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Restoring Democracy in The Gambia?

**An Analysis of Diaspora Engagement in Gambian
Politics**

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Abstract

The role of the diaspora in 'homeland' politics has become more visible over the last two decades, and the amount of diaspora literature focusing on diaspora contribution in the socio-economic and political development of their countries of origin has significantly increased. In Africa, the focus has been on 'large' diasporas such as the Somali, Eritrean and Zimbabwean diaspora and less attention is given to 'small' diasporas like that of the Gambia that are making crucial strides in the politics of the 'home' country. While the Somali and Eritrean diaspora are termed as "conflict diaspora," diasporas such as Gambia are 'non-violent' diasporas that received less attention in the African diaspora literature. In this thesis, I attempt to contribute to the growing literature on diaspora by providing an in-depth empirical analysis of the political involvement of the Gambian diaspora in homeland politics, particular in the December 2016 elections that resulted to Jammeh losing. Primarily, I am interested in how the diaspora influence partisan politics in Gambia and secondly if, and how they contribute to the promotion of democracy through their political activities. Using multi-level research design comprising of case study and netnography, the thesis asks what role did the Gambian diaspora play in Gambia's recent democratization process and in what way their activities contribute to the promotion of democracy? Observing the difficulty to establish causality, the thesis argues that while the diaspora, which portrays itself as a 'democracy movement' had considerable degree of influence in homeland partisan politics, their political outlook has less to do with democracy promotion, rather it has more to do with promoting their primary interest of removing Jammeh (#JammehMustGo).

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgment	3
Chapter One: Introduction	7
1.0 Introduction.....	7
1.1 Research Problem and question	9
1.2 Justification of the Research?	12
1.3 Outline of the thesis	13
Chapter Two: Democracy Promotion and Diaspora Activism: Towards a Theoretical Framework	15
2.0 Introduction.....	15
2.1 Why Africa failed to democratize: Replicating Mamdani	16
2.2 Diaspora Defined.....	21
2.2.1 An evolving relationship between Diasporas and Country of Origin: Case of the African Diaspora	23
2.2.2 African Diaspora and Homeland Politics.....	26
2.3 Diaspora and Democracy Promotion in Africa.....	28
2.4 Social Movement	35
2.4.1 Social Movement theory: linking Diaspora Activism and Democracy Promotion.....	37
2.5 Conclusion	41
Chapter Three: Methodological Framework.....	43
3.0 Introduction.....	43
3.1 Research Design.....	43
3.2 The Case Study	45
3.2.1 Exploratory case study	46
3.2.2 My Role as the Researcher.....	47
3.2.3 Unit of Analysis (The Struggle as a community).....	48
3.2.4 Data Generation	49
3.2.5 Challenges.....	52

3.3	Netnography as the second phase of the research	53
3.3.1	Defining Netnography	54
3.3.2	The Researcher in the Netnographic Setting	55
3.4	Data Analysis	56
3.5	Ethical Consideration	57
Chapter 4:	Background- The Gambian Diaspora.....	58
4.0	Introduction	58
4.1	Gambia under Jammeh: Democracy or Autocracy or both?	58
4.2	Gambian Migration to the West.....	62
4.3	The Gambian Diaspora: Formation and Characteristics	67
4.3.1	The Welfare Organizations	68
4.3.2	Political Organizations.....	71
4.4	The Gambian Diaspora and the Homeland	72
4.5	Conclusion	73
Chapter Five:	Empirical Discussion: Diaspora Political Activism and Homeland Politics.....	74
5.0	Introduction	74
5.1	The Development of Anti-Jammeh Mobilization in the Gambian diaspora	74
5.1.1	Where it all started: The Gambia-L.....	75
5.1.2	Organized Politics: Protest and Lobbying	80
5.1.3	The Internet as a Mobilization Tool	88
5.2	The Evolving Political Strategy of the diaspora: By any means Necessary?.....	93
5.3	Symbolic Politics and Diaspora Justification.....	96
5.4	Diaspora relation structure: The internal politics within the diaspora.....	100
5.5	Diaspora and Homeland Politics: Relationship with Opposition Political Parties.....	105
5.6	Conclusion.....	114
Chapter 6:	Conclusion: Restoring Democracy in the Gambia?	115
6.0	Introduction	115
6.1	The 2016 Elections	115
6.1.2	The Campaign and Electoral	119

6.2 Conclusion: Restoring Democracy in Gambia?	120
Reference List.....	127
Appendix 1.....	134
Appendix 2	135

Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

On December 1st 2016, after having ruled the Gambia for 22 years, Yahya Jammeh shockingly lost the presidential election to the somewhat unknown Adama Barrow. What was more shocking was Jammeh conceding on December 2nd. As the BBC reports, “hopes weren’t high for a peaceful transfer of power, with a crackdown on opposition leaders months before the polls, the banning of international observers, and post-election demonstrations and then the switching off the internet”(BBC, 2016). During the campaign period and days before the election, a significant number of Gambians left Gambia fearing electoral violence. Some even voted for Jammeh fearing his anger in case of defeat (Withnall, 2016). To many analysts, his admittance averted post-election violence that ravaged some African countries¹.

Despite the ban on post-election demonstration, Gambians particular supporters of the coalition² went out on the streets to celebrate what they termed as the "end of dictatorship." Jammeh's pictures, displayed in public, were pulled down and Jammeh t-shirts burnt.

However, a week later following the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) revisions of the result³, Jammeh changed his mind. He did what many international media houses including BBC call a “U-turn” rejecting the electoral result. The Guardian reported that Jammeh’s televised announcement on December 9 “throws the future of the West African country into doubt” (Guardian, 2016). In the televised address played late night on national TV, Jammeh cited "severe abnormalities that transpired during the elections" including unprecedented foreign interference⁴. He rejected the elections in its "totality" and called for fresh elections to be

¹ Kenya in 2007 and Ivory Coast in 2010

² Seven political parties Gambia Moral Congress Party (GMC), National Reconciliation Party (NRP), Peoples’ Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS), United Democratic Party (UDP) People Progressive Party (PPP) Gambia People Democratic Party (GPDP), National Convention Party (NCP) and an independent candidate Dr. Isatou Touray formed the coalition in October 2016.

³ The initial results the IEC chairman announced showed that in the triparty simple majority race, Jammeh defeated with a 9% margin. However, the 5th December revision which the IEC blame on tallying error shows about a 19,000 difference, thus reducing Barrow’s lead from 9% margin to 4%. The IEC stressed that the corrections “had not changed the status quo” of the results.

⁴ Although it was not clear who Jammeh was referring to, I argue that he was referring to the diaspora as they were the only ones visibly engage in the election.

officialiated by a "God fearing IEC." Jammeh's rejection of the results created a two-month political impasse that forced more than fifty thousand Gambians including President-elect Barrow⁵ to seek refuge in Senegal and a greater number internally displaced. His refusal to leave office also triggered a diplomatic mission⁶ by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and later a military intervention, which eventually sent him into exile in Equatorial Guinea.

A closer look at Jammeh's 22 years of rule since leading a military coup in 1994⁷ begged the question of how a self-proclaimed autocrat lost a democratic election in a country where he dictates the rules. In assessing the Gambian case, one may look at what scholars such as Abdoulaye Saine and Carlene J Edie refers to as "Gambian exceptionalism." For more than three decades after independence, while the rest of Africa characterized by one party rule and authoritarian rule, the Gambia maintained the longest surviving multiparty democracy alongside Botswana and Mauritius (Saine, 2009, Edie, 2000). In 1994, a bloodless coup toppled the People Progressive Party (PPP) and government of Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara. Abdoulaye Saine observed that this event is remarkable in two ways. First, It marked the end of one the longest continuous surviving multiparty democracy, and secondly Jawara as the longest president in Africa (Saine, 2009). Similarly, Carlene J. Edie refers to Gambia as an African "exception." She observed that in 1994 while the continent was moving from authoritarianism to multi-party politics Gambia was moving from multiparty politics to authoritarianism (Edie, 2000). The 2016 electoral defeat therefore on this background suggest the beginning of democratization in the tiny African country.

At the center of the 2016 elections were the Gambian diaspora activists who have sustained more than two decades of the anti-Jammeh campaign. Since 1994 following the military coup, these group of Gambians has invested both money and time to "restore" democracy in Gambia. Following Jammeh's defeat, they like their fellow countrymen jubilated, congratulating each other on Facebook and online radios for a victory. In this thesis, my focus is on why Jammeh lost

⁵ Barrow went on a temporary exile to Senegal where he was sworn on the 19th of January 2017 the day Jammeh's termed ended.

⁶ Jammeh's U-turn received wide international condemnation from ECOWAS, AU, UN, US, and Britain.

⁷ Jammeh led other junior officers of Gambian National Army to overthrow Gambia's first president Dawda Jawara. He won four subsequent elections (1996, 2001, 2006, and 2011) which were far from free and fair.

the election by paying attention to the role played by the Gambian diaspora. I want to explain to what degree the diaspora influence the outcome of the December 2016 presidential election and to whether their activities contributed to democracy promotion.

The 22 years of Jammeh has witnessed a wave of emigration by Gambians. The wet handling of the state of affairs, over the years, have forced many Gambians mostly journalist and political activists, into exile in the United States (US), and some parts of Europe (The United Kingdom, Sweden, and Norway). It also experienced a trend of protest from Gambian expatriates living in the above countries. Over the years, the protest has exponentially grown thanks to the internet, particularly social media incorporating expatriate communities in other parts of the world. The primary target of the dissidents was to mobilize both internal and external actors against the Jammeh regime with the goal of ‘restoring democracy’ in Gambia. The mobilization, which started as an email list (Gambia-L) grew into contentious professional organizations engaged in non-violent, yet certain protest movements aimed at changing the regime of Jammeh as a means to restoring democracy. They participate in external lobbying targeting their respective host states and international human rights organization and regional bodies like the African Union (AU), ECOWAS and European Union (EU), as well as building an alliance with the opposition political parties in Gambia. While they carried out open protests and collaborations with international human rights organizations to bring to light human rights violations in Gambia in the respective host countries, they also allied with the Gambian opposition parties in fundraising and information politics, targeted at Gambians at home.

1.1 Research Problem and question

Since 1994, the Gambia Diaspora as a social movement has carried out and sustained anti-Jammeh mobilization through several advocacy organizations, online media houses, and networks created over the years to ‘restore democracy’ in Gambia⁸. They have gone to a great length in their efforts to influence regime change in Gambia both through non-violent and ‘violent’ means. Over 20 years, they have carried out several political activities including mass mobilization for demonstrations, issuing of press releases, lobbying transnational Non-

⁸ The restoration of democracy stems from the belief that Gambia was democratic before the military coup in 1994.

governmental organizations (NGO) such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch; and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGO) such as the EU, ECOWAS, AU, United Nations (UN); and states such as the US, UK, Norway. They have also used military efforts to oust the dictatorship of Jammeh and allegedly sponsored mass protest for electoral reform in the period leading up to the 2016 elections. While their efforts to engage states and IGOs shows little results, they were able to join NGOs documenting the human rights abuses in Gambia, which in turn informed IGOs such as the EU to take a stance against Jammeh⁹. The diaspora has also engaged in a failed military coup in December 2014 against the Jammeh regime. Hence, they have used both non-violent and violent means to influence regime change in Gambia.

Over the years, they have been labeled by Jammeh as "enemy of the state," "trouble-makers" thus warranting Jammeh's regime to come up with a range of measures to curtail their influence and silence the diaspora. Banning diaspora websites, arresting dissidents that find their way into the country, using the state media to attack the personalities of prominent activists, cooptation of activists by enticing them with government positions, creating diaspora groups with online radios to counter the narratives of the diaspora dissidents, and enacting laws criminalizing the use of internet, and social media to criticize Jammeh were the repressive means employed. On the other hand, the diaspora received ample praises from the political opposition particularly their financial contribution and providing access to their online radios to share their policy programs with the general public. For instance, President Barrow has consistently been quoted showing gratitude to the diaspora.

*"We are grateful for the work Gambians are doing by supporting our efforts during the campaign. Thank you GDF for raising funds for Coalition 2016"*¹⁰

The relationship between the diaspora and home activists has also fluctuated over time. For the most part, before the 2016 president election, the two groups engaged in a war of words. While the diaspora labeled home based activists as "cowards" the home based activist labeled the

⁹ The EU withheld about 32 Million Euros supported to Gambia government in 2014.

¹⁰ <http://thegambiacoalition.com/the-gambian-diaspora/>. The Gambia Democracy Fund (GDF) is a diaspora group that entirely raises fund to support political parties and activist in Gambia. See Chapter 4 for more discussion.

diaspora as "keyboard warriors."¹¹ These various political activities to a large extent have shown that the Gambian diaspora was at the center of Gambian political conversation.

While critical theoretical headways have long emerged on large diaspora formations, diaspora identities, socio-economic contribution, political mobilization and impact in conflict resolution, despite 'small diasporas' are mainly ignored in the African diaspora literature, even though, their role in the socio-economic and political development in the country of origin. However, this has become more visible over the last two decades, primarily due to the proliferation of the internet. Although there is a vast amount of literature on democracy promotion it mainly advanced the role of states, International Governmental Organizations (IGOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the democratization of authoritarian regimes as well as the leverage and linkage mechanisms (Koinova, 2009), and mostly ignore the diaspora¹². Keck and Sikkink observed that "political scientist have tended to ignore such nongovernmental actor because they are not "powerful" in the classic sense of the term. At the core of the network, activity is the production, exchange and strategic use of information" (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, P. x). In this paper, I attempt to modestly contribute to filling this existing gap in the political science literature using the Gambian diaspora as a case. My hypothesis is that the participation of the Gambian diaspora significantly enriched the political resources available to the opposition political actors through finance and demystifying the personality of Jammeh.

Diaspora engagement as a transnational network of players was consequential to the important outcome of the December 1 Gambian election, and a fair academic assessment of their origins, strategies, limits and effectiveness of diaspora engagement will contribute to the general understanding of the events and what they portend for the overall democratization process of Gambia. Therefore, the research question for this thesis builds upon this problem. In employing concepts and tools from social movement literature and diaspora literature, I plan to retort to the following research question:

¹¹" The diaspora at some point wanted the Gambians in Gambia to openly engage in politics even to the extent of going on the streets to protest. The Gambians at home called them to come back at taking the lead. They accuse the diaspora of just been warriors on social media.

¹² Except for Koinava 2009

What role did the diaspora¹³ Played in Gambia's recent democratization process and in what way their activities promote democracy or the lack of it?

In answering the above research question, I raised a few other issues to provide an empirical basis. I asked about diaspora formation, mobilization strategy, tactics, and interactions with political actors in Gambia and how such influence on regime change have informed on the theory of democratization.

1.2 Justification of the Research?

I engage in this research topic for two critical reasons: theoretical and empirical. Theoretically, I want to engage the diaspora literature, which has largely ignored small ‘non-violent’¹⁴ diaspora, with a case study of the Gambian diaspora. The diaspora literature in Africa has mostly covered significant conflict diasporas such as the Somali, Eritrean (Bernal, 2005, Bernal, 2013, Bernal, 2006, Lyons, 2007) and the role they play in the socio-economic and political development of their home countries during and post-conflict situations. Similarly, large non-violent Diasporas such as the Zimbabwean diaspora (Jenny, 2010b, Jenny, 2010a, Kuhlmann, 2010, McGregor and Pasura, 2014, McGregor and Pasura, 2010, Pasura, 2010) have received considerable attention in the political literature. Correspondingly, the democracy promotion research only covered the role of states, IGOs, NGOs and the linkage and leverage mechanisms in the democratization process of authoritarian regimes. This entails mostly ignoring the diaspora from such systems. The aim is to contribute broadly to the important theoretical undertakings that have informed various aspects of diaspora political engagement in the homeland. These different theoretical advancements have shown, to a large extent, the diaspora as an important political actor in both the home and host country and over the years have commanded keen interest from academics and policy makers (Kee, 2014).

Today, thanks to globalization and technological advancement (internet) the diaspora are more visible than some decades ago (Bernal, 2013, Koinova, 2009, Vertovec, 2005), and hence, makes it possible and important to engage in diaspora research. Another theoretical importance of this

¹³ I am referring to the anti-Jammeh activist? A clear distinction is made in chapter 4.

¹⁴ Non-violent here is use loosely to refer to the broader non-violent protests that have been used over the years. The December 2014 attempted coup is an exception.

study is to demonstrate that by treating the Gambian diaspora activities as social movement and linking it with diaspora politics literature; I will be able to contribute to the democracy promotion research by comparing the level of activities and the different forms of the democracy promotion literature and whether Gambian diaspora fits within this framework. Specifically, ask whether their actions to restore democracy in Gambia promote democracy or otherwise. Social movement theory is used to explain mobilization in transnational space (Sökefeld, 2006) and how that reflects in Gambia's political scene.

Secondly, I have an empirical aim. My empirical contribution is to map out and bring to the table how the 'small' Gambian political diaspora work. The lack of literature on the Gambian diaspora despite their significant contribution to the socio-economic and political development of the country provides an avenue. Although tiny compared to other African Diasporas from authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes, their role in driving regime change needs documenting. Furthermore studying the Gambian diaspora provides an avenue to add to the little literature on small autocratic states like the Gambia that have been widely ignored by political science research. Although Abdoulie Saine in his book the *Paradox of Third Wave Democratization in Africa: The Gambia Under AFPRC-APRC Rule, 1994-2008* has briefly discussed the political activities of the Gambian diaspora in the 2001 and 2006 election, he did not capture the most recent development or even the internal politics of the diaspora, which I argue affected their mobilization efforts. The study will also fill a gap in diaspora studies by exploring a small diaspora and its political engagement. I term Gambian diaspora small based on country population size and the number of people in the diaspora. The people of the Gambia as of 2016 is about 2 million¹⁵ and the diaspora population of Gambia is about 90,000. Compared to countries like Eritrea or Somalia or even Zimbabwe both in population size and the number of their diaspora citizen, Gambia is minuscule. Hence, along with a handful of studies on diaspora activism in Africa ((Jenny, 2010b, Jenny, 2010a, Bernal, 2005, Bernal, 2006), this thesis with its empirical goal seeks to explore an understudied case of a recent phenomenon.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

¹⁵ <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/gambia-population/>

In the second chapter, I discuss the theoretical framework and the concepts that informed the argument. First I engaged with the literature on democracy promotion from which it was noted that the diaspora had been ignored. I then discuss the concept of the diaspora from which the Gambian diaspora is situated. Thirdly, the existence gap leads to linking with literature in social movement to fill the gap in democracy promotion literature as well as to create an integrated framework for this thesis. In chapter three, I discuss my research choice. I conduct a multi-level research using interviews and netnography as two components of the study design. The interview is used to getting key informant information about the diaspora Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and the relationship between the CSOs and home politicians. Netnography is used to understand the online and offline interaction of the Gambian diaspora network broadly. The fourth chapter presents the background of the thesis. It starts by discussing politics under Jammeh from 1994-2016. This is followed by a discussion on migration trends in Gambia and the emergence of diaspora welfare organization as means of diaspora formation. I briefly discuss the Gambian political diaspora. In chapter five, I discussed the political diaspora using (Sökefeld, 2006) as a framework. I specifically look at the political opportunities, mobilization structures and framing of Gambian politics to discuss the role of Gambian diaspora in regime change. In the final chapter, which also the conclusion, I began by discussing the December 2016 elections and address the second part of the research question whether the activities of the diaspora contribute to democracy promotion or the lack of it.

Chapter Two: Democracy Promotion and Diaspora Activism: Towards a Theoretical Framework

2.0 Introduction

The primary aim of this chapter is to develop a conceptual framework to help with the overall analysis of the empirical research as well as to gauge the literature in the relevant social science fields disparagingly. In doing so, I introduce the field diaspora political activism as a form of social movement to which this thesis aims to contribute to a case study from the Gambia. In this chapter, while observing that the diaspora has gained significant attention in migration studies, and peace and conflict studies, I argue that the literature on democracy promotion while it focuses on states, international organizations, and NGOs, pays little attention to diaspora influence particularly the African political context. The aim of the thesis is to add to this gap in the democracy promotion literature by linking it with the literature on social movements.

This chapter, divided into three sections start by situating the problem of democratization in Africa¹⁶. It asked to what degree we can expect democracy to evolve in Africa: Is it part of an imperial or neo-imperial tradition to impose democracy in Africa, or is there an actual democracy movement in the continent? The idea is to present the debate from democratization literature so as to set the ground for an in-depth discussion on the Gambian diaspora's role in democracy promotion in Gambia. The assumption is that democracy promotion in Africa has been a western liberal foreign policy goal responding to perceived failure of democratization in Africa. However, while observing that non-state actors like NGOs have received considerable attention, the diaspora as a non-state actor have received less consideration even though it is assumed that when a diaspora is socialized in a liberal democracy, they tend to be sympathetic to democratization movement of the homeland (Koinova, 2009). The following section discusses the main concepts of the thesis (diaspora and democracy promotion) with the intention of filling missing gaps. Specifically, the paper while acknowledging earlier studies, engage with a more recent strand of literature interested in the relationship between diaspora and democratization in Africa. The final part discusses social movement theory to serve as a link between diaspora

¹⁶ Africa here refers to Sub-Saharan Africa

political activism and democratization to the research question of diaspora engagement in homeland politics. The study makes use of three social movement concepts *Political opportunities*, *mobilizing structure* and *framing* to understand the role of Gambian diaspora activists played in driving regime change in Gambia.

2.1 Why Africa failed to democratize: Replicating Mamdani

The beginning of the 1990s was an exciting period in Africa. It ushered in Huntington's (1991) so-called "third wave" of democratization following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. This transitional period witnessed some multiparty elections on the continent. The events (multiparty elections) around this time somehow rekindle the democratization debate of the mainland (mostly) between the modernist and the dependency theorist. Undoubtedly, these two technical schools dominated the discussion with their different assumptions as to why the African continent continues to struggle with the issue of democratization and democratic governance. In this section, I ask to what degree we can expect democracy to evolve in Africa, and whose agenda is it? Is it an imperial or neo-imperial tradition or is there an actual democracy movement in Africa? I argue that the failure of African states to democratize five decades after independence can be situated in their reproduction of the colonial "mode of rule."

Most studies on democratization in Africa (See Bayart, 2009, Mbaku and Ihonvbere, 2003, Hyden, 2012, Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2000, Adejumobi, 2001) rest on the notion that Africa failed to democratize because of corruption, bad/poor leadership, poor economic performance and civil war. McGowan (2005) while locating his analysis on dependency theory argued strongly that a visible link exists between economic growth, poor leadership and instability in West Africa (McGowan, 2005). He observed that the peripheral nature of politics within West African states and their fringe economies coupled with the selfish behavior of the political leadership both military and civilian contributes to instability. Similarly, Usman A. Tar in comparing the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa observed that the reason why these two regions suffer from a democratic deficit is due to dictators, monarchies and dynastic rulers (Tar, 2010). Both Tar and McGowan observations can be located in the broader "patrimonial state" or the "politics of the belly" (Bayart, 2009, Hyden, 2000, Hyden, 2012) debate. While these

scholars were interested in identifying the current African predicament, they failed to grasp how the modern African state emerged fully.

Structuralist scholars have advanced more accurate arguments focus on explaining why Africa failed to democratize. In the structuralist school, modernization theorist and dependency theorist are the dominant schools. While the two disagree broadly in their analysis of the post-colonial African state, they both focus their analysis on structures (political and economic). On the one hand, the modernists situate post-colonial Africa in a broader and more general theory of the political development of underdeveloped countries. According to the "modernists" or "development theorist" African states "will follow a relatively well-defined unilinear path of economic, social and political development-westernization- which in due course will bring them closer to the Western European and North American "models"(Chabal, 1992, p.11). The modernist has been criticized for only trying to fit the postcolonial African state within the general theory, rather than trying to understanding African politics (Chabal, 1992, p.12). Hence, the primary facet of the modernist approach was to compare the new post-colonial African state with the European experience while ignoring historicity.

On the other hand, dependency theory emerged to "critique the various forms of unilineal evolutionism" (Mamdani, 1996a) that believed that Western culture is the current peak of social evolution and position post-colonial African states on the edge of the globe. They maintained that the underdevelopment (politically and economically) of Africa is as a result of the exploitative relationship it has with Europe and North America (the core) (Wallerstein, 2011, Rodney, 1972). While the core develops from this exploitative relationship, Africa and other third world countries (periphery) failed to advance. Thus, dependency theorist "explained post-colonial African politics regarding its dependent economic structure and parasitic class development" (Chabal, 1992, p. 19). They rejected modernist claim that African societies were traditional societies in need of modernization and the conviction that they were backward pre-capitalist societies on the threshold of a much needed bourgeois revolution"(Mamdani, 1996a, p.9).

Another grand theory that can help us understand the debate is the democratic theory. This particular theory came as a reaction to the above theories. It maintains firmly "that statist politics have failed and dismissed the idea that there is a trade-off between democracy and development"(Chabal, 1992, p.28). Democratic theories blame the current crisis in Africa on the rulers (Agulanna, 2006). While calling for multi-party politics, they argue that democratization of the political system combined with economic liberalization can lead to sustainable development beneficial to all (Chabal, 1992). While it is true that democratic theorists have shifted the democratization debate from a seemingly narrow perspective as seen in both the dependency and modernist literature into a universal footing, I argue that its failure to situate African politics within Africa's historicity makes it only as useful as to what its assumption of African politics is. Nonetheless, its focus on addressing the question of power in Africa (Herbst, 2014), even though it is situated similarly to the European experience is a good starting point for our case. Picking up on this stage, we will soon discuss Mamdani's *Citizen and Subject*.

Patrick Chabal observed that the different theoretical frameworks developed by political scientist have "tended to examine African politics through excessively opaque lenses and thus frequently neglected to look at contemporary African politics as it is" (Chabal, 1992, p.10). He thus argues that politics in Africa must be understood from a cosmic perspective rather than a narrow one and that the interpretation of African politics must be situated in the dark history of Africa (Chabal, 1992). Similarly, Mamdani observed that the modernist and the dependency theories are "two sides of the same coin: both see in the specificity of experience nothing but its idiosyncrasy" (Mamdani, 1996a, p. 11). He posited that modernization theory, dependency theory, and Marxism all viewed social reality as binary opposites (Mamdani, 1996a).

Mahmood Mamdani, unlike Chabal who agrees that Africa must not be given a "special treatment" advanced that Africa is different as such must be given specific attention. However, he notes that the various scholars that tried to understand African politics to be it the modernist or communitarian, Africanist or Eurocentrist all talk about the same African dilemma but from a different perspective. Hence, he suggested "sublating both sides of the debate through a double move that simultaneously critiques and affirms" as the way forward in addressing this impasse (Mamdani, 1996a, p.3). Hence, in dealing with the dilemma, Mamdani explore in his

revolutionary book *Citizen and Subjects (1996)* the question of how power is organized and how it tends to fragment resistance.

Mamdani believes that to understand the current African impasse; one must understand "*the mode of colonial penetration in the continent*" (Mamdani, 1996a, p.285) within the context of Europe's larger colonizing experience (ibid, p. 286). While tracing the common challenge of the post-colonial from the power structures created by the colonialist (British and French), Mamdani observed that the contemporary African state reproduce (the same) colonial structures and such fail to democratize. He argues that although Africa deracialized the state, it failed to democratize it due to its failure to grasp the specificity of the "mode of rule" that needs to be democratized (Mamdani, 1996a, Mamdani, 1999). He strongly argued that "without the reform of the local state, democratization in Africa will remain not only superficial but also explosive"(Mamdani, 1996a, p. 289).

According to Mamdani, the organization of power within the contemporary African state is the reason why Africa failed to democratize. He observed that the postcolonial African state reproduces the mode of rule of the colonialist. He called this style of decentralized government despotism. Colonial rule divided the African countries into two forms of power: urban and rural power organized differently under a hegemonic authority (Mamdani, 1996a, p.18). Whereas urban power spoke the language of civil society and rights, rural power deal with community and culture (ibid). The protectorate (country) was the "decentralized arm of the colonial state"(Mamdani, 1996a, p. 52). Power within the decentralized state was vested in the hands of the Native Authority comprising a hierarchy of chiefs (*ibid*). The Chiefs as a creation of the colonial authority performed administrative and judicial functions. In the rural communities or places where indirect rule system was instituted, the nature of political power within such environs created subjects that were governed by middlemen (Chiefs) who is the "petty legislator, administrator, judge and policemen all in one"(Mamdani, 1996a, p.54). Mamdani went on to explain

“Every moment of power legislative, executive judicial and administrative was combined in this one official. Here there is no question of internal check and balance on the exercise of authority,

let alone a test that is popular and democratic. The chief is answerable only to a higher authority"(Mamdani, 1996a, p.54).

Unlike the protectorates, the colonies were territories of "European Settlement." These areas were ruled by civil laws, which claimed to protect rights of citizens. Mamdani notes that "the rationale of public power was that it was the source of law that framed civil rights in civil society"(Mamdani, 1996a, p.18). Within this framework, citizens were given the right to free association and free publicity as well as representation. The postcolonial state adopted the bifurcated nature of power within this dual system. It just reproduces and maintains the inequality that was created in the colonial days.

The current nature of the African state although still resembling the colonial entity is slowly moving away from that. For example, in Gambia, though traditional authority exists in the rural communities, the civil society as alluded to by Mamdani has also been extended to the rural communities. For instance, in every major rural town, there are new courts and state institutions. However, this does not negate the fact that the power is still centralized in the capital.

Although Mamdani has provided us with a clear understanding of the African state, his explanation failed to capture certain structural issues that continue to challenge the current African state. Perhaps at the time of writing factors such as the internet and migration were not very evident. Nonetheless, they have extended the state and at the same time limited or disrupted the power structures within African countries, forcing it to redraw its boundaries. Situating African countries away from the global community fails to take into consideration factors such as state membership in international organizations as well as the advancement of information technology which I argue has significantly limited the power of the African state. Many African countries are heavily dependent on support from the international community. Their heavy dependence on donor countries also continues to challenge reformist agenda of democratizing the state. Similarly, the rural and urban cleavages he paid attention to are not the only basis for understanding the power structure. In the last two decades, global migration has created a third form of citizenship (diaspora) which are outside state authority and control but have a relative influence on the African state with remittances and other forms of leverage on the country. For

example, Gambia has an estimated diaspora population of 90,000 contributing about 11% of GDP in 2010¹⁷. How then can we understand this bifurcated state in the era of globalization, migration and information technology? Answering such a question will help to determine the relevance of Madman's "Citizen and Subject" in understanding the current African dilemma of democratization.

I still found Mamdani's work relevant and evident in the modern African state, particularly in the Gambian context. Conversely, this thesis is primarily interested in Mamdani's discussion of the "mode of rule" or his concept of power as a theoretical departure point. Understanding the current state in Africa (in some ways) will help to understand the nature of diaspora politics in Gambia and whether they engage in reproducing the bifurcated nature of colonial state. Nonetheless, in bringing the debate to the Gambian context, it would be important to explore Gambia's democratization of the past and present as well as situate the Gambian diaspora within the general discussion. I argue that the political activism of Gambian diaspora has more to do with replacing one individual with another while replicating the power structure of the state and is by its very nature undemocratic.

2.2 Diaspora Defined

In recent years, the term diaspora has gained wider academic and policy interest (Kee, 2014). This has culminated to some recent academic literature focusing on the impact the diaspora have in the socio-economic and political processes of their home countries (countries of origin). However, what constitutes the term "diaspora" remains contested and convoluted over time. From a term that was specifically used to describe the Jews to one that refers to everyone. In other words, "this ancient name underwent an unusual inflation that peaked in the 1990s, by which time it was being applied to most of the world's peoples"(Dufoix, 2008, p. 1). Kim Knott and Sean McLoughlin observed that scholars, on the one hand, submitted that the over usage, and the lack of agreeable definition has "emptied the concept of meaning." On the contrary, "others have identified it as capturing the very spirit of the age"(Knott and McLoughlin, 2010).

¹⁷ <http://blogs.worldbank.org/peoplemove/migration-remittances-and-economic-growth-the-case-of-the-gambia>

Pookong Kee while tracing the origin of the word from Greek, observed that the term was used to refer to the disperse of the Jews population following the destruction of Jerusalem around 586 BC (Kee, 2014) sending them into exile. According to him, the term emanated from Greek, *dispersion* (dia-across' and sperien-to sow or scatter seeds'). Recently, the "usage of the phrase stems from its appearance as a neologism in the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek by the legendary seventy Jewish scholars in Alexandria in the third century BC" (Dufoix, 2008, p.4). During the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, the usage of the term expanded to include people of African descent even though their experience relatively differs from the Jews. Such references were based on history as such historians and sociologist dominated the field of diaspora inquiry around that time. Today, thanks to globalization, the term is used broadly to describe Chinese, South Asian, and Africans, etc. migrants. How then can we define the term diaspora?

Steven Vertovec while outlining three general meanings of diaspora as “social form”, “as type of consciousness” and “as mode of cultural production” observed that the term is

"used today to describe practically any population which is considered 'deterritorialised' or 'transnational'—that is which has originated in a land other than which it currently resides and whose social, economic and political networks across the borders of nation-states or indeed, span the globe."(Vertovec, 1997, p. 277)

This broad definition of the term is also shared by Emma Lundgren Jörum in her study of the Syrian diaspora in Sweden. She simply used the word to "denote a large group of people with roots in the same nation state, living outside of that state."(Jörum, 2015) Similarly, Patrick Manning posits that the term diaspora is used today by a social scientist to refer “to migrants who settle in distant lands and produce new generations, all the while maintaining ties of affection with and making occasional visits to each other and their homeland” (Manning, 2009, p.2).

In examining the migration trends and formation of African diaspora communities around the globe over the last centuries and the challenges associated with studying the African Diaspora, Paul Zeleza broadly posited that

“diasporas are complex social and cultural communities created out of real and imagined genealogies and geographies (cultural, racial, ethnic, national, continental, transnational) of belonging, displacement and recreation, constructed and conceived at multiple temporal and spatial scales, at different moments and distance from the putative homeland” (Zezeza, 2008, p.7).

All these definitions connote well with Kim Butler's (2000), and Robin Cohen's suggested "conditions" necessary for defining the concept. Accordingly, Butler argued that in conceptualizing diaspora, "the reality of multiple identities and phases of diasporation over time must be accommodated"(Butler, 2000 as cited in Zezeza, 2008, p.8). She went on to highlight key conditions needed for such. These are reasons for, and condition of, the dispersal; relationship with homeland; relationship with host land; interrelationship within diaspora groups; and comparative study of different diaspora (ibid). The relationship with the motherland and diaspora interrelation will be useful in our case. Similarly, Cohen advanced the following conditions: "forced exile across two or more countries, victimization, preservation of ethnic boundaries, the memory of the original homeland and the myth of longing of return"(Kee, 2014, p.251). According to Kee, Cohen's typology of diaspora identified four groups: victim diaspora, migratory diaspora, ideological or religious diaspora and imperial diaspora (Kee, 2014). In our context, nomadic diaspora best represents the Gambian experience. Within this group are economic migrants, students, and political exiles. Hence, this paper adopts Manning definition to represent the Gambian diaspora. The Gambian diaspora is Gambian migrants who settled in other parts of the world due to economic reasons, and forced exiles and still maintain socio-economic and political ties with The Gambia. The social and economic relations include forming groups to preserve and extend the Gambian heritage as well as supporting families back home through remittances. The political ties involved financing opposition parties and engaging in a contentious form of politics to bring about 'democratic regime' change.

2.2.1 An evolving relationship between Diasporas and Country of Origin: Case of the African Diaspora

Even though there is no explicit agreement on what the term diaspora means, the function of the term and group in relation with the country of origin has been well documented across

disciplines within the social sciences. It has also been recognized by both policy makers and development practitioners especially when it comes to third world countries and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular.

In recent years, numerous studies have looked at the socio-economic (see Akyeampong, 2010, Akyeampong, 1998, Akokpari, 2006, Davies, 2012) and political link between African Diasporas and their home countries as well as the role of the diaspora in post-conflict situations. The basis on which this relationship is built on has been “shaped by continuities, changes and ruptures”(Zezeza, 2008). Paul Zezeza observed that "one critical measure of the diaspora as a self-conscious identity lies in remembering, imagining and engaging the original homeland, whose own identity is, in part, constituted by and, in turn, helps represent the diaspora"(Zezeza, 2008, p.16)..

In Africa, despite their socio-economic and political contribution, diaspora's have been viewed negatively for the longest. Okechukwu Iheduru (2011), while recognizing the change in the relationship between the African States and their diaspora population, observed that in Africa, these groups (diaspora) of people were perceived negatively by their states. He asserts that "historically, African countries loathed population movements or migration that challenged its desire to project power" (Iheduru, 2011, p.181).

The economic crises, such as the Economic Recovery Program (ERP) designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that affected most African countries throughout the 1980s and early 90s, and diasporas mobilization efforts during and post conflict situation saw a turning point in diaspora interest from the level of African states, international development agencies as well as in academia. This interest was further fueled by the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had been an alternative source of funding for many African governments. Hence, the collapsed of the Soviet Union left African states with two options: The Western donors and the Brighton Wood institutions, who from the early 1990s tied human rights and good governance to aid. Interestingly, this time also witnesses a "wave of democratization" in the African continent. All these events, as well as post 9/11, have increased the "profile of the diaspora as both development and security actor"(Davies, 2012, p.91). As Zela (2008) accurately

puts it the “awakened interest by African institutions and national governments in the diaspora as a development asset-remittance pipeline and as the continent's potential global guardian” is the socio-economic factors that influence the growth of diaspora studies. Today, due to globalization and shift in development approach (liberalization) spearheaded by the World Bank, this “negative” connotation on the diaspora is slowly or has rapidly changed over the period. This has forced many African governments to reconsider their stance on migrants and what role they can play in the socio-economic development of the homelands.

Okechuwkwu Iheduru in his article *African States, global migration, and transformation in citizenship politics* using Ghana and Nigeria as case studies, explores the changing relationship between African migrants and their home countries, moving from “antagonism to attempts to embrace and structure emigrant behaviors” (Iheduru, 2011, p. 181). He argues that such a transformation was initiated by African states in response to pressure from aid donors to "redefine emigrants as development partners or stakeholders." Furthermore, he asserts that this policy change of reintegrating diaspora citizens had nothing to do with "diaspora welfare or national development," instead, it was a deliberate attempt to "tap into emigrant resources to enhance weakened state power" and to fix the fiscal gap created by donor fatigue (ibid). He observed that the "boundaries of citizenship, political participation and economies are being negotiated" between African states and their diaspora citizens. On the issue of nationality, he posited that most African countries are slowly accepting the idea of dual citizenship and that the franchise has been extended to diaspora citizens. However, he was quick to note that these policy changes are not being implemented effectively.

However, as will be shown later, some African governments like that of The Gambia under President Jammeh perceived the Gambian diaspora as a threat to his political survival. Despite The Gambian diaspora contributing (remittances) about 12.5% of GDP in 2006, there was no significant public recognition concerning policies and program directed at The Gambian diaspora community. Nonetheless, an attempt was made in 2012 to mainstream Gambian diaspora into the socio-economic development. In fact, "Gambians Abroad" was added to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Gambians Abroad) in an attempt to tap into the resources of the diaspora. Interestingly, there is no division within the Foreign Affairs Ministry

responsible for Gambians abroad (like in many African countries). Also, despite a constitutional provision to enfranchise Gambians abroad, the government and even the electoral commission has refused to act on such a provision citing technicalities and financial issues. Hence, the Gambian diaspora is allowed to contribute economically, but they have no formal voice in matters regarding the state.

Under the nexus between diaspora and development, the literature has extensively looked at remittances remitted by the diaspora as their contribution to homeland development as well as their contribution in investments, skills and knowledge transfer and advocacy (Ho and Boyle, 2015). Teferra (2015) while observing the challenges in mobilizing the African intellectual to return home, noted how the emergence of remittance have become a critical source of capital flow for some countries (Teferra, 2015). Similarly, Ratha and Plaza while maintaining that "remittances are the most tangible link between migration and development" observed that in 2010, \$40 Billion was remitted to Africa. A figure believed to be lower than what is paid if unrecorded flows are added (Ratha and Plaza, 2011). The multiplier effect and usage of remittances on a country's development agenda such as health, and education, relief have also been well documented (Hammond et al., 2011a). The money remitted by the diaspora according to the literature mainly focus on family (see Das Gupta et al., 2007, Nyamongo et al., 2012, Obadare and Adebaniwi, 2009), town/village (see Mercer et al., 2009) and nationally (see Nyamongo et al., 2012). I observed that in Gambia most of the monies remitted by the diaspora benefitted the family. Hence, this suggests that the diaspora has considerably influenced by the family. The evidence gathered has alluded to such when it comes to diaspora engagement in homeland politics.

2.2.2 African Diaspora and Homeland Politics

Diasporas organized politically not only to advance the wellbeing of the diaspora community and the extension of their communities, but also to extend support to the homeland (Quinsaas, 2016) economically and politically. The political ties are those that are related to engaging in the democratization process, supporting political parties and groupings to promote good governance, supporting post-conflict operations as well as supporting or opposing the policies and programs

of the incumbent. While this thesis recognizes the socio-economic links, it mainly focuses on the political bonds to explain diaspora engagement in Gambian political affairs. Nevertheless, it is highly assumed that the reason why most politically active diaspora Gambians are engaged in the political process is due to the numerous amount of money they are sending back home to support their families, as well as personal experience with the regime. As much as this paper wants to digress from such, efforts have been made to factor the socio-economic conditions informing diaspora activism. It should also be noted that not all the Gambian diaspora engages in the quest for democratic government in Gambia. Nonetheless, this paper is interested in individuals and organizations that are visibly involved in homeland politics, particularly those opposed to the then Jammeh regime. I want to understand what role they played in driving regime change in Gambia.

Over the years, many diaspora groups have contributed significantly to the domestic politics of the homeland. (Lyons and Mandaville, 2013) While locating diasporas in the same category as political parties, interest groups, civil society, insurgencies as instruments to effect political outcomes at home, observed that over the years, the boundaries of politics have changed to enable diaspora groups to participate in local politics. Although they place diaspora alongside political parties and other interest groups, they were quick to clarify that diasporas are different because they challenge modern notion of how political life should be structured (Lyons and Mandaville, 2013). For instance, the issues of dual citizenship and extending the franchise to the diaspora have become a central theme in the diaspora-state relationship. (Esman, 2009) While noting the role of globalization increased migration, posits that new technologies and social media (NurMuhammad et al., 2013, NurMuhammad et al., 2016) have enabled diaspora to engage in politics of the home. Similarly, (Stokke, 2016, P 12) advanced that the "proliferation of communication tools and enhanced transportation has served to facilitate close ties between diaspora and homeland communities making them particularly vital during conflict situations."

While the diaspora has received wide attention as political actors in political science and international relation literature, in Africa, most of the early literature on diaspora political involvement has centered mostly on great crises and the remittances sent by the diaspora during such emergencies or after the crises (McGregor and Pasura, 2014). This has created binary opposites within the literature in diaspora political engagement, which has placed diaspora as

peacemakers or peace-wreckers (Smith and Stares, 2007). While a study by (Baser and Swain, 2008) have shown the diaspora as third party arbitrators, studies such as (Bernal, 2006, Koser, 2003, Lyons, 2007) have demonstrated the role of the Eritrean and Ethiopian diaspora during the conflict as peace-wreckers. Equally, studies such as (Hammond et al., 2011b, Tezare et al., 2006, Galipo, 2011, Mohamoud and Osman, 2008) have looked at the role of the diaspora in conflict management and reconciliation and peacebuilding. Brinkerhoff while deviating from the general trend of literature on diaspora support to insurgencies and political instability posit that diasporas play various roles in conflict management (Brinkerhoff, 2011).

While the general literature on African diaspora political involvement has focused on countries experiencing or having experienced conflict crises, few studies exist that explore transnational diaspora engagement in 'peaceful' countries homeland politics. Studies such as (Pasura, 2010, McGregor and Pasura, 2010, McGregor and Pasura, 2014) have looked at the transnational activities of the Zimbabwean diaspora. A similar study by Jenny Kulhman on the Zimbabwean diaspora explores the "opportunities for, and challenges to, transnational mobilization and diaspora politics oriented towards the home country of origin" (Jenny, 2010b). This study follows the above studies to understand Gambian diaspora engagement in homeland politics. Using social movement theory to link diaspora political activism and democracy promotion.

2.3 Diaspora and Democracy Promotion in Africa

In the post-Cold War period, the 'Western Liberalist' agenda of democracy promotion has become an increasingly valuable industry to both policy makers and academics. Observing that the field has been largely ignored by scholars in the past, Wolff and Wurm maintains that the "growth of foreign development policies explicitly aiming at the international promotion and protection of democratic regimes" have gained wider academic interest in recent years (Wolff and Wurm, 2011, P. 77). The field which has attracted attention over the years, still finds it hard to identify the core goals of the policy area (Van Cranenburgh, 2011). The difficulty in the identification of the underlying goal of democracy promotion has both a conceptual and theoretical implications.

Conceptually, what is democracy promotion? How can we define such a concept that has become a central tool in the foreign policies of many advanced democracies such as the US, UK

as well as regional bodies such as the European Union and most recently by ECOWAS? Cranenburg who used the term interchangeably with democracy assistance maintains that such is "provided under the umbrella of human rights, the rule of law, good governance and post-conflict peacebuilding programs" by multilateral agencies, international NGOs, and political parties or party-affiliated foundations (Van Cranenburgh, 2011). She advanced that such is the reason why it 's hard to identify the core goals of the field.

Before engaging in the democracy promotion literature, it is important that we first understand the concept of democracy within the African context. For brevity purposes, the thesis does not indulge deep into the conceptual debate of democracy (See Shapiro, 2009, Beitz, 1989, Haerpfer et al., Bernhagen, 2009). Rather, it focuses its attention on the democratization literature. (Collier and Levitsky, 1997) observed that the post-Cold War democratization wave has presented scholars with the challenge of dealing conceptually with a great diversity of post-authoritarian regimes in Africa, Latin America, Asia and post-communist countries. While identifying such problems as well as the contention that exist over the meaning of the term, they situate democracy within the context of democratization as has been the prevailing norm among researchers in the democratization literature. That is choice entails deliberately focusing on the procedural definition of the term ignoring the substantive meaning. They define the term focusing on the minimal attributes of democracy that is " fully contested elections with full suffrage and the absence of massive fraud, combined with sufficient guarantees of civil liberties, including freedom of speech, assembly, and association"(ibid, p.434). This definition of democracy can be situated within Robert Dahl's components of democracy: competition and participation (Dahl, 1971). This thesis follows such definition because the literature on democracy promotion in Africa has mostly followed the same (Carothers, 2009, Carothers, 2011, Brown, 2005). Perhaps, the clear indicators it provides and the ease of comparison across states makes it useful. It is also influenced by (Schmitz, 2006) work on *Transnational Mobilization and Domestic Regime Change* where he equally defines democracy as procedural. For our case, establishing democracy within such minimal framework will help us to understand diaspora engagement better.

The democracy promotion literature as observed before has advanced the role of states and international NGOs as well as the leverage and linkage mechanisms while largely ignoring the role of the diaspora. I argue that the reason why the diaspora received less attention within the literature is the fact that scholars explored such within the "strategy of democratic foreign policies"(Wolff and Wurm, 2011) and that diasporas were not considered as "powerful actors" (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). However, a process of diversification has emerged in recent years focusing on players involved, the range of countries where it operates, and the kind of activities it comprises (Carothers, 2009). This sense of diversification has guided the practice of democracy promotion as well as the growing scholarly work. Carothers while acknowledging the shift from one-size fits all, which was the earlier approach of democracy aid providers, advanced two distinct approaches to democracy promotion: the developmental and political approach. The developmental approach, which favors an incremental approach to democracy, is based on a broader notion of the concept. It is mostly concerned with equality and justice and the process of change involving both political and socio-economic, which are vital in building a well-functioning state (Carothers, 2009).

This thesis is interested in the political approach, which resonates with diaspora engagement in democracy promotion. Its definition of democracy focuses "on elections and political liberties and a view of democratization as a process of political struggle in which Democrats work to gain the upper hand in society over non-democrats"(Carothers, 2009, p.5). Here, Carothers suggests that the democracy promoters channel resources at core political processes and institutions- especially elections, political parties, and politically oriented CSOs groups often at critical conjunctural moments with the hope of catalytic effects.

Based on the two approaches to democracy promotion, one may question why democracy promotion. Why do many western countries provide democratic assistance? Various interpretations can be drive from the question. Going by the procedural definition of democracy mentioned above, democracy promoters for a long hold the notion that democracy leads to higher economic development. Cranenburgh observed that democracy is seen by many as a viable option to "rebuild the legitimacy of the African state"(Van Cranenburgh, 2011). Therefore, the end of the cold war and the so-called triumph of Western liberalism provided an

avenue for the ‘victors’ to impose political and economic reforms on so-called third world countries (Brown, 2005, Carothers, 2011). This should not also negate the fact that critical voices against democracy promotion have seen it as a deliberate Western liberal strategy to maintain its neoliberal strategy in the political realm of the underdeveloped former colonies. Equally, some have charged that the idea of democracy promotion was to replace critical leaders under the guise of democracy and human rights with a Western-friendly leader who opens up trade links with the West at the detriment of his/her people. I argue that the reason why democracy promoters engage in democracy assistance in Africa is to help reproduce and model African states according to western political systems so as to advance their economic and political ideas to further direct Africa according to their caprices.

In Africa, the literature on democracy promotion has focused on the ‘donor countries’(Carothers, 2002), ‘recipients’ as well as the role of NGOs(Carothers and Barndt, 1999) along with the challenges of the policy field. Thomas Carothers, one of the leading figures in this academic field, has written extensively on the issue. In his article *Democracy Support and Development Aid: the Elusive Synthesis* Carothers explores the relationship between development aid and democracy assistance. While observing that the two have existed side by side, their relationship have been "uncertain and in flux"(Carothers, 2010). However, following the democratization wave in the 1990s that showed an increase in democracy aid, the parting between the two began to narrow in Western policy circles. He maintains that the narrowing of the two goals has to with the "view that an integrated approach to both political and economic development aid might be valuable as well as possible" (ibid, P.12). The bridging of the two goals which resulted from developmental and democracy promoters ‘taking politics into account’ and ‘help democracy deliver’ respectively, blurred concerning both organizational boundaries and the activities on the ground (Carothers, 2010).

While some scholars have explored the institutional context, others focused on the institutional variations in democracy promotion. One social scientist that looked at the institutional context of democracy promotion in Africa is Cranenburgh. In her article *Democracy Promotion in Africa: the institutional context* similar to Mamdani (1996) she observed that “African democracy is often based on a particular set of institutions which tend to concentrate power in the executive”

(Van Cranenburgh, 2011, p 443). She noted that earlier democracy assistance programs were targeted primarily at multiparty elections and political parties. However, she was quick to mention that donors have shifted from such to include a broader aspect of good governance and human rights. However, she argues that both approaches do not address the institutional context of multiparty competition sufficiently and this has a dire impact on democracy promotion policies of the donors.

Karen del Biondo in her article *Norms or Interests? Explaining Instrumental Variation in EU Democracy Promotion in Africa* using two cases where the EU imposed sanctions (Guinea and Niger) and two cases where the EU was reluctant to do so (Ethiopia and Rwanda) investigates the causes of instrumental variation in EU democracy promotion. While observing that earlier studies on EU democracy promotion tend to agree with the realist assumption that democracy only drives foreign policy when there is no conflict between norms and interest (Del Biondo, 2015b), she maintains the contrary. She argues based on the evidence generated from her cases that idealism rather than realism explains the instrumental variation in EU democracy promotion. In a similarly article (Del Biondo, 2015a) where she used a fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) of 17 cases of violations of democratic principles and human rights to investigate "why sanctions are applied unevenly in EU democracy promotion in Africa" she argues that "sanctions are taken in the absence of donor interests and developmental performance, and are not taken in the presence of donor interest and developmental performance" (Ibid, P.74). Such an attitude to democracy promotion relates to the realist notion that international democracy promoters are mostly alarmed by their power position, which includes, commercial interest, security, and spheres of influence (Del Biondo, 2015a). Such observation can be said of the Gambian diaspora relation with opposition political actors in Gambia. A great source of party finances comes from the diaspora, as such the Gambian diaspora occupy a position of power within the opposition setting.

Some studies have explored when external donors can influence democratization. Most of these scholarly work used leverage and linkage theory to show the mechanism of donor influence. The primary concern for this approach is to understand how external actors can affect democratization (Tolstrup, 2013). This framework has been mainly used to investigate how

Western pressure for democracy can lead to change in non-democratic countries. Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way while noting that “the end of the Cold War posed an unprecedented challenge to authoritarian regimes around the world” (Levitsky and Way, 2005, p.20), proposed a new framework for analyzing the international dimension of regime change (Levitsky and Way, 2006, Levitsky and Way, 2005). They observed that since the end of the cold war, studies of regime change “have drawn considerable attention to the “international dimension” of democratization” (Levitsky and Way, 2006, p.379). Whereas they argue that the "relationship between post-cold war global environment and regime outcomes remains poorly understood," they noted that the most studied forms of international influence such as conditionality, US policy and democracy assistance programs, have not had a steady democratizing effect (Levitsky and Way, 2006).

Unlike the “Western proximity model”(Kopstein and Reilly, 2000) which argues that “the closer a country is to Vienna or Berlin (whichever is closest) the more exposed it will be to Western diffusion of norms, resources, and institutions and better it will thus reform regarding democratization and market economy reforms”(Tolstrup, 2013, p.719), Levitsky and Way offer a detailed, elegant and far-reaching explanation of western democracy promotion (Tolstrup, 2013) in their renowned theory of leverage and linkage. This is done on the backdrop that the post-cold-war international environment operates along two dimensions: Western leverage and linkage to the West (Levitsky and Way, 2006). They posited that differences in foreign influence on democratization are entrenched in differences in degree of linkage and leverage across countries (Levitsky and Way, 2006).

Leverage or Western leverage refers to the degree to which undemocratic governments are susceptible to external democratization pressure (Levitsky and Way, 2006, Levitsky and Way, 2005, Tolstrup, 2013). Pressure may be exerted in various ways including, positive conditionality (Example EU membership), punitive sanctions (aid withdrawal, trade sanctions) diplomatic persuasion, and military force (Levitsky and Way, 2006). The size and economic strength of a state determine the effectiveness of leverage. Weak, small countries mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa, highly dependent on foreign aid, are posed to be more vulnerable to external pressure

compared to larger countries with strong military and economic power (Levitsky and Way, 2006).

According to Levitsky and Way (2006), Western influence can be limited by the presence of another regional power that can provide an alternative economic, military and diplomatic support. For instance, the reason why many African countries failed to democratize during the Cold War could be linked to the presence of an alternative source of military and economic support in the Soviet Union. Today, the presence of China as an alternate source of financial assistance to many authoritarian governments in Africa is thwarting the democratization agenda of the western donors. While EU and US funding is tied to democratization and good governance, China's support is free from such. Secondly, leverage can be limited by competing for foreign policy objectives. That is to say, in countries where security or economic interest of the western power are critically high, authoritarian governments, with the promise of political stability and protecting the interest of the strength of the West might be allowed to continue at the expense of democratization (see Del Biondo, 2015a, Del Biondo, 2015b).

The linkage has been defined the "density of ties and cross-border flows between a particular country and the US, the EU, and Western-dominated multilateral institutions"(Levitsky and Way, 2006, p.383). In the African context, some scholars have explored the leverage and linkage mechanism of regional bodies such as EU and ECOWAS. Christopher Hartman in his article *Leverage and Linkage: how regionalism shapes regime dynamics in Africa* shows that leverage by regional organizations such as ECOWAS and others do have influence on the system dynamics on the continent. Observing the contribution of Levitsky and Way who saw Sub-Saharan African as homogenous he argues that internal variables must be used to gain a deeper understanding of the regime dynamics between African states.

This section explains that while the role of states, NGOs, and IGOs such as the EU have received attention in the democracy promotion literature, the diaspora has not been considered to a large extent. However, Koinova (2009) in her article on *Diasporas and democratization in the post-communist world* while notes the lack of attention on the diaspora in the democracy assistance literature and argues that when "diaspora communities are socialized in the western world with

democratic values in western societies, they could be expected to be sympathetic to the democratization of their home countries”(Koinova, 2009). Her study, which draws evidence from the activities of diasporas from post-communists states such as the Serbian, Armenian, and Albanian diaspora suggest that diasporas only engages in procedural democracy. While her study has provided an entry point for diaspora engagement in democracy promotion, its limited focus on post-communists' states tends to ignore the African diaspora. Hence, based on her work, I hope to contribute in advancing diaspora and democracy promotion with a case study from the Gambia. I assume that the Gambian diaspora as a case has effectively behaved similarly to the western donors. They have contributed money and created awareness on the issues of human rights violation. They equally supported the forces of democracy (opposition parties) with finances as well as the media platform to advance their political agenda against the dictatorship of Jammeh. Observing this gap in the democracy promotion literature, I now turn to explore the concept of social movement with a view of linking diaspora to democracy promotion.

2.4 Social Movement

Social movement is becoming the favorite word for politically active citizens in defining their actions. Over the years, popular movements for democracy, human rights, environment, etc. spilled over the globe challenging governments and the international system. These groups of people were not linked to any old ideologies such as Marxism that have challenged the world order over the years. They are ordinary individuals concerned about their surrounding and rose to demand change through collective actions. But what comes to mind when one hears the term social movement?

The term social movement has accumulated different definitions in the literature with no particular consensus. Mario Diani (1992) observed that in all social movement descriptions, three criteria are noticeable: "a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity"(Diani, 1992, p. 1). He posited that such criteria differentiate social movements from interest groups, political parties, protest events or coalitions (ibid). Sidney Tarrow (1994) conceptualize social movements as "collective challenges to elites, authorities,

other groups or cultural codes) by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustainable interaction with elites, opponents and authorities."

Similarly, Snow et al. defined social movements as

"collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organization, society, culture, or world order of which they are part of"(Snow et al., 2004, p. 11)

The definitions above although broad, point to some important notions useful for our case. Firstly, the definitions postulated by Snow et al. and Tarrow expressed Diani's idea of "shared collective identity." This identity is not naturally ascribed like in the case of race or ethnicity or even nationality, but it is one of concern. The second notion has to do with organizational capacity as well as the degree of organization. What is postulated here especially by Snow et al. are that a social movement's lifespan may vary depending on issues of continuity and change. As a collective action, the achievement of their demand or intense state repression might lead to the short lifespan of the movement. For instance, most of the CSOs cited in this study have disbanded or at the verge of it following the defeat of Jammeh. Most of the organizations were tailor made to remove Jammeh. Thus achieving their demands, they see less reason to continue. Thirdly, what is evident from the definitions is how social movement actors act within the broader political –spectrum. While law sanctions political parties and pressure groups, social movements are not. They emerged as a response to need to rectify or demand changes on issues of concern. Hence, their tools are also unconventional; this enables them to challenge authorities effectively. I contend that the Gambian diaspora, in this case, has employed a broad range of tools to advance their claims for regime change thus not only focusing on the protest, which has been the hallmark of early social movement literature.

As will be shown later, the definitions presented by Snow et al. and Tarrow represents our case as adequately described by Diani. Hence, for convenience, we will adopt Diani's characterization of movement to describe the Gambian diaspora activists. It is important to note that Gambian

diaspora activists are not typical movements as outlined in the literature, primarily because they are not on the ground movement. Nonetheless, their unconventional actions and activities, such as occupying the Gambian embassy in the United States and protesting in front of the embassies, UN, etc. vividly portrays the activists as a social movement organization. Also, their heavy reliance on social media too as a mobilization tool played prominently in their anti-Jammeh mobilization. My interest in this whole episode is to understand how such a movement's action as a whole has influenced regime change in Gambia.

In this thesis *diaspora activism* as a form of social protest (social movements) refers to a method of collective action that are undertaken by individuals, groups, and networks in the diaspora for shared determination to advance a particular demand or political struggle against an authoritarian regime in the homeland. The actions of diaspora dissidents, within the broad concept of collective action, can be sum into two distinctive dimensions. On the one hand is the measure that requires either individual or group participation. Within this dimension as Postmes and Brunsting indicated

"...captures the distinction between actions that demand the involvement of many members of a group (labor disputes, demonstrations and mass petitioning) versus actions that can be undertaken by relatively solitary (sabotage, civil disobedience, and letter writing). Also, these individual forms of collective actions can be thought of as collective in nature when they are intended as a means of achieving a collective outcome" (Postmes and Brunsting, 2002, p. 291)

The other dimension mentioned by (Postmes and Brunsting, 2002) are actions that are either persuasive or confrontational. While efficient operations involve more subtle ways such as letter writings, lobbying, and petitioning, confrontation activities are more directly and open, and this includes demonstration and blockade or sabotage. These two dimensions will be used to analyze Gambian diaspora engagement.

2.4.1 Social Movement theory: linking Diaspora Activism and Democracy Promotion

Most of the social movement literature focused on the political up shots of social movements. They mainly explore the casual relationship between movement action and what changes in can

generate in public policy. Hence, most studies on social movement discuss specific issues. Studies that look at the democratization possibilities of social movement are very limited. (Stokke, 2016, p. 13) Observed that "the plethora of academic work on diasporas from various scholarly discipline rarely have, if at all connected with social movement" Hence, this study hopes to add to the growing literature by connecting social movement with democracy promotion using the Gambia diaspora as a case. It is broadly interested in understanding how ordinary diaspora citizens of The Gambia fueled by discontentment and a desire for political change come together to oppose the status quo in a hostile manner.

Mahmood Mamdani observed that the form of rule shapes the kind of revolt against it (Mamdani, 1996a, Mamdani, 1999, Mamdani, 1996b). According to Sydney Tarrow "collective actions becomes contentious when it is used by people who lack regular access to institutions who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims, and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge other or authorities"(Tarrow, 1998, p. 3). He went on to define social movements as "collective challenges based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities"(Tarrow, 1998, p.4). Tarrow's position relatively resonates with modernization theory and relative deprivation theory. Accordingly, Samuel Huntington observed that society would strive to change current institutions with ones that can meet current social, political and economic demands when the current systems cannot keep up with socio-economic changes (Huntington, 1968). In filling the gap left by modernization theorists, relative deprivation theorists posited that even if the current regime can meet the new socio-economic challenges, the touch of dispossession and inequality will lead people to mass organize and challenge the government. They argued that the feeling of deprivation stemmed from people comparing their situation to others, or concerning their expectations of the regime (Gurr, 1968). This resonates with Koinova (2009) insinuation that diaspora citizens when socialized tend to be sympathetic with democratization in the homeland. I argue that the Gambian diaspora most of whom live in advanced democracies tend to be sensitive to the democratization of Gambia under Jammeh. Both theories explain the motives for social mobilization as well as the factors that might lead to the emergence of a social movement as a function of individual's grumbles and anger.

Similarly, theories such as resource mobilization and political opportunity perspective, which emphasize the appropriate limitations and possibilities faced by social movements, argues that for a movement to emerge and to sustain resources such as time, money organization skills etc. and opportunities such as "the relative openness of the institutionalized political system, the stability of elite alignments, the elite alliances, the state capacity and propensity for repression and the division among elites"(Roldán, 2013) must be present. The modernization theory, relative deprivation theory, resource mobilization and political opportunity focused on factors that lead to collective action or the emergence of social movements. However, Charles Tilly criticizes the heavy emphasis on individuals instead of the interaction between people (Tilly, 1984). People only participate in actions they feel part of. Hence, the level of group identification is a determining factor of personal engagement. Concisely, recognizing one's membership must stem from the interaction between persons or actors. Consequently, both individuals and the collective action group and survival depend on the existence of social network (Tarrow, 1998, Tilly, 1984, Castells, 2012).

The social network begins with few individuals or nodes occupying central positions that then recruit other people with grievances expanding into a mass protest movement. This thesis aims to understand this interaction within the Gambian diaspora dissidents (The Struggle) and how has it reflected on their shared goal of regime change in Gambia. In doing so, I rely on three social movement theories: *Political opportunities, mobilizing structure, and framing* as advanced by (Sökefeld, 2006) to better explain diaspora political mobilization as well as to map out the activities Gambian diaspora.

In presenting his macro perspective for analyzing social movements, (McAdam, 1982)exceptional conditions under which social movements emerge. According to (Sökefeld, 2006, p. 269) political opportunities refer to "the structural, including institutional, conditions that enable the rise of social movements." In the case of the diaspora, the theory advanced that Diasporas need political opportunities that will lead to their emergence. Sokefeld argues that the formation of diaspora is not a 'natural' consequence of migration but that particular processes of mobilization have to take place for a diaspora to emerge. Whilst noting the need to broaden the concept of political opportunities, which for long has focused on movements in a single national

context, suggests that the possibilities include "communication, media, and transport as well as the legal and institutional (for example multiculturalist) framework with which claims for community and identity can be articulated" (Sökefeld, 2006, p.270). I argued the political opportunity that led to diaspora mobilization in Gambia was the 1994 military coup and the proliferation of the internet. The military coup was seen by many Gambians in US and Europe as an event that brought an abrupt end to democracy in Gambia. However, what sustained the activism was the way they framed the issues around human rights and political repression.

Martin Sokefeld following (McAdam et al., 1996) defines mobilization structures "as collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action." (Sökefeld, 2006) He maintains that "mobilizing structures can be networks of people that are bound to the same issue or formal organizations that are established for the same purpose of making particular claims"(Sökefeld, 2006, p. 269). Similarly (Tarrow, 1998, p 3) observed that "they build organizations, elaborate ideologies and socialize and mobilize constituencies, and their members engage in self-development and construction of collective identities." (Sökefeld, 2006) observed that in the case of the diaspora

"such networks and associations can be very diverse; they may be situated at the local level (such as neighborhood community organizations), but they also include high-level associations that are themselves transnational character"(p.270).

For example, the Gambian political diaspora has about 15 groups (including party surrogates), media houses and individuals who have a shared interest in influencing regime change in Gambia. They have organizations that are both local focusings on a particular host country as well as transnational organizations in many different countries. The online media houses also have gone multinational in the sense that they attract listeners of Gambians around the world. The transnational nature of politics allows diaspora to mobilize and debate about issues without getting into trouble. Their ability to frame political issues according to their meanings, solicit funds are some of the advantages the diaspora activist has (Koinova, 2012). The studies by (Kuhlmann, 2010, Jenny, 2010a) on the Zimbabwean political diaspora is a proper example. The

Zimbabwean diaspora has used both online and offline spaces to mobilize to bring to light the human rights violations in Zimbabwe under Mugabe.

According to (Sökefeld, 2006) Framing which was coin Erving Goffman (1974) and later used by (Snow et al., 1986) refers to

“particular idea that fashion a shared understanding of a social movement by rendering events and conditions meaningful and enable a common framework of interpretations and representations. They are ideas that transform certain circumstances into an issue that help to define grievances and claims, and that legitimize and mobilize action” (p.270)

I argue that the Gambian diaspora framed issues around human rights violation. Events in Gambia such as April 10-11 2000 student massacre was framed as human rights violation. I observed that this event and the way the diaspora network on Gambia-L framed it, increased both their lobbying and mobilization opportunities in the host country.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I began by discussing why Africa failed to democratize after independence by replicating Mamadani (1996). Mamdani argues that the failure of the African state to democratize is due to "mode of rule" the African state reproduces from the colonial experience. Hence, he argues that for African countries to democratize power must be institutionalized. From Mamdani, I have shown that the literature on democracy promotion while it captures states and international governmental organizations such as the EU and NGOs have failed to capture the role of the diaspora. Equally, the literature on African diaspora has made strive in revealing the significant role performed by the African diaspora. Although the focus has been on remittances and diaspora contribution in conflict and posts conflict situation the need to situate the diaspora effort during the time of peace to effect regime change needs emphasis as well. This chapter addressing the gap in the democracy promotion literature and pushing forward the active involvement of the diaspora in the homeland both political and economic posit that to create the link with aim of filling the gap in the democracy promotion literature, social movement theories of political opportunities, mobilization structures as well as framing are essential elements. The

thesis thus uses (Sökefeld, 2006) to understand the role of the Gambian diaspora in influencing regime change in Gambia.

Chapter Three: Methodological Framework

3.0 Introduction

The Gambian diaspora over the years has contributed significantly to Gambia's political evolution. Nevertheless, the absence of empirical research on the activities of the Gambian political diaspora motivated this research. This chapter outlines the methodological choices that the researcher implores that have informed each stage of the thesis. This multi-sited study of the Gambian diaspora dissidents describes the research design, data collection method, and data analysis to meet the empirical goal of the thesis. I used purely qualitative data, but some quantitative data from secondary materials have also been used.

This chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part presents the research strategy, which adopts a multi-level study design. The second part talks about how data was collected and briefly introduces the reader to initial analysis. I also briefly discuss my role as the researcher. The final part discusses the criteria for construing data findings focusing on the qualitative nature of the research. I also discuss the challenges that confronted me during the data collection face. The paper begins by explaining the nature of the research strategy employed.

3.1 Research Design

Primarily, this section intends to familiarize the reader the decisions that have been taken by the researcher. I showed how the case study, as well as the selection procedure; how netnography was used as well as the motives behind selecting the units of analysis and the methods employed. This part chronicles how data has been gathered and evaluated with the use of thematic analysis.

The purpose of this study as mentioned before is to understand how diaspora activism has influenced regime change in Gambia. Specifically, what role did the Gambian diaspora played in driving regime change in the Gambia? In addressing this, I have involved prominent diaspora political activists representing diaspora media houses, diaspora political organizations (both civil society and political parties), and prominent individuals. I have also interviewed prominent opposition figures in the Gambia to understand the relationship between the diaspora activists

and elite politicians. Despite their different interests, they all agree that they are members of the 'Struggle for Democracy' in the Gambia commonly known in its short form the "Struggle." This made it easy for me to aggregate the different interest into a unique group for my fieldwork data. I have also followed and participated in the online discussion by the activists. Based on the above a multi-level strategy has been adopted to generate the data for the thesis. It should be noted that netnography is selected as a separate component of the research strategy.

Before presenting the research plan, an initial stage has to be noted as it has played a vital role in the development of this approach. In April 2016, when Solo Sandeng, a pro-democracy activist was tortured to death by the Jammeh regime, almost the same time when I started working on this thesis, I noticed a high amount of Gambians engaging on social media condemning the government for his death. Even people that were silent in the past could not hold their tongues. At the same time, I also noticed and participated in an online campaign calling on the youth to register to vote. There were similar attacks that were calling on young people to take up to the streets and have an "Arab Spring" moment. All these different activities online convinced me that I needed to study the online operations of the diaspora and to see whether or not it reflects on the ground. Measuring such was going to be a big problem for as I was on exiled and returning to conduct the study was practically impossible for reasons such as my safety. However, I also noticed that the online platforms are just a part of the many strategies and mediums the diaspora activists used to advocate for regime change. Hence, I decided to widen the scope of the study by not only focusing on one aspect but diaspora engagement in general including the online platforms so as to broadly understand the role they play in driving regime change. As such from April 2016 to April 2017, I carefully monitored the discussion and got exposed to various diaspora led groups on Facebook. I requested to join some. I got accepted and continue to be an active participant in those online groups.

The benefits of joining the groups were many. Firstly, most of the new Facebook groups I joined belong to political parties in Gambia. Their diaspora surrogates created these groups/discussion forums so as to engage and mobilize the diaspora to support the party back home. All the political party forums I joined have membership ranging from eight thousand (8,000) to forty thousand (40,000). It should be noted that not all these people were active participants in the

groups. Also, some of the members were people living in Gambia and not in the diaspora. This was an advantage for the diaspora as the individuals in the home country had access to some of the information shared by the diaspora as individual diaspora news sites like Freedom Newspaper critical of the government were banned under Jammeh. Similarly, the Civil Society groups have more membership some of whom belong to the political party groups. Although such forums were not exclusively own by the diaspora CSOs they were actually utilized by all the different groups because of the membership. The most active online community, Gambian Youth and Women's Forum has close to eighty-five thousand (85,000) members living in Gambia and the diaspora. I also liked the Fatu Network Facebook page, which has about 238,000 people following it for news from Gambia. In joining these groups, I gained an informed idea of the issues that diaspora activists were preoccupied with at an early stage. Some of the activists I knew from an earlier social group (Balafong), which did not allow local politics to be discussed. In this forum, I got to understand who was who and who to reach out to for comments. Also, not been a passive participant helped a lot as I got to share my thoughts and people responded creating some debate. There also, one can have a sense or an idea of the origin of the anti-Jammeh struggle and how it has grown from a campaign for human rights and to one of regime change. Such an approach was vital in the semi-structured interviews and email interviews through which I could trace the origins of the movement. Finally, I was able to locate the administrators of the Facebook Groups for a preliminary chat as to the reason behind creating the group, etc. Nonetheless, most of the people I interviewed were more proactive than the creators of the group. Most of them are leading established civil society organizations to promote democratic change in Gambia.

3.2 The Case Study

In any research, to answer the question asked depends on the method of one's choice of studying the phenomenon. In this study, I have opted to use a case study method as a constitutive part of the research design to precisely understand the complex nature of the Gambian diaspora activists as an area that has not been studied before. The case study in this instance uses "as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident" (Yin 2003, p.13). What I did in this study is to explore the role of the diaspora in changing the authoritarian regime in

Gambia. Hence, the role of the diaspora is an abstraction of the phenomenon of regime change in The Gambia. Through the study of the diaspora, I will be able to look at how regime change was manifested by looking at the people involved their relationship and how things affect each other within the phenomenon understudied.

More specifically, the Struggle as a unit of analysis with multiple actors consist of many interest groups: Surrogates of political parties in Gambia that started diaspora branches of the political parties, civil society organizations working to promote and restore democracy in Gambia, online diaspora media houses bringing news from the homeland to the thousands of Gambians in the diaspora, many individuals that do not belong to any of the groups but are equally committed to democratic change in Gambia (More details about how the struggle is organized and functions will be presented in the empirical chapter). However, it is important to note that the struggle as a community of Gambians is not grouped in one country. Some live in US, UK, Scandinavia, Senegal, etc. What makes them a community is their use of social media and the networks they have created and maintained online over the course of the Struggle to restore democracy. Henceforth, instead of comparing their activities in different host countries, I group them into one group and analyze their engagement as a group. Thus, this makes it difficult to uncover the dynamics of the struggle in this context compared to define real community well. Hence, the Struggle is treated as a network of Gambian dissidents living abroad.

3.2.1 Exploratory case study

In this thesis, I employed an exploratory approach to understanding what role the Gambian diaspora have played in driving regime in Gambia and how their activities have promoted democracy or the lack of it. Although the process of regime change has completed in the sense that Jammeh lost the election, I started working on this thesis before the elections. Hence, an exploratory study availed me the opportunity to design questionnaires without knowing precisely what to ask. Its flexibility made it possible for me to navigate around, raising issues as they unfold in discussion with my respondents as well as from my participation and observation of the diaspora online community. Furthermore, the fact that I was dealing with an ongoing phenomenon, one that is created by the participants, I have to situate the study within its natural context. My role as a political activist and exiled Gambian equally situates me within this

respect. Such categorization has its advantages and disadvantages and such an issue I now address.

3.2.2 My Role as the Researcher

My interest in this topic apart from the academic interest is somehow personal, and it may be helpful if I briefly described how this thesis came to be written and precisely my role in the struggle for regime change. This will undoubtedly reveal some of my biases, but also my experience, which to a large extent influence the background of the study. It will also preempt the difficulties I faced when gathering data, especially when it comes to Jammeh's party the APRC.

In November 2014, I was arrested and detained by the Jammeh regime in connection with a survey I was helping a Ghanaian company FACTS International to conduct. My arrest and detention stirred public outrage both in Gambian and the diaspora as I was detained beyond the 72 hours stipulated by the constitution. With subsequent advocacy by fellow political activists in Gambia, diaspora, and friends from Amnesty International, Freedom House and Article 19, I was released on bail¹⁸. However, in December of the same year, I was arrested again by the regime and this time charged with four counts¹⁹. Following a four-month protracted court case; I was eventually acquitted and discharged by the Magistrate Court²⁰. The state appeal against the decision and I was advised to leave the country by my lawyers. Luckily for me, I was already offered scholarship by the Norwegian government to pursue this degree.

From my arrest, my experience in the hands of the security forces and the court case has undoubtedly increased my dislike for the regime, but at the same time has shown a reason why I migrated. My story is very similar to many other diaspora activists that have been sent into exile. In my safe space in Norway, like the journalists that have been forced into exile, I resumed blogging about the regime, writing and at the same time using social media to connect with my fellow activists back home as well as continue to engage with the diaspora most of whom I knew

¹⁸ <https://advox.globalvoices.org/2014/11/13/update-gambian-blogger-released-as-outrage-escalates/>

¹⁹ <http://gainako.com/youth-activist-sait-matty-jaw-others-charged-and-remanded-in-mile-ii-prison/>

²⁰ <http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/state-to-appeal-against-sait-matty-jaw-acquittal>

from Balafong²¹ Where I used to be part of the administrative team of the Facebook group. With my writings and my constant engagement on Facebook, I was soon seen as a member of the diaspora activists. As one activist joking told me when asked how can one be part of the Struggle. She replied "just say negative things about Jammeh on the radio or your Facebook wall and you are in" However, the difference between many of the activists and me is the fact that I served as a bridge between the local and diaspora activist. Although sometimes I believe that I am not part of the diaspora activists, my engagement since I got to Norway has proven otherwise. I have been part of major events, and I have appeared on diaspora TV and many Radio stations talking about the regime. I was in the task force of the first female presidential candidate of Gambia-Dr. Touray²². In April 2016, following Solo's death, with friends, we started a Global Movement for Justice and Democracy in Gambia with the motto "#JammehMustGo." This slogan was later adopted as the final demand of the diaspora and the political opposition in the country. We released statements and attempted to organize a mass youth uprising like the Arab Spring. This failed. Nonetheless, we continue our engagement. My activities have shown that I was very much engaged in the struggle for regime change. I was in every major debate, my blog articles²³ were republished by many diaspora media houses. Sometimes, with an article, I have close to 20000 reads. What this shows is that I was an active voice in the struggle even though I did not associate with any particular traditional Gambian diaspora group or CSO.

Although I have effectively participated in the process of regime change, I have been very critical to the data gathered even though I am using the voice of the diaspora to untangle their role in driving regime change in Gambia. I think been critical to the literature has enabled me to reduce possible biases even though I do not see myself as part of the activists.

3.2.3 Unit of Analysis (The Struggle as a community)

²¹ Balafong is a Facebook group created by two young Gambians to connect Gambians both at home and in the diaspora to engage in literary and social discussion. Membership of the group was about 10000. While social issues were discussed, Gambian politics was not banned. This created a lot of tension between the diaspora activist and the Gambians. The diaspora activist later created their Facebook groups as shown above.

²² <http://gainako.com/dr-isatou-touray-independent-candidate-president-republic-gambia/>

²³ <https://dcampaigner.wordpress.com/>

In this study, I selected and grouped politically active Gambian diaspora (the struggle) as the unit of analysis. While the Struggle's story will be discussed and presented in the empirical section, the focus here is the logic behind the selection. The Struggle encompasses diverse identities, and through this, it is what it is. It is an informal network comprising of various actors from individuals to organizations, online media platforms loosely managed and governed but share a common agenda of regime change in Gambia. The selection was based on the premise that the politically active Gambian diaspora be separated from the wider diaspora community as not every Gambian in the diaspora is engaged in the politics of regime change back home. Secondly, the participants have over the years been able to identify themselves as members of the struggle and could identify those that are not, and as such, they are visible and commonly acknowledged by both members and non-members alike. Finally, the "Struggle" as an informal network would help us to understand how all these different nodes (individuals, organizations and online media platforms) have worked towards a common agenda of regime change in the homeland.

3.2.4 Data Generation

The case study in the Struggle as a network of organizations has been conducted mainly through interviews. Interviews have been a convenient tool used to understand individual motivation and activities of social movement networks (Blee, 2002). She identified four types of semi-structured interviews used in social movement studies: *Oral history interviewing*, *Life cycle interviewing*, *Key-informant interviewing* and *Focus group discussion*. Due to foreseeable time constraint, relevance as well as resources, this study makes use of key informant interviewing. Such is used to understand the past periods of the Gambian struggle as interviewing respondents will produce a substantial historical description of the events of the past from the perspective of the actors engaged at the time. The Key informant strategy also helped me to gain insider access as it allowed me to position myself within the group as well as build relationship with the participants. Well-placed respondents in the Struggle were interviewed so as to understand the mobilization process and the numerous strategies been used, but most importantly to gauge power dynamics within the movement. This technique was very useful as I gained insight into the various activities of the activists, their motivation, and perspective on the research subject.

The face to face interviews for this study took place in the UK, Norway and the Gambia between October 2016 and March 2017. The interviews in the UK consist of three semi-structured interviews with prominent figures of Gambian diaspora activists from the CSOs based in London and a party surrogate. In Norway, I conducted two semi-structured interviews with a leading member of the diaspora feminist group that supported the first female presidential candidate and a prominent activist that have been in the struggle for 22 years. The activist was targeted for historical context. For the activist in the US, four email interviews were conducted targeting members of CSOs based in the US. The email was used because I was denied entry visa into the US. The email interviews were followed up by Facebook Messenger chats to ask further questions or clarification on some issues or issues. One additional interview was conducted with the founder of Gambia-L. Although am not sure about his current location, he was interviewed for context on the Gambia L. In total nine (10) interviews were conducted targeting prominent individuals and head of political organization and media houses covering a broad range of possible sources in the diaspora political activism from organizing protest movements, to lobbying host countries, disseminating information and fundraising. In a nutshell, the multiple identities of the diaspora activists have been explored through a series of interviews and opinions. Additionally, four (4) interviews were conducted in The Gambia mostly targeting opposition politicians that had worked with the diaspora during the election. Among them is the current minority leader of parliament. The second politician I interviewed is the leader of PPP and now Minister of Agriculture. The third person I interviewed in Gambia is a member of the Diaspora Consultative Committee who was in Gambia at the time helping in the transition. The final interviewee was a female activist that returned home. Some other targeted individuals could not be interviewed due to a busy schedule.

All face to face interviews lasted between 30-40 minutes. Most of the face to face interviews took place in the relaxing homes of the respondents. The interview format used was semi-structured, recorded and transcribed. Most of the face to face activists were very informal, perhaps due to the relationship we have built over the years as well as the fact that they were at home and comfortable. Nonetheless, in some cases, they were very formal mainly answering questions that have to do with their organization or the controversies that emanated from some of their strategies. Despite, this made it possible for more questions and new topics to emerge

beyond the researcher's anticipation. The researcher beforehand prepared a list of few items, thus the discussions were open and new themes and names to watch out for online sprung up. Notes were taken following every interview, specifically to construct a sense of people and places ethnographically. Likewise, the same notes provided a necessary context and also the observed motivation of the respondents as they react to the individual question.

In addition to the interviews, documents provided by some of the activists were used to study their engagement and interaction with others. The documents shared include email correspondence, press releases that were published in the early days of the struggle and not found online. I was also privy to some meeting minutes and also financial transactions and funds raised by the organizations as well as recent email correspondence. According to Yin, "documentary information can take many forms and should be the object of explicit data collection plans"(Yin, 2009). Hence, this study while observing the possible weaknesses (such as potential biasedness) and inaccuracies of such a method use all types of documentation from the organizations as well as through third parties. Documentation in this study is used mainly to verify names of people, society and also to substantiate the evidence gathered from interviews.

Furthermore, a kind of participant observation, although very short and restricted was part of the methods employed, at the same time as I was in Gambia in March 2017. In Gambia, I happened to attend a meeting that was organized by the new president as there was an influx of diaspora activists and non-activists all of whom wanted to meet the new president. For convenience, a town hall meeting was organized. I went to the meeting to observe the offline interaction between the diaspora and the political elites. In the meeting I noticed the diversity of the Gambian diaspora as both political activists and non-activist were present from as far as Saudi Arabia some of whom wanted to discuss business opportunities with the new government. In the meeting, I also notice the disunity or apparent disagreement within the community. The moderator while acknowledging the presence of many of the diaspora groups forgot to mention one. In reaction, the group that was sitting in the left corner of the room, decided to walk out of the meeting in protest. They were later coaxed by the foreign minister and the head of UDP to join the meeting. I then realized that the group was comprised of UDP diaspora surrogates. The moderator apologized and acknowledged their presence before the president stepped in.

3.2.5 Challenges

The challenges in conducting interviews were many. However, it should be noted that the interviews conducted here are elite interviews as such it comes with challenges of time and cancellation as well as the researcher been perceived as an opponent. While interviews in UK and Norway went well, the greatest challenge I encountered was in Gambia.

In Gambia, I have made several calls and had several appointments canceled, and others turn down interviews due to a busy schedule. Some of the politicians I have to sit and wait for few hours along with other visitors. For instance, at one of the opposition politicians home, I waited for more than two hours to get a 25 minutes interview due to the number of people waiting.

I have also encountered cancellations from other politicians after several instances of postponement. One of the politicians who was the spokesperson for the Coalition 2016, who I had contact before and we have become acquaintances through my previous school project in Gambia.

Interviewing people in Gambia is about who you know. Going through official channels makes it difficult. I made an attempt to talk to the APRC political elites remaining in the country. I went to the political bureau met the spokesperson and former Minister of Information during the political impasse who requested that I write to the party for an interview. This bureaucratic bottleneck was also experienced with Mama Kandeh. On both cases, I wrote. While I was able to follow with Kandeh intensively, I could not meet with APRC due to my past activism against their party. Hence, I decided to approach them individually, but that also failed. From my initial discussion with one of them I knew my request would not be granted. I attempted to talk to a friend and former minister of information, who was the minister during the election and the arrest of Solo and received a lot of criticism from the diaspora. After promising to grant the interview, he could not be reached after several calls almost every day. He refused to conduct the interview without telling me. Similarly, I went to see the Mayor of Kanifing and APRC chief political mobilizer. His secretary said that he was out of the country. Interestingly, I saw him that evening on the late night news at his party's nomination for the parliamentary election. The difficulty stemming from accessing APRC has to a large extent to do with my earlier stance and

my writings against the regime. I was seen as an enemy and still conceived by many as the enemy.

I have discussed the case study as one constitutive part of the research design; I will now explain the other part of the strategy (netnography) which was also used.

3.3 Netnography as the second phase of the research

Studying the activities of Gambian diaspora activists who are distributed across space and time needs to be defined differently. The Struggle apart from been diffused has been a community generated network of actors in multiple sites. Below, I outline the adaptation of netnography and how it has been engaged in studying a different aspect of the diaspora activist.

In other to apprehend netnography, I briefly discuss ethnography, which has its unusual approach and principles. The method has been linked with a detailed, in-depth, longitudinal description of people, cultures, customs and habits. Ethnographers immersed themselves within their study environment in a unique way. The method which has gained popularity in cultural studies, sociology, anthropology and other social research is an "inherently open-ended practice based upon participation and observation in particular cultural areas as well as acknowledgment and research reflexivity"(Kozinets, 2002, P. 3). "comparison, contextualization of a life world, and exposition of the relationship" (y Blasco and Wardle, 2007, P. 5) are the key critical lenses in the field. While noting that ethnography is grounded on knowledge of local, and commonly used to generalize, Kozinets posited that it is most often used to gain deeper understanding based on grounded knowledge (Kozinets, 2002). The 'attendance' and 'co-presence' characterized by the researcher's engagement with the locality informed ethnographic practice (Wittel, 2000). Kozinets (2000) observed that with its rich qualitative content, finding and open-mindedness made ethnography adaptable to different circumstances and had made it accessible over the years. Ethnographers are associated with being "constantly reflecting upon observation, experiences, and interaction in a confessional way, which allows the realization of how things come to be"(Baka, 2012, P. 84). As noted in the section about the position of the researcher in this thesis, it is important to underscore that the researcher has immersed himself as part of the flow of events and not an outsider to the phenomenon understudied. Being a Gambian and also

an active participant in the democratization of Gambia, I have gone through a process similar to that of the activists studied here. Nonetheless, what matters here is the degree of my involvement, which I have clear stated above. I now discuss the concept of netnography and how the study adopts it.

3.3.1 Defining Netnography

The idea of the locality has traditionally informed ethnographic research. However, the process of globalization and the emergence of technology, the internet, in particular, have significantly challenged the traditional method. Escobar observed that "the point of departure of this inquiry is the belief that any technology represents a cultural intervention, in the sense that technologies bring forth the world they emerge out of particular cultural conditions and in turn help to create new social and cultural situations" (Escobar et al., 1994, P 58).

Since the emergence of ethnography conducted on the web, many concepts and notions have been developed to describe such activities. Terms such as "virtual ethnography" (Hine, 2008), which is the study of online civilizations, interactions and discourses have emerged. Robert Kozinets who coined the term "netnography" simplifies it by defining it as "the internet or technologically networked, ethnography. Netnography is ethnography adapted to the complexities of our contemporary, technological mediated social world" (Kozinets, 2010b). Unlike ethnography, netnography is participant observational method base online field work. He describes it as "a new qualitative research methodology that adapts ethnographic research techniques to study the cultures and communities that are emerging through CMCs" (Kozinets, 2002). Visibly open discussions on groups are used as evidence to understand online groups. He elucidates in his book in 2010 that "netnography contributes by adding valuable interpretive insight, by building through careful focus and analysis, what is available publicly on the internet into a known and respected body of codified knowledge" (Kozinets, 2010a, p. 113).

In differentiating netnography from other research methods such as focus groups, surveys, etc., Kozinets observed that netnography is focused on cultural insights and pays very close attention to context. Culturally, it looks at online communications not just as little content but as social interactions, and concerning context it looks at the forum elements, the communicator

characteristics, the language, history, the meaning and the type of communication (Kozinets, 2010b). In distinguishing between studying online communities and communities online, Kozinets observed a methodological implication. While in the former case, netnography can be applied independently, in the latter case, it must be complemented by other techniques to enable the research to get a deeper understanding of various dimensions of the issue past the online. On this basis, the thesis adopted netnography to study an aspect of diaspora engagement while paying attention to the various activities and other interests involved.

3.3.2 The Researcher in the Netnographic Setting

Having studied the diaspora activists through the head of CSOs in the case study section, in this part, I discuss the strategy through which I accessed the broader diaspora community. The use of netnography in this study has followed (Kozinets, 2010b) method of data gathering. It should be noted that the netnography employed here similar to the case study research is presented as an abstract from the phenomenon of diaspora political activism.

The rationale for selecting this data gathering technique stems from the fact that I am an "active"¹ participant in the struggle for regime change. Being a member of such group, while studying it at the same time provides both opportunities to reach prominent individuals but might also challenge the validity and reliability of the study. Nonetheless, "being a participant can facilitate access to movement and promote the trust and rapport necessary for collecting sound data"(Blee, 2002, p. 97).

In describing my role as the researcher, I have indicated my involvement in the political struggle to remove Jammeh. While that has to do with more of a personal thing, engaging in netnography followed three distinct ways: direct participation in online forums with the diaspora activists mostly on Facebook and Twitter, Monitoring online diaspora new sites and listening to diaspora radios, and finally digging archive files of the Gambia-L and other mediums that have been used by the diaspora as mobilization tool. The Facebook and Twitter engagement were absorbing as I immersed myself within the discussion and engaged in a direct manner. As a participant, I am part of numerous forums, groups, and pages. The study followed certain prominent individuals in the diaspora as well as Facebook pages and groups where these people engage in making meaning of the discussion. The people followed are part of the 5000 friends I have on Facebook

most of whom are activists. In a case where I wanted to meet new activists, I sent a friend request to the individual. For the radios and new sites, I listen and read mostly about opinions and also press releases from diaspora organizations as well as news from Gambia and Jammeh in particular.

I found this method very similar to the case study which involved actual physical fieldwork of interviewing and control participant observation. Here, while being a participant, I observed the interaction among the activist as well as the activist and non-members of the community to get an idea of the private dealings within the diaspora network as well as their relationship with the others. In some instances, I send messages to a certain participant to further engage the person.

3.4 Data Analysis

As has been shown above, the data used for this study comprises of two distinct research methods: case study and netnography. The corpus of data comprising of interviews from different CSOs, media personality, politicians, documents publicly available online as well as those provided by the activists, archival digging, Facebook forums, diaspora media house and in general internet materials I found relevant for this study. The data gathered from the two distinct strategies was triangulated so as to answer the question of the research and also to address the issues of validity in the research.

The analysis process took place after each stage of the interviews. The data from interviews were transcribed. Based on the objective of the study, data from the semi-structured interviews and netnography was coded descriptively in the sense that topics such as movement goals and strategies, name of individuals or organizations, chronologist of events, etc. Linking such coded data from the interview made it easy to trace the history of diaspora engagement, activist networks and agencies, and chronologist of events (ibid). Hence coding was done manually. The analysis of data is contingent on the fact that this project is about social networks and they "consist of a myriad of exchanges (of mobilization resources, information activist, etc.)"(Diani, 2002, p.189).

3.5 Ethical Consideration

Despite the fact that I have both personal and professional relationship with the respondents, the research vehemently adhered to ethical considerations in social science research. Ethical issues observed include but not limited to confidentiality, consent of those interviewed, anonymity, personal integrity and most necessary consent from the respondents. Consent to use any recording device was seek from respondents before any interview conducted.

Chapter 4: Background- The Gambian Diaspora

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present a brief political timeline of Gambia's political development, paying particular attention to the period between 1994 and 2016 (Jammeh's rule). I then discuss Gambia's migratory history and how the 1994 military coup led to the emergence of diaspora civil society organizations who mobilize against the regime. Finally, I highlight some characteristics of the Gambian diaspora as a whole paying more attention to the anti-Jammeh diaspora. I believe this into perspective will give us a clear understanding of how Gambian diaspora engages with the homeland and other actors promoting democracy. It also provides the empirical basis for a diaspora that has been understudied.

4.1 Gambia under Jammeh: Democracy or Autocracy or both?

The Gambia surrounded on three sides by Senegal (North, South, and East) and the Atlantic Ocean on the West was the last British colony to gain independence in 1965. For more than three decades after independence, while the rest of Africa was characterized by one party rule and authoritarian rule, the Gambia maintained the longest surviving multiparty democracy alongside Botswana and Mauritius (Saine, 2009, Edie, 2000). Apart from an abortive coup in 1981 that threatened the government of Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, Gambia enjoyed relative peace. Although multiparty party politics, relatively free media and guaranteed human rights existed, the Gambia never experiences an electoral turnover under Jawara and his People Progressive Party (PPP) that came to power in 1962. Jawara and the PPP won every election making Gambia's electoral system a one party dominant. The presence of few disjointed opposition parties to a large extent only exist to legitimize Jawara, and they were frequently co-opted or delimited by the PPP (Edie, 2000) who dominated parliament. While democracy promoters praised Jawara and his PPP government for respecting human rights, multiparty competition, etc, few weak civil societies existed, and PPP's control of the state media made it difficult to criticize the government. This is not to say that there were no independent newspapers that wrote

critically against the PPP government²⁴. However, the challenge was that these papers had a little flow around the urban areas due to lack of resources and low literacy rate in the country at the time. A closer look at Jawara's 30 years rule characterized by economic degradation, and the PPP dominants of the political scene, one can observe that the "conditions required for the entrenchment of democracy were missing"(Eddie, 2000).

In 1994, a bloodless coup led by Yahya Jammeh and four other officers of the Gambia National Army toppled Jawara and his PPP government. According to Arnold Hughes, the coup "brought to an end one of the most open political systems in Sub-Saharan Africa"(Hughes, 2000, p.35) Jammeh's justification of the coup as "an anti-corruption effort aimed at a stagnant elite"(Hultin et al., 2017) received extensive support from young marginalized people and other sectors of society who felt that Jawara overstayed his welcome.

Promising never to introduce dictatorship in the Gambia and "been soldiers with a difference," Jammeh and his Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC) government, within two years of the transition, built more schools, roads, hospitals across the country than Jawara did in 30 years. These infrastructural developments were calculated as he presented himself as a civilian candidate in the 1996 elections. Hughes argues that "the paradox of the military's affirmation of democratic values was that it replaced a functioning democracy ... with a short period of military rule and a managed presidential and parliamentary election,"(Hughes, 2000, p. 36).

After winning the elections, as Hultin et al observed, "Jammeh quickly developed a persona as a classic African 'Strongman' with a paternalistic, patriarchal and devoutly Islamic identity; democratic trappings aside, his record was that of a bullying autocrat a brutal demagogue, and he embraced the title dictator"(Hultin et al., 2017, p. 2). Equally, Saine (2009) observed that between 1997 and 2000, Gambia witnessed an "overt consolidation of a police state" and since the 2001 presidential election which was precipitated by an attempted coups in 2000 and the gunning down of fourteen student protesters in the same year marked the beginning of the

²⁴ Foroyaa Newspaper was established by PDOIS in 1986 as their propaganda mouthpiece. It was seen as the alternative voice to the PPP control state media. The paper is still in circulation and performed the same role under Jammeh.

consolidation of dictatorship in Gambia. Over the year's Jammeh was named among "the world's most eccentric and ruthless leaders"²⁵. This very assessment of Jammeh characterized Gambian politics in the next two decades as Jammeh determines to maintain political power; he traverses between dictatorship and democracy. As Norberto Bobbio observed democracies and dictatorship could be concurrently negating and dialectical (Bobbio, 1989). There is ample evidence that suggests some semblance of democracy existed under Jammeh along with autocracy. The existence of political parties, the conduct of periodic multiparty competition (both presidential and parliamentary) suggests so.

Since 1994, the Gambia witnessed a series of presidential and legislative elections as well as local government elections monitored by both domestic and international observers. Jammeh was re-elected in 2001 (52.84%), 2006 (67.3) and 2011 (71.5%) presidential elections, "but there was little fairness or freedom in the prelude to and conduct of elections"(Hultin et al., 2017, p.1). Voter intimidation by security forces, closure of media houses critical to government, murder and forceful disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture, etc. characterized Gambia's political scene under Jammeh. According to Human Rights Watch, such state-sponsored "repression and abuses created a climate of fear within Gambia"²⁶.

In the wake of these deeply rooted human rights violations and Jammeh's intensive crackdown on dissent, which resulted in an unprecedented level of corruption defied all the promises he made in 1994. Over the years, except for four years²⁷ Freedom House ranked Gambia as Not Free since 1998. In 2014, 2015 and 2016 Reporters without Borders ranked Gambia 155th, 151 and 145th out of 180 countries on press freedom respectively. Since 1996, journalists have been constantly under attack. In 2004, the Managing Editor of The Point Newspaper, Deida Hydera was gunned down by unknown assailants. The Independent Newspaper also experienced an arson attack in 2008. Many radio stations and newspapers²⁸ that have been perceived to be

²⁵ See the BBC Profile of Jammeh <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24383225>

²⁶ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/gambia>

²⁷ the period 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2010, Freedom House rated Gambia as Partly Free

²⁸ The Standard Newspaper has been shut down twice by the government. Daily News also was banned from publishing. Today newspaper also experienced closure and the managing editor arrested on trumped up charges. Taranga FM local radio stations that translate the local news into the local languages was also shut down and different intervals, the manager, arrested and accused of sedition.

critical of the government were closed up at various periods. Many journalists and politicians have over the years been arrested, charged, tortured jailed, forcefully disappeared or forced into exile. Equally, Transparency International ranked it 145th of 176 countries in 2016 Corruption Perception Index. These rankings "reveals the ambiguous nature of democratization" under Jammeh as "he leads and perpetuates a neo-patrimonial leadership which they so despised under the deposed head of state"(Hughes, 2000, p.35)

The last decade of Jammeh's rule (2006-2016) shows an unprecedented level of human rights violations as well as exposing Jammeh's eccentricity. In 2007, he claimed he could cure AIDS, and in 2008 he started his anti-LGBTI campaign calling them "vermin" and vowing to "slight their throats." In 2011, he promised to rule the Gambia for a billion years if Allah wills it. In 2013, he ended a 27-year moratorium on the death penalty by executing nine dead row inmates without following due process. In the same year, he withdrew Gambia from the Commonwealth accusing the body "neo-colonialism." He also retired the Gambia from the International Criminal Court in 2015. All these events were signs of Jammeh's growing global isolation.

The Gambia's economy under Jammeh also suffered forcing thousands of young Gambians to travel to Europe through the Sahara Desert illegally. Between 2013 and 2014, Gambian asylum application in Europe rose by 198% (Embirico, 2016). In 2015, UNHCR reported that Gambians made up 5% of the 153, 850 arrivals by sea to Italy and about 10% of Italy's asylum applications. In 2016, about 12000 Gambians arrived in Italy making Gambia the 5th largest sending country²⁹. Embirico observed that "the interlinking of a dire economic situation and a culture of fear within the country are key pushed factors"(Embirico, 2016)

With all these human rights violations and the economic challenges that confronted Gambia in the last decade of Jammeh's rule summed up the reasons why he lost the December 2016 to the newcomer Adama Barrow. Undoubtedly, Jammeh's lost came as a surprise or what Darboe and Kora term as "electoral earthquake"(Kora and Darboe, 2017). Jammeh losing the election also has to do with the opposition finally agreeing to form a coalition after 15 years of disagreement

²⁹ See <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/53994>

One group that was very vital in both the opposition uniting and the subsequent defeat of Jammeh was the Gambian diaspora. The diaspora has sustained 22 years anti-regime protest. As it is the intention of this thesis to explore what role the Gambian diaspora play in driving regime change, I now turn to understanding the Gambia diaspora starting with the migration history with a primary focus on the West.

4.2 Gambian Migration to the West³⁰

The Gambia despite its tiny size is a notable contributor in international migration. From serving as a transit point during the Transatlantic Slave Trade to recently been named as a "significant contributor"³¹ to illegal migrants has put Gambia on the world stage. This section of the chapter briefly introduces early migration patterns from the Gambia and how it evolved to where the West became the destination of choice for Many Gambians. It highlights numerous factors that led to the shift, e.g., pushed and pull factors.

It is important to note that migration data from Gambia is unreliable in part due to the lack of data as well as the different clandestine means such as arriving by foot, boat or overstaying their visa. Nonetheless, we can identify some larger trends before and after independence in 1965 triggered by the weak economy, schooling, and political prosecution.

The first wave of large-scale migration from Gambia came in the 1950s when Sierra Leone government opened up diamond-mining activities to small-scale operators (Bellagamba, 2016) Alice Bellagamba observed that when this news reached the Gambia “thousands of rural Gambian youths sought their fortune in the diamond fields of Sierra Leone” thus, “marking the beginning of international diaspora” (Bellagamba, 2016, P.281). Poverty and economic hardship coupled with shared responsibility were one factor that pushed much rural youth from their villages.

Many young people equally detested the physical labor demands such as road repair after the rains, imposed by the chiefs and the colonial authorities. This was made possible by the system

³⁰ The West refers to Europe and US. It is used to group diaspora's in advanced democracies and at the same separate them from Gambians living in other parts of Africa or Asia.

³¹ http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/world/2015/06/14/tiny-gambia-has-a-big-export-migrants-desperate-to-reach-europe/?utm_term=.cb4a7665ac29

of rule the British adopted-The indirect rule system or what Mamdani term as *decentralized despotism or the bifurcated state*. The British divided the Gambia into colony and protectorate. The colony was directly administered by the British using civil laws while the protectorate was administered through Native Authorities appointed by the colonial administration using customary law (Mamdani, 1996a). The fact that most rural youths did not go to school nor had any chance of joining the civil service like most of their counterparts in the colony, traveling out of the Gambia into the diamond mines of Sierra Leon and then later DR Congo was the desired option. It is important to note that, the Serahules from the Upper River Region of Gambia were the first group of Gambians to engage in large-scale emigration out of Gambia. Over the years, prominent individuals from the group have returned home with the wealth amazed from the diamond fields of Sierra Leon and Congo and other diamond producing countries in Africa.

While most rural youths found other African countries, particular diamond producing countries as desired destination, urban youth with schooling opportunities saw the UK as the desired destination. In the decades leading to independence, many Gambians journeyed to the UK to study. A significant number of them including the first president of Gambia Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara and Pierre Sarr Njie returned home to lead the country to independence from Britain. There were also some Gambians that went to the UK immediately after independence to study and work (Kebbeh, 2013). U.K was leading destination country due to its historical ties with Gambia. Most of the people that traveled to the UK did through scholarships or came from prominent families in the colony (Darboe, 2017). Few from the protectorates which were believed to be sons of chiefs had the opportunity to further their schoolings in the UK. Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leon were also destination countries for few students on scholarship. In the post-independence, era awards were obtained by the PPP government to send young Gambians to many different countries such as New Zealand, Russia East, and Western Germany as well as the United States. These scholarships were handed down as some patronage to mostly the political elites and their immediate family members or young radicals that posed a threat to Jawara and his young government. Unlike other post independent countries were these youth could have been arrested. Instead, Jawara appeased them with scholarship and later co-opt them into the civil service if they return home. Most of the students sent on scholarship returned home

to occupy positions in the public service as part of the "Gambianization"³² process. However, a high number remained in Europe and other parts of the world until today.

The dire economic situation in the post-independence era was a great source of the outflow of Gambians into Western countries, in particular by those that had no connection with the government and could not obtain scholarships. Agriculture which served as the backbone of the country's economy and the highest employer was profoundly affected by prolonged drought in the 70s and 80s that affected many countries in the region. It was also affected by land resource scarcity- exacerbated by population growth (Kebbeh, 2013). These challenges were compounded by the lack of natural resources (oil and other minerals) that could have been used to offset development agendas. Hence, such economic challenge serves as the cornerstone of Jawara's foreign policy and at the same his survival mechanism. As Saine observes, Jawara's pro-western stance was targeted at "attracting external economic resources" (Saine, 2000) it also created opportunities for Gambians to travel to western countries.

At the end of the 1960s chartered tourism was introduced in Gambia as a foreign exchange earner for the government attracting mainly Scandinavian tourists. "Growing unemployment was one of the main reasons to set up a tourist industry, when the opportunity offered"(Wagner, 1982, p 24). While chartered tourism brought in many Scandinavian tourists, it also accounted for a counter flow of Gambians to Scandinavia particularly in Sweden (Wagner and Yamba, 1986). Wagner and Yamba posited that the number of Gambians in Sweden increased by some five to six hundred compared to a dozen or so in 1966/67 and out of which two thirds had acquired residence/work permit (Wagner and Yamba, 1986). A quite number of Gambians were also believed to travel to Norway and Denmark as well.

Further economic deterioration coupled with the 1981 failed coup attempt saw a lot of young Gambians migrate to Scandinavia seeking for political asylum. For instance, a significant

³²" The idea of such an agenda was to "erode racially accumulated privilege in erstwhile colonies" Deracialization in The Gambia was known as "Gambianization." It mostly affected the civil service. See Mamdani 1996 for more details.

number of the Movement for Justice in Africa-Gambia (MOJA-G), a Marxist clandestine group opposed to Jawara and accused of masterminding the failed 1981 coup led by Kukoi Samba Sanyang were given political asylum in Scandinavia. Other Gambians who were not part of the group also used the opportunity to seek asylum. The period also saw a high number of high school graduates traveling to Scandinavia primarily due to free education offered and the ease of going to Scandinavia. Before the military coup in 1994, Gambians that had the finances and got accepted into folkehøgskole mostly in Norway went to Norway to study.

Over the years, new destinations emerged. In the 1970s, US also become a destination country. The first group of Gambians traveled to Chicago "for higher education opportunities not available at home"(Steffes, 2005). Currently, Spain has the largest number of Gambians residence as of 2013 with about 22000 Gambians living their most of whom came from the Upper River Region. The US, UK, and Germany also accumulated a significant number of Gambians in recent years most of whom traveled to study and work. The high pay rate in the US and other countries have over the years attracted skilled Gambians into their workforce. Most of them are nurses and doctors. The majority of Gambians that first traveled to the US were students. Later they settled, started families and had some of their relatives to join them. This was also the case in many countries where Gambians with permanent residence could bring their kids, wives and other family members to join them in the west.

The 1994 military coup by Yahya Jammeh also saw a significant number of Gambians seeking refuge in Europe and US. The high volume of asylum seekers after the coup as observed by Kebbeh

"prompted the United Kingdom and other European Countries to require Gambians to obtain a visa before traveling. However, despite the tightening of immigration policies and enforcement, scores of young Gambian men continue to migrate to Europe legally and illegally in search of better opportunities"(Kebbeh, 2013)

In the last two decades, the human rights violations and political prosecution against his opponent along lack of economic opportunities forced many Gambians to travel to out of the

country. Kebbeh (2013) noted that "The Gambian government inability to restore financial stability including rectifying high unemployment especially among youth –has resulted in increased emigration among all segments of the population." By 2012, the number of Gambians living abroad was estimated at 70,000 (Chant, 2015). This figure though small compared to many other sub-Saharan African countries, the Gambia's net migrant rate is the tenth highest in Africa (Kebbeh, 2013).

Gambians over the years have used various means to reach the west both illegally and legally. The legal means deals with applying for a visa and getting accepted by a country of destination. Most of the people that traveled under such conditions were mostly students and other family members that traveled to join relatives as well as professionals with a work visa. The illegal means commonly known as "the Backway" has become very popular over the years. In the late 70s and early 80s, a number of Gambians and other West African nationals traveled to Morocco and then crossed to Spain³³. Most recently, the "backway" involved undocumented migrants using boats from fishing villages in Gambia for the Canary Islands, the first point of entry to Europe. As (Gaibazzi, 2010, p. 9) observed: "thousands of unemployed and disenfranchised young men with no chance of obtaining a valid visa risked their lives to secure a better future for their families and for themselves." Since 2012 the route shifted from the boats, and now to Libya³⁴ where thousands of Gambians have crossed from to Italy. While a great number remains in Italy, a lot have traveled to other European countries such as Germany increasing the number of Gambians in Europe.

Gambians emigrated to the west for different reasons in the past five decades. These various reasons show that the Gambia diaspora is made up of a multifaceted set of individuals such as political refugees, economic migrants, and students. In order to reflect on conditions of diaspora formation established in theory such as dispersion, homeland orientation, and boundary maintenance, I now turn to the formation of the Gambian diaspora and its primary characteristic with a special focus on migrants in the West, particularly in US, UK, and Scandinavia. I argue

³³ My grandfather went to Europe using this route in the late 70s. He passed to Spain and worked as a farmer before becoming a seaman.

³⁴ The Fall of Gaddafi has made Libya a transit point where thousands of individuals travel to cross the Mediterranean to Italy and from there to many other European countries.

that the process of diaspora formation in the west were on two fold. The first was based on the need to create welfare organization so as to provide support for the membership in western countries. Some of these welfare organizations have been set up by people that came from the same village or community in the Gambia. The second which is the primary interest of this thesis has to do with creating the political diaspora which emerged from an email listserv call Gambia L. The 1994 military coup, which saw an increased number of political persecuted activists and journalist, as well as the emergence of the internet, created an opportunity for Gambians to organize politically.

4.3 The Gambian Diaspora: Formation and Characteristics

Kim Knott and Sean McLoughlin observed that diaspora “as a global phenomenon with far-reaching histories and multi-located populations, some of which are still in transit, diaspora are impossible to enumerate reliably”(Knott and McLoughlin, 2010, p.5). By highlighting the migration trends in the years before independence in 1965 and post-independence, I have shown by default how the Gambian population in other countries served as a transnational community expressing signs of dispersion. The fact that a good number of Gambians left Gambia and settled in other nations, while at the same time maintaining boundaries with the homeland through cultural, economic and political activities provide an opening to understand their operations and relations with the motherland. As shown above, a significant number of Gambian migrants in the west are economic migrants who have left the homeland in search of a "greener pasture" or better opportunities for themselves and their families back home.

Nicholas Van Hear while observing that dispersal across many countries is the common ground of diaspora posited that Diasporas formed in two ways: Voluntary migration or by crises of conflict or by both (Hear, 2014). This cumulative process one can argue led to the formation of the Gambian diaspora. While a majority of Gambian migrants are economic, handfuls are political refugees persecuted after the failed coup of 1981 and the successful coup of 1994. The scale of the crises in 1981 was limited compared to that of the Sub-Saharan African countries that experienced full-blown civil war. Most of the individuals were political activist opposed to

the Jawara regime and that of Jammeh. These people, as will be shown later, with their political organization skills started the political diaspora³⁵.

Comparatively, most diasporas pursue their national identities as “indication for homeland orientation”(Stokke, 2016) either when their countries are at war, occupied by other states as seen in the case of the Syrian diaspora after the 2011 uprising. (Stokke, 2016) observed that there was no "Syrian identity" among the Syrian expatriate community in the US and UK before the uprising. In some sub-Saharan African countries such as in Ethiopia and in Nigeria, certain members of the diaspora identified based on ethnic lines instead of the national. The case of the Oromo and the Biafra separatist is an obvious example. In the Gambian case, it was different. For instance, most of the Gambians that arrived in Norway in the early 70s knew each other from back home. Some of them lived on the same streets or even went to the same schools. Hence, the only reasonable thing for them to do was to form some welfare organization. Besides, as some of my informants in Norway informed me, most of the people that started the Gambian Association in Oslo were part of boys clubs and street vouts before traveling to Norway. Hence, starting such is more like a continuation of the brotherhood they established back home.

Secondly, Gambians were among the first groups of Africans to travel to Norway and other Scandinavian countries. The case of Sweden was pretty different from that of Norway. While most of the Gambians in Norway were either students or sailors, Sweden experienced a lot of what Wagner and Yamba call the "floating minorities." These people traveled to Sweden through a support of a Swedes who visited Gambia as a tourist. Pushed by poverty and the desire to stay in Sweden, the floating minority with their three months visa were bent on finding a Swedes partner to marry so as to obtain the needed work or residence permit. Most of the floating minorities were Gambians from rural communities that migrated to the urban centers and engaged in the tourism sector for survival. The experience of a new country, with its changing immigration policies, made it difficult for many young men.

4.3.1 The Welfare Organizations

³⁵ This group started the anti-Jammeh protest and also created the many diaspora Civil Society Organizations geared towards the restoration of democracy and human rights in Gambia.

The creation of welfare organizations first by Gambians in Scandinavia served as a departure point for Gambians in other countries. For instance, the Gambian association³⁶ in Stockholm which was born out of the need to support the floating minorities (Wagner and Yamba, 1986) and at the same time to make sure that they do not tarnish the image of the Gambian community and by extension the African immigrant communities. Wagner and Yamba argued that a “Gambian consciousness of sorts” was created out of the “regular fusion” of the floating Gambian minorities with the Eritreans who called them “uneducated” (Wagner and Yamba, 1986, p. 219). This trend was later seen in other parts of Scandinavia and Finland and much later in other areas of Europe and America. It is important to note that while the Gambian migrants in Scandinavia established organizations in the 1970s, Gambians in the US and the UK started much later. Perhaps, this is due to the policies of the host countries. While in Scandinavia³⁷ these organizations received support from the state (Wagner and Yamba, 1986), they were also able to adequately support their members and help them properly integrate into the host countries. Accordingly,

"with the grants they received from the state the Gambian association were able to afford proper premises, and they began to arrange a number of exciting activities for many young Gambians whose experience would otherwise have been limited to Afro and Local³⁸. Apart from ordinary social entertainment, they arranged cultural evenings of African drumming and dancing shows or invited visiting Gambians and Swede of some distinction to give lectures on a variety of topics. Fairly soon the activities of these associations were being attended by members of the host population of both sexes with a genuine interest in the African cultural element they provide" (Wagner and Yamba, 1986, p.219).

Secondly, it could be the fact that most Gambians in US and UK were students from wealthy families that returned home upon completion of their studies (Darboe, 2017). For instance, most of the first group of Gambians in Chicago, returned home to take up positions in politics and

³⁶ According to Wagner and Yamba the organization was formed in the early 1980s. However, an interview with a former president of Organization of Gambians in Stockholm claimed that the organization was established in 1975. However, he was quick to say that the organization was poor in keeping records.

³⁷ In Sweden, the association was registered with the authorities. Wagner and Yamba observed that the Gambian association at the time had joint Swedish-Gambian committees

³⁸ Afro and Local were Gambian night clubs where the floating minority group met Swedes ladies.

business upon completing (Steffes, 2005). However, the few well-educated and highly professional that remained began building a community (ibid).

Today there are hundreds of Gambian welfare associations of all sizes and focus in the West and other parts of the world. The table below lists some of the organizations, when they were formed, country and a brief description of what they do. It is important to note that most of the first organizations did not have a national coverage in the host countries, but were more like people living in towns that formed the groups. Gradually national associations were formed with representatives from the earlier smaller organizations. For instance, the formation of Gambian Riksförbundet (GRF) or Gambian National Association in Sweden in 2014 brought together the 45 registered associations out of which 44 is welfare and only one political. The Alliance of Gambian Associations in the America's is another example. Equally, some organizations have ethnic, regional and religious orientations. Examples of such groups are Niumikafo³⁹, Gambian Christian Association of Atlanta⁴⁰ etc.

Table 3: Showing some Diaspora welfare organizations

No	Name	Country	Year	Brief Description
1	Organization of Gambians in Stockholm	Sweden	1975	Although this organization was non-political, the founders were political refugees from Gambia. They traveled to Sweden following the failed 1981 coup. Their aim was to support Gambians in Sweden to integrate into Sweden by helping them to pursue formal education.
2.	The Gambians Association in Oslo	Norway	1972	Formed by the first group of students and sailors in Norway. Today the organization has about 1000 members of Gambians and Gambian descendants. They have carried out several projects including sponsoring students to get higher education degrees in Gambia.
3.	Gambian Association	Finish Finland		To bring Gambians living in Finland together and to assist Gambians at home with schooling etc.

³⁹ A non-profit, no partisan organization formed by men, women, youth and children from Niumi in Sweden. www.niumikafo.com

⁴⁰ Created by Gambian Christians in the US in 1993, the aim of the organization among other things is to be responsive to the needs of the Christian community in the US. www.gco-atlanta.org

4	Gambia Society	United	United Kingdom	1997	The organization which obtains charitable status in 2005 was created to help maintain awareness amongst Gambians and to create a better community relation.
5	The Atlanta Emergency Relief Fund	Gambia	United States		The idea is to create a relief fund to support members in terms distress.

Source: Access Gambia available online

What all these welfare organizations have in common are the membership dues their members pay and what such dues are used for. Most of the organizations with National characteristic are open to any Gambian, and they are non-partisan and not political. The idea was to bring the Gambian community abroad together and not to separate them with politics.

4.3.2 Political Organizations

Whereas the welfare organizations were created to support the welfare needs of Gambians, the political organization started emerging in the mid-1990s and early 2000s out of the need to restore democracy in Gambia. These groups were interested in regime change in Gambia. They are mostly made up of politically active diaspora comprising of exiled politicians, journalist and human rights defenders as well as disgruntle former government workers. The Political organization can be further divided into two groups: Civil Society and the Party surrogates. While the civil society is more encompassing of individuals with no particular party identification, they work in human rights promotion, and the restoration of democracy, the party surrogates are mostly interested in winning political points for their political parties at home. These party proxies also include the ruling party of Jammeh, APRC. They engage in fundraising to finance the parties at home at the same time confront other party surrogates to win visibility and political points. This thesis is particularly interested in the politically organize groups (CSOs) as to understand diaspora political activism. It is important to note that membership in these two different organizations was fluid. An individual can be a member of a Gambian society, belong to a political party and at the same time a member of a CSO.

Unlike the welfare organizations which are entirely based in a particular host country, the political organizations, particularly the CSOs are transnational with headquarters in a particular

country and with many branches across countries. The political party surrogates are more focused within the host country they exist in. As will be shown later in the empirical chapter, CSOs have organized common events and press releases. They have also formed umbrella organizations to properly championed their cause. The table below shows a list of CSOs.

4.4 The Gambian Diaspora and the Homeland

The Gambian diaspora has over the years been a critical partner in the socio-economic development of Gambia. However, the relationship between Gambian migrants and the home country have experienced continuities and ruptures over the years. While the continuities deal with the financial remittances the diaspora remit to the state, the disagreements were entirely political. The political disagreements although existed in the first republic, it was entirely based on prominent personalities or party financiers in the diaspora disagreeing with politicians at home. A good example is the case of Solo Darboe⁴¹. However, in the second republic, the disagreements were as a result of the human rights violations meted on Gambians by the regime. Hence, while scolding the government, the political activists form alliances with the political oppositions to drive regime change. The relationship between the diaspora and the regime of Jammeh can be divided into two: the economic and political relationship. While the financial was mainly directed at family members, friends, and relatives, it somehow lessens the dependence on the state for jobs due to the high amount of remittances sent home by the diaspora. Kebbeh observed that "incoming remittances as a share of GDP in the Gambia has been among the largest in Africa"(Kebbeh, 2013). Data from Worldbank shows the sharp rise of inflows between 1978 from \$0.35 million to \$186.23 million. The IMF estimated that in 2010 \$90.7 million was remitted to Gambia, representing 10.1% of the country's GDP. These estimates do not involve unauthorized transactions that were carried out by local money transfer agents that have culminated over the years. In 2011, the figure of remittances was "twice the size of FDI flows and almost equal to net official development assistance and official aid to Gambia"(Kebbeh, 2013). Kebbeh observed that while FDI has decreased, remittances have not. He noted that most of the money remitted to Gambia in 2012 originated from Spain (31%), United States (16%), United Kingdom (9%), Germany (8%) and Sweden (7%).

⁴¹ See BELLAGAMBA, A. 2016. Solo Darboe, Former Diamond Dealer. Transnational Connection and Home Politics in the Twentieth Century Gambia.

On the other hand, the political relationship between the Gambian diaspora, particularly the political diaspora has been that of contention with the state. As most of the political diaspora were sent into exile by the Jammeh regime, antagonizing the government became the hallmark of the relationship. As will be shown later in the empirical chapter, the Gambian diaspora activist with their online radios, online newspapers and the intense collaboration with transnational NGOS, the political diaspora exposed the human rights violation of the regime and was able to attract the attention of the government who devised several plans to response to diaspora tactics. While the relationship with the government was that of contention, the diaspora, on the other hand, found partnership in the disjointed Gambian political opposition on the ground.

4.5 Conclusion

The concern of this chapter has been to illustrate the emergence of the Gambian diaspora as well as the characteristics of the diaspora. It shows migration trends, the process of diaspora formation and the nature of the political diaspora. It should be noted that such illustration is important in mapping out the Gambian diaspora to understand their engagement in homeland politics empirically.

Chapter Five: Empirical Discussion: Diaspora Political Activism and Homeland Politics

5.0 Introduction

In this section, I discuss the empirical focus of the thesis, which is the analysis of the political engagement of the Gambian diaspora in Gambian politics. The chapter divided into four sections engages the literature on diaspora activism as a form of social movement. In the first section, I discuss the political mobilization of the Gambian diaspora focusing on formal political engagement and contentious politics using social movement theory. I observed that the literature on diaspora political mobilization maintains that diaspora mobilization can take varied forms ranging from negative to positive outcomes (Vertovec, 2005, Keck and Sikkink, 1998). For instance, the diaspora mobilized to fund political parties, support protest movements, engage in online activism, lobby host countries and IGOs to take action against the homeland, participate in post-conflict reconciliation process or support conflicts.

To ease the analysis, I use *political opportunities, mobilizing structure and framing* as advanced by (Sökefeld, 2006) to show how Gambian diaspora work. According to Keck and Sikkink, diaspora activists use same ways like other groups to seek influence. I observed that since the 1994 military coup with the proliferation of the internet Gambians in the diaspora has engaged with homeland politics. In the first section, I discuss the political mobilization of the diaspora. I began with the Gambia-L group where the mobilization started. The next section focuses on the symbolic politics of the diaspora. Here, I look at key events in Gambian politics and how they have been used by the diaspora to frame their engagement. The Leverage politics, discusses the relationship between the diaspora and the opposition politicians, with greater emphasis on the diaspora's quest to have a united opposition.

5.1 The Development of Anti-Jammeh Mobilization in the Gambian diaspora

The importance of diaspora engagement in homeland politics has been captured by the diaspora literature (Vertovec, 2005, Adamson, 2016, Lyons and Mandaville, 2013, Koinova, 2009,

Koinova, 2012) According to (Vertovec, 2005) diaspora engagement in homeland politics is nothing new. He observed that historical studies had shown the involvement of the diaspora in home politics as far back as 100 years ago. The Jewish and Armenian Diasporas are classic examples of the role diaspora play in homeland politics. The literature on the transnational political activities of the diaspora posits that a diaspora can engage in violent or non-violent means to challenge home regimes. For our case, I advance that the Gambian diaspora activists have engaged in a non-violent form of political contention with the government of Jammeh. Over two decades, they mobilize the Gambian diaspora and the host states by highlighting the poor human rights situation in Gambia under Jammeh. For instance, the CCG on October 1st, 2015 organized an International CSO forum on the Gambia with the theme: *Human Rights; Democracy; Governance; Transparency; and Regional Security* in New York. While the diaspora portrays itself as a non-violent group, their call to remove Jammeh by any means necessary suggests that they support violent means to effect regime change. The planned December 30th, 2014 attack on the state house by dissidents from US and Germany is an obvious example. The response to the activists and discussion on social media suggest that they welcome such an approach to regime change. In fact, a group was created to commemorate the "heroism" of the attackers that were killed by loyal forces to Jammeh.

5.1.1 Where it all started: The Gambia-L

The foundations of what later became the diverse sustained and substantial diaspora democracy front was laid immediately following the advent of the 1994 coup in The Gambia. Mamdani observed that the form of rule shapes the kind of revolt against it (Mamdani, 1996a, Mamdani, 1999). I posit that the nature of military rule in the formative years of the military coup in 1994, informed diaspora political activism in Gambia. The passing of decrees such as Decree 89 banning political parties and all other political activities and growing attack on media houses in the formative years of the coup forced the Gambian diaspora some of whom belong to banned parties to mobilize and assumed the voice of resistance. As (Sökefeld, 2006) argues, diasporas particularly political diaspora as in the case of the Gambia did not emerge as "a "natural" consequence of migration, but that a particular process of mobilization have to take place for a diaspora to develop" (p.265). This particular event in Gambia's political history informed diaspora political mobilization.

Though, relatively small at the onset, activists primarily in the US and Europe used the communication tools of the Internet as a nascent networking and mobilization tool to gather likeminded advocates discussing and challenging the military regime of Jammeh. The first vehicle to emerge out of those efforts was Gambia-L, a discussion listserv founded by Dr. Katim S Touray and hosted by St John's University in New York. The precursor to Gambia-L was started in 1994, shortly after the July 1994 by Yahya Jammeh and the Gambian military.

The listserv which started as a discussion group of Katim's friend slowly grew into a national debate platform to discuss news about Gambia, plot strategy, generate international attention, forged alliances among the various forces of democracy opposed to the Jammeh regime. As (NurMuhammad et al., 2016) observed the internet served as a transnational political space for ideas to be advanced and countered behind the safety of computer screen.

Although Gambia-L was not explicitly intended to mobilize against the Jammeh regime but rather to discuss "Gambian related issues" for "national good" served as the beginning of what becomes a long sustained struggle against the dictatorship of Jammeh. However, it should be noted that the founder of the group Katim was neither a politician nor an activist. He was very much interested in leveraging the tools provided by the internet to bring Gambians together for national discussion. In fact, he resigned from the management of the group in 2000 and unsubscribed himself from the group in 2002.

It's non-partisan nature enabled Gambians with different interests to engage in discussions which were both constructive (Saine, 2009) and personal at the same time. In the later years, Saine (2009) observed that while politicians in Gambia and their supporters were using the Gambia-L as a platform to communicate with the diaspora, some other individuals were very much interested in engaging on critical issues meant to increase awareness on the human rights violation of the Jammeh regime. The platform was also used by Jammeh supporters as well as civil servants to counter the argument of the diaspora dissidents. In May 1999 following the relocation of the forum to St John's Katim sent out an email highlighting the reasons for moving. One of the reasons mentioned was a threat posted to one of the managers by the regime

supporters on the forum who passive the group as "anti-Jammeh" (Touray, 1999b). Although the individual was removed from the panel, the threat created discomfort, and the group had to be moved to its present location at St John's University. These divergent opinions created some division while the listserv served as the locus of contention. Saine further noted that in the ensuing years, Gambia-L and its next splinter group Gambia-Post" become recognized as influential voices in Gambia's political landscape"(Saine, 2009, p.44) and that it was believed that Jammeh and his cabinet were members of the group or frequently visited the group. One prominent figure in the Jammeh regime which was the director of the state broadcaster, Tombong Saïdy was an active member of the group. In most cases, he was expected by the diaspora to highlight or clarify some of the claims made by individuals. Interestingly in November 1999, Katim wrote an open letter inviting Jammeh to join the group and also to help increase the benefit of Gambia-L, and the internet to Gambia. While highlighting the idea behind the group, Katim categorically dismissed the general believe that the forum was "anti-Jammeh" or his government.

"Not all of the postings on Gambia-L flatter your or your government. In the eyes of some people, Gambia-L is nothing but a forum for what they call "anti-Jammeh people." I have received suggestions that I for one created Gambia-L because I oppose your government. While I do not agree with some of your policies, I did not help start Gambia-L to provide a forum for your critics. Gambia-L is, in fact, a result of my efforts that began as far back as 1993 seeking to help setting up a mailing list to discuss Gambian issues and assistance in connecting the Gambia to the internet" (Touray, 1999a).

The Listserv understood here as a "political space in which differently situated actors negotiate-formally or informally-the social, cultural and political meaning of their joint enterprise" (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, P.3), served two different groups of people: supporters of the regime and the opposition. Nonetheless, following the discussion on the listserv one can notice that the anti-regime activists were dominant, thus forcing the group to slowly become anti-Jammeh platform even though that was not the initial intention.

The opposition through rigorous and sometimes contentious exchanges built consensus around particular issues of human rights, which was the basis through which the engagement was anchored. One cardinal strategy of the activist on Gambia-L was to create international attention on the human rights violations in Gambia. In doing this, the activists targeted key institutions and individuals within the host countries (The US mostly). For instance, in 2000 following the massacre of 14 student protesters by the security forces on April 10-11, the activists frame Gambian politics around human rights violations by the regime (Sökefeld, 2006). In the listserv, they created petitions and wrote letters to human rights organizations as well as states to bring to light the atrocities of Jammeh. For example, a group within the listserv calling themselves a group of Concerned Gambians wrote to the White House highlighting the political situation in Gambia. They informed the white house and other stakeholders the atrocities committed by the regime. In turn, the white house in a letter signed by President Clinton on May 29 (see appendix) acknowledged the efforts of the activists and promised to monitor the situation in Gambia. Additionally, this event at home and the framing by the diaspora activist helped in mobilizing members of the group that was neutral. Some of these people mobilized around the 2000s to demand regime change through organizations as we shall discuss later. As one informant highlights his reason of joining the dissidents:

The 1994 coup was something I supported and saw it as the best thing that could have happened to our country. The APRC Jammeh revolution was seen as an opportunity to correct the wrongs and the shortcomings of the Jawara Government since independence. And Jammeh being someone from our generation, it reinforced the maxim that the beautiful ones are finally born and ready to fan the change that our fathers could not do since independence. When the whole revolution turned out to be a big lie, and President Jammeh who was from a humble beginning and became one of the richest leaders in the African continent, and the human rights violation became his obsession, sitting down and doing nothing was not an option. For the first time in the Gambia, people were getting killed because of their politics and what used to be stories from faraway lands were at our doorstep. (Informant 2, email interview)

The quotation above shows that the dominant of the opposition stems from events in the homeland and the decision by the regime to withhold information from the public. The ability of

the diaspora dissidents to provide information that was not readily available to the public and making the information comprehensible and useful to the activists and public particularly the diaspora who are geographically distant gave them some influence. The information they provided were not just reports but also testimonies from individuals that were arrested, tortured or forced into exile by the regime. The statements from such individuals who have been affected helped the activist to frame their political mobilization around issues of human rights and the lack of political freedom. They have been able to use these testimonies to legitimize their anti-Jammeh campaign. Keck and Sikkink observed that personal statements motivate people to seek changed policies. According to the (Keck and Sikkink, 1998) "an active frame must show that a given state of affairs is neither natural nor accidental, identify the responsible party or parties and proposed credible solutions" (p.19). In the case of human rights violation, the responsible party was Jammeh and his military regime. The individual cases over time rose to an unprecedented number⁴² That eventually motivate a significant number of diaspora Gambians to get involved. Some members of the diaspora were motivated to get involved for the fact that the government abused a friend or neighbor or relative. For instance, when the regime of Jammeh arrested me in 2014, a high number of my Facebook friends both in the diaspora and in Gambia used social media to demand my release⁴³. Some of these individuals have never been engaged in discussing local politics before or anything to do with human rights abuses. Most were indifferent to the human rights situation in Gambia before.

In the early 2000s, The Gambia L also served as a vehicle to engage the home based political parties by proxy because active members of the parties headquartered in the diaspora engaged on both fronts. This became useful in the serious and repeated attempts at forging unified political alliances to take on the dictator. This very notion reflects how Gambian diaspora has contributed in enhancing the political resources available to the political parties at home throughout the anti-Jammeh campaign. Party sympathizers based abroad would often strategize among themselves and proceed to pressure and lobby the front line politicians on those shared positions. As will be shown later, most of those efforts rooted in the cardinal democratic principles of compromises to advance the greater good fell short of absolute unity among the political parties resulting in

⁴² See a list of people affected by Jammeh in his 22 years. The list was prepared by an exiled journalist over the period and has been used vigorously by the activists <http://www.maafanta.com/mathewkjallowyaya20years>

⁴³ <https://advox.globalvoices.org/2014/11/13/update-gambian-blogger-released-as-outrage-escalates/>

partial and ultimately ineffective electoral alliances that ensured defeat for the opposition in the first four elections under Jammeh.

In the Gambia-L, ideas to create online papers and radios emerged as well as the efficient organization of the activists into groups. For instance in one of the discussion following April 10-11, a member of the forum suggested the creation of online radio to air the concerns of Gambians. The proposed Radio Liberte was to be established in Senegal. However, from the discussion, the activist feared that the new Senegalese president at the time Abdoulaye Wade would not want to engage in hostilities with Jammeh. Wade and much Senegalese saw Jammeh as the sponsor of the rebellion in Casamance. Such accusations stem from the fact that Jammeh is the Jolas predominantly fought jola and the rebellion in the southern province of Senegal. Equally, Jammeh originating from Foni, a region that borders Casamance did not help. Although I cannot substantiate Jammeh's role in the rebellion, the fact that the separationist started the war since the early 1980s perhaps can prove Jammeh's innocence.

5.1.2 Organized Politics: Protest and Lobbying

Over the years, the diaspora activists created an extensive set of CSOs and advocacy organizations to supplement their online activism. These groups over the years have served a pivotal role in the political mobilization of the Gambian diaspora as well as to formally engage with more formal organizations and institutions in the US, Europe, and Africa. The number of groups has upsurge over 22 years both in the US and Europe with also chapters or branches in other parts of the world like Senegal. The increase of CSOs has a lot to do with the conservative nature of the political activists but also the various demands of the activists such as respect for human rights and regime change or the restoration of democracy. For instance, in 2012, DUGA DC emerged as a reaction to the nine inmates that were executed by the Jammeh regime (Informant 1, 2017). It is important to note that members of this particular group have been active members of other groups such as STGDP which also emerged as reactionary movement following the 1996 presidential elections and the consequent change in the electoral laws to First Past the Post System in 2001. The table below highlights successful Gambian diaspora organizations that have been actively engaging with the years and the countries in which they engage. The nature of most the organizations is transnational. The list is not exhaustive as other

smaller groups exist. It does not also include the political party branches. Some of the organizations such as CCG and CORDEG are coalition bodies that other agencies are members of. While CORDEG was confronted with a lot of withdrawals Coalition for Change is still in existence and with a presence in Gambia. The difference between the two umbrella groups is the composition of the membership. While CORDEG targeted mostly CSOs and work in partnership with other organizations, CCG is a coalition of both CSOs in the diaspora and other human rights organization interested in Gambia. Nevertheless, CCG is a member of CORDEG.

Table: 4 showing selected list of diaspora CSOs

N	Name	Country
o	Safe The Gambia Democracy Project (STGDP) (2001)	US
	Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in the Gambia (CORDEG) (2014)	US
	The Gambia Democracy Action Group (GDAG) (2004)	US
	Democratic Union of Gambians (2012)	US
	Coalition for Change Gambia (CCG) (2011)	US/Senegal
	Movement for the Restoration of Democracy in Gambia (MRDG)	US/UK
	Committee of Concerned Gambian Citizens(CCGC)	US UK
	Campaign for Human Rights Gambia (CHRG) (2011)	
	Civil Society Association Gambia (CSAG)	US
	Gambia Consultative Council (GCC) (2013)	US/UK/Norway/Holland
	Gambia Democracy Fund (2014)	US
	Gambians for Democracy and Development (2014)	Norway/Sweden
	Senegambia Human Rights Defence League (2010)	UK
	National Resistance Movement Gambia (2014)	US
	Gambia Youth for Unity (GYU) (2015)	US/UK

While acting as an extension of CSOs in Gambia, the diaspora CSOs used various strategies to mobilize against the Jammeh regime. The shared concern by the diaspora CSOs on “restoring democracy” and “human rights” as suggested by the names of the organization was central to their agenda of regime change. Although to restore democracy was the objective, framing the conflict around human rights gave them legitimacy and enabled them to interact in more formal setting with the international community and host states. Below I discuss the political activities of the diaspora thematically in relations to host country and international organizations. I observed that since the political mobilization of the diaspora started in Gambia L, and the subsequent creation of CSOs, the diaspora have engaged in organized protests, organizing seminars and lobbying.

5.1.2.1 Protests

The formation of the CSOs expanded on what the activist could do in terms of organizing direct action like protest. Over the years, the diaspora have organized and mobilized Gambians to protest against the regime. Political rallies and demonstrations have been organized jointly by the CSOs. Some of these political rallies and demonstrations that were in reaction to an event in Gambia such as the execution of prison inmates in 2012 or the massacre of students in 2000 as well as the heavy crackdown on opposition figures were organize in a transnational fashion. An example is the National Day of Outraged, which was a protest move to bring light to the 9 inmates that were executed by the regime in 2012. The first set of demonstrations started in the US and over a whole week spread in other parts of the world including Europe and Senegal. In Europe the protests took place mostly in UK , Norway and Sweden. In UK, US and Senegal the protest were carried out in front of Gambian embassies. While in other countries without Gambian embassy the protest took place in public places like in Norway or before parliament. In UK even though there is a Gambian embassy, the protests usually take place in front of parliament.

Although the diaspora activists have organized numerous protests two protests have been very significant in their work over the period in terms of the attention in generates and the size of the protesters. The first was in October 2013 when three members of DUGA DC in an operation call “Operation Mborr Mborr” stormed the Gambian Embassy in Washington DC and chained

themselves inside the embassy. Their aim was to attract the attention of the regime back home on “their violations of the rights of Gambians” (Informant 1, 2017, email) and at the same time create noise to attract attention on Gambia from the host country. The incident which was broadcasted live on Facebook was the first of such kinder protest by the diaspora. The embassy staff who went on hiding eventually called the police who arrested the three activists and later released them on bail without conditions following charges of “unlawful entry into the Gambian embassy”. The arrest of the activists was well received by the regime at home as propaganda material. A news broadcast was aired on national TV showing the arrest of the activists. This action by the government intended to cause negative reaction from the public was instead seeing in positive light by many Gambians on social media.

Figure 2: A picture of DUGA Activists arrested by DC Police



source: Kibaaro News

The second and most publicize protest event was the Hay Adams demonstrations that was purposefully targeted at Jammeh when he attended US Africa summit in 2014. The protest which was jointly organize by all the CSOs in the US and attended by individual activist and community members was the largest and most successful protest in the history of the US diaspora. One informant posited that the protest that kept Jammeh “prisoner” in his hotel and his wife smuggled out of the hotel by the US secret agents supplemented the demystifying efforts of Jammeh’s personality on the online radios. He believe that the protest which was documented on mobile phones and shared broadly on social media “showed Gambians on the ground that Jammeh was so beatable after all” (informant 3, 2017). The protest did not end without incidence. While Jammeh was captured prisoner in his hotel from morning till evening, his entourage went out to confront the protesters. In fact Fatou Camara (see picture below) of the Fatu Radio network a former close aide⁴⁴ to Jammeh was assaulted by Jammeh’s security details. The incidence of her assault attracted broader coverage by US based media houses such as Foreign Policy who called the incident “Mayhem”⁴⁵.

Figure 3: Fatou Camara after she was abused by Jammeh’s security detail



Source: JollofNews

Both protests even though they differ in terms of number and target are termed by the activists as successful due to the amount of media attention it generate. While the first protest was carried out by three people and targeted at the embassy staff, it generated attention primary because the

⁴⁴ She was the Director of Press at the Office of the President accused of given false information to diaspora media houses. She was arrested detained without trial for two months and later charged. She escaped the jurisdiction and seek political asylum in the US.

⁴⁵ <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/08/14/mayhem-at-the-hay-adams/>

protest was covered live through Facebook and shared on other social media platforms like YouTube⁴⁶. The second protest which was primarily targeted at Jammeh was also shared on social media. However, the amount of people that turned up for the protest was a considerable number. One informant informed me that this protests was the longest protest and the number of people that showed up was close to 100 Gambian activists and their partners in the US (Informant 5, interview).

The protests although significant have less impact on the regime at home. However, it resonates with part of the literature that maintains that host countries play pivotal role in providing the space for Diasporas to engage in homeland politics (Stokke, 2016, Vanderbush, 2014, Zapata-Barrero et al., 2013). The US and UK which host a great number of the CSOs have been very useful to the activists for two reasons. Firstly, these countries provide safety for the activists to engage without any risk of repression from the home regime. Secondly, both countries are very much interested in democratic and human rights promotion. While the states are engage, the presence of human rights organizations and international bodies are also valuable to the activist. While the host states have provided valuable opportunities, I argue that the protest had less impact on the regime.

The data from both interviews and netnography have suggested that such protests have created impact in the sense that they raise awareness on the political situation in the country and by extension have made the regime to be watchful. For instance, one of the informants when asked about the impact of the protests and diaspora involvement noted

“Indeed. If anything, the diaspora has been able to demystify Jammeh through the online radios and various protests. In fact, the 2014 protest at Jammeh’s hotel in New York, which held him “prisoner” in his hotel room and his wife being smuggled out of the hotel, showed Gambians on the ground that Jammeh was so invincible after all. We have also been able to expose his excesses to the whole world.” (Informant 1, 2017 email)

Another activist noted

⁴⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sFeNZN4ag0>

I found these assessments by the diaspora activists somehow contradictory to the overall goal of the diaspora activists, which is to unseat Jammeh and by extension drive democratization in Gambia. Firstly, while I observed that such protests have created minimal attention on the regime over the years, it failed to influence the host states to take direct action such as targeted sanctions against the regime. Except for the few statements that have been released by the US and UK through their embassies in Gambia condemning human rights violations such as the execution of the 9 death row inmates as well as statements released during the political impasse following the December 1 2016 presidential elections, no further action have been taking against the regime.

This resonates with the literature on democracy promotion that states only take action on other states if their economic interest is threaten(Levitsky and Way, 2005). The Gambia holds no economic resources to warrant external intervention by US and UK. Secondly, the diaspora only mobilize an organize protest when the believe Jammeh violated the constitution or committed a grave human rights violations. These reactionary way of protesting although shows discontentment within the diaspora community, it never prevented Jammeh from committing human rights violations even after losing the December 2016 presidential election. During the political impasse, forces loyal to Jammeh were going around arresting members of the #GambiaHasDecided movement and people that wore t-shirts demanding Jammeh to accept the results of the elections. Finally, the sizes of the protesters compared to the number of Gambians abroad are very few compared to their activities on social media. The reason why such numbers are low can be attributed to the fear factor or fear of targeted political repression by the regime on their family (Jörum, 2015). For instance following the 30th December 2014 attempted coup, the regime arrested about 30 people purported to be family members of the plotters including a 16 year old boy and a 65 year old woman⁴⁷.

5.1.2.2 Lobbying Host States and International Organizations

Lobbying the host state and also international organizations both governmental and nongovernment was also part of the mobilization effort of the activists. The CSOs organizations

⁴⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/01/gambia-charge-or-release-family-members-alleged-failed-coup-plotters/>

gave them both legitimacy as collective to engage with these international bodies and states rather than approaching them individually. While the activists in the US lobby congress, the activists in UK lobby the parliament. The join lobbying efforts by the various organizations aimed influencing the host states to engage the regime at home has resulted in statements from host countries. Both the US governments and UK governments have over the years released statements and reports⁴⁸ condemning and highlighting human rights violations in Gambia. Aside from the political establishments the diaspora also engaged with US based human rights and democracy organization such as Robert Kennedy Foundation and the International Republican Institute as well as Vanguard Africa⁴⁹. In Europe, they lobby the EU and attended human rights meetings in Geneva, writing shadow reports to counter that of the regime. Equally they have lobbied African Regional bodies such as the AU and ECOWAS to put pressure on the regime. As mentioned before, they were also able to engage with Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Both organizations have extensively worked with diaspora organizations to release statements of human rights abuses in Gambia.

As noted by Saine , the diaspora realizing that “to oust Jammeh in the 2001 elections, Gambians abroad needed to make a more concerted effort in lobbying the international community to force Jammeh to hold free and fair elections and to increase their financial contribution if they wanted it to succeed”(Saine, 2009, P.42). Hence, the hallmark of the lobbying efforts of the diaspora was concerned with influencing states and regional bodies to put pressure on government to embark on fundamental reforms aimed at promoting democracy and good governance. However, Gambia’s size and lack of resources made these lobbying difficult. Nonetheless, the diaspora claim that there lobbying efforts had some significant impact on the regime. Although the effect of their lobbying on the regime cannot be substantiated, evidence suggests that there was collaboration between CSOs such as CCG and other NGOs. For instance, CCG has organized several meetings bringing together organizations such as Open Society Forum to discuss the political situation in Gambia under Jammeh.

⁴⁸ See <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252897.pdf>

⁴⁹ <http://www.newsweek.com/2017/02/10/gambia-yahya-jammeh-adama-barrow-vanguard-550031.html>

Among the claim achievements of the diaspora activists was that they lobbied the UN to send in Special human rights rapporteurs to Gambia to investigate the prison conditions⁵⁰. A second claim as evidence in the netnography was the suspension of development aid by the EU in 2014 following failed talks after the execution of the 9 death row inmates⁵¹. The diaspora has also claimed that they lobbied the US government to remove Gambia from AGOA in 2015⁵². Although there are enough evidences of diaspora lobbying, substantiating such actions taking by external actors on the direct lobbying efforts of the diaspora is difficult to substantiate. The fact that all these different bodies have representatives in the country and at the same time have sent several teams over the period blurred diaspora claims.

5.1.3 The Internet as a Mobilization Tool

In contentious politics, the internet has been described as “weapon of the weak”(Smith and Suttmeier, 2007) and “the place where the fearful of the world should overcome their fear and unite to fight against the power structures” (Roldán, 2013, p.1). Undoubtedly, a tool that can be use by both anti-regime movements and the regime itself looks appealing for social scientist. Although it will be too quick to “construct a technologically deterministic theory of democratization”(Hussain and Howard, 2013, p. 50), it is nonetheless interesting to explore the role of digital tools as they limit and enable both anti-regime movements and authoritarian regime to promote their different agendas. Whether the use of digital technology by social movements and grassroots activists has any effect on political outcomes have been the focus of many scholars and analyst globally (Hussain and Howard, 2013, Jenny, 2010b, Passini, 2012). Nonetheless, the space provided by the internet for networking and debate is promoting the active participation of young people (Passini, 2012) and has given rise to new movements that are both active online and offline and are challenging the political establishment (*Hussain and Howard, 2013*).

⁵⁰ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15267&LangID=E>

⁵¹ <https://torchongambia.wordpress.com/2017/02/09/eu-pledges-80-million-aid-to-gambia-after-two-year-suspension/>

⁵² <http://www.ictsd.org/bridges-news/bridges-africa/news/united-states-removes-three-countries-from-agoa>

Over the years, the diaspora has established several online media house such as Fatu Network⁵³, Kibaaro News⁵⁴, Sidi Sanneh Blog⁵⁵, Gainako⁵⁶, Jollof News⁵⁷, Maa Fanta⁵⁸ and series of blogs. All these radios hosted in various countries, provided the diaspora a broader transnational focus. However, in the early days of the struggle, challenges such as low internet penetration as well as the cost made the online media inaccessible to many Gambians in Gambia. Equally, the government noting the possible influence of diaspora media houses took action to curtail their influence. For instance Freedom Newspaper was banned in the country by blocking the website. Gambians in Gambia used sites such as “Anonymous” to access the website. However, Freedom grew to be the propaganda mouth piece of the anti-Jammeh movement for a long period before other Radios such as Gainako and more recently Fatu Network emerged to amplify the voice of the dissidents. According to (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, p. 16) “*information politics* or the ability to quickly and credibly generate politically useable information and move it to where it will have the most impact” has been a tactic use by networks. The credibility of some information generated by the online media houses such as Freedom newspaper was questionable. For instance, the paper in order to demystify Jammeh, concocted many articles and photos that were not accurate. A case in point is the use of a category of reports reportedly filed by ‘a soldier’ close to Jammeh. In one article, the paper reported that “Dictator Jammeh is sick both mentally and physically”⁵⁹ and that Jammeh imported prostitutes from Ethiopia. Such style of online activism has attracted a lot of criticism by members of the diaspora community. This form of criticism also resonates with the critics of internet activism or “clicktivism”. Critics (White, 2010, Karpf, 2010) argue that such form of activism weakens political engagement. In the case of Gambia, the internet seems to be the best option for the exiled activists. First, it keeps them from the arms of the regime and secondly helps in mobilizing the international community. As proponents of the internet (Bernal, 2005, Siapera, 2014) as a tool for activism observed, the internet unite groups and individuals around a political issues with few risks attached.

⁵³ <http://fatunetwork.net/>

⁵⁴ <http://kibaaro.com/>

⁵⁵ <http://sidisanneh.blogspot.no/>

⁵⁶ <http://gainako.com/>

⁵⁷ <https://jollofnews.com/>

⁵⁸ <http://www.maafanta.com/>

⁵⁹ <http://www.freedomnewspaper.com/gambia-yahya-jammehs-health-degenerates-amid-fears-possible-demise-jammeh-invites-ethiopian-prostitutes-unknown-attackers-hit-gambia/>

The advent of social media in addition to the online media house also intensified the information politics of the diaspora. The diaspora has a heavy presence on the internet particularly on social media. Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp and other social media communication tools have become very important in diaspora politics due to its effectiveness and low cost involve. These different platforms played similar role like the email listserv. The only difference is the amount of people that could be reached. Social media has wider coverage of the different segment of Gambian society, while the listserv catered mostly for the elites; social media reaches all ages and groups. In these platforms they created groups or forums to engage the wider Gambian community both at home and abroad.

The first Facebook forum to surface that brought Gambians at home and in the diaspora was Balafong. Balafong was established by two Gambians Amran Gaye (US) and Latirr Carr (Gambia) in 2010 to promote Gambian literature. The forum quickly developed into a discussion forum that attracted about ten thousand Gambians from all over the world. Unlike the Gambia L and Post, Balafong shy away from discussing local Gambian politics. The reason advanced by the management was the fact that some of the administrators reside in Gambia and discussing local politics can put them into trouble with the regime. Basically, they were concerned with safety of the people living in Gambia. Another reason given by the group was that Gambians were not mature in discussing local politics. That is instead of discussing about issues, people engage in personal attacks and such actions tend to defeat the reasons for creating the group.

The management's strong stance on the issue of "no local politics" was not received well by the dissidents who felt that the forum should be open for any topic. In several instances, diaspora activist were blocked from the group for refusing to follow the guidelines set by the admins. This developed into some form of contention between the management and Gambians in Gambia on one side and the dissidents on the other side. The contention resulted to name calling. The diaspora called the home activists "cowards" while the home activists called them "keyboard warriors". A point we can make from these names is this. While the diaspora portrait themselves as the vanguard of the democracy movement in Gambia, Gambian activist either out of fear or wary of the diaspora and their project of regime change were not interested. For instances, during

one of the heated debates⁶⁰ in 2011, on the “no local partisan politics” rule Gambian activists wrote

“The two biggest crimes in 2011, seems to be Internet Gangstarism a.k.a.keyboard warriors n commentary trolling on online articles. We are finding out that cyber courage is more powerfull than liquid courage!”

“Throwing stones from a distance shows that u were not ready to fight and die for the cause. Come back to gambia and we shall all fight for our rights. Were u so vocal when u were in the gambia? Smh”

The advent of Whatsapp and Viber also added another opportunity to the activist to spread information and at the same time mobilize for regime change. Like Facebook, groups were created on WhatsApp particularly in the period leading to the December 2016 presidential election. While the state censored media houses, social media became an alternative that was heavily utilized by the diaspora. This kind of direct outreach significantly helped the ground game for the coalition by having constituency level WhatsApp and Facebook groups that targeted voters. For instance, one informant alluded to how they utilize whatsapp to mobilize for the opposition.

For example in my native CRR, we had separate WhatsApp groups for each constituency with teams of volunteers on motorbikes and cars shuttling messages to key voters and voting blocks and extracting firm commitments of support. We were so efficient in the micro-targeting of electors that we could count the votes we were likely to get even before the first ballot was cast. If you want I can send you samples of WhatsApp messages I made to target voters I wanted to and did deliver on my side. We used the same political infrastructure and outreach to achieve success for our party UDP in the parliamentary election. The other parties fell short in part because of the limited capacity of direct diaspora engagement they have across the country (informant 9, 2017, interview)

⁶⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/198553840154883/search/?query=Nanama%20Keita>

At this point, it is also important to note the efforts by the regime to contest the information spread by the diaspora online. Like the anti-Jammeh dissidents, pro-Jammeh forces also engaged in information war online to curtail the activities of the diaspora. Over the last five years, several pro-Jammeh diaspora radios such as Gambia One Radio⁶¹ have emerged. Although the radio claims to report on Gambian news in a fair and balanced way, they have been seen as the alternative voice in the diaspora to challenge anti-Jammeh propaganda. "Our goal is to promote the positive and genuine image of our country. Our doors are open to any individual who wants to contribute positively to the development of our beloved country and its social and peaceful cohesion"⁶². However, monitoring the online platform shows that most of the radio programs and the articles shared attacked the diaspora activists. For instance, Samsudeen Sarr a former activist who was coopted by Jammeh and appointed as Deputy Ambassador at the Gambian mission in the US was a consistent contributor and critic of the diaspora activist. In one of his articles, Sarr wrote

Listening to their desperate arguments to influence the political situation in The Gambia from their online radios and social media with crude prescriptions over how the Gambia could be political, economically and socially emancipated through unconventional measures, one wonders why these genii are not participating in the ongoing discussion representative of the politic⁶³ al climate in the USA since the emergence of President-elect Donald J. Trump⁶⁴

In fact many activists believe that the radio was sponsored by Jammeh to curtail their mobilization efforts. The Daily Observer, which was the chief Propaganda machinery of the regime, was also heavily utilized to counter the anti-Jammeh activist. The paper's online presence as well as offline gave them a wider audience compared to most of the online articles. This enabled them to print or publish damaging materials against the dissidents efficiently. For instance, several articles⁶⁵ were released on the paper to discredit prominent activists like Fatou Camara of the Fatu Radio Network and Pa Nderry Mbai of Freedom Newspaper. The paper also started reporting on the internal disagreements of the diaspora so as to further discredit them. A

⁶¹ <http://gambiaoneradio.com/>

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ <https://observergm.com/>

⁶⁴ <http://gambiaoneradio.com/the-gambia-diaspora-strugglers-your-political-miseries-are-your-choices/>

⁶⁵ <https://observergm.com/fatou-camara-in-her-own-words/>
<https://observergm.com/gambian-youths-fatu-camara-pa-nderry-mbai-survive-on-lies/>

case in point was when Ahmed Gitteh a former journalist with Fatu Radio and a prominent activist parted ways with Fatu Radio and joined Gainako another diaspora radio⁶⁶.

Although the regimes attempt to curtail the activities of the diaspora were visible, it had a profound effect on diaspora engagement. In fact, the diaspora with their radios was also equally capable of defending themselves and portraying the regime as liars. The support received by Fatou when the government published such damaging reports was overwhelming. This stems from the fact that many Gambians both at home generally saw the paper as the propaganda machine of the government and Jammeh in particular.

From the above, one can notice information politics through leveraging the opportunities presented by the internet help activist to both frame Gambian politics and use it as a medium to mobilize. However, the proliferation of social media although created opportunities, it also exposes the disagreement within the diaspora activists as well as with the Gambians at home. The possibility of anyone individual starting a forum, resulted to many forums been created, thus watering down the possible impact of their mobilization tool. The dissatisfaction in terms of content and forum rules resulted to many splinter groups. Gambia Post splinted from Gambia L. Gambia Youth and Women Forum from Balafong and the “Future of Gambia” splinted from the Gambia Youth and Women Forum. However, although there were splinter groups, all these groups generally share the same membership. One person can be a member of all these different forums.

5.2 The Evolving Political Strategy of the diaspora: By any means Necessary?

The political objectives of the diaspora and ways to achieving such goals have changed over the years. While early engagement was more concerned with engaging the host country to put pressure on the regime back home to respect the rights of the citizens and open up the democratic space, the later part of the struggle show a more determined diaspora set to remove the regime of Jammeh through both legal and illegal means. Nonetheless, the overarching objective of the diaspora as a social movement has been to restore democracy in the Gambia or at least the

⁶⁶ <https://observergm.com/ahmed-gitteh-abandons-fatou-camara-and-cuts-ties-with-fatu-radio/>

semblance of democracy as was the case the three decades after independence (informant 5, 2017, interview). Most of the early activists believe that Gambia enjoyed some degree of democracy after independence and the military coup in 1994 brought an abrupt end to this long enjoyed freedom. They saw the regime of Jammeh as a "tyranny" and Jammeh himself as a dictator. Hence, the need to end such dictatorship and return Gambia to its democratization process was the goal. The mission statement of all the CSOs highlighted above pointed to that fact. In fact, such a goal has been reflected in some of the organization's name (STGDP and MRDG).

The idea of restoring democracy in Gambia was constituted as early as the beginning of the contention. The means to archiving such goals have evolved over the years. In the beginning, the idea was to influence home countries to take measures and force Jammeh to value and respect human rights. They have used protests, lobbying, and organized symposium and wrote series of letters to highlight to the host countries the need to intervene in Gambia's internal affairs. The actions of the diaspora are in line with Koinova's view that "if diaspora communities are socialized with democratic values in Western societies, they could be expected to be sympathetic to the democratization of their home countries" (Koinova, 2009, P. 41). These efforts had minimal effect on the regime at home. (Keck and Sikkink, 1998) posited that "networks frequently failed to achieve their goals." These can be seen in the numerous letters and lobbying expedition the activist engaged in since the days of Gambia-L and Gambia Post. The activists to achieve such goal worked tirelessly to document human rights abuses through testimonies from victims, which was used to highlight the need for the US and UK to intervene in Gambia. The documented human rights abuses were accompanied by suggestions by the states to levy targeted sanctions against Jammeh and his close aids. While such efforts failed to materialize or at least only stopped at press releases and statements from the host states particular UK and US, the diaspora was forced to come up with different strategies in addition to the one mentioned above. The second strategy which leads to the emergence of STGDP was to mobilize the internal opposition political parties to contest the election as a united force. This stems from the unfavorable electoral laws, which have been observed by the activists to have a dire impact on the disjointed oppositions. This particular point will be discussed in detail when discussing the relationship between the diaspora activists and opposition parties. However, it is important to

note that even though the activists had less trust in the political system, they were ready to support opposition parties to challenge the regime-democratically.

Over the years, such willingness change as political repression increase and the regimes tightening of the electoral laws disillusioned a group of the activist who believed that the only means to restore democracy in Gambia was through military coup or popular uprising. Hence, on 30th December 2014, a group comprising of 11 former military men from Gambia and US attacked the State House in an attempt to over throw the government of Jammeh. The attempted coup which was hatched in the US was term by Jammeh as a "Terrorist Attack"⁶⁷ For a detail explanation as to how the event unfolded read⁶⁸ . Following the incident, Jammeh went on a purge arresting suspected members of the military as well as family members of the diaspora dissidents that took part in the coup. The coup received wide condemnation from both the opposition parties and the international community. Members of the diaspora from the US open returned were arrested by the US government and charges levied on them. However, the diaspora mobilized to influence the judges to be lenient with the arrested.

A second incident which shows the changing strategy of the diaspora was on 14th April 2016. On this particular date, Solo Sandeng believed to be supported by the diaspora mobilized and started an open protest in Gambia demanding for electoral reforms. He was subsequently arrested and allegedly tortured to death. The protest although was peaceful was diaspora strategy to get the youth on the streets. By monitoring the event on that specific day on Fatu Network and Gainako radio, I could hear the presenters inciting the public to go out and join the protesters. In fact Solo's protest was covered live and he was recorded talking on the Radio. Mobile phone was used to record the protest to be shared on social media⁶⁹. These two events later shaped the political contestation of the diaspora. Both the people that took part in the 2014 coup and Solo become martyr of the struggle.

⁶⁷ See Gambia government statement on the assault <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IH7ELvZAWBAhttp://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/dec-30-terrorist-attack-those-behind-it>

⁶⁸ <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/03/lets-take-back-our-country/426852/>, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/30/gambia-capital-banjul-gunfire-reported-coup> ,

⁶⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Skiw2TX5J0Y>

5.3 Symbolic Politics and Diaspora Justification

According to (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, P 22) “activists frame issues by identifying and providing convincing explanations for powerful symbolic events, which in turn become catalyst for the growth of networks”. Similarly (Sökefeld, 2006, P. 270) argues that *framing* “are ideas that transform certain conditions into an issue, that help to define grievances and claims, and that legitimize and mobilize action”. In the Gambian case, the evidence reveals that the diaspora engage in politics primarily due to human rights violation, political repression and the abuse of power as well as corruption and economic mismanagement. However, it should be noted that human rights violation, political repression and the abuse of authority outweigh that of corruption and financial mismanagement. Perhaps, framing the issue around political repression and human rights will provide them the opportunity to mobilize more than focusing on the economic activities of Jammeh. However, Keck and Sikkink observed that networks take action not based on one particular event “but the juxtaposition of disparate events that makes people change their minds and act”(Keck and Sikkink, 1998, P.22)

From the evidence, I observed that the diaspora has continually accused the regime of Jammeh of committing crime against the citizens through arbitrary arrest and detention, judicial interference, forced exiles, state-sponsored murders etc. Due to their location and the small risk involved, when the diaspora report on such events, it usually galvanizes global attention. For instance, when the government first arrested me in November 2014, the diaspora media houses (Fatu Network in particular) quickly reported the event. Consequently, my arrest attracted a lot of attention from international human rights organization such as Amnesty International and Freedom House all demanding for my release following the 72hrs detention, which is unconstitutional in Gambia. Although diaspora reporting was instrumental, I equally think that the fact that I was a known youth activists internationally with a broad network contributed to generating the attention my case made.

Generally, diaspora political mobilization has been framed around human rights abuses of the regime. Through this they mobilize action against the government. Many of the activists I interviewed claimed that the 1994 military coup with subsequent human rights violations

motivated them to take action against the regime. Equally major events like the April 10th and 11th student uprising was also cited to be a trigger by the activists. For instance according to one of my informants:

As a human rights activists who abhors coup d'états , especially against democratically elected governments, my conscience could not allow me to remain silent in the face of the usurpation of power. I made it a duty to speak up against the overthrow of the Gambian Constitution and of course the subsequent abrogation of fundamental human and constitutional rights of Gambians (informant 6, 2017)

The 1994 military coup that brought Jammeh to power although welcome by many Gambians at the time, slowly turn out to be a cause than a blessing. The first event, although not known to many Gambians at the time was the summary execution of 9 soldiers at the Yundum Barracks accused of planning to overthrow the AFPRC Junta⁷⁰. This event has been framed as the beginning of crimes committed against the citizens. In 1995, the death of Ousman Koro Ceesay⁷¹ was also a trigger. Ceesay who was the Finance Minister in 1995 was found death in mysterious circumstances⁷². However, the discussion mostly took place in the Gambia L group. Another event that triggered diaspora activism was the April 10-11 2000 student shooting. The shooting of 14 student protesters was a shock to Gambians as such never happened in the history of the country before. The event for the first time publicly exposed the human rights violation of the regime. While the two early incidences are known in close circles and most recently have gained considerable attention as part of human rights abuses and political repression, the April shooting points to the brutal nature of Jammeh's regime. Consequently, following the event, human rights violation in Gambia under Jammeh intensified and the political mobilization of the diaspora also began to take new forms in the sense that it marks the beginning of organized diaspora political mobilization. Groups such as Concerned Gambians emerged writing petitions as well as letters to bring to light the abuses in Gambia. These events and the subsequent harsh political conditions in the country forced many politically active Gambians mostly politicians, journalists and human

⁷⁰ See a full article on the November 11 incidence and narrated by former soldier

<http://thegambiavoice.blogspot.no/2011/11/gambia-remembering-bloody-11-november.html>

⁷¹ <http://allafrica.com/stories/201006170319.html>

⁷² <http://standard.gm/site/2017/05/04/koro-ceesay-killed/>

rights activist to seek political asylum in US, Europe and Senegal. For instance the December 2004 shooting and murder of a prominent journalist Deyda Hydera, co-proprietor of the Point Newspaper was trigger. In the following years, writers experience arson attacks, arrest and torture etc. The editor of the Independent Newspaper, Musa SaidyKhan for example was abused and the papers burnt down by clandestine forces believe to be Jammeh's loyalist. Radio 1 FM was also burnt down and the Manager almost caught in the fire⁷³. Arrests of journalists and members of the Gambia Press Union (GPU) continued. In 2009, six journalists and three executive members of GPU were arrested, charged and sentence to prison for deformation and seditious intent⁷⁴. Most recently in 2012, the Standard Newspaper, Daily News and Teranga FM radio station were shut down by the government. While the Standard was allowed to resume later in 2015, the daily news was never allowed to return. Terranga FM was also authorized to continue operation but consequently shutdown many times⁷⁵ the most recent been in January 2017 during the political impasse.

Through testimonies by some of the victims of human rights violation, international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International⁷⁶, Human Rights Watch, Article 19⁷⁷ among many others have documented what they term as the gross human rights violations in Gambia under Jammeh. In 2015 Human Rights Watch in their report *State of Fear, Arbitrary Arrests, Torture and Killings*⁷⁸ gathered testimonies from 38 victims and some witnesses of human rights violation under Jammeh. Most of the victims as noted before included journalists, activist, LGBTI people, opposition political party members, civil servants, security forces and even ordinary citizens. Some of these people fled the country to seek political asylum in Senegal, Europe and US.

Although Jammeh has tried to dismiss these accusations, his actions and pronouncements have been well documented to suggest that his government carried out such abuses. For instance, in

⁷³ <https://frontpageinternational.wordpress.com/2016/06/08/a-big-loss-and-a-sad-day-gambian-media-mourns-death-of-legendary-broadcaster-george-christensen/>

⁷⁴ <http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/in-the-high-court-of-the-gambia-holden-at-banjul>

⁷⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38488083>

⁷⁶ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/07/gambiasharpdeteriorationofhuman/>

⁷⁷ <https://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/3047/en/the-gambia:-new-report-highlights-draconian-media-laws>

⁷⁸ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/09/16/state-fear/arbitrary-arrests-torture-and-killings>

May 2014, he was quoted at a political rally threatening to "slit throats" of homosexuals and later in the same year an aggravated homosexuality bill was passed into law by the parliament⁷⁹. In November of the same year, while I was detained at the National Intelligence Agency on trumped up charges⁸⁰, a group of young men was arrested including a 17-year-old boy. The group was charged under the aggravated homosexuality act. Subsequently, they were freed, and two of them have left the country and seek political asylum in Canada.

The evidence against Jammeh has been significantly documented. The most recent was the arrest and torture of death of Solo Sandeng, National Youth Mobiliser of UDP in April 2016. Solo with influence from the diaspora mobilizes a group of young politicians to demand electoral reform. Jammeh himself in an interview admitted that Solo died in custody⁸¹. In 2012, the execution of the nine death row inmates also triggered diaspora activism. Although the regime was denying the incident, it later released a statement confirming the execution⁸².

Evidence from both netnography and interviews highlighted the abuse of power by Jammeh as a trigger for diaspora political mobilization. Jammeh's party's control of the National Assembly and the subsequent centralization of power in the office of the president enabled him to deepen his grip on power. He has in many instances advanced constitutional amendments to the constitutions that favor him and at the same time curtail his opponents from challenging him. The most recent of this was the change of the electoral act in 2015 that increased the electoral fees for candidates⁸³. Following this amendment his national mobilizer was quoted saying that "election should be cheap for every Tom Dick and Harry"⁸⁴. Jammeh was also known for the hiring and firing of people at will mostly civil servants⁸⁵. He absorbed the role of traditional authorities by appointing and firing chiefs at will going against tradition. His declaration of

⁷⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/21/gambian-leader-approves-anti-gay-law>

⁸⁰ <http://gainako.com/breaking-news-sait-matty-jaw-rearrested-and-sent-straight-to-mile-ii-prison/>

⁸¹ <http://us.blastingnews.com/world/2016/05/president-jammeh-confirms-the-death-in-custody-of-solo-sandeng-won-t-launch-investigation-00943573.html>

⁸² <http://www.voanews.com/a/gambia-executions/1496805.html>

⁸³ <http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/gambia-increased-monetary-deposit-requirements-for-election-candidates/>

⁸⁴ <http://www.wathi.org/debat-du-mois/contributions/holding-political-parties-accountable-should-it-be-the-duty-of-the-iec/>

⁸⁵ <http://www.panapress.com/Gambian-President-Jammeh-sacks-over-20-civil-servants--13-449989-17-lang1-index.html>

Gambia as an Islamic State in the tail end of December 2015 and the withdrawal of Gambia from the Commonwealth in 2013⁸⁶ and the ICC in 2016⁸⁷ were all seen by the diaspora as Jammeh abusing state power.

Finally, Jammeh's economic activities and alleged corruption practices have also been a trigger for diaspora political mobilization. The evidence from netnography suggests that many activists were concerned with Jammeh's wealth. Although accusations by activist were not substantiated at the time, a recent investigation by Ministry of Justice in the new government confirms such charges. In a press conference in May 2017, the minister informed the public that a court order was obtained to freeze Jammeh's assets⁸⁸ following a preliminary investigation that suggests that Jammeh stole \$50 million Dalasis from government coffers. Such revelation vindicated the activists and at the same time shows that Jammeh's and the juntas reasons for overthrowing the then government of Jawara on corruption charges were in contradiction to his actions.

The above triggers have been seen by the diaspora as justification to intervene in Gambian politics. The evidence from netnography shows that diaspora engage in such with the belief that people in Gambia were fearful of political repression from the regime and therefore, they were speaking for the repressed population at home even though they used terms like "cowards" to refer to the oppressed citizens they claim to be fighting for. This notion resonates with the normative liberal interventionism approach which justifies state intervention in other countries when such state failed to provide good governance and democratic practices (Duffield et al., 2013, Duffield, 2010). In Gambian context it is not states that are intervening in the domestic politics of the Gambia, but Gambian citizens residing abroad. However, (Koinova, 2009) argues that diaspora when socialized in liberal democratic settings tend to be sympathetic to homeland politics.

5.4 Diaspora relation structure: The internal politics within the diaspora

⁸⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/03/gambia-quits-commonwealth-yahya-jammeh>

⁸⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/26/gambia-becomes-latest-african-nation-to-quit-international-criminal-court>

⁸⁸ <http://www.africanews.com/2017/05/23/exiled-jammeh-s-assets-frozen-accused-of-stealing-over-50m-state-funds//>

(Koinova, 2012, p. 100) argued that "regardless of how strong original homelands aspire to govern their populations abroad, influential diaspora individuals, institutions, and networks enjoy a relative autonomy vis-à-vis their homeland". I further argue the presence of such autonomy and within the diaspora activists have created challenges for their mobilization vis-à-vis towards to homeland. She differentiated three form of freedom: Powerful individual, institutions and networks. Powerful people are those that have made their "professional success without participation in homeland business politics, or academic networks and enjoy official legal status in another state". Institutions according to Koinova have different autonomy from individuals. Their independence stems from "their ability to solicit funds, instrumentalize interests and frame meanings vis-à-vis homeland politics". For instance, Gambian diaspora online radios such as Freedom, Gainako, Fatu Network etc and news sites such as Sidi Sanneh blogpost, are autonomous political entrepreneurs seeking regime change in Gambia (Koinova, 2012). The final category, networks she posited are the "most questionable and difficult to discern, not least because networks span diaspora circle, homeland, host lands, international organizations and other countries' context where diaspora reside"(Koinova, 2012). She added that the advent of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc) have further blurred the difficulty to distinguish networks as information has been spreading instantly throughout networks, and symbols have been evoked for mobilization purposes. She further added that networks mostly rely on "information" and "symbolic" functions to persuade and socialize other members of the network, while parts of the network also exercises "leverage" to influence powerful actors while other areas of the network are unlikely to do so"(Koinova, 2012). She concludes that "not all parts of networks are equal in strength and nor are they equally exposed to direct intervention from the home state"(ibid). This characterization of networks depicts the Gambian diaspora activists. From the Gambia L the activists have created various organizations and branches in US and Europe to internationalize Gambian politics.

The evidence gathered from mostly netnography shows that the activists even though they share an overall goal of regime change, differed in the means to achieving such goal. I group the individual activists into three broad groups: *The Pacifist, by any means necessary and the warmongers*. However, it should be noted that such a grouping was done based on the discussions of several events that were taking shape in the Gambia, particularly the December

30th, 2014, attempted coup. In some instances, some CSOs are group based on the mission statement of the organization.

The first group the 'pacifists' were individuals that believe in the procedural democracy (election) as means to effect regime change. They believe that through supporting the political parties at home and exposing the government's human rights and political repression Gambians will eventually defeat the tyranny. This group also believed in reconciliation as a means to achieving a proper democratic setting and not one that will create conflict. Their activities online include preaching peace, speaking against false reports, etc.

The second group or what I called the '*by any means necessary*' group were more focus on Jammeh leaving office even through the use of unconventional means such as military coups or popular uprising. Unlike the pacifists, they have less trust in the political institution of the country under Jammeh. However, this does not mean that the pacifist entirely trusts in the electoral process. This very group supported the 30th December 2014 attack and also the April 2016 protest that led to the death of Solo Sandeng and the subsequent arrest of the UDP executive. Groups such as DUGA DC and media houses such as Gainako and Fatu Radio can be group here. In fact, DUGA DC in March 2016 planned 'Homecoming and Mobilization,' a protest movement that was to mobilize Gambians at home to take to the streets and demand regime change as was the case in the Arab Spring According to the group on their GoFundMe account⁸⁹

After 21 years of activism, advocacy and sensitization from the diaspora. DUGA is calling on Gambians, all over the world to put all hands on deck we mobilize our citizens in The Gambia. We call to action, all concerned citizens to join as we embark on a peaceful quest for democracy in The Gambia. Please help fund our efforts by obtaining the name of an Ambassador in your area (worldwide).

Interesting, although cannot be substantiated, DUGA started fund raising in March 2016 and a month later the first public protest to demand for electoral reform led by Solo Sandeng was

⁸⁹ <https://www.gofundme.com/dugahomecoming>

staged. One of the informants in Gambia told me that Solo was working with some member of the diaspora without going further. Although it will be too premature to point to DUGA DC, but evidence from an interview suggest that the group had a clandestine movement in Gambia

We had set up secret groups on the ground and did a lot of leafletting among other things. We had some of people on the ground go for training on issues surrounding activism etc. (Informant 1, 2017 email interview)

The final group or the 'warmongers' are activists that believe the only means to uproot Jammeh was through violence. They did not believe in election but like the 'any means necessary' group, think that through mass public protest and military intervention from external forces Jammeh could be overthrown. I must say that this small group where the extreme activists who have lost all hope in any peaceful means of regime change. Prominent among this group is the National Transition Council of the Gambia (NTCG). The group which was formed in late 2012 following the execution of the death row inmates, threatened to carry out "armed rebellion" in the country. The leader of the group Sheik Sidia Bayo a Gambian born in France was continually reported to be preparing military intervention in Gambia from Senegal. However, he was expelled from Senegal in 2015⁹⁰ by Senegalese government after his men severely caused body harm to Amadou Samba a closed ally to then President Jammeh. He was equally accused by the Senegalese government of his involvement in the 30th December attempt to overthrow the Jammeh regime.

Although these three broad group of activist existed, the means to achieving their goals even though contributed to the dynamics of the internal diaspora politics has less to do with general issues that confronted the diaspora, particularly the diaspora organizations. I observed that the networked nature of the diaspora and the different interests and positionality created some visible tensions. However, this does not mean that there was no collaboration between the various organizations. I have shown above how the different groups have come together to organize a joint protest or even seminars. For instance, within the diaspora network political party surrogates from UDP, PDOIS, GDC whose primary interest was to advance their party interest.

⁹⁰ <http://allafrica.com/stories/201512142136.html>

The most apparent disagreement was between PDOIS surrogates and UDP. The actions by the surrogates according to an informant while dissecting the parties involved in the networked argued that the political party proxies "prolonged the struggle against Jammeh" (Informant 5, interview).

"I think what most of you failed to understand though is that we had the "struggle" and then we also had partisan political militants all within the same movement. Totally two different agendas. Go to Facebook and see how those two different camps are relating to each other now - with Jammeh was gone"

While the above quotation has to deal with the broader network, the organizations also had their own issues. For instance, over the course of the struggle to remove Jammeh, numerous organizations were formed with the same aims sometimes in the same country. STGDP although different in its outlook to facilitate opposition unity has similar goals with MRDG. Similarly, all these different groups have tried in many instances to form an umbrella body that will strengthen their positions, but none has lasted long. Although one can argue that CSAG has stood the test of time, the organization's constituency was contested and thus reduce the group into releasing statements and also filing cases in ECOWAS court. Another example is CORDEG, which was formed in 2013 to bring all the anti-Jammeh activists including political parties failed few months after it was launch at the Raleigh meeting. The first party to leave the committee was the GMC and later followed by GDAC. Although the real reason for CORDEG breaking up cannot be substantiated, it might have to do with issues of electing the executive body and the process employed.

The other issues that confronted the diaspora have to do with matters related to young people and also women. For instance, Gambia Youth Union was created in response to the low level of youth representatives in the diaspora organizations. Women, although youths have played a critical part where also highly underrepresented in the organization. I observed the reason why young people and women were under-represented is due to the nature of organized politics in Gambia. Young people and females are always pushed to the back.

The issue of Radios has also contributed to the internal politics within the diaspora. Monitoring the communications online, one notices the rivalry that exists between them. I mentioned before that Freedom Radio been the oldest served as the voice of the anti-Jammeh activist before the emergence of Fatu Network and Gainako. However, the rise of Fatu Network created some tension between her and Pa Nderry of Freedom Radio. In one of her response to Pa Nderry, Camara claimed that Pa Nderry is obsessed with her to the extent that he can kill her⁹¹ I argue that the difference between these two is more economic than political. Fatu who was a close allied to president Jammeh command a great crowd both in Gambia and in the diaspora. Unlike Pa Nderry, she is a trained journalist that have worked in media and for the government as well as US Embassy in Gambia. Her connection to the country gave her leverage to dictate diaspora media agenda even though Pa Nderry was there for the longest. The coming of Fatu coincided with disgruntlement within the diaspora about the false news and personal attacks that Freedom has been embarking on. Most of the people that used to have radio show migrated to Fatu Network.

The internal politics within the Gambian diaspora, as indicated above, has much more to do with positionality (power) within the diaspora network rather than one's quality. Power within diaspora network is derived from the social position that node occupy (Koinova, 2012, Castells, 2009, Castells, 2011). The media institutions within the global diaspora politics have wielded a considerable amount of power because of their proximity to information and how they have used that information to socialize other members of the diaspora into mobilizing for regime change. Although this information is vital for their overall goal, it has also created some tensions among the activists.

5.5 Diaspora and Homeland Politics: Relationship with Opposition Political Parties

In this section, I shift the discussion from the activities of the diaspora in the host countries to their operations in the homeland although a thin line separates the two. Specifically, I look at the

⁹¹ <https://soundcloud.com/thegambianquirer/fatu-camara-pa-nderry-is-so-obsessed-with-me-that-he-could-kill-me>

relationship between the diaspora and opposition political parties in the Gambia in their efforts to facilitate opposition alliance. I argue that the presence of the political parties in Gambia provided the diaspora and opportunity structure to engage the regime in a non-violent manner directly. I observed that the relationship between the two have experience ruptures and continuities over the years, nonetheless, they were finally able to reach an agreement after 15 years. I posit that the formation of coalition 2016, is not entirely the efforts of the diaspora, but also due to local actors and the changing nature of Gambian politics played some part too. Nonetheless, the funds raised by the diaspora through GDF were highly utilized in the campaign that removed Jammeh.

The literature on transnational activities of diaspora networks shows that a 'strong' link exists between diaspora and political parties in the homeland (Waterbury, 2006), particularly when parties intend to leverage on the opportunities the diaspora can provide. For instance, part of the literature as mentioned above shows that diasporas mobilized to fund political parties, support protest movements, engage in online activism, lobby host countries and IGOs to take action against the homeland, participate in post-conflict reconciliation process or support conflicts (Vertovec, 2005, Kuhlmann, 2010). The literature on leverage politics, which I argue informed the relationship between diaspora activists and the opposition in the Gambia, notes that "activist in advocacy networks are concerned with political effectiveness. Their definition of efficiency often includes some policy change by target actors"(Keck and Sikkink, 1998). They further noted that in order to bring policy change, "networks need to pressure and persuade most potent actors" using leverage. They observed two forms of leverage: material and moral advantage. In the Gambian case, even though the moral force was used, what informed diaspora relationship with opposition on the ground was material leverage. This has to do with issue of money and other resources that can benefit the opposition parties win election. For instance, I observed that the targeted policy change for the diaspora activists was to have the opposition form an alliance to face the regime of Jammeh. Evidence from both interviews and netnography suggest this. Both STGDP and GDF were created at different stages of the struggle to facilitate the financing of opposition.

In the Gambia, the relationship between the diaspora activists and political parties can be traced as far back 1996 during the first presidential election(Saine, 2009). Although diaspora involvement was not intense in the sense that it mostly took place on Gambia-L and evidence to

substantiate their financial contribution in the 1996 election is had to come by, it paves the way for a greater involvement of the diaspora in the ensuing years. (Saine, 2009) Observed that diaspora Gambians started playing an active role in elections in 2001 with the intention to influence the outcome of the 2001 presidential election. He maintains that they did this by attempting to "broker and build opposition alliances of all opposition political parties" and by "raising the needed funds to support the alliance."

2001 is important in this discussion not only for the fact that the diaspora started engaging in the electoral process, but a significant change happened in the Gambia. The unbanning of all the former parties that were banned with decree 89 by the military (Saine, 2009). These parties include NCP and the old ruling party, PPP. The unbanning of the former parties increased the opposition political parties in the country at the time to five working groups (PPP, NRP, PDOIS, UDP, NCP,). Although other parties like Gambia Peoples Party (GPP) were unbanned, it subsequently disappeared in the political scene.

Subsequently, several meetings and forums were organized in the US and UK by STGDP and MRDG respectively in the period leading to October 2001 presidential election. The meetings that brought together activists and opposition politicians were meant to forge and help improve discussion among them and in doing so help build a stronger alliance(Saine, 2009). Although these meetings and forums were crucial, the set objective of forming an all alliance did not materialize primary due to personality difference of the opposition politicians. Consequently, a limited opposition alliance led by UDP comprising of PPP and GPP was attained. However, it 's hard to substantiate whether such was as a direct result of diaspora engagement. What is clear is that UDP as a party was formed by members of parties banned by the regime in 1996 from GPP, NCP, and PPP. Thus, for UDP to form an alliance with PPP and GPP was evident. According to an informant,

While I was in detention in 1996, I sent a letter to my wife and all the PPP youth leaders to rally all our party structures and support Ousainou Darboe since our party was banned. Since then the PPP has always advocated for coalition and for 22 years, we have never put forward a

candidate because we believed that the only way to bring about change was through unity.(informant 10, 2017, interview)

Though NCP failed to join the alliance on rumors that Jammeh paid the NCP leader at the time Sheriff Dibba not to accede to the coalition. Nonetheless, Dibba was appointed as speaker of the parliament after the parliamentary election of 2002 and later fired by Jammeh. The other opposition parties NRP and PDOIS contested individually all losing to Jammeh.

However, the sustained diaspora engagement over the years increased the leverage they had over the frontline politicians in the period leading to the 2006 elections STGDP and other diaspora CSOs intensified their engagement and subsequently brokered an alliance in 2006. According to an informant

Save the Gambia Democracy Project was the organization that facilitated the NADD coalition, over the years the group has led partnership with other agencies bringing political parties to engage in talks, like the Raleigh conference that was organized couple of years ago. Again, members of the organization stayed very much involved in a leadership role that contributed in online social media activism and raising the funds that finally gave us the victory in Dec 2016.(Informant 5, email interview)

Following the unsuccessful efforts to rally the opposition in 2001, STGDP and other diaspora organizations in 2005 brokered an alliance of five political parties (UDP, NRP, PDOIS, NDAM and PPP) in preparation for the 2006 presidential election. Two reasons can be advanced for why the diaspora was able to broker an alliance. The first has to do with two structural changes in Gambia's electoral process. The first was the Commonwealth-brokered MOU facilitated by the former Nigerian President Obasanjo. "The MOU sought primarily to create the appropriate environment for and orderly vote, which it achieved"(Saine, 2009, p. 118). The second structural issue had to do with amending the electoral act. Jammeh and his dominated parliament in order to avoid second round of voting changed the electoral law to first past the post system. According to Saine (2009), this was "reaction to his narrow 53% margin of victory to his leading contender, Ousainou Darboe." These two structural changes forced the disjointed opposition to

re-evaluate their chances and at the same time strengthen diaspora political activism (Saine, 2009)

The formation of NADD generated high hopes primarily due to its potential threat to the regime. However, two months before the presidential election in 2006 NADD broke down (informant 10, 2017 interview). The collapse of NADD can be attributed to two factors: regime response and leadership crises with the opposition. Firstly, while NADD generated excitement within the diaspora community as well as in Gambia, it posed a significant threat to Jammeh, who decided to put an end to the alliance. The first blow came when the APRC filed a petition in the courts to expel NADD members from parliament. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of APRC and Hamat Bah, Sidia Jatta, Kemeseng Jammeh and Halifa Sallah all executive members of NADD lost their seats in parliament. However, following a by-election, Jatta, Sallah and Jammeh regained their seats under NADD ticket. Only Bah lost his seat. He attributed his defeat to voter buying in his constituency. The second blow according to Saine (2009) came on 15 November when three executive members of NADD (O J, Halifa and Hamat Bah) were arrested by the regime for criticizing the government.

The second factor that led to the collapse of NADD had to do with a relationship within the executive committee. Although NADD was formed, no leadership was identified during the process this was a shortcoming of STGDP. In February the UDP leader Ousainou Darboe and other executive members including NADD chairman Assan Musa Camara resigned from NADD. Subsequently, Hamat Bah of NRP also quit. Darboe's resignation according to many political commentators has to do with the issue of 'leadership.' Although Darboe initially agreed to support any candidate, he did not agree on the selection process advanced by Sallah and OJ.

Following Darboe's resignation, STGDP's partner wrote a letter to Darboe pointing why he should continue with the discussion.

STGDP would like to work with you and the entire NADD Executive to find common ground that will ameliorate the problems. For the sake of our fathers and heritage, let us all make the tough decisions that will give us a chance to bring an end to the Jammeh tyranny. If we fail to do that,

history will judge us harshly, and no blame game or shifting of responsibility will suffice. The headlines will stay with us for the rest of our lives: the coalition partners went their separate ways because of their inability to select a leader (email correspondence STGDP to Darboe, 2006).

Although UDP and NRP resigned from NADD, the remaining parties continued and contested the election. UDP and NRP formed an alliance with Darboe as the presidential candidate, and NADD selected Sallah to lead the coalition. For the second time, STGDP and the diaspora CSOs have failed in their efforts to broker an all opposition alliance. I argue that in dealing with the opposition parties, the diaspora at that time while promising finances, did not fully utilize their leverage on the parties. Around this time as seen in the letter sent to Darboe, their argument was morally based. For instance "Breaking away is not an option. It is only heartbreaking to Gambians who have traveled with you so far to see the end of Jammeh rule."

While over the years, the opposition was divided into Darboe and Sallah camps. Darboe who is from UDP and the leading opposition to Jammeh believed in a party led coalition while Sallah from PDOIS think the best way of selecting a candidate was through a primary where political parties send representatives to elect a unifying candidate. These two different positions for the longest have been the obstacle to opposition alliance⁹². It has also served as a basis for diaspora disagreement, particularly between the UDP and PDOIS surrogates. However, in 2016, following Darboe's arrests and subsequent sentencing by Jammeh's regime the traditional opposition parties were finally able to broker an alliance through a convention⁹³. The process of forming a coalition started as far back as 2013 when a meeting was organized in Raleigh, North Carolina to bring all the opposition parties together again⁹⁴.

Although the formation of the 2016 coalition cannot be entirely linked to the diaspora, evidence suggests that they have played a significant role in the whole process. Other factors include the jailing of UDP supporters and growing youth dissatisfaction in the country. While the diaspora

⁹² http://www.gambia.dk/forums/topic.asp?ARCHIVE=true&TOPIC_ID=13587

⁹³ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-10-10/gambia-opposition-parties-agree-to-form-coalition-ahead-of-vote>

⁹⁴ <http://kibaaro.com/gambians-gear-up-for-national-conference/>

was pushing from abroad, young Gambians mostly university students were also pushing for the opposition to unite. For instance in March 2016, the Social Science Students organize a seminar on the theme “*The 2016 Elections and the Way Forward*” The meeting which was targeted at all political parties including the ruling APRC, even though they did not show up, turned the meeting into an opposition affair were the students challenged the leaders to form a coalition. In fact, it was common knowledge in the Gambia after the 2011 election that the only way to remove Jammeh was through a coalition. In the diaspora, In addition to the ability of those associated with political parties demonstrating the courage to push their parties to abandon orthodoxies of wanting coalition on their terms, the fund raising stream of the diaspora was critical.

In 2001, the diaspora started raising funds through STGDP to support opposition parties in Gambia. The fund mobilization strategy of the diaspora was directed both and the diaspora community as well as funding agencies. For instance, in 2006 when NADD was formed the diaspora organized series of fund raising events. They wrote open proposals targeting institutions. The financing proposal “*Rebuilding Democracy in The Gambia: The Impending 2006 Presidential Elections*” STGDP requested \$200,000 to support NADD. However, it is not clear whether such funding was obtained, but it shows the resolute of the diaspora as fund-raising machinery for the opposition. Equally, series of fund raising activities were carried out in Europe and the US targeting the Gambian community. In one of the discussion forums on Gambia-L, one of the activists in Sweden reported on collecting 3500 SEK from an event organized in Stockholm.

Email correspondence between NADD executive and the diaspora also revealed how much dependent the opposition politician were on the financial contribution of the diaspora. For instance, this email requesting for 150 000 (One hundred and fifty thousand) Dalasis to contest the Kombo-East by-election is one of many emails sent to STGDP

Dear Compatriots,

The budget for the Kombo East by-election is attached for your attention. This election is critical in that a victory will boost the moral of NADD supporters. It is the last by-election before the presidential election.

Today is nomination day.

Even though NADD, as intended, failed, an excellent source of finance for the individual opposition parties came from the diaspora. I was not able to accurately establish the amount that opposition parties received from their diaspora surrogates as well as that of CSOs, due to the fact the Gambian oppositions are destitute at keeping records.

Most recently, with the advent of crowd sourcing websites such as GoFundme⁹⁵ and the emergence of GDF, an enormous amount of money was raised for the opposition both as individual parties and as a collective when they formed a coalition. In raising funds, GDF collaborates with online media houses and organize fund raising drives. An obvious example was when the 2016 coalition was formed. GDF held a three-day fund raising drive from November 11 to 13th⁹⁶. I had the opportunity to monitor Fatu Network on Facebook Live raising funds. I observed that within 3 hours, she was able to raise close to \$8000 from Gambians all over. This willingness for the diaspora to contribute excitedly was linked to the fact that the opposition had finally united to face Jammeh.

At the end of the drive, GDF was able to raise \$71 107 on Gofundme⁹⁷. It was also noted that a lot of money was contributed through the Western Union and some directly sent to the accounts of identified individuals by GDF. The amount provided by different diaspora ranges from \$10 to \$2000. At the end of the drive, GDF sent a total value of \$102, 359 which amounts to about Four million Gambian Dalasis⁹⁸. The table below shows the sum of money that was sent to the coordinator of the Coalition 2016. The GDF in a press release sent to all the media houses.

Table 5: Money sent to Coalition 2016 by GDF

⁹⁵ <https://www.gofundme.com/>

⁹⁶ <http://gainako.com/gdf-opposition-coalition-grand-fundraising-nov-11-12-13th-2016/>

⁹⁷ <https://www.gofundme.com/2016-gambia-coalition>

⁹⁸ <http://gainako.com/gdf-release-details-funds-donated-coalition-gambian-diaspora/>

Date	Amount Sent	Sending fees	Amount + Fees	Amount in Dalasis	Money Recipient
10/27/2016	\$5,000	\$125	\$5,125	D210,000	Aja Tambajang
10/28/2016	\$9,155	\$274	\$9,429	D384,510	Aja Tambajang
11/8/2016	\$15,000	\$375	\$15,375	D630,000	Aja Tambajang
11/15/2016	\$10,000	\$300	\$10,300	D420,000	Aja Tambajang
11/15/2016	\$5,000	\$150	\$5,150	D210,00	Aja Tambajang
11/17/2016	\$8,335	\$208	\$8,543	D350,070	Aja Tambajang
11/21/2016	\$16,300	\$407	\$16,707	D687,045	Aja Tambajang
11/21/2016	\$5,000	\$150	\$5,150	D210,000	Aja Tambajang
11/21/2016	\$2,100	\$0	\$2100	D88,200	Aja Tambajang
11/21/2016	\$24,000	\$480	\$24,480	D1,011,600	Alhagi Darboe
Total	\$99,890	\$2,269	\$102,359	D4,201,425	

Source: GDF/ <http://gainako.com/gdf-release-details-funds-donated-coalition-gambian-diaspora/>

The fund raising drive of the diaspora was indeed a game changer in the 2016 elections. The monies sent to enable the coalition to organize an active campaign traveling all around the country in 10 days. Also, a group of the politicians went to the borders to collect the voter's card of people believed not to be Gambian. According to one of my informants in Gambia,

We sent a team to Casamance, to exchange rice with their voters' cards. Jammeh used these people in the previous elections to rig the elections. (Informant 7, 2017 interview)

In the last elections, Jammeh was accused by the opposition for importing voters from the Jolas of Casamance. In fact, in rejecting the votes after a week of conceding defeat, Jammeh blamed his lost on the 300 000 voters that did not vote and that a new election will be organized to make sure every Gambian voted. Though I cannot substantiate the claims by the opposition or prof that of Jammeh, however, what is clear is that there was voter apathy as only about 60% of the electorate turned out to vote a figure lower than the 2011 votes⁹⁹. Voter apathy in the election can be linked to the thousands of Gambians that migrated between 2011 and 2016. A high number of young people left the Gambia to seek for economic opportunities in Europe. Another reason that can be associated with voter apathy is that fact that many Gambians mostly those

⁹⁹ <http://gainako.com/gambia-elections-results-2016/>

living in the urban areas left for Senegal in anticipation of a violent political campaign. Some were internally displaced during the election period. For instance, a friend informed me that he left Gambia to avoid the possible violence from the election as the environment was very tense. Similarly, an arson attack was carried out at Jammeh's party headquarters¹⁰⁰ in August three months before the presidential election. Unconfirmed reports from some segment of the diaspora activist claim that the room that was burnt down was housing additional voters card that Jammeh planned to use to win the election. Interestingly, in the whole building, only one room was burnt down. This very act raised suspicion among the diaspora committee.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown how the diaspora activists work leveraging on political opportunities at their disposal both in the host country and the homeland to advanced their agenda of regime change. I have shown that the Gambian political diaspora as we know it today started with Gambia-L from which new organizations and media houses grew to carry and sustained two decades of anti-Jammeh politics. I have indicated how the diaspora utilizes the internet to mobilize and also the challenges associated with that too.

¹⁰⁰ <http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/aprc-party-office-burnt>

Chapter 6: Conclusion: Restoring Democracy in the Gambia?

6.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis. It starts by discussing the main aim of the diaspora CSOs to restore democracy in Gambia. It does this by discussing the 2016 presidential election that led to the defeat of Jammeh. This election shows that the diaspora played a crucial role in driving regime change. The second part discusses the other part of the research question "how diaspora activism promotes democracy." While it acknowledges that the role of the diaspora in regime change can be substantiated, their efforts in the democratic promotion are not apparent. Here, I used Mamdani to argue that the diaspora were more interested in regime change than the consolidation of democracy in Gambia. The final part looks the implication of the thesis, its limitations and suggests areas for future research.

6.1 The 2016 Elections

On December 1 2016, in a three-way race, Yahya Jammeh shockingly lost the Gambian presidential election to "newcomer" Adama Barrow, candidate for "Coalition 2016". Jammeh's unexpected defeat in the polls ended his 22 years rule on the tiny West African country. However, what was more shocking was his concession speech. The speech aired on national TV (GRTS) a day after the polls, stormed the world by surprise. Alex Vines wrote that "Gambia's election result is a sign of democracy advancing in Africa"(Vines, 2016). Many analysts and political commentators were concerned with whether Jammeh will accept the outcome of the results or not. Here, I briefly discuss the Gambia 2016 election focusing on the reasons why Jammeh lost. I posited that immediate events such as amendment of the electoral act in 2015; splinter within the APRC, Solo Sandeng's electoral reform protest, diaspora facilitated coalition formation contributed to Jammeh losing the elections. Additionally, the poor economic situation, which led to growing youth disgruntlement and continuing state repression and human rights violations also contributed to his defeat.

The precursor to what becomes a series of miscalculated steps by Jammeh and his APRC regime was the amendment of the electoral act in 2015. This move by Jammeh and his APRC dominated National Assembly was seen by many as a means to stifle electoral politics and subsequently turn Gambia into a one party state¹⁰¹. While Jammeh and his party claim that they were responding to the call by the opposition to reform the electoral laws, the changes favored his party as he has the advantage of incumbency. The new amendments to the Election Act increased the deposit for presidential candidates from D10, 000 (appx¹⁰² \$250) to D50, 000 (appx 12,500). It also increased deposits for National Assembly candidates from D5000 (\$126) to D50, 000 (\$1260) and local government candidates such as Mayors and councilors from D2, 500 (\$60) to D25, 000 (appx \$600). The financial aspect of the amendment was not received well by the opposition nor was it by the Gambian diaspora. "To many, the new fees set by the act will further shrink the political space, kill "multiparty democracy" and discourage people from vying for elected offices, thereby further entrenching undemocratic practices"((Jaw, 2015). The APRC argued that elections should not be cheap for everyone.¹⁰³ Although the financial aspect was controversial, the amendment also catered for counting on the spot. I argue this very provision made it difficult for Jammeh to change the results even if he had the intention to do so. On polling day, each political party has agents that represent the party from voting to counting. The amendments although stifled opposition political parties, it provided them an opportunity to reevaluate and subsequently agreed to form coalition 2016.

Another factor that can be attributed to why Jammeh lost the election was an internal split within his party. In April 2013, Jammeh expelled a number of his party members from APRC. One of the expelled members was the former APRC National Assembly member for Kantora, Mama Kandeh¹⁰⁴. Kandeh later formed his political party Gambia Democratic Congress (GDC) in 2016 few months before the election. Unlike the traditional opposition parties that maintained a following, Kandeh primarily targeted APRC supporters, especially the disgruntle militants. His political strategy of attracting APRC party members subsequently created political bickering

¹⁰¹ <https://gambiabeat.wordpress.com/2015/09/14/gambias-new-electoral-law-meant-to-create-one-party-state/>

¹⁰² Approximately

¹⁰³ <http://www.wathi.org/debat-du-mois/contributions/holding-political-parties-accountable-should-it-be-the-duty-of-the-iec/>

¹⁰⁴ <http://standard.gm/site/2016/06/29/aprc-expelled-mamma-kandeh-reminds-mayor-colley/>

between him and the National Mobiliser of the APRC who accused Kandeh of betraying APRC and the President Jammeh¹⁰⁵ also calling him a member of APRC still. Similarly, Kandeh's campaign was also interested in attracting people wary of Jammeh and the traditional opposition parties. I also observed that the rise of Kandeh and his popularity forced the opposition parties and their diaspora supporters to attack Kandeh's personality or even his intention¹⁰⁶. Some accused him of been supported by Jammeh. In November I wrote a blog post warning the diaspora and the political pundits that Mama Kandeh can upset the elections¹⁰⁷. In fact, he did. Kandeh came up with 17% of the results just a few months after establishing his party.

While Kandeh splintered from the APRC, a new candidate rose from the opposition side. For the first time in Gambia's history was a female presidential candidate-Dr. Isatou Touray. Touray's aspiration was cut short by Coalition 2016¹⁰⁸. However, I argue that her coming into the political scene as a highly educated, female candidate was a threat both to the opposition and the ruling party. Touray's campaign attracted a lot of university students who subsequently created WhatsApp groups to help with her campaign. Her campaign while breaking the gender barriers also strengthened cleavage politics between the intellectuals and the rest of society. In fact, she was compared to Kandeh who was accused of not graduating from university by the diaspora and therefore cannot lead Gambia. Touray coming into the limelight is an obvious example of diaspora involvement in Gambian politics. Her candidacy was sponsored by the feminists' wing of the diaspora mostly in Norway who felt that the opposition needed to rally around a single candidate.

Events such as the December 30th attempted coup by the diaspora although put Gambia and Jammeh's regime in the limelight, Jammeh's repression of the internal political parties particularly the UDP created a huge interest in the December 2016 elections. Two events led by members of UDP are important here. The first was the standoff between the UDP party and the police at Fass Njago Choi. The impasse was as result of the police denying the party permit to embark on a nationwide tour to engage with their supporters. Ultimately after two days of

¹⁰⁵ <http://standard.gm/site/2016/07/01/mamma-kandeh-betrayed-president-jammeh/>

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.freedomnewspaper.com/gambia-is-mama-kandeh-genuine/>

¹⁰⁷ <https://dcampaigner.wordpress.com/2016/11/14/mama-kandeh-can-upset-the-presidential-election/>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3908728/Gambias-female-presidential-candidate-bows-out.html>

discussion, the party was finally allowed to carry on. This incident as I argued in (Jaw, 2015) ended "fear" politics that have characterized the Gambian opposition for two decades. The second incident was Solo Sandeng's protest for electoral reforms. As noted above, 2015 amendments to the electoral act and the age limit in the constitution that barred politicians like UDP leader Darboe (65) was seen as unfair and unconstitutional. Hence, Solo, with support from the diaspora mobilized and interparty youth committee and embarked on a little key protest demanding for electoral reforms. His protest, which sparks series of other protests by UDP was heavily repressed by the security forces. Solo was arrested and subsequently tortured to death. On April 16, 2016, two days after the protest, Darboe and his UDP executive embarked on another protest demanding Solo's body death or alive. Darboe and 50 members of his party were arrested, and subsequently jailed¹⁰⁹. This created a lot of international attention but also created a lot of dissatisfaction within the Gambian and the diaspora. Solo, a youth leader, was highly respected. The news of his death further started civil disobedience among the young people in Gambia not members of any political party. In fact, his death led to an immediate campaign by #NewGambia Movement that demanded that #JammehMUSTGO. This particular hashtag becomes viral and subsequently was the theme for the 2016 election.

. In October 2016, the parties finally agreed to unite and present a single candidate to face Jammeh. The process of selecting this single candidate like in 2001, 2006 and 2011 created some difficulties. Eventually, they agreed on a convention as the best means to choose a unifying candidate¹¹⁰. However, Mama Kandeh and Dr. Touray did not participate. While Kandeh blamed it on the unfair nature of the convention¹¹¹ that is parties with no political structure in Gambia had an equal number of representatives of the parties with structures on the ground. Dr. Touray, on the other hand, felt she was intentionally pushed out of the convention¹¹². However, following a series of meetings and petitions she eventually joined the coalition. Finally, the coalition was formed by seven political parties (PDOIS, UDP, NRP, PPP, GMC, NCP, and GPDP) and one independent candidate (Dr. Isatou Touray)

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36853700>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-10-10/gambia-opposition-parties-agree-to-form-coalition-ahead-of-vote>

¹¹¹ <http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/gdc-explains-reasons-for-opting-out-of-coalition-talks>

¹¹² <http://www.foroyaa.gm/archives/12684>

As indicated earlier, in addition to the internal push for coalition formation, the diaspora also pushed from abroad. The weight of their financial contribution was very noticeable. The diaspora facilitated both the convention and all other expenses that the opposition needed from the funds raised by GDF.

6.1.2 The Campaign and Electoral

The campaign period started following nomination of candidates between 7th-to 10 November 2016. The first candidate to be nominated was Mama Kandeh of the GDC. He was followed by Adama Barrow representing Coalition 2016 and finally Jammeh. The campaign period was from November 16th to 29th.

Jammeh, who was seeking a fifth term in office, focused his campaign on the developments he brought to Gambia over 22 years. He promised free university education and health care. Mama Kandeh's campaign focused on reconciliation and promise to bring about development and pledged to end the illegal migration to Europe through Job creation. Barrow's campaign was entirely based on discrediting Jammeh particularly on the human rights issues, and repression of the public and a promised to restore democracy in Gambia. While all these parties seemed to have different campaign messages ideologically, there was not much difference between the parties. The election according to many activists was about Jammeh and nothing else¹¹³.

The campaign period was relative peaceful and orderly. I ascribed this to the Chief of Defense Staff of the Gambia National Army who went around the country in October warning his troops against intimidating voters. Similarly, he cautioned against "tribal politics" that such will not be tolerated no matter where it is coming from¹¹⁴. Despite, such attempt by the military head, three journalists were arrested, detained and later released¹¹⁵.

International election observers from the AU, OIC and local observers were allowed to monitor the election. However, while ECOWAS boycotted the polls for the second time (2011) on the premise that the it won't be fair¹¹⁶, EU was denied access by the government¹¹⁷.

¹¹³ <https://dcampaigner.wordpress.com/2016/11/22/why-gambian-youth-should-vote-for-change/>

¹¹⁴ <https://observergm.com/cds-warns-against-tribal-politics-in-gambia/>

¹¹⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/11/16/gambia-three-journalists-arrested-campaign-begins>

¹¹⁶ <http://citizen.co.za/news/news-africa/1361893/ecowas-to-boycott-gambias-presidential-elections/>

Social media notably WhatsApp was heavily utilized by the opposition camps both Kandeh and the coalition. Through this medium, they were able to communicate with a vast number of electorates. As mentioned before, diaspora activists also used the medium to mobilize their immediate families and communities to support the coalition. However, on the day of voting, the regime shut down the internet without warning till the following day¹¹⁸. Many believe that shutting down the internet was a security measure to prevent Gambians from protesting the election results. I also posit that it was a strategy to cut the diaspora from the process. However, the state broadcaster GRTS aired the results announcement. In the end, Jammeh who was poised to win scored 39% of the results, Kandeh 17%, and Barrow was declared winner with 43% of the votes. (See Appendix 2 for full list of the election results)

6.2 Conclusion: Restoring Democracy in Gambia?

It is evident that the diaspora activists through diaspora CSOs have had some degree of influence in their attempt to drive regime change in the Gambia as experienced in the December 2016 presidential election. As the evidence suggests, they have been able to mobilize internally, partner with international human rights organizations to highlight human rights abuses in the Gambia and most importantly, have been an excellent source of finance to the political opposition in the country. As one informant noted, "the diaspora internationalized Gambian politics" (informant 12 2017, interview). Although I cannot entirely substantiate that it was the sole responsibility of the diaspora that brought about opposition unity, nonetheless, it is clear that they were the primary source of funding to the opposition. For instance, GDF the diaspora CSO responsible for fundraising was able to raise about Four million Dalasis during the December 2016 presidential election of which all the money was sent to the coalition to help in their electioneering. They have also raised money to help the opposition organize the convention that gave birth to the coalition.

Leveraging on the opportunities provided by the internet played an integral part in their mobilization effort. From the Gambia-L to the online media houses and most recently the advent

¹¹⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-gambia-election-idUSKBN13D29N>

¹¹⁸ <https://qz.com/850002/gambias-government-has-shut-down-the-internet-on-the-eve-of-elections/>

of new networking and mobilization tools of communication like WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter, the pool of diaspora activists expanded exponentially and in the process fundamentally changed the very nature of politics in The Gambia. However, it should be noted that most of the activist only engage online (clicktivism). The dictator's most potent tool of inducing fear through the control and manipulation of information became untenable. Perhaps more importantly, the politically active diaspora member could wield far more influence by directly engaging his extended family, neighbors, friends and community as a whole. For instance, in November following a series of WhatsApp calls, I convinced my extended family to vote for the coalition even though a great majority preferred the third candidate-Mama Kandeh. It is equally belief that many of the diaspora activists were also able to engage their families and community by extension to coax them into voting for the opposition. One informant (8) sent me some of the tailored messages on Whatsapp and the voice notes sent to his family and close friends in the community. In one of the messages, a friend told him "not worry; they have decided to bring change." This response from his friend although relevant, one cannot entirely direct it at the messages sent by the diaspora. Perhaps the individual already made up his mind as several other factors made people in Gambia to demand regime change. Among the reasons were the poor human rights conditions of the government and political repression, his attack on the Mandinkas¹¹⁹ the growing youth dissatisfaction and increasing emigration out of the country using illegal means¹²⁰, his declaration of Gambia as an Islamic state¹²¹ pushing the 10% Christians as minorities and many other factors including his economic activities. For instance, during the campaign, a young man was quoted singing that if he "sells bread Jammeh sells food if he sells vegetables Jammeh sells vegetable, how does he expect the youth to find work"¹²². Although the video went viral because it was shared by the diaspora, it expresses growing youth dissatisfaction in the country. All these factors might have contributed in Jammeh losing in addition to the diaspora activists fund raising efforts and use of the internet to demystify Jammeh.

¹¹⁹ <http://www.freedomnewspaper.com/7213-2/>

¹²⁰ <https://qz.com/931034/gambias-illegal-migrants-want-to-return-home-after-yahya-jammehs-departure/>

¹²¹ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3357311/Gambia-Islamic-state-says-president.html>

¹²² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_Va9Csh9TE

In this chapter, I have attempted to show the various ways the diaspora engage with homeland politics. I have shown how their strategies evolved from entirely focusing on influencing the host states like the US to put pressure on Jammeh to open up the democratic space. I argue that such efforts although exposes the regime of Jammeh, it failed to garner the needed actions as suggested by the diaspora such as targeted sanctions. As the literature on leverage and linkage suggests, states that have an alternative source of funding tends to resist external pressure to democratize (Levitsky and Way, 2005). Though following the military takeover in 1994, the traditional donors US and UK suspended bilateral aid to the Gambia and levied some sanctions on Gambia. Jammeh turned to Cuba, Venezuela, and Iran as well as the Arab States for support. In the early years, it was reported that he got a lot of support from the former Nigerian dictator Sani Abacha. Even when the EU Gambia's biggest development partner withheld about 30 Million Euros in development aid in 2014, which Jammeh called "chicken change"¹²³. This suggests that even though Jammeh depended on the western donors, he was able to resist their pressure using both religion and pan-Africanism. For instance, the issue of homosexuality was used to counter EU 17¹²⁴ point tasking the government to respect human rights as agreed on in the ACP-EU partnership agreement. In 2014, Jammeh passed the aggravated homosexuality act to criminalize same-sex relationship¹²⁵. His declaration of the Gambia as an Islamic state was also seen as a strategy to leverage on Arab countries for funds. In addition to using religion and culture to counter the EU and the West by extension, Jammeh acquired new development partners- China and Russia¹²⁶. In 2013, Jammeh severed ties with Taiwan¹²⁷ a traditional donor and switched to China in 2016¹²⁸. In a statement from his office, Jammeh argues "This decision has been taken in our strategic national interest"¹²⁹. The decision by Jammeh to established diplomatic ties with China and Russia was perceived by the diaspora as means to curtail Western influence on his regime. China as a donor is belief not to be concerned with human rights and democratic governance issues as the western donors. This strategic move to China and Russia to some extent gave Jammeh some leverage on the EU. For instance, in 2015, Jammeh expelled

¹²³ <http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/jammeh-rejects-european-union-demands>

¹²⁴ <http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/jammeh-rejects-european-union-demands>

¹²⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/tag/gambia-lgbt-rights>

¹²⁶ <http://www.african-defense.com/defense-news/gambia-russia-sign-cooperative-military-agreement/>

¹²⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/15/gambia-severs-diplomatic-ties-taiwan>

¹²⁸ https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/19/world/asia/china-gambia-taiwan-diplomatic-relations.html?_r=0

¹²⁹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24951115>

EU's top diplomat in Gambia¹³⁰ and denied the EU from observing the December 2016 presidential election¹³¹. Though the diaspora claimed influence on EU, Jammeh's diplomatic maneuver undermined the efforts of EU to change the regime.

I have also shown that the diaspora's primary aim was to remove the government of Jammeh and replaced it with a democratic dispensation that was more open and one that guarantees fundamental human rights. From the evidence, human rights abuses were more prominent in their discussion as the need for regime change was anchored on such basis. Such framing also enabled them to form solid alliances with human rights organizations in the West. However, a change of government was believed to be the first step in achieving genuine democracy. While this was evident in the discussion, I observed that the diaspora activists' one-dimensional focus on the human rights forced them to neglect the present democratic dispensation even though it was not as advanced as experience in their host countries. For instance, their lack of mistrust on the electoral commission with series of accusations levied at the chairman of the IEC claiming that he will not declare the coalition winners if people voted for them. After he announced the results, the suddenly switch to singing praises at him and calling him brave. Such attitudes have characterized diaspora engagement with people perceived to be "enabling" the regime. Another example was during the counting of votes. I was part of a panel on the Fatu network analyzing the presidential results. We received many comments accusing the regime of rigging the elections with initial results showing Jammeh leading. Subsequently, Barrow came on top proving that rigging in Gambia's election was not possible at least during counting. In fact, for the first time, the IEC started counting on the spot, an institutional reform that was meant to dismiss the possibilities of vote rigging.

From the evidence, I also observed while the diaspora presents a democratic image, their actions speak differently. This I particularly link to the dynamics within the network organizations. I observed that although party surrogates existed in the diaspora, many of the CSO members were also sympathizers to different parties. They wanted Jammeh gone, internally, they were different and selective to whom they support or not. This created a series of internal conflicts and created

¹³⁰ <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-gambia-eu-expulsion-idUKKBN0OM01J20150606>

¹³¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-gambia-election-idUSKBN13D29N>

diaspora cleavages. For instance, Mama Kandeh, the third candidate received a lot of criticism after he refused to join the coalition even though his party was part of the talks¹³². Kandeh pointed to the “unfair” process of selecting a single candidate.

The thesis attempted to map out how the diaspora work by linking with the literature on the social movement. The research has shown the role the diaspora played during the 2016 election paying particular attention to their fundraising drive as well as their use of the internet both to provide an alternative source of information and at the same time mobilize extensively for regime change. The evidence highlights that funds were disbursed to the opposition, but whether the diaspora was directly responsible for regime change cannot be substantiated, and I refrain from such discussion even though they claim such. As one of my informants argue

It is not a question of having an effect, but it was the activism of the Diaspora that led to the change we witnessed this past December. The Diaspora was able to launch an awareness campaign both at home and abroad using social media, finally coming together as one voice to raise the funding that was necessary, and finally able to convince the parties to get together under a coalition which finally brought down the tyrant

The comment above is contradictory to a discussion I had with a youth activist when I was in Gambia. The activists claim that "nobody liberated her she made the conscious decision to vote against Jammeh" based on what she has observed in Gambia over the period. This two different comments although established that the diaspora was very engage in mobilizing Gambians inside, but how far did that go in influencing people to vote against the regime. In fact, the election result shows that Barrow defeated Jammeh with about 20,000 votes.¹³³

By using a multi-level research design comprising of case study and netnography and gathering great materials (primary and secondary), this thesis has analyzed the general engagement of Gambian diaspora on mobilizing for regime change in Gambia. I have been interested in understanding diaspora engagement from the perspective of the diaspora activists and how such

¹³² <http://gainako.com/mamma-kandeh-dr-isatou-touray-betray-gambians-coalition/>

¹³³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38271480>

has influence regime change in Gambia so as to contribute to the growing literature on diaspora relation with the homeland. I have used social movement theory of political opportunities, mobilization structure and framing as an analytical framework to understand Gambian diaspora engagement.

The explanation on the political prospects indicates that there were both internal and external opportunities available to the diaspora. The internal opportunities include the host states and the internet, and the outer opportunity involves the presence of opposition political parties as well as growing state repression in Gambia. Regarding the mobilization structure of the diaspora, I have shown how the Internet, in particular, has been extensively utilized by the activists to mobilize against the Jammeh regime. I have also demonstrated that the framing of events in Gambia along human rights and political repression enable the diaspora to mobilize not only members of the diaspora community, but also the international community particularly human rights NGOs that turn to be very useful in their campaign to remove Jammeh.

The analysis has indicated that the Gambian diaspora has played a significant role in driving regime change in Gambia. Since 1994 with the overthrow of the Jawara government, the diaspora has been engaged in restoring or returning Gambia to its democratic tradition of free multiparty politics. In doing this, they have raised funds, facilitated opposition unity, involved in lobbying to influence host states to put pressure on the Jammeh regime, engaged in online activism to discredit Jammeh and through that mobilize more Gambians to participate in the anti-Jammeh campaign.

Despite such contribution, the goal of the diaspora to restore democracy failed short. Perhaps it is too early to engage in such a topic as the coalition government just spent their hundred days in Office in April 2017. However, the trajectories of their organizations which were tailor made to remove Jammeh have shown a different picture. By the time I concluded this thesis, most of the organizations have become very dormant, and many of the activists claimed that they are done with Gambian politics since Jammeh is gone now. Such a posture I believe has supported my argument that the diaspora was more interested in removing Jammeh than promoting democracy.

Lastly, I have shown the division that exists within the Gambian diaspora network. I have argued that such divisions are as a result of the internal politics in Gambia as well as other cleavages such as education, ethnicity as well as the socialization process of the host country. I have argued that such divisions prolonged the struggle to bring about regime change and at the same time served as an impediment to diaspora mobilization.

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Appendix 1

Letter Signed by Bill Clinton to Concerned Gambians

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 29, 2000

Dear Friends :

Thank you for your letter about the political situation in The Gambia. Like you, I am concerned about events there.

As you may be aware, the coup in 1994 triggered a cutoff of most of our bilateral assistance. Because the election in 1996 did not meet international standards for transparency and fairness, our relations have not improved. I am concerned that the government has not taken adequate measures to ensure a free and fair 2001 election.

The events surrounding the demonstrations in April are alarming. President Jammeh has appointed a commission of inquiry, and our Ambassador in Banjul has told the Gambian government that the United States believes there must be a complete, transparent investigation into the events of April 10 - 11. I have asked Ambassador Haley to keep me informed about the progress of the investigation and to inform President Jammeh of my personal interest.

I regret that scheduling constraints make it impossible to schedule a meeting with your group. My Africa team, however, is monitoring both the human rights and political dimensions of the situation in The Gambia and is keeping me informed.

Thank you again for your letter.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton (signed)

Members of The Concerned Gambians

Abroad --- U.S. Chapter

c / o 13830 Castle Boulevard, # 204

Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

Appendix 2

Results of the December 2016 Elections

INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION
1st.December 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
FINAL RESULTS BY CONSTITUENCIES

ADMIN/CONSTITUENCIES	ELECTORAL	BALLOT	%	BARROW	% BARROW	JAMMEH	% JAMMEH	KANDEH
	TE	CA	Turnout					
BANJUL								
BANJUL SOUTH	6,258	3,515	56%	1,813	52%	1,350	38%	352
BANJUL CENTRAL	9,371	5,882	63%	2,670	45%	2,808	48%	404
BANJUL NORTH	7,102	3,974	56%	2,156	54%	1,546	39%	272
BANJUL TOTAL	22,731	13,371	59%	6,639	50%	5,704	42%	1,028
KANIFING								
BAKAU	17,148	10,764	63%	6,550	61%	3,547	33%	667
JESHWANG	31,857	18,074	57%	9,196	51%	7,002	39%	1,876
SEREKUNDA WEST	46,502	24,850	53%	12,029	48%	10,422	42%	2,499
SEREKUNDA	14,701	7,784	53%	3,993	51%	2,895	37%	895
BUNDUNGKA KUNDA	31,065	17,273	56%	9,021	52%	6,698	39%	1,552
LATRIKUNDA SABIJIE	33,970	19,591	58%	8,684	44%	8,507	44%	2,398
TALINDING KUNJANG	24,714	13,676	55%	6,634	49%	5,802	42%	1,240
KANIFING TOTAL	199,957	112,012	56%	56,107	50%	44,873	40%	11,127
BRIKAMA								
FONI JARROL	3,926	2,737	70%	435	16%	1,885	69%	416
FONI BREFET	8,455	5,694	67%	1,105	19%	4,217	74%	372
FONI BINTANG	9,073	6,727	74%	798	12%	5,694	84%	255
FONI BONDALI	4,104	2,873	70%	193	7%	2,341	81%	339
FONI KANSALA	8,245	6,000	73%	343	6%	5,554	92%	103
KOMBO EAST	21,626	14,670	68%	6,204	42%	6,976	48%	1,486
KOMBO SOUTH	45,152	24,825	55%	13,689	55%	8,603	35%	2,514
BRIKAMA NORTH	29,369	18,194	62%	10,210	56%	6,066	33%	2,025
BRIKAMA SOUTH	30,814	19,509	63%	8,712	45%	8,678	44%	2,119
SANNEH MENTERENG	39,618	23,400	59%	13,143	56%	7,659	33%	2,591
OLD YUNDUM	44,131	25,141	57%	8,236	33%	9,545	38%	7,342
BUSUMBALA	36,602	23,511	64%	11,755	50%	9,662	41%	2,094
BRIKAMA TOTAL	281,115	173,281	62%	74,823	43%	76,880	44%	21,656
KEREWAN								
LOWER NUIMI	23,935	14,943	62%	4,260	29%	4,492	30%	6,191

UPPER NUIMI	14,536	9,776	67%	3,350	34%	2,309	24%	4,117
JOKADU	10,725	7,116	66%	1,502	21%	2,022	29%	3,588
LOWER BADDIBU	9,782	6,073	62%	4,002	66%	905	15%	1,166
CENTRAL BADDIBU	9,672	6,058	63%	3,049	50%	1,474	25%	1,535
ILLIASSA	20,826	11,929	57%	5,606	47%	3,450	29%	2,868
SABACH SANJAL	12,241	7,815	64%	1,577	20%	3,664	47%	2,574
KEREWAN TOTAL	101,717	63,710	63%	23,346	37%	18,316	29%	22,039
MANSAKONKO								
JARRA WEST	14,941	8,444	57%	4,648	55%	2,385	28%	1,409
JARRA EAST	8,609	4,962	58%	2,658	54%	1,002	20%	1,301
JARRA CENTRAL	4,820	2,868	60%	835	29%	1,300	46%	721
KIANG WEST	10,343	6,804	66%	4,972	73%	1,415	21%	417
KIANG EAST	4,483	3,002	67%	1,624	54%	933	31%	445
KIANG CENTRAL	6,002	3,458	58%	1,739	50%	961	28%	755
MANSAKONKO TOTAL	49,198	29,538	60%	16,476	56%	7,996	27%	5,048
JANJANBUREH								
JANJANBUREH	1,980	1,060	54%	359	34%	643	61%	58
NIANI	13,593	8,549	63%	2,673	31%	3,260	38%	2,613
NIANIJA	4,974	3,314	67%	565	17%	1,228	37%	1,519
NIAMINA WEST	4,375	3,053	70%	752	25%	775	25%	1,526
NIAMINA EAST	11,151	7,333	66%	2,109	29%	2,908	40%	2,316
NIAMINA DANKUNKU	3,574	2,501	70%	690	28%	1,003	40%	808
LOWER FULLADU WEST	20,414	11,413	56%	3,198	28%	6,065	53%	2,145
UPPER FULLADU WEST	24,678	12,489	51%	4,132	33%	5,843	47%	2,506
LOWER SALOUM	9,253	5,730	62%	1,966	34%	2,145	38%	1,617
UPPER SALOUM	11,042	6,705	61%	2,157	32%	2,974	44%	1,574
SAMI	11,641	7,899	68%	3,614	46%	3,384	43%	899
JANJANBUREH TOTAL	116,675	70,046	60%	22,215	32%	30,228	43%	17,581
BASSE								
BASSE	20,655	10,257	50%	4,402	43%	4,384	43%	1,467
JIMARA	21,434	10,666	50%	2,439	23%	5,009	47%	3,207
TUMANA	16,966	10,127	60%	5,202	51%	3,365	33%	1,560
KANTORA	19,146	9,399	49%	2,570	27%	5,215	56%	1,607
SANDU	13,167	7,777	59%	3,584	46%	2,823	36%	1,369
WULLI WEST	11,632	7,870	68%	5,006	64%	2,058	26%	803

WULLI EAST	12,185	7,813	64%	4,899	63%	1,636	21%	1,276
BASSE TOTAL	115,185	63,909	55%	28,102	44%	24,490	38%	11,289
NATIONAL TOTAL:	886,578	525,867	59%	227,708	43%	208,487	40%	89,768

