Go and stop at a very nice place and take a picture there to show, when they see they must also look for something to go the back way..”(interview 3, 9/4-2014)

The Facebook pictures that people post show their wellbeing and once they have crossed to Italy it is seen as a success. They are all well dressed and as the man says the pictures are taken in nice places and they look very happy, which makes the people who did not yet go want to go.

When it comes to what they have heard about the back way many of them heard that the way is hard but if you have enough money you will manage. On the question “hard in what way?” they show varied knowledge about the way. Some of them say that they do not know in what way it is going to be hard, they just heard that it is hard and that you have to take it like a man. They accept the fact that the journey is hard and that they do not have complete information about the way because they have to. If they do not accept this they show weakness and in the Gambian society a man should not be weak.

Other says that they know people who have been mistreated and abused on the way and that the most difficult part of the journey is to go through the desert. The two young men that have been through the journey up to Libya confirm that the days in the desert are the absolute worst part of the journey, they both mentioned that once you are in the desert you care about nobody but yourself. They say that everybody on the truck is aware of that their survival lies in the hand of God and on their water bottles, if your water is finished in the middle of the desert there is nobody who will share their water with you which everybody is aware of.
One of the respondent I talked to was not aware of that the journey included a long way in the desert, and when I mentioned that it is he said that his friend in Libya did not mention that and he thought that the friend did not do that because he did not want to scare him. This is a typical example that many of these young men base their decision on very unclear information and that they are prepared to go even though, or because of that they do not know what to expect.

At the time I was in Gambia they had recently heard news about one Gambian who was beaten and then burned to death in Libya, which was mentioned by many of the respondents. Even though they heard about that many of them still said that they are prepared to go and that they believe that God will help them on their way and that if they have enough money they can still make it. One of the respondents, a first son who before said that he is not going because as a first son he have obligation towards his parents, said that the boy’s death scared him and that when he heard about the incident he decided not to go, this then gave him a stronger reason not to go. This young man could express his fear about going because as a first son he already had a valid reason to stay.

On the question if they were scared at all about going the answers varied, some of them said that they were scared about going because they do not know what to expect on the way. Other says that they were not scared at all and referred to that other hade made it so they were confident that they could manage as well. It might be that they are scared but because of the way that the social structures in Gambia, with the men being the superior and the norm that people are supposed to want to go they do not want to look weak in front of others.

Those that I have been talking to who have made the journey, both those who came to Libya and then went home and those who made it to Italy, all say that they do not wish for their worst enemy to go on that journey, yet some of them are prepared to do it again. They will never say to anybody who wants to go that they should not go, instead they say that they will, if they are asked for advice, tell those who want to go what they should think about and what they have to be careful about but they will never tell anybody not to go. They say that their intentions might then be misunderstood and those who wants to go might think that they do not want others to succeed. This is also a form of an adaption to the system that Tilly (1998) is talking about; they do not tell all the facts because the society might think that they are greedy and this is based on how the society has formed them.
5.4 What make the back way an option?
Most of the people in this study do see the back way as their only option. Because of lack of money they rather invest the money they have in the back way than in visa fees, this is based on the pre-understanding they have that most people who apply for visas do not get it. Poverty forces people to do things that they never would have done if they had money to do it in another way. Many people go but not all and that has to do with the family structure and the hierarchic order, their position in the family is crucial in their decision of going or not. We do not see people from Sweden go the back way when they want to migrate somewhere, and that is of course because they have other options. Gambia is a small and very poor country and many of the people who live there are living under the poverty line which is 2 US dollars a day (Globalis, 2014). This make their situation tough, to save money for visa fee, ticket, pocket money and then open a bank account is something that is almost impossible for many of them.

They back way do then seem as a better option. When going the back way you need to have some money to start with, on the way there is a chance that you can work and get money to continue. It is then better invested money using the back way, where you know that you will get somewhere than going to the embassies and apply for visas and get denied. If they have not applied visas themselves they have heard and know people who have applied and many of those who did not get visas got rejected with the motivation that they (the embassy) do not think that the applicant will return home after the visa has expired. This is included when they are doing their cost-benefit analysis.

These are important factors why these people think that the back way is their only option of getting to Europe. I once heard a man say that “poor people travel as well, they just use other ways than the rich ones” which is true, the back way is what they can afford and it is what is available to them.

The reason that the ones who wants to go think that they will succeed once they get to Europe are based on that they have seen the progress that people who went to Europe reached. They have seen that after they reached Europe they are now able to support their family, which they were not able to do before they left, this is then a pull factor for them to go. That progress is compared to the progress that people can make staying in Gambia and they all see a big difference, they see that even a short time in Europe can make you develop your house and
improve your economy while in Gambia you can hardly save money from one day to another, and this is also considered in their cost- benefit analysis.

6. Analysis
People who are willing to risk their lives in order to reach Europe are making rational decisions based on their situation and what they see from other people. They are basing their decisions on cost – benefit analysis that they consider before they make their final decision. Their cost benefit analysis is on their hand based on their preferences and their pre-understandings that they get from the society that they live in and from the social systems that exists in Gambia. They know what is expected of them from the family and from the society, they know that their parents rely on them and that they have a responsibility towards the family.

They talk to people who have gone through the back way to get an understanding of how it is and what they should think about. The information they manage to get from others about the back way is often leaving the worst part of the journey out and what they know before going are basically based on that people made it before them, people who are alive and in Libya or in the best cases in Europe. They somehow see that this journey might cost them their lives but on the other hand they see other people’s progress in the Gambia after they left to Europe and they see that it might be worth risking your life for.

6.1 Individual goal
What we can see from the findings is that the people who say that they are prepared to take the back way in order to reach Europe all have their individual goal; these goals are similar to most of them and are mainly to be able to support their family. These individual goals are coming from the existing social system in Gambia and they know what is expected by them, to support their parents, which is why they have the same goal. They are planning to go, to participate in the collective action that it is to go the back way in order to reach these individual goals. Their goals are formed out of the society that they live in and their position in the family make them consider the back way. The economic situation, the lack of opportunities, the lack of job, the lack of freedom and the poverty in the country is the visual push factors that make them consider the back way as an option while they are pulled by the welfare in Europe, and the people who have reach Europe successfully. The people that are pushed and pulled by these factors are the people who know that their family would be helped if they made it to Europe, the ones who do not have specific obligations at home. Other
people who do not consider going are on their hand staying because of their obligations at home. The hierarchic order in the family is then to some extent forcing some people to stay, because of their obligations at the same time as it is forcing people to leave because of the expectations.

6.2 The social structure
Some earlier research about migration shows that people tend to stay in places where they feel home or to migrate to places where they have family (Schram and Soss, 1999), while other shows that some people migrate to countries where they do not have any relatives to be able to make money on jobs they would not consider in their home country (Whitehouse, 2013).

This research shows that the kinship networks and the social structure in the society are important factors when people consider whether or not they are going. They are considering what they and their family will gain if they succeed, and what they might lose. They value the family and they know what is expected by them, therefore they also have to consider their families pride, if they go and succeed their family will be very proud of them, which all goes in line with the rational choice theory that Coleman is talking about (Ritzer, 2008). They will be proud that their son and brother made it and that he is now sending money to improve the living standard for the rest of the family, this is something that they can show to their friends and neighbors. The rational choices that they make are considered out of the family’s best and out of their pride; it is rational because the family gain respect and a better living standard. For the person himself the decision is not rational since he does not have enough information about the way, he is pushed to go by his position in the family and by what it is expecting from him.

6.2.1 Family pride and respect
The family that is still in Gambia will not mind how the person made his money as long as money is coming. This means that the person who goes can take any kind of job either on the way to Europe or when they reach Europe without having to consider what that job does to the family’s pride, just like Whitehouse (2013) shows in his research. They can if they go do the kind of job that they would not consider doing in Gambia as long as there is some money to send to the family which give them more opportunity to make money outside the country. By going they can then gain respect in the society, their family will have something to be proud of and earn respect in the closest society.
By earning this kind of respect the family will move up in the hierarchic order of the society, they might be moving from being in the lowest subordinated group to be in the superior group in the close society network. They will still be subordinated to the elite group of the society but in their closest society network they will move from subordinated to superior (Tilly, 1998). This will then be counted as great success and the family as well as the society will be proud of the person who manages to get the family from the subordinated group to the superior group. In the Gambian society where one way to earn respect is through money and where success is visual through what you have done for your family, the family member who manages to improve his family’s living standard is a hero within the society network. All the family would in this way gain if one family member migrates and that is a reason to consider migration.

6.2.2 Adapting to the system
The social network and the way that they organize their social structures is also what is keeping people from going. The system is built in hierarchic order and in the household the first son of the family is the one who is supposed to” run the business”, this can be understood as the adaption that Tilly (1998) is talking about. By adapting to this system they contribute to maintain the inequality in the society. The first son will not go because of his obligations in the house and the last born will most likely not go since he is the one who are gaining most from this system. The last born have more chances than any of the other siblings to for example get education and is the one who will enjoy most from the system at the same time as s/he do not have any obligations towards the family. The last born in a family and anybody who have that position in other social networks benefits from the durable inequality in the society, they adapt to the system and gain from it and are therefore not migrating in order to improve their lives. The people who sit in this position are most likely to gain from somebody else’s effort and success and they would risk losing more than others by going (ibid).

The social system is organized in a way so that it is enough if one family member migrate, the way that they rely on each other and the way that they are brought up to take care of each other make the person who goes feel responsible while those who are at home feel as if they can rely on that person for support. This is why the Gambian families tend to send one family member. The family helps to finance the journey by for example selling a piece of their land. They invest in that family member and in return they will benefit from his success and earn respect in the closest society network, if he makes it. Because it is enough if one person is the
family provider most of the family can stay home where they feel comfortable and where they have their lives.

The rational choices in their decisions to go or not are therefore rational to the society, the society and the family will gain from if one family member goes, they will gain respect, welfare and they will this way maintain the existing social structure which they benefit from. Those who migrate are on the other hand leaving everything that they know behind and are prepared to sacrifice the feeling of belonging in order to improve their family’s life. For him and from his personal point of view the decision will be more based on that his position push him to go, he is then forced to go by the system. He is prepared to sacrifices the feeling of belonging because that is what the society expects from him and in return he and the family will earn respect from the society which is worth a lot.

This shows that the social system in Gambia is working quite well, they have organized themselves and adapted to the inequality in the society by having a hierarchic order system. The ones who are in the middle of the hierarchy are the ones who will try to improve the family’s living standard by migrating. It is working in the sense that the one who migrate is the one who then can support the family at home while the family at home can benefit from the opportunity hoarding and the respect that they earn because of the migration (Tilly, 1998).

6.2.3 Prepared to sacrifice for the family
The sacrifice that these young men say that they are prepared to do, or in some of the cases not to do could be seen as carefully considered, out of rationality and out of their position in the family and in the society. But on the other hand; the people who say that they are prepared to go, to do what it takes to help their family are in some way forced by their position in the family and the economic situation in the country. The family expects the boys to contribute and when the economic situation in the country is not giving any opportunities for them to earn money so that they can contribute; they are left with the back way as their opportunity to help the family. As mentioned before the ones who benefit most from the inequality in the society are not likely to go while those who are in the middle of the hierarchy and in the position where they do not have other obligations than to contribute to the family and are not gaining from system are likely to go. It might be that they do not want to go, that they are scared to go but are prepared to sacrifice their lives because of the pressure they feel from the society.
The back way is only a way to improve your life, if there were other options the same people who are now saying that they are prepared to take the back way are the ones who would migrate no matter what way there is available and that is due to their position in the family. Their decision is not as much based on what way there is to migrate but on whether they should migrate or not. The risk that is involved by going the back way is considered out of the little they actually know about it. I will argue that the people who would go the back way are the people who would migrate, no matter what way there was available, and because of their pride, also prepared to sacrifice not only their lives but the feeling of belonging in order to earn respect for the family in the closest society network.

I would say that Gambians tend to let one family member migrate because of how they have organized themselves and because the way they organized it is beneficial for most of them. If the system did not function, which could happen if there was a war, the families would most likely try to go together in order to save their own lives. The reasons for migrating now are not a matter of life and death but a matter of better living standard and economic development, and the lack of opportunities in Gambia make them look for greener pastures elsewhere.

7. Discussion
At the moment the way to migrate and to improvement is by going the back way. Because of all the people who have left before and who have manage to reach Europe through the back way it has become a business. Smugglers make money by organizing these trips from Gambia to Libya and Italy and the more people that make it through this way, the more money the smugglers make and this will then keep the back way open as an option to these people.

The fact that so many young men from Gambia are taking the back way these days are a combination of the social system and poverty. They migrate in order to help their family and to improve their lives which is a result of the children being the parents’ safety net. That they risk their lives by taking the back way is a result of the poverty that the people in Gambia live in.

Irregular migration is one of our times big challenges and something that we have to find a solution to very soon. Too many people have already lost their lives in the desert and in the Mediterranean Sea because they are trying to reach Europe. People are ready to sacrifice their lives in order to reach Europe and what they go through on the way is something one can just imagine. Europe on the other hand is doing everything in their power to stop these migrants to
enter and by that creating exactly what they are trying to avoid when they are closing all ways to reach Europe,

Many of the people who want to go to Europe want to go only for a little while in their lives, to work hard and earn some money to take back home to establish something. These people have very little chances of getting a visa to go to Europe and work as it looks like today, they are instead left with only the back way as a possible way to reach Europe. The closed borders and the visa denials results in irregular migration, which Europe are so keen to stop. If the people who want to come instead was trusted, like European people are trusted to go to their countries, to come and given a chance to improve their lives the problems that the world is facing with irregular migration might be delimited.

Irregular migration will continue to be a problem in the world as long as borders are closed and as long as people do not have the same rights to move, the same rights to travel and see the world. The only way to stop irregular migration is to let people enter, to give people the chances to move that everybody deserve to have.

To trust poor people from the developing world seems to be a problem. They are not trusted to get visas or to travel as they wish while people from the west world are free to travel all over the world. People from the developing world on the other hand are not trusted to travel outside their continent, not even if they have the money that is necessary to go. They are left with routes like the back way as their only option if they want to go. The back way will if they are lucky take them to Europe. Europe, who does not want them there and who treat them like criminals, take their fingerprints and lock them in prisons (Akolor, 2014).

What would happen if Europe instead gave them the chance to come, a fair chance to enter the European borders? Would it be as bad as many seems to believe or would it be beneficial for everybody at the end of the day?

The back way is the reality of today, smugglers will keep making money and people will keep risking their lives as long as there is no legal ways to come to Europe for them and as long as there is poverty. As long as the children are the parents’ safety net and the parents guarantee for a better future, the young men of Gambia will do their best to try to pay back to their parents’ by supporting them, and as long as there is no opportunities in the country they will try to go the back way. The only way to stop irregular migration and human smuggling is to make migration safe and legal for everybody no matter where you come from.
8. Conclusion

The research findings in this study shows that these young men, who say that they are prepared to take the back way to reach Europe, are the ones who have the position in the family that expects them to contribute to the family’s economy and thereby improve the living standard for their families. The ones who tend to migrate are the ones who are not the first born and not the last born in the family but the ones who are in the middle of the siblings. It shows that in a society where the system works thanks to the existing inequality, a certain group of people who do not benefit from the system are the ones who are most likely to migrate, while those who benefits from the system are most likely to stay. This is also why your position in the family is crucial when making decisions about going. It shows that the society benefits from the people who migrate and a family who have a child in Europe who can support them are secured.

These young men, who are prepared to take the back way, think of it since the society expects them to provide because of their position in the family. The back way is what is available to them and therefore their option, if there was other options for them to migrate it would have been the same people who went, the back way is their option because of poverty.
9. References

9.1 Printed sources

9.1.1 Books


Conelly M Patricia, Li Tania Murray, MacDonald Martha, Parpart Jane L. (2000), Feminism and development: theoretical perspectives in: Parpart Jane L, Conelly M Partricia & Barritteau V Eudine (eds), *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development*, Ottawa IDRC


9.2 Online sources

9.2.1 Articles and journals


9.2.2 Internet sources


9.3 Television programs
9.4 Interviews with Gambian men about the back way

Interview 1
Performed in the interviewees home, Gambia 2014-04-09
Participants:
A1 Man 20-25 years
A2 Man 20-25 years

Interview 2
Performed in interviewees home, Gambia 2014-04-09
Participant:
B1: Man 20-25 years

Interview 3
Performed at the local video club, Gambia 2014-04-09
Participants:
C1: Man 35-40 years
C2: Man 25-30 years
C3: Man 35-40 years
C4: Man 25-30 years
C5: Man 20-25 years

Interview 4
Performed Under the tree by the main street, Gambia 2014-04-10
Participant:
D1: Man 20-25 years
Interview 5
Performed outside at the working place, Gambia 2014-04-10
Participants:
E1: Man 30-35 years
E2: Man 25-30 years

Interview 6
Performed at the gym, Gambia 2014-04-10
Participant:
F: Man 25-30 years

Interview 7
Performed under the tree in interviewees home, Gambia 2014-04-10
Participant:
G: Man 25-30 years

Interview 8
Performed in interviewees home, Gambia 2014-04-14
Participant:
H: Man 25-30 years