



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

## MIGCHOICE COUNTRY REPORT:

# SENEGAL

AUTHORS: DRAMANE CISSOKHO, BRUNO RICCIO,  
PAPA SAKHO, GUIDO NICOLAS ZINGARI

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# CONTENTS

<b>List of abbreviations and acronyms</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Questioning the decision making to migrate	5
1.2 Background	6
1.2.1 A brief history of national development	6
1.2.2 Migration in Senegal from yesterday to today	7
1.2.3 Senegalese migration today: volume and destination of flows	9
<b>2. Research sites</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 Louga	11
2.2 Kolda	12
2.3 Islands of the Saloum Delta	13
2.4 Medina Gounass and Thies	14
2.5 Development interventions	15
<b>3. Methodology</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1 Approach and methodological tools	17
3.1.1 Data collection	17
3.1.2 Data analysis and processing	17
3.1.3 Field research periods and team composition	17
3.2 The strategic groups targeted by the study	18
3.2.1 Young people	18
3.2.2 Public policy makers / Development actors	18
3.2.3 Associations / groups	18
3.2.4 Local notables	18
<b>4. Results</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1 Training and integration in the face of young people's frustration due to lack of opportunities and inequality of chances	19
4.1.1 General education and Koranic education	19
4.1.2 Vocational training as an 'alternative to migration' in the face of young people's frustration due to unequal opportunities	20
4.1.3 The cleanliness and soiling of local economies: discourse on development versus development at ground level	21
4.1.4 Migration as an alternative to unequal opportunities	21
4.2 Incomplete interventions and difficulties in accessing projects and resources	22
4.2.1 The world of development and the lived experience of young people	22
4.2.2 Access to projects, finance, land and sea	23
4.2.3 Development from below	24
4.3 Public development policies and the social immobility of young people	25
4.3.1 Agricultural and fishing interventions that offer little hope to young people	25
4.3.2 Low pay, socio-economic vulnerabilities	26
4.4 Decision-making to migrate between family pressures, logics and social inequalities	27
4.4.1 To emerge from uncertainty by aspiring to migrate	27
4.4.2 Social Mobility and Migration: Spatial Compressions and Temporal Distensions in the Era of 'Irregular' Migration.	29
<b>5. Policy implications</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>6. Bibliography</b>	<b>31</b>



# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>ANPEJ</b>	National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment
<b>ANSD</b>	National Agency for Statistics and Demography
<b>CSA</b>	Social and Cultural Activities
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>FAPAL</b>	Federation of Peasant Associations of the Louga Region
<b>FCFA</b>	Franc of the Financial Community in Africa
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>FRONTEX</b>	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
<b>CBO</b>	Grassroots Community Organisation
<b>ODCAV</b>	Departmental Body for the Coordination of Holiday Activities
<b>IO</b>	International Organisation
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>SODAGRI</b>	Agricultural and Industrial Development Company of Senegal
<b>SODEFITEX</b>	Société de Développement et des Fibres Textiles
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

**Professor Papa Sakho, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Senegal**

**Professor Bruno Riccio, University of Bologna, Italy**

**Dr Dramane Cissokho, Université Assane Seck  
de Ziguinchor, Senegal**

**Dr Guido Nicolas Zingari, University of Bologna,  
University of Turin and State University of Milan, Italy**





# INTRODUCTION

Senegal was built through migration. Today the country is home to a large diaspora active throughout the world. However, it is mainly internal migrants who fuel the vitality of trade and economic activities in the country and the sub-region. It is therefore necessary to recognise the great diversity of migratory profiles that contribute to the shaping of a constant geographical and social mobility from below.

The geopolitical, economic and social integration of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) remains an open project. Here, public policies are trying to promote the free movement of goods and people through investments in infrastructure. On the other hand, European Union (EU) migration policies in recent years have radically restricted the freedom of intercontinental and trans-Saharan movement. This transformation has imposed new mobility regimes that have had a profound impact on both migratory trajectories and forms of voluntary and involuntary immobility.

At the local level, the impact of interventions in terms of development and migration depends on a multitude of local and international actors, micro-projects and public-private partnerships, as well as on the presence of more or less dense migration networks. All these factors work, within different contexts, to form trajectories of mobility and immobility.

The diversity of migratory practices, the configuration of local development and the specificity of socio-economic contexts are therefore the three dimensions around which this study is structured. Yet, a fourth dimension is taken into account. We intend to interrogate migration from the point of view of the decision-making processes to migrate or to stay. This implies an approach focused on social actors and the way they construct and represent their trajectories of mobility or immobility.

## 1.1

# QUESTIONING THE DECISION MAKING TO MIGRATE

Our approach conceives of migration as a cultural and social process in which migrants and non-migrants are active subjects. Their actions are not over-determined by external conditions, values or pressures. Similarly, they are not merely the result of purely individual economic calculations.

Thus, one should not look for a precise moment in which a coherence between objective causes or conditions – structural dimensions such as unemployment, poverty, climatic or political crises, etc. – and subjective choices – individual, family or community – would produce a clear consequence such as the departure for migration or the decision to stay. Such a pattern would not explain, for example, why migration is on the agenda in less poor contexts, or why it persists despite increasing restrictions and strict border controls. Neither would it explain why some people decide to stay and others do not, nor why some social groups (especially young people) are more orientated towards international migration than others.



Instead, we have chosen to adopt a relational approach to migration. This approach recognises the interweaving of objective and subjective elements in every action and decision making. In other words, social actors constantly evaluate the objective conditions surrounding them. They internalise and interpret the values they receive in their cultural and family context. But in the end they take decisions that cannot be reduced to these external conditions. In doing so, they actively build their future, seizing or defying the opportunities and obstacles of the present. In order to interrogate migration in this study, we therefore look at the way in which ordinary people represent, imagine, tell or realise their decisions to migrate or stay. Each decision-making process is conceived as a process of transformation that upsets the daily life, in time, space and social relations, of both those who leave and those who stay. These processes open up new possibilities and alternatives for individual, family and collective futures. But this transformation should not be conceived as a specific moment in time. It is most often the result of a play of forces, efforts and choices that must be analysed case by case if we want to understand the different social logics that dominate each situation.

In giving voice to ordinary people, their aspirations and their retrospective narratives, we have noticed that there is no distinction, from below, between 'irregular' and 'regular' migration. The choice to migrate does not arise in terms of this difference. There are migration projects that take shape in different ways depending on the context, social groups and historical moment. These projects are told differently in the case of aspiring migrants or retrospective accounts by migrants or those close to migrants. There is no purely external or economic causality or purely subjective reasons or affinity for 'adventure' that can explain these decisions. On the contrary, there is '*a complex set of subjective positionings, arrangements and contextualisations leading to choices, compromises, wills and reflections that resonate differently for each person*' (Canut and Sow 2014; Degli Uberti and Riccio 2017).

In choosing to look at aspirations and decision-making processes to migrate, an attempt was also made to question the place of spatial mobility and social success models in general in people's daily lives. Intercontinental migration represents, in West Africa, only one of the many opportunities for movement and social success. To do so, we have therefore listened at length to young people who do not aspire to leave the continent or who may never have the opportunity to do so.

# 1.2

## BACKGROUND

### 1.2.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The political class that guided the country after independence opted for a highly centralised state responsible for the redistribution of resources, the direction of development models and the priorities of the political agenda. After years of relative economic prosperity, a long decade of drought from 1968 onwards had a profound impact on the agricultural economy, which was based on groundnut production. In 1979 these dramatic circumstances prompted the government, guided at the time by the then Prime Minister and future President Abdou Diouf, to seek assistance from foreign financing institutions such as the World Bank and IMF. The diagnosis of these institutions pointed to the economic dirigisme of the state and the inefficiency of its bureaucratic apparatus. This opened a new season of economic policies known as 'structural adjustment': a period of intense technical interventions inspired by the Western neo-liberal development model, dedicated to the liberalisation of the economy and a direct reconnection to the global market through a redefinition of the role of the state. This period corresponded to the gradual entry of new development actors such as International Organisations (IOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

This new development era, covering the 1980s and 1990s, was driven by discourses on good governance and a more technical and diffuse economic language: diversification, deregulation, decentralisation and privatisation were some of the key concepts. A long wave of liberalisation processes hit many state social programmes, agricultural subsidies and other public expenditures, leading very quickly to the notorious 'disengagement of the state' from the economy and society. The culmination of this process was the devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994. This decision had enormous effects on the daily lives of ordinary people. The cost of living rose suddenly and unpredictably, causing enormous uncertainties in household budgets.

Unemployment soared as a result, as these austerity policies caused a contraction in both the public and private sectors. Seasonal migration turned into a chronic, mass rural exodus, which intensified both rural depopulation and the overcrowding of the urban periphery. This led to an increase in social mobility, which in turn increased inequality. The post-colonial optimism linked to the struggles for independence and nation-building gave way to a panoply of crises: crisis of the state, of social reproduction, of the younger generations.

Since then, young people have become one of the main scapegoats of the public authorities. They are most often accused of fostering a climate of mistrust towards institutions, fuelling delinquency and illicit activities, and participating in maintaining instability and violence. In short, they are often perceived as the 'haunting of the public space' (Diouf and Collignon 2001): the protagonists of an erosion of the social bond and the values underlying solidarity and development (Diouf 1996). But from their point of view, as we shall see in this report, the main cause of the permanent economic and social crisis is linked to the predatory attitude of the political class.

In the 2000s, Senegal experienced a new phase of major transformations. The 'renaissance', driven by Abdoulaye Wade's policy, sought to turn the page on adjustments in favour of a new conception of national development. It focused on the construction of globalised spaces of consumption and traffic, of which the toll motorway and the new Dakar airport are undoubtedly the emblems. The partnerships of these new projects networked the national agencies with many IOs. The objective then became that of making the country cosmopolitan and attractive to a new global elite of 'foreign direct investors' (Melly 2017). Despite the construction of these global interconnected spaces and areas, the majority of urban and rural inhabitants have consolidated a feeling of exclusion. Indeed, on the fringes of these great works, ordinary people continued to frequent dilapidated roads that were increasingly unsuitable for smooth traffic flow. They thus became more familiar with traffic jams, floods, water and electricity shortages than with better traffic and living conditions.



## 1.2.2 MIGRATION IN SENEGAL FROM YESTERDAY TO TODAY

### International migration and social mobility

The lack of opportunities and growing uncertainty caused by structural adjustment policies is stimulating the invention of new economic strategies and new models of social success. In this context transnational migration has emerged as a key means of providing for household needs. Migration and its remittances became the main means of securing the present and the future.

It was from the 1970s onwards that Senegal became a country of mass departure. Migratory movements first developed towards Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon (Russel et al. 1990, Findley 1991) and towards France (Condé et al. 1986). In the 1980s and 1990s these mass migratory movements opened the way to a real diaspora within new destinations such as the United States, Spain, Italy and new African destinations (Riccio 2005, Tandian 2008, Tall 2009, Robin et al. 1999). According to Eurostat data (1995) in 1993, Senegal had 77,000 individuals in Europe, making it the leading West African country by number of residents ahead of Nigeria (72,000) and Cape Verde (43,000). Italy and Spain have become the main destinations for migrants.

The Senegal River Valley was the first centre of international emigration (Kane and Lericollais 1975, Findley 1991, Guilimoto 1991, 1997). Thus, in the 1960s and 1970s, a large wave of single or married men settled in France. In the 1980s, the lung of the groundnut economy experienced a strong decline linked to the climate crisis mentioned above. Seasonal migratory flows turned into an exodus to the cities, thus increasing urban unemployment and underemployment. Much of this exodus has been transformed into long-distance migration. Especially during the 1990s, therefore, Dakar and the regions of the groundnut basin (Diourbel, Louga and Kaolack) became the protagonists of a new wave of international migration (Tall 2008, ESAM 2004).

Attracted by new work opportunities, these economic migrants have built strong mobility networks. The value of foreign currencies captured by migrants, after the devaluation of the CFA Franc in 1994, consolidated the almost magical function of their remittances. This had the effect of offsetting the scale of the crisis caused by structural adjustment policies. During the 1990s the figure of the transnational migrant progressed and emerged as a model of social success.

In this context, transnational migration was conceived as a predominantly male enterprise: an act of sacrifice that brought relief to households and the nation in the midst of an economic crisis while separating men from their wife(s) and children. In doing so, migrants compensated for the effects of austerity policies and their remittances became structurally indispensable for the survival of households. The participation of migrants quickly became essential to local socio-economic configurations: from daily expenses to medical check-ups, from the purchase of seeds for the agricultural sector, to working capital for family micro-enterprises and house construction, as well as religious and ritual ceremonies and community initiatives such as the construction of mosques or associative activities.

The disengagement of the state abruptly slowed down the construction of basic infrastructure and housing, which resumed on the initiative



of migrants and their families. This has made visible and present the undertaking of many absent migrants, as true builders of the future. This visible dimension of the success of migrants and its impact on urban and rural landscapes has nourished the imagination, dreams and hopes of new generations, imbued with an ever-increasing desire for exile (Lesssault, Beauchemin, Sakho, 2011). The present and the future of the country then seemed to be shaped by the efforts of the diaspora communities. The figure of the migrant worker was then celebrated in public discourse, in media and musical products. These representations constantly conveyed an ethic of resourcefulness, embodied by men who had not 'made the benches' but had been able to take up the challenge of integration and success in the countries of the North.

In the early 2000s, while transnational mobility had become a structural dimension of Senegal's development for the reasons we have just described, it also became an increasingly elusive possibility. The vast majority of Senegalese people, especially young men and women, clung to the aspiration to migrate to Europe and the United States. But the turn of the century also corresponds to a period of profound transformation in the migration policies of host countries (Gaibazzi, Bellagamba, Dunnwald 2017). New strategies for deterring and managing undocumented migrants were rapidly put in place. In 2005 the EU set up the border control organisation (FRONTEX), which would become increasingly responsible for the surveillance of African coasts, detention and repatriation of illegal migrants. In these years, the figure of the 'irregular migrant' made its appearance.

In addition to joint efforts in border and coastal control, the EU and West African countries have undertaken a policy of managing migration flows. Among these initiatives are agricultural development and awareness-raising projects. In 2006, Senegal launched the REVA (Return to Agriculture) plan, conceived as a response to the phenomenon of emigration and partly financed by European countries. This paved the way for a large number of other smaller scale initiatives, mainly carried out by local and international NGOs. These initiatives also include many information and awareness campaigns on the risks of 'irregular' or 'clandestine' migration. While migration had until now been conceived as a resource for the development of the country, these new projects were driven by the contrasting logic of migration being about 'keeping people in their place' (Bakewell 2008). Despite this, young people have never stopped aspiring to migration and organising their departures, taking increasingly dangerous routes to reach Europe.

## Migration and development

As already highlighted above, for several decades migrants have been sending remittances to their families, contributing to daily expenses as well as to the construction of houses and community infrastructure. For a long time, these practices have been considered as very informal forms of investment. They were seen as having little potential to contribute to local and national development. From the 2000s onwards, a series of state projects and programmes, consolidated by international partnerships, attempted to convert this important informal flow of capital into formal projects, strategic investments, or even development interventions.

In 2000, Senegal hosted an *interregional ministerial conference on the participation of migrants in the development of their countries of origin*, under the aegis of the IOM. The representatives of the countries participating in the conference then undertook to *'strengthen relations between migrants and their countries of origin by creating favourable conditions for their remittances and savings, so as to ensure a more productive use of these resources. ... [But also to] support and encourage investment-oriented initiatives taken by migrants in their areas of origin by developing effective financial mechanisms and providing advice and technical and institutional support for their implementation. ... [And ultimately] to assist the reintegration of migrants, who choose to return to their country of origin, into the economic system of production'* (Dakar Declaration – IOM, 2000:4).

This conference also laid the first foundations for a policy to reduce the inclination to emigrate, by seeking collaboration from members of the diaspora. The main recognised areas of intervention of migration in terms of development potential are therefore monetary transfers, skills learned during the stay abroad and diaspora initiatives. The promotion of 'official' transfers and their 'productive' economic investment was now recognised as a national development strategy aimed at structuring transnational flows.

With regard to the first axis, various attempts to estimate annual financial transfer flows have been made by both the World Bank and the IMF. However, these estimates, based on international banking systems, considerably underestimate the flow of funds through unofficial channels. According to Tall (2008), about half of these transfers are through informal channels. It is therefore not possible to quantify the magnitude of this phenomenon. However, there is no doubt that this is a major financial windfall (World Bank 2001).

For the second axis, the skills and experiences acquired in migration also represent a great technical and concrete support to development, which is again very difficult to quantify. But it is necessary to turn towards the third axis, the 'initiatives of the diaspora', to grasp other aspects of this circulation of knowledge and skills.

To understand this phenomenon, it is necessary to go back to the first links between development and diaspora. It was during the 1980s that partnerships were born in France between migrants and African diaspora communities and the French State or its local authorities. These partnerships then took the form of 'co-development' programmes, based on the idea of radical decentralisation. According to this logic, it is no longer the State and its institutions that must design and arbitrate development projects but the people themselves, the migrants. Thus, the creation of infrastructures and opportunities in rural and remote areas, which at the time were the priorities of development policies, had to be carried out first and foremost by representatives of the diaspora. According to this approach, the spirit of sacrifice and collaboration of migrants would thus nourish, from below, renewed relations between host and home countries. These co-development projects, which are still very active in certain regions of the country, have inaugurated a new conception of migration and its relationship to development.

The Senegalese public authorities have thus set up over time various institutions dedicated to managing and protecting 'Senegalese from abroad' and their reintegration. For most migrants, return is a desirable and desired prospect which is part of their initial project. However, it is subordinated to productive and sustainable economic reintegration. Thus, return can be organised autonomously or framed by aid programmes developed by the state and its partners (cf. Black and King 2004).



**IT IS NO LONGER THE STATE AND ITS INSTITUTIONS THAT MUST DESIGN AND ARBITRATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS BUT THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES, THE MIGRANTS.**

In 1983 a Ministry was created to guide the actions of the State and its partners to facilitate the reintegration of emigrants. In 1987, thanks to an agreement with France, the *Bureau d'Accueil, d'Orientation et de Suivi* (BOAS) was created within the same ministry. From 1993 to 2003, the ministry responsible for emigrants was integrated into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 2004 to 2013 the Ministry for Senegalese Abroad was re-established. Since 2014 it has been reshuffled and again integrated into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Various programmes and lines of credit have fuelled this policy of reintegrating migrants into the country's socio-economic fabric: a fund of 150 million CFA francs from the Caisse Centrale de Coopération Economique de la France (CCCE) was paid to the Banque Nationale de Développement du Sénégal (BNDS) in 1983. The Local Development Migration Programme (PDLM) was launched in 1994. The Contrat de Réinsertion dans le Pays d'Origine (CRPO), aimed at providing pre- and post-return training, has been active since 1998.





But also, a great many NGOs and IOs (IOM, UNDP, UNFPA) have embarked on assisting the return and reintegration of emigrants. Their projects involve training promoters in the search for credit or subsidies, as well as the provision of working capital for the implementation of business projects. This new synergy dates back to 2001 when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad launched 'a new partnership with Senegalese abroad' whose aim was to network these actors by also including associations of former migrants in Senegal.

The MIDA (Migration for Development in Africa, IOM, 2001) and TOKTEN (Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals, UNDP, 2002) programmes crown this desire to reintegrate migrants, to circulate the know-how and resources of the diaspora for national and local development through the creation of networks of technical and financial partners.

It is important to point out that a very large number of migrants returning to Senegal or in constant cross-border mobility have carried out autonomous reintegration projects, using their own funds. This mainly concerns migrants from sub-Saharan and North African countries, the Near and Middle East or China, who do not fall into the technical category of 'return migrants' or 'diaspora' provided for by many development projects and programmes. Nevertheless, they represent a large part of the circulation of persons, capital and goods integrated into the local and national economic fabric.

The proliferation of these public programmes for the integration of migrants and their assets is not an isolated reality in Senegal. There is a rich local history of development activities linked to the collectivisation of remittances. Perhaps the most obvious model for pooling migrant resources comes from religious communities. The example of the mourides is typical<sup>1</sup>. According to this tradition each disciple who lives and works abroad is called upon to hand over part of his earnings to his religious guide. The latter reinvests these resources for the well-being and development of the community. A good part of the city of Touba, the religious capital of the Mouride community, was built and is developing thanks to this system: from places of worship to hospitals, including basic infrastructure, Koranic schools, Islamic university, etc. The city is also the religious capital of the Mouride community.

However, State or cooperation programmes and projects are based on a different configuration of the link between development and migration than these community projects. They contain the idea that it is possible to articulate national development with individual rather than collective responsibility and entrepreneurial risk-taking. The search for individual profit plays a key role in this. The migrant, initially a sign of the State's failure, has become a promoter and a potential collaborator, able to stitch together the stretched fabrics of the public and private sectors. The migrant-investor-entrepreneur has thus emerged as a new player in sustainable development.

Mobility and migration are thus reconfigured as sources of value and social change. Their efforts can be made worthwhile as a 'productive' activity at the time of 'return'. Despite the constant marginalisation of migrants in geopolitical terms, they are transformed by reintegration projects and programmes into successful figures, examples of loyal citizens and models of virtuous risk-taking.

<sup>1</sup> The Mourids are members of one of the four main Muslim brotherhoods in the country. The majority are Wolof from central-western Senegal.



## 1.2.3 SENEGALESE MIGRATION TODAY: VOLUME AND DESTINATION OF FLOWS

### Recent volumes and patterns of international migration

Senegal is today a country of international emigration, transit and sub-regional immigration. Senegal's latest migration profile dating from 2018 states that the country has registered 355,000 immigrants since 1975. In 2013, there were 199,261 foreigners residing in the country. On the other hand, the country has significant migratory flows. In the period 1992–2002, the number of recent migrants (who left in the last 5 years) had increased from 120,575 to 159,958 individuals. The Senegalese Household Survey (ESAM-II) carried out in 2004, counted 142,131 international migrants. For the period 2008–2012, the 2013 census reports 164,901 international migrants.

**Table 1: Recent out-migration from Senegal and Dakar (1992–2002)**

		1992	2002
Number of recent out-migrants*		120,575	159,958
Rate of out-migration**	Senegal	0.7%	0.7%
	Dakar	0.6%	0.9%
Percentage of migrants living in Europe	Senegal	44%	48%
	Dakar	57%	61%
Percentage of migrants living in North America	Senegal	2%	7%
	Dakar	5%	13%
Percentage of migrants living in West Africa	Senegal	40%	23%
	Dakar	27%	11%

Sources: 2002 Census and 1992 Survey on Migration and Urbanization (EMUS, *Enquête sur les migrations et l'urbanisation*), computed by Lessault and Flahaux (2014).

\*Recent migrants are persons declared by households as former household members who have been living abroad for less than five years at the time of the survey/census. All figures in the table relate to recent out-migrants.

\*\*The rate of out-migration is the number of recent out-migrants as a percentage of the population of the Country/the Dakar region.

**Table 2: Senegalese migrants in the receiving geographical regions**

Geographic regions	Stock total migrants	Stock migrants sénégalais	% mig sen/région géographique	% stock migrants sen/total
Africa	15,051,677	237,221	60.1	1.6
Asia	49,394,322	67	0	0
Europe	56,858,788	144,335	36.6	0.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	6,570,729	152	0	0
Northern America	40,351,694	12,599	3.2	0
Oceania	5,361,231	240	0.1	0
		<b>394,614</b>	<b>100</b>	



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division (2019). *International Migrant Stock 2019 (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2019)*.

The scale of the migratory phenomenon and the inhuman conditions of treatment that are sometimes associated with it, have prompted the Senegalese state to attempt to govern migration through the establishment of a national migration policy document. This state of affairs reveals the still fragile and undefined situation of migration policies. Migration management in Senegal is most often based on bilateral and sub-regional agreements and conventions within the framework of a policy of outsourcing the control of migration flows (Aidara 2013).

Pending the implementation of the national migration policy document, the State and its partners have also intervened (often without any real coordination of actions) in regions that have been heavily involved in 'irregular migration'.

Over the last 14 years, the Senegalese coast has been the point of departure for thousands of people to Southern Europe, contributing to the media coverage of 'irregular migration' (Senegalese Migration Observatory 2012). According to European Union statistics, 19,235 Senegalese arrived in Italy, Greece and Spain by sea from January 2016 to March 2019 (Henrich Boll Stiftung 2020). But as the critical analysis of 'the root causes of irregular migration in the countries of the Rabat process' reveals, there is to date no universal definition of 'irregular migration' (Vickstrom 2014; Bacon and Robin 2018). In addition, numerous studies show that sub-Saharan migrants represent a minority of the migratory workforce in Europe, that sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the lowest rate of emigration to northern countries in the world, and that departures abroad mainly concern other African countries (Beauchemin, Kabbanji, Sakho and Schoumaker, 2013; Beauchemin, 2018).



**OVER THE LAST 14 YEARS, THE SENEGALESE COAST HAS BEEN THE POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE TO SOUTHERN EUROPE, CONTRIBUTING TO THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF 'IRREGULAR MIGRATION'.**

*Senegalese Migration Observatory 2012*

### Recent volumes and patterns of internal and sub-regional migration

Senegal is also a country where internal migration affects a significant part of the population. According to the ANSD (2014), the 2002 and 2013 censuses reveal that it affects 1,510,337 and 1,896,779 individuals respectively. The people concerned represent more than 14% of the total population. The capital is a magnet for 43% of internal migrants (IFAD 2015). The Dakar-Thiès-Touba urban axis is the main reception area for rural and urban dwellers from the interior of the country in search of educational, commercial or professional opportunities but also for religious reasons (Ba, Bourgoin and Diop 2018).

On the other hand, the few migratory flows in the direction of rural areas are oriented towards the developed or irrigated areas of the regions of Saint-Louis, Matam and even Kolda. It should also be noted that the areas of the Senegal River valley, boosted by the monetary transfers made by international migrants, also attract migrants of urban and rural origin (Cissokho et al. 2019).

As an ECOWAS Member State, Senegal also participates in sub-regional migration. According to the RGPFAE 2013 (ANSD 2014) data, West African countries are the destination of 45,306 Senegalese migrants. It is important to stress that this sub-regional emigration is mainly directed towards neighbouring countries. In fact, Mauritania, Gambia, Mali and Guinea received 16,364, 9,105, 4,833 and 2,622 Senegalese respectively. Côte d'Ivoire, one of the economic poles of the sub-region, also received a significant share of migrants. Sub-regional emigration owes much to porous borders, improved transport and communication infrastructure, and the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of persons which dates from 1979.

The Senegalese migratory field within the African continent also includes Morocco, Libya and the countries of Central and South Africa. Migration to Gabon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola has given rise to what Sylvie Bredeloup (1993) calls the 'diami'pora' (diamond diaspora).



# RESEARCH SITES



Data was collected in the regions of Louga, Kolda, Fatick, Dakar and Thiès (Figure 1). In contrast to the first three regions (Louga, Kolda, Fatick) where data collection took place in the field, for Dakar and Thiès, interviews were conducted exclusively online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In Louga, the research field is the town of the same name. Diabé and the villages of the islands of the Saloum delta were respectively the investigation sites for the regions of Kolda and Fatick. In the regions of Dakar and Thiès, the interviewees live on the outskirts of the urban agglomerations of Dakar and Thiès respectively in the district commune of Médina Gounass (city and department of Guédiawaye) and in the Lamy cité district (city of Thiès).

## 2.1

### LOUGA

The department of Louga is located in the North-West of Senegal (figure 2) and covers an area of 5,849 Km<sup>2</sup>. It is bordered to the north by the region of Saint-Louis, to the west by the department of Kébémér and the Atlantic Ocean, to the east by the department of Linguère and to the south by the departments of Linguère and Kébémér. According to the 2013 census (RGPHAE 2014), it has 354,989 inhabitants. Its population is made up of Wolof (71%), Peulh (25%), and Serer, Diola and Moorish minorities (0.4%). The population density is 53 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. The department has an agro-pastoral vocation and comprises three major eco-geographical zones: the Atlantic coast, the groundnut and Millimole zone in the centre, the sylvopastoral zone and the lower Ferlo valley to the east.

Figure 1: Location of Research Sites

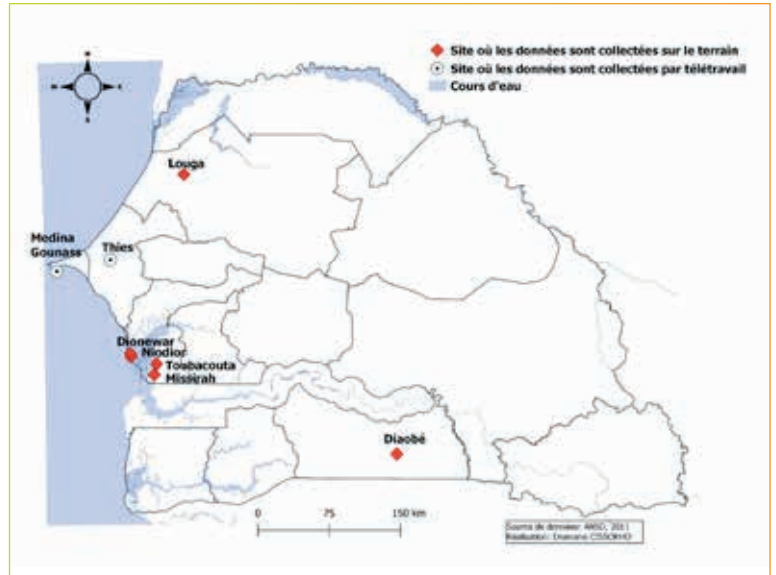


Figure 2: Administrative card of the Louga region



Source: National Land Use Planning Agency, 2018

The origins of the town of Louga date back to the construction of an Artillery Fort by the French in 1882. In 1976 Louga became the capital of the region and the department of the same name. Since then, it has concentrated the administrative functions and reference services.

It is Senegal's twelfth largest city by number of inhabitants (114,000) (SES 2019), covers more than 8 km<sup>2</sup> and has 10,000 built-up plots. From 2002 to 2013 it increased its built-up area by 28% (Tiepolo & Braccio 2014). The urbanisation rate of the county was estimated at 22% in 2016 (SES 2019). The urban plan, the Local Agenda 21 (2003) and the Economic and Social Development Plan (PDSEC 2013) contain most of its infrastructure forecasts. However, the proportion of its paved roads, drainage and street lighting makes Louga a city with a high deficit in basic infrastructure.

Many migrants both leave and settle in Louga. These population flows combined with a proliferation of municipal development projects have generated a rapid expansion of the urban fabric. During the 1980s, new districts were added. This period ushered in the proliferation of real estate investments made by transnational migrants and the entry of new development actors.

Today it is possible to distinguish two factors of urban dynamics. On the one hand, the constant expansion of real estate investments by migrants and wealthy families is reflected in the construction of ever more imposing villas and buildings. On the other hand, the emergence of informal housing on the margins of the city is a visible sign of the growing inequalities that permeate the Louga society. Building a house is an important sign of social mobility which highlights intra-family solidarity and the success often derived from an economically virtuous migratory journey. The more disadvantaged strata of the city, on the other hand, are made up of internal migrants from rural areas, who tend to settle in more informal dwellings on the outskirts of the city.

The population of the Louga department is very mobile. Population movements (transhumance, internal and international migration to Europe) are intense and constant. Since the 1980s, the department of Louga has been one of the main points of departure for international migration in Senegal. According to the results of the RGPFAE 2013, more than 12,000 nationals abroad are counted there (ANSD 2014). Emigration contributes considerably to the economy through capital transfers, making Louga the second least poor city (21.7%) after Dakar (17.1%) according to the Senegal Poverty Monitoring Survey (ESPS 2013).

## 2.2

# KOLDA



Fouladou (country of the Peulh), also called Upper Casamance, corresponds overall to the administrative region of Kolda (Figure 3). Geographically, the region of Kolda is bordered to the north by the Gambia and to the south by the two Guineas (Bissau and Conakry). In addition to this cross-border location, it is peripheral to the major centres of the country, in particular Dakar, the Senegalese capital, 670 km away.

**Figure 3: Administrative card of the Kolda region**



Source: National Land Use Planning Agency, 2018

Diaobé, the site of data collection in the Kolda region, enjoys a relatively central position in the region. Indeed, it is almost centrally located in the Kolda region, at the western border of Velingara county and the eastern border of Kolda county. This location gives it a strategic geographical position and it is crossed by the national road No. 6, which facilitates its access.

Beyond its relatively central position in the Kolda region, Diaobé is a crossroads for exchanges of sub-regional scope. It is an important node in the distribution of agricultural and forestry products, particularly palm oil from neighbouring countries. Traders from neighbouring states buy in return large quantities of industrial and construction products.

Diaobé by its spatial inscription in the Fouladou cultural area, is predominantly (70%) populated by Fulani (Gano 2018). Fulani predominance should not overshadow ethnic plurality. Almost all ethnic groups in Senegal are present, to which are added some from the sub-region (Baldé 2013). This situation stems from the weekly market, which makes it a receptacle for various internal and international migration flows.

Regarding education, 48% of the population has never attended school (Gano 2018). This is the result of several factors including parental hostility towards school, poverty and the value of Koranic learning.

Trade and agriculture are the predominant sectors of activity. This can be explained by the socio-territorial anchoring of the 'loumo', which means that a large part of the daily activities of the inhabitants are concentrated there. In a precarious context, the population takes advantage of the opportunity offered by the weekly market to trade various products. The proximity of the Anambé basin underlies, in part, the contribution of the agricultural sector.

2.3

# ISLANDS OF THE SALOUM DELTA

The islands inhabited by the Niominka and Socé fishermen form what are commonly known as the islands of the Saloum Delta. Administratively, they are part of the department of Foundiougne (Figure 4), itself located in the Fatick region. The incidence of poverty is 67.8% (ANSD 2013). One of the main reasons for this delay is the absence of an industrial sector. In addition, the primary sector is experiencing limited expansion due to its low productivity and timid modernisation. Similarly, Fatick has no vocational training establishments. It should be noted that the health infrastructure is not up to the population's expectations, which justifies recourse to the health centres in the town of Kaolack, some 40 kilometres away (UNIDO 2009).

Figure 4: Administrative card of the Fatick region



Source: National Land Use Planning Agency, 2018

The term *Niominka* is linked to fishing activity (Dème, Sall and Sow 2017). The Serere-Niominka are fishermen located in the Gandoul Islands, also known as the Saloum Islands. The main villages, in terms of population, are Niodior, Dionewar, Bassar, Bassoul, Moundé, Djiirnda and Diarniadio. On the other hand, the Socé fishermen, occupy Niombato, Bettenty and Fathala islands which are located near the Gambian border. They speak Manding.

The hydrographic network, essentially made up of bolongs and mangrove swamps, has shaped the Saloum delta. For a very long time, tourists have been staying on certain islands, notably on Dionewar and Niodior. However, the fragmentation of the territory by the channels and mangroves, which further isolates the villages, poses a problem of geographical mobility (Villeneuve 2010).

The social organisation of Niominka fishermen is community-based and egalitarian. In the public squares of the villages, groups of the same generation share meals together from their respective families (Fall 2006). The communal character of the way of life is less visible among their socé neighbours. Whether among the niominka or the socé, fishing and the processing of fish products are the mainstay of the local economy. While men are involved in fishing, women are active in seafood processing.

For several decades, there have been efforts to develop the tourism sector in the islands of the Saloum Delta but this has had a limited effect on wider income-generating activities and the local economy.



2.4

# MEDINA GOUNASS AND THIES

Médina Gounass is a district municipality in the city and department of Guédiawaye, in the Dakar region (Figure 5). It is situated in the geographical area of the Niayes in a depression which exposes it to constant flooding during the rainy season. It has about 36,000 inhabitants and was built from the 1960s onwards to cope with the influx of people from the country's rural areas.

Figure 5: Administrative card of the Thiès region



Source: National Land Use Planning Agency, 2018

Figure 6: Administrative card of the Dakar region



Source: National Land Use Planning Agency, 2018

Cité Lamy is a historic district in the southern part of the city of Thiès (figure 6). Situated 70 km from Dakar, it was born as a railway stop on the Dakar-Bamako line in the second half of the 19th century. Today the city has a population of around 800,000 and is one of its most populous and popular neighbourhoods, where vulnerable populations live and where youth unemployment, as in Medina Gounass, is widespread. The Dakar-Thiès-Mbour triangle today represents a major axis of economic development, regional planning, mobility and exchange.



# DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

The State of Senegal has opted for a process of deconcentration and decentralisation of public institutions, which aims to promote the empowerment of local populations to take charge of their own development. This process has led to three major reforms carried out in 1972, 1996 and 2013. The 1972 reform inaugurated the decentralisation process by creating rural communities. The 1996 reform created the regions 'intended to serve as a framework for programming economic, social and cultural development, and where the coordination of State and local authority actions can be established' (CCL Local Communities Code, Law No. 96-06 of 22 March 1996). It also created the district municipalities in the Dakar region and transferred to local authorities' powers in various fields (environment and natural resource management, health, population and social action, youth, sport and leisure, culture, education, planning, land use, urban planning and housing). This 1996 reform makes local authorities genuine actors in local development with 'the task of designing, programming and implementing economic, educational, social and cultural development actions of regional, communal and rural interest' (Article 3 of the CCL, 96-06).

This empowerment of local authorities has led to a broadening of the fields of intervention, to the diversification of international actors and partners, but above all to the implementation of local development actions. To support this process of taking charge of the competences transferred to the local level, the State has set up the Decentralisation Endowment Fund (FDD) and the Local Communities Capital Development Fund (FECL), previously created by the Finance Act No. 77-67 of 4 June 1977. The latter aims to support local authorities in the realisation of investments of an economic, social or cultural nature.

In parallel to State interventions, technical and financial partners, NGOs, civil society organisations, CBOs as well as private sector companies are now among the main actors of interventions supporting local authorities. Many of these local authorities have also invested in the niche of 'territorial partnerships', previously known as the 'decentralised cooperation' sector.

Overall, three main categories of stakeholders can be identified (figure 7): public stakeholders (State, local authorities, agencies, etc.); development partners, divided between technical and financial partners (WB, USAID, EU, etc.) and the decentralised cooperation sector (currently defined as 'territorial partnerships'); NGOs and CBOs (figure 8).



**THE STATE OF SENEGAL HAS OPTED FOR A PROCESS OF DECONCENTRATION AND DECENTRALISATION OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, WHICH AIMS TO PROMOTE THE EMPOWERMENT OF LOCAL POPULATIONS TO TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT.**

Figure 7: Synoptic view of the categories of actors and stakeholders

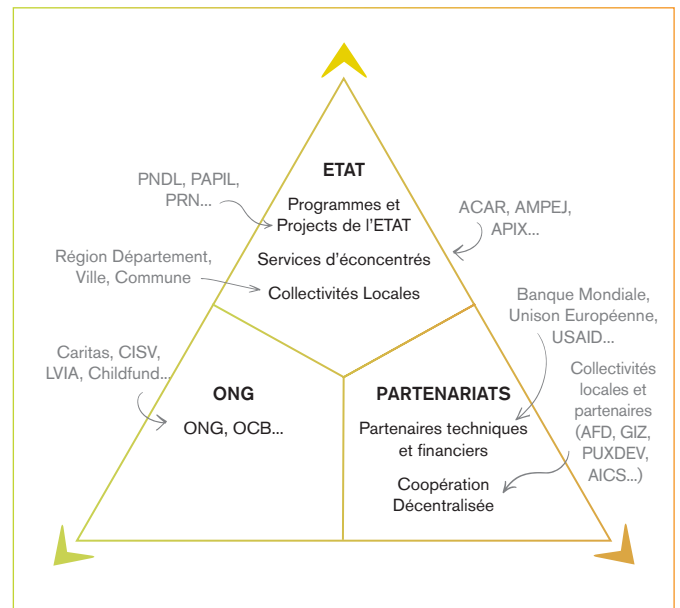
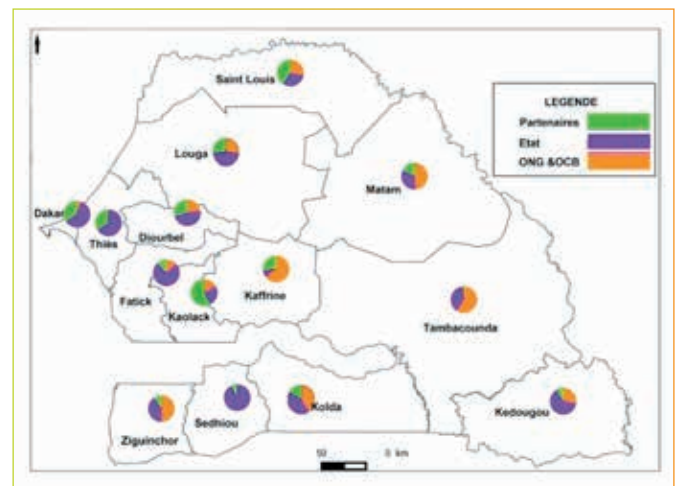


Figure 8: Breakdown of interventions and the national territory by category of actor



Source: Intervention Mapping, 2015

Public intervention in the agricultural sector is much more common in the Kolda region, particularly in the Diaobé area. These include hydro-agricultural developments in the Anambé basin for rice cultivation, technical supervision of cotton producers, and the Soutouré farm as part of the 'young people in farms' project. These interventions are carried out by the Société de Développement Agricole et Industriel du Sénégal (SODAGRI) and the Société de Développement et des Fibres Textiles

(SODEFITEX) set up in the 1970s. In order to facilitate the marketing of agricultural production, the existence of a market is necessary. This prompted the public authorities to intervene by creating a weekly market in Diaobé in 1974. This market emerged, in part, because of Diaobé's location as a border crossroads and the asphaltting of national road No. 6 linking the towns of Kolda and Vellingara to Tambacounda.

Public interventions in the fisheries sector and environmental management concern the islands of the Saloum Delta. A fishing centre has been built in Missirah to boost the fishing economy in the Saloum island areas. In addition, for some years now, fishermen have benefited from subsidies for the acquisition of engines. In addition, this part of the island is the subject of interventions for the preservation of the environment. The mangrove formations that covered an area of 64,000 ha in the 1970s have been degraded by 25% (Ndour, Dieng and Fall 2016). In response to this degradation and in order to respect the commitments signed at the international level, the Senegalese state and its partners have embarked on the restoration and conservation of natural resources. Thus, the Saloum Delta became a biosphere reserve in 1981 and a wetland of international importance in 1984. The two international treaties governing these categories of areas recommend the integrated management of the natural environment. The Saloum Delta National Park and several classified forests were quickly established.

As for the interventions carried out by NGOs and within the framework of decentralised cooperation, they largely concern the city of Louga. This city is a major centre of international emigration. The presence of international partners and NGOs is linked to the migratory phenomenon. Thanks to the diaspora based in the Italian metropolises, it is the scene of several interventions by NGOs of Italian origin. The main sectors of intervention are: education, training, health, socio-economic promotion, infrastructure development, microfinance, capacity building.

It is important to underline that NGOs are also active in the Diaobé area and in the islands of the Saloum Delta for the preservation of the environment and the fight against migration. In a context where the Fouladou (Kolda region) does not stop mourning its sons who left for adventure and never came back, the Italian NGO 'ACRA', the University Milano Bicocca and the association 'Guné' of Kolda have initiated a project 'Actions in contrast to the irregular migration dynamics in the regions of Kolda, Senegal and Gabou, Guinea Bissau' aimed at stopping the departure of young people in 2017. In addition, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is active in the area through projects for the socio-economic integration of returning migrants.





3.1

# APPROACH AND METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS

## 3.1.1 DATA COLLECTION

The collection of empirical data was carried out through a socio-anthropological or 'ethnographic' research method. This is based on the collection of qualitative data within 'natural' social situations and therefore experienced by social actors. Daily life, discourses, practices and interactions as well as the representations that emerge from them thus become the objects of direct observation by the researcher. But they are also subjects of conversation, extended dialogues and shared reflections between the social actors and the researcher so as to listen to and take into account the subjective point of view of the actors: migrants, non-migrants, aspiring migrants, returning migrants.

We thus used four main ways of producing empirical ethnographic data:

- Prolonged observation by researchers in the field of the contexts and life situations of the people studied. This direct observation-description activity is carried out in accordance with an agreement, consensual and informed about the aims of the study, with the interlocutors involved.
- Individual interviews and focus groups. Once again, these interview collection and focus group activities were carried out in full agreement, consensus and information with the interlocutors involved.
- The collection of audio-visual material (photographs, films, mental maps, images, sound archives...)
- The use of written sources that are not produced by researchers: These are second-hand data that can enrich the knowledge of contexts made up of scientific literature, study reports, local development plans, theses and dissertations, maps, press reviews, etc.

Faced with the same 'problem' (the impact of development interventions on daily life), we have identified 'strategic groups' (specified below). In other words, aggregates of individuals who share the same social relationship to this 'problem'. This notion has an empirical value and assumes that in a given context, not everyone has the same interests, views, representations and imaginations. It also presupposes that there are different positions in power relations, and therefore different access to resources and opportunities for movement, as well as unequal capacities for action.

## 3.1.2 DATA ANALYSIS AND PROCESSING

Each interview and focus group were literally translated and transcribed into French as faithfully as possible, without corrections or adjustments, to the words formulated by the research interlocutors.

*Text mining* of the data collected (interviews, focus groups) is then used to extract thematic syntheses (macroscopic) from the information collected at the individual (microscopic) level.

The statistical linking of the text data was carried out with the help of qualitative data processing software (NVivo 12 Plus). The latter makes it possible to generate a cartography of the words and phrases used by the research interlocutors according to the questions asked by the researchers and the themes raised by the problem of decision-making to be migrated in relation to development interventions.

The process of categorisation, representation and appropriation of the social world on the part of social actors is expressed through the stories and words they use. The textual analysis of the latter allows us to detect recurring elements in order to compare them with the observations of researchers and the divergent or convergent points of view of other individuals or social groups.

To ensure rigorous production and analysis, we have maintained thematic consistency in data collection and have assembled a corpus large enough to ensure that individual data are never isolated but rather triangulated. Contextual information – notably age and gender (collected in the form of notes and direct observations) – served as metadata to be associated with the information contained in the interviews and focus groups.

## 3.1.3 FIELD RESEARCH PERIODS AND TEAM COMPOSITION

Beyond this methodological uniformity, our team was multidisciplinary and international. It included two geographers from the University Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar (Senegal) and two social anthropologists from the University of Bologna (Italy). The Cheikh Anta Diop University team carried out the fieldwork in Diabô and the islands of the Saloum Delta from March to May and August to September 2020, respectively, while the Bologna University team focused on the contexts of Louga from January to March and Medina Gounass and Thiès from June to August 2020.

Only the Louga site was completed before the health crisis linked to the pandemic spread of Covid-19. Following initial disruptions, the Dakar team was able to complete the Diabô and Saloum Islands sites from May to September 2020. However, the Bologna team was unable to return to the field after March 2020 and as a result, research on the ground in Medina Gounass and Thiès was impossible. The team therefore opted for a remote research strategy, based on interviews conducted online. Through the tools of what is called *nethnography*, ie, ethnographic research based on the use of virtual instruments (telematic interviews, written conversations on social networks, etc.), the Bologna team has managed to collect a satisfactory amount of data on these sites. These data are by no means worthy of an ethnography carried out in the field, but they constitute an interesting and sufficient corpus to carry out a comparative analysis between these two sites and the contexts studied in depth and in a direct manner.

## 3.2

# THE STRATEGIC GROUPS TARGETED BY THE STUDY

The interviews identified four main strategic groups:

### 3.2.1 YOUNG PEOPLE

This refers to young people in the broadest sense: people between the ages of 15 and 35. They define themselves as young people and are considered by members of their network or their entourage as people who have not reached maturity (social and economic), even when some of them already have children. These included both aspiring migrants or young people who have already experienced mobility on an internal or continental scale; as well as non-migrants and non-aspiring migrants. In-depth interviews or focus groups took place with a total of 21 young people including 18 males and 3 females in Diaobé; 37 young people including 34 males and 3 females in Louga; 11 young people including 10 males and 1 female in the Saloum islands; and 22 young people including 18 males and 4 females in Thiès and Médina Gounass.

There are two main reasons for the gap between the number of females and males interviewed. Firstly because our team was composed exclusively of men. Senegalese society, in a transversal way, is dominated by extremely codified gender relations. This problem arises especially in terms of access to the interpersonal sphere between men and women. The second reason, which is superimposed on the first, is linked to the fact that migration, decision-making, as well as the exposure of the socio-economic conditions of people and their households, are particularly sensitive subjects, difficult to access and often filtered by men despite the extensive participation of women.

### 3.2.2 PUBLIC POLICY MAKERS/DEVELOPMENT ACTORS

In addition to young people, the data collection also concerned public policy makers and development actors. These are the people responsible for the different categories of interventions identified and predominant in each context. We carried out two parallel sets of interviews for both groups in order to avoid superimposing and confusing the networks proposed by the actors with the reality of young migrants and aspiring migrants.

For this strategic group, we participated in meetings and working sessions to observe in a direct way the concrete and daily practices and interactions. Interviews focused on certain institutions and organisations that we considered to be more significant in the relationship between development and migration.

### 3.2.3 ASSOCIATIONS/GROUPS

In each context we also met with the leaders of youth and neighbourhood associations, as well as religious, secular and cultural associations. Some of these associations are responsible for the organisation of prestigious events and collaborate intensively with public institutions and international partners. Others, on the other hand, are smaller organisations which nevertheless constitute a significant cultural and social ferment in the local development landscape. We also met members of interest groups, which, although they are part of the civil society framework, are often interwoven with specific economic and institutional logics.

As with the previous strategy group, we attended ordinary meetings and gatherings that make up these realities, to observe the gears and social logics that are less evident in the speeches of their members.

### 3.2.4 LOCAL NOTABLES

Notables are personalities whose social rank or prestige is recognised by the community. They are personalities whose advanced age, experience and social position imply a privileged point of view on the local and collective memory of development. Notables were encountered mainly in the more rural contexts of Diaobé and the Saloum Islands.



4.1

# TRAINING AND INTEGRATION IN THE FACE OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S FRUSTRATION DUE TO LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES AND INEQUALITY OF CHANCES

## 4.1.1 GENERAL EDUCATION AND KORANIC EDUCATION

One of the main axes around which development interventions are organised is that of vocational training. Most initiatives and training centres receive structural support from international partners, both in terms of funding and skills transfer.

The impact of vocational training is significant, whether it is long or short courses. Many of the beneficiaries we met in the field, following technical and vocational training, have embarked on a process of integration into the world of work or entrepreneurship.



**THE ASPIRATION TO MIGRATE IS OFTEN EXPRESSED IN PROPORTION TO THE FRUSTRATION WITH THE DEVALUATION OF DIPLOMAS AND EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS, AND IS RELATED TO THE LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES.**

However, we were able to document a double fault in the general education system. The first weakness is the large number of young people who drop out of school at a very early age or who never obtain the relevant diplomas.

The second weakness is linked to the large number of young people who, once they have reached the baccalaureate or BFEM, or even a basic or advanced university degree, have no prospect of integration consistent with the course of study. The devaluation of diplomas is a widespread and long-standing phenomenon:

*'You see someone who has done secondary and higher education to be at the top and to work but where he should be they put someone who doesn't even have the level! It's frustrating and there are people who wonder why study if you can't even find a job even though there are some who fight.'* (CCM, Louga, February 2020).

For people who come from families with more means or who are ready to invest in the future of their children, migration to North Africa or Europe to continue their studies or to find an outlet consistent with the training path is a widespread practice. For the rest of the population, the frustration resulting from an abandoned course or one considered not very useful for socio-professional integration is the rule. The aspiration to migrate is often expressed in proportion to the frustration linked to the devaluation of diplomas and schooling, and is related to the lack of opportunities:

*'Irregular emigration, everyone knows that it is not good, but you don't have a choice with everything that people encounter on the way to success at the risk of their lives. [...] Even graduates can't find anything to do. As for the jakartamans [motorbike taxi drivers], either they have the BFEM, the Bac or even the Licence, that's the problem. Right here there are more than 300 motorbike taxis, since I started the Jakartamans in 2013, I myself have counted more than 600 motorbike taxis in my locality, quite simply.'* (ID, Diaobé, April 2020).



A large proportion of the young people we met had no or very little schooling. On the other hand, most of the time they attended the *daara* (Koranic schools) at a young age<sup>2</sup>. Most of the people in charge of training institutes denounce the marginal status of these young people who have neither schooling nor training. A teacher and promoter of development projects linked to education, who is a member of a religious community strongly rooted in the tradition of Koranic schools, summed up this phenomenon very clearly in relation to the projects for which he is responsible:

*'Most of the emigrants who are in Europe come mostly from Koranic schools. [...] We try to raise awareness, we try to go to French schools when the problem is not at this level because these young people can follow their studies and find work; this is not the case for young people leaving the daaras who have no professional background; they only learn the Koran so they will become street vendors, sell Touba coffee, drive a cart, they manage because they are left to themselves. They don't have a support system and we thought of setting up this association [...] to [...] help them through support structures where they can benefit from this or that service. You know that the problem is vast, for example it is written CFP of Louga, but in French then the [young people] leaving the daara will say to themselves that this is not intended for Koranic school pupils. MDL is not written in Wolof or Arabic, so the young people leaving the daara do not think they will go there. They can pass in front of the door every day without thinking of going in.'* (FN, Louga, January 2020).

## 4.1.2 VOCATIONAL TRAINING AS AN 'ALTERNATIVE TO MIGRATION' IN THE FACE OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S FRUSTRATION DUE TO UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

It is at the level of technical and vocational training that a good number of interventions have turned in recent years to offer what many projects and actors define as an 'alternative to migration'. This type of training varies greatly. It can be intensive, lasting only a few hours, or it can last three years. In the latter case we find the classic training courses provided by training centres. Short training courses are often incorporated into cooperation projects run by NGOs or IOs and their partners, or are organised by economic or public actors such as SODAGRI in Diaobé, the Fishing Centre in Missirah or the FAPAL in Kelle Gueye.

Training courses are split between those intended for the apprenticeship of a trade; those aimed at transferring skills specific to a sector or economic sector; and more general technical training courses that revolve around business creation. The latter in particular are often linked to credit access public (ANPEJ) or private services (banking institutions).

Most managers of facilities recognise that these training activities have a real impact on the migration phenomenon and the 'personal development' of young people:

*'We first train them in personal development because at the beginning; they have problems of choice and it is in this sense that we encourage them to believe in themselves. We also train them in entrepreneurship so that they have an entrepreneurial culture. After all this, the young people who benefit from the training and the funding from the state will have another training in finance to enable them to manage resources well. It is a whole package of technical and managerial support that is given to young people.'* (AB, Diaobé, April 2020).



**MOST MANAGERS OF FACILITIES RECOGNISE THAT THESE TRAINING ACTIVITIES HAVE A REAL IMPACT ON THE MIGRATION PHENOMENON AND THE 'PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT' OF YOUNG PEOPLE.**

*'There are young people leaving here who don't think about travelling but have started their own business. [...] If we had a lot of centres like this one, the problem would be under control. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Young people are beginning to change their minds little by little, especially those who have attended vocational training establishments, because we run personal development courses with them, which are integrated into the scheme to make them aware of the need to acquire certain personal skills such as self-confidence, to show them that it is indeed possible to stay and work here. But it hasn't yet reached the desired threshold. I think that in time, these young people in training will go out and inform other young people so that we have more success stories and show them that it is possible.'* (FN, Louga, January 2020).

However, many young people are still not involved in these training courses, as a member of the Louga Municipal Youth Council points out, where, according to him, *'almost 90% of young people are not trained!'* (CCJ, Louga, March 2020). But if we look at things more closely and from the point of view of young people, we can see that most of them learn or invent their trade in a more informal way, outside of institutional pathways, in particular by going through a period of apprenticeship that is difficult to pinpoint precisely. In this case, business projects or access to a trade are through personal or family networks, as summarised by a young entrepreneur from Louga:

*'I can say that it was my big brother who financed me who also taught me the trade until I had my own business today, he showed me the way.'* (B, March 2020).

<sup>2</sup> It is important to stress that there is no causal relationship between international migration and Koranic schools. In Senegal, Koranic schools are pedagogical institutions that go well beyond their religious vocation. They are places that are highly frequented by children between 5 and 12 years of age from all social classes. In addition to the study of the Koran, these contexts provide pupils with education in the broadest sense: to community life, to the relationship between teachers (elders) and pupils (cadets), to peer relations, to respect for good manners and collective responsibilities. Despite some rare abuses in certain degraded urban contexts, the vast majority of Koranic schools are under the administration and control of religious brotherhoods, which guarantee the guardianship of children's rights. For a very large part of the population, this is the only possible form of education given its accessibility and the socio-religious networks on which it is based and which underpin community and intergenerational links in a large part of the country and its diaspora.

### 4.1.3 THE CLEANLINESS AND SOILING OF LOCAL ECONOMIES: DISCOURSE ON DEVELOPMENT VERSUS DEVELOPMENT AT GROUND LEVEL

This leads us to highlight another important aspect of the relationship of young people to training and development. The training courses offered in the establishments under review are often presented by those responsible for them as the norm, as the natural growth sectors of local, national and even global economies. Those that do not are often regarded as 'informal sectors'. A typical example of this is one of the most diffuse activities practised by young people in need of employment: driving motorbike taxis.

In the eyes of a good number of development actors, this sector is the perverse outlet of an 'illiterate' youth, who are unable to better integrate into an economic fabric worthy of the name:

*'There are young people who have no skills and who drive motorbike taxis so these young people are exposed to danger, I always say that the acquisition of skills is the first element of safety for young people'* (AD, Louga, February 2020).

*'Most of the young people in Louga don't have a trade, the majority are motorbike taxi drivers, they haven't received a good education and do anything'* (JF, Louga, February 2020).



**DEVELOPMENT AT GROUND LEVEL IS ALSO MADE UP OF INFORMAL TRAINING AND APPRENTICESHIPS, ECONOMIC SECTORS THAT DO NOT FALL WITHIN THE 'CARRIER' SECTORS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY PROJECTS AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES.**

However, we were able to document a certain openness, in terms of projects and training, towards this phenomenon:

*'Motorbike taxis are not a safe activity, as it is also a favourite activity among young people. We had an initiative where we accompanied young people to obtain driving licences to tell you that we are working for sustainability'* (AB, Kolda, April 2020).

*'The association works for young people from the daara but the structure is for all young people, for example we train motorbike taxi drivers, cart drivers and other young people'* (FN, Louga, January 2020).

However, it is important to highlight that, contrary to the sometimes very sharp views of development actors, many of the motorbike taxi drivers are also young people with a general or even university education who do not correspond to marginal or 'unsuitable' profiles. The paradox is such that we even met several field workers from local NGOs working in parallel as motorbike taxi drivers.

What is important to remember is that the distinction between 'clean' or 'pure' economic sectors and 'dirty' or 'dangerous' sectors only widens the social distance between project leaders, institute managers or development actors in general and young people who, on the contrary, in search of jobs, are constantly innovating local economies from the bottom up. Thus, development at ground level is also made up of informal training and apprenticeships, economic sectors that do not fall within the 'carrier' sectors taken into account by projects and institutional development policies.



### 4.1.4 MIGRATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The claim that vocational training is an 'alternative to migration' is not demonstrable in practice. Likewise, the view that some economic sectors are cleaner and others are the stain on local economies is the result of a bias. This bias seems to be dictated more by a strategy of attracting flows of international funding and development support than by a real knowledge of the contexts, economic areas, their growth sectors and their real needs. The adoption of a vision according to which vocational training would represent an 'alternative to migration' therefore corresponds more to a strategy of resource capture and co-optation of international partners on the part of those in charge of training institutes and development projects than to an analytical approach to the socio-economic realities of the regions. This is confirmed by the fact that the demand for such a vision is all the stronger among the managers of training centres financed by international (and European in particular) partnerships or IOs involved in contrasting migratory phenomena.

When young people are asked about the training-to-migration relationship, the reading is often the opposite. On the contrary, what emerges is a very diffuse frustration with the inequality of chances and opportunities. In other words, in the imagination of young people, even when they receive training, whether general or technical, opportunities are rarer and less desirable in Senegal than in other countries, particularly in Europe. For young people, training does not exclude, but often helps to encourage mobility and migration in search of better chances and opportunities.



**FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, TRAINING DOES NOT EXCLUDE, BUT OFTEN ENCOURAGES, MOBILITY AND MIGRATION IN SEARCH OF BETTER OPPORTUNITIES AND CHANCES.**

# INCOMPLETE INTERVENTIONS AND DIFFICULTIES IN ACCESSING PROJECTS AND RESOURCES

## 4.2.1 THE WORLD OF DEVELOPMENT AND THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

As anticipated in the introduction, the austerity and disengagement measures known as structural adjustments, introduced bureaucratic language and highly technical intervention models. This legacy still shapes the interactions and references of development practitioners, both from international organisations and local institutions. The way of describing people's needs, analysing contexts and interpreting development projects, programmes and policies is largely dominated by a highly technical and sometimes abstract use of numbers and words. In addition, there is a widespread tendency for interventions to be deployed in emergency situations rather than over the long term. As a result, many development actors lament, behind the scenes, the low effective 'social impact' of projects. On the contrary, many public works and infrastructure projects are carried out at a very slow pace, often linked to the vagaries of election campaigns.

The technical-bureaucratic languages of interventions often do not take into account local models of social, moral and economic success. On the contrary, people's social behaviour is sometimes described, or even stigmatised, as a hindrance to development by members of the local authorities themselves:

*'I can say that Africans have cultural burdens that are resistant to development, we are a very festive people, we like to celebrate while the challenges are enormous, so we must change paradigm. Take what is good from our culture and leave what is bad aside. [...] After the effort, it's comforting, so when we work to develop our localities, once the development is there we can enjoy it and we can take time off and celebrate. We also have to reduce waste in family ceremonies, there are a lot of resources that are wasted in family ceremonies, it's bullshit, you can't waste 2 million in a party and end up in the rubble the next day and have nothing to survive. [...] It's even madness, so we have to draw on this cultural background to find the necessary resources'* (MD, Louga, February 2020).

Despite this, some development actors recognise the limitations of such an approach and point instead to the problem of bad governance of development funds and projects, as well as partnerships, which undermines the impact of interventions, rather than to allegedly vicious or idle behaviour:

*'We are our own obstacles to development. For example, if we say that so many billions are injected into agriculture, there are so many rural communities where farmers have been identified. So why not transfer these competences to the commune and the commune will work directly with the technical services? Because the law allows these communes to use the technical services through what is called the 'model convention' and it is written in the texts. So why not transfer these competences to the communes? Everyone knows that projects that are launched at the grassroots level are much more felt by the*

*population. [...] I have a personal conception that means we are our own gravediggers of development. We are the main culprits! Sometimes we are even accomplices with the partners, that's the truth, we have to change our approach, for example with the IOM. All the means that it puts in place through the State and other institutions, there is no fallout at the grassroots level. Today there are approaches that I see it is developing. [...] I had some information with the guy in Saint-Louis, it's the fact of supervising the young people who are listed in the IOM files on emigration, we accompanied them on community projects. I had been informed of a project he is developing in two villages. There were two nationals who had been identified. This helps to solve certain problems, but if the funds are channelled through other structures it may not succeed, that's the truth. Today we need to change our approach, as development designers and development technicians we must at least ensure that our work has an impact on the population. There are projects that only exist in name but in reality they have no impact on the population and we have invested billions, even though they do not capitalise on anything at all, whereas we can bring a beneficial action that can have an impact even if it is only in the short term. The development approach must be changed, we have talked about management based on results but nothing. [...] Look at how evaluations are carried out, the evaluators are accomplices. There is no impartiality, in any case if we have to be concerned about the future of children and young people who every year multiply by a thousand, we must change our approach. The support must be direct to really reach the targets, but as we have said, the projects that the Italians finance, that Belgium finances, in three years time if you go to the level of these projects, you will see nothing.'* (F, Louga, February 2020).

*'To set up a project, you need to know the realities of the field in which the project will be implemented. It is a project that was set up in offices for the whole of Senegal because it was twenty-three (23) farms at the national level without meeting the climatic requirements and other factors of the different regions. So we benefited from 5 ha of our commune, then the fence was built by the State but it did not respond because it was a fence that was put in place for a year and everything was destroyed. In terms of equipment, we had a tractor that didn't have any traction equipment, that is to say, the Ossetians that allow us to do the ploughing. So a simple tractor is not efficient. As far as the production system is concerned, there was a motor pump used for irrigation. I mean, we would have to respond to the climatic requirements of each region, for example if the Casamance region here, it is hot at certain times, on the other hand there are many parasites on the agricultural crops so the sprinkler system did not respond, we had sprinklers for just 0.5 ha. On the whole, I mean the 5 ha were never covered when the equipment was insufficient'* (AS, Diaobé, April 2020).

## 4.2.2 ACCESS TO PROJECTS, FINANCE, LAND AND SEA

From the perspective of young people, the non-completion of interventions or a more radical lack of impact is interpreted from different angles. On the one hand, those who are closely or remotely involved in projects or services often complain about a 'lack of follow-up' and continuity. But more often than not, it is the very access to projects and resources that is questioned.

*'We are all Senegalese and we know how things work, you need to have a long arm [bras longs] to benefit from certain aids, if you don't have an arm, your curriculum vitae will be thrown in the dustbin. Sometimes we appoint someone in a company and they only hire members of their family.'* (D, Louga, January 2020).

The members of the Municipal Youth Council themselves denounce the presence of strong political clientelism, which is at the root of the inaccessibility of partner networks and the management of interventions:

**'Do you sometimes look for other partners?'**

**'We are still doing research but the only donors here in Senegal are politicians and for them to be partners you have to be a politician like them.'**

**'So they're going to block your plans if you're not a politician?'**

**'The projects will be given to their political clients. The town council is going to Europe to look for partners without bringing young people, the only block is that you have to be a politician or one of their supporters. This is a real block.'**

(Local Youth Council, Louga, March 2020).

Difficult access to financial resources is also, despite the presence of State services such as ANPEJ or projects designed to facilitate funding applications, perceived as a hindrance to the socio-economic development of young people. Return migrants from Europe are themselves often confronted with the fact that bank loans in Senegal are less accessible than in European countries. The following testimony is that of a young man from Louga who was able, thanks to the help of his family, to undertake a commercial activity which today is extremely virtuous:

*'At the beginning I tried with the banks but it's very hard to work with the banks because the interest rate is very high, you'll even think you're working for the bank. I tried once to work with a bank but I saw that it didn't suit me.'* (C, Louga, February 2020).

*A department manager admits, with regard to ANPEJ's services, that 'the rate they finance is tiny in relation to demand, supply is lower than demand'* (MD, Louga, February 2020).

Difficulty of access to land is a cross-cutting characteristic of rural contexts. For reasons that may vary, access to cultivable land and even more so to developed plots such as those in rice-growing areas is a very penalising aspect for young people:

*'There is a large federation that manages the plots. When someone wants a plot of land, if he doesn't sublet or sublet, he has to go to this federation. It is this federation that manages the plots. It turned out that the first ones who took over the plots do not give them back. ...] This makes access to the plots very difficult and management is done out of friendship or kinship or on the basis of an agreement that increases the cost of production. Often, the agreement on the table is the sharing of the harvest, which is not at all beneficial to the applicant.'* (ABK, Diaobé, May 2020).

*'At Anambé, those who have plots, have plots. Those who don't, can no longer have any. It's to the captains who are in Dakar, to the colonels who are in Ziguinchor or to the bosses who have money that the land is given. There are agents who have 150 hectares, while many heads of household can't get a plot of land to produce what they need to feed themselves. You can come and go for years but you will get nothing. Young people have difficulty accessing land. The ODCAV intervened so that the CSAs could have plots, given that the new director is from the locality. But there was no success. It is said that the young people do not meet the conditions (tractor, inputs and a sum paid as a deposit). The lack of technical and financial means deprives young people of plots.'* (AK, Diaobé, March 2020).



### DIFFICULTY OF ACCESS TO LAND IS A CROSS-CUTTING CHARACTERISTIC OF RURAL CONTEXTS.

In the context of the Saloum islands, it is the fishing resources and access to the sea, particularly since the creation of marine protected areas, that poses a problem. The latter are often perceived as provisions imposed from above, according to logics that escape the interests of fishermen who are faced with a dramatic reduction in fishing areas and fish stocks. International agreements that give access to foreign operators, such as those renewed with the European Union by a text adopted on 11 November 2020, only reinforce the fishermen's sense of injustice and the economic precariousness of the future of the region:

*'Personally, I used to fish there a lot, but in the old days I used to have the sleeping nets, I haven't been there since they closed it, we used to go there when the fish were scarce on that side. Some of them are very impacted, fishermen only count on the sea to work, it becomes problematic if they are forbidden access to it.'* (PMF, Missirah, September 2020).



### 4.2.3 DEVELOPMENT FROM BELOW

From the point of view of ordinary people, the future of the country and local areas is not so much expressed through development interventions or the great works we spoke of above. It is the tangible and daily efforts of ordinary people and, in emigration contexts such as Louga and Dakar, of migrants, who work abroad and provide for their relatives while carrying out minor works, that inspire a sense of advancement. It is these *minor works* (investments, household assistance, building of family homes) that connect the global world to local realities, and at the same time nourish the aspirations of young people despite the imposing restrictions on freedom of movement.

Many development projects carried out by NGOs, partnerships or local authorities do not leave the traces they promise. From the point of view of ordinary people, 'development' is not a familiar concept. It is usually an abstract and technical category that only some insiders - development specialists - handle. In fact, ordinary people tend to talk about the level of 'advancement' of the context in which they live by referring to what might be defined as the landscapes of everyday life and its minor works. These landscapes and works are inseparable from transnational migration. In this sense, it is interesting to point out that the verb 'to advance' is the translation of the Wolof '*demm ci kanam*', the same root of 'departure in migration': '*demm touk*'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> A system of membership fees which is very widespread in West Africa, often run by women in their neighbourhood of residence, or in any case by an association of people, which consists of pooling a fund which is redistributed periodically (often monthly) and in turn to each member of the group. In the case of our research sites, tontines were more present in Dakar and Thiès.

But from the point of view of ordinary people, it is also and above all the 'invisible infrastructures' (Simone 2004) that make progress possible: those of solidarity, collaboration and mutual aid networks: financial contributions from within the family or from the social environment, *tontines*<sup>3</sup>, etc. It is these ordinary and almost imperceptible efforts that make it possible to work daily to ensure the survival of households and the advancement of the land.



**FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ORDINARY PEOPLE,  
'DEVELOPMENT' IS NOT A FAMILIAR CONCEPT.**



# PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND THE SOCIAL IMMOBILITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE

## 4.3.1 AGRICULTURAL AND FISHING INTERVENTIONS THAT OFFER LITTLE HOPE TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Senegal's rural world is characterised by the predominance of the agricultural sector despite the diversification of activities. The public authorities' clear desire to improve the living conditions of rural people has been reflected in interventions that focus on valley management, supervision and financing of production. Thus, specific companies have been set up to support groundnut, cotton, rice, etc. production. Thanks to public interventions, young people in the Diaobé zone have shown an interest in participating in agricultural activities in the irrigated areas of the Anambé Basin in order to generate income and even produce rice for domestic consumption. While some large older producers benefiting from the authorities' largesse are doing well, young people, who often do not have sufficient means, suffer repeated failures. They feel that hydro-agricultural developments do not bring them any added value:

*'Two years ago, I invested in a 1 ha rice field. I paid for the harvester but I had to queue up because there are a small number of tractors. The problem is that those who have money, the bosses who harvest first. Before they finish, the other plots are dry and the rice has fallen to the ground and the birds that come to collect the rice and eat it. I, who had invested 200,000 CFA francs, harvested nothing but a small bag. It's a wasted effort, since then I haven't been farming. That's why we young people don't see each other in agricultural activities anymore and we try to go elsewhere'* (AK, Diaobé, March 2020).



**COTTON FARMING DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT. ANYONE WHO WORKS WITH SODEFITEX IS THE ONE WHO LOSES.**

Moreover, cotton production is conditioned by the massive use of inputs held by SODEFITEX, the technical supervision structure. This structure ensures its distribution to producers at the beginning of the rainy season. And it requires payment by nature after the harvest. Because it is also the sole buyer, the price per kilogram of cotton is imposed. Given the poor harvests due to the irregularity of the rains, destruction by animals, and the low selling price, debt collection is difficult and often requires the sale of the goods by the producers, which discourages them. Thus, growing cotton generates no profit or is synonymous with loss:

*'No, I've never seen a young person who succeeds with accommodation. It's only the old people who are there and there are not many who have succeeded. [...] Cotton farming does not contribute to local development. Anyone who works with SODEFITEX is the one who loses. My older*

*brother and I used to grow cotton. We had stopped growing cotton in 2009 because of the losses. If they give you inputs, at the end of the harvest they come to weigh your cotton for reimbursement in kind. If the season is good, you get some profit. If the season is average, you just manage to reimburse the cost of the inputs. In this case it's as if you work for SODEFITEX without interest. If it happens that the harvest is bad, you have to manage differently to pay for the inputs. In the year when we stopped growing cotton, production is not good. We reported, but SODEFITEX demanded payment for the cost of inputs. We had to sell our cart and donkey to be able to pay SODEFITEX back. Since then, we've been telling ourselves that we'll never grow cotton. Before, there were a lot of producers, but now we can count them.'* (D, Diaobé, May 2020).

One of the most important investments in the fishing sector in the islands of the Saloum Delta remains the Missirah fishing centre, offered by Japan to Senegal as a sign of friendship in 1989. The pirogue fleet that depends on the centre counts about fifteen today, whereas it was very important in the past. The centre supplies fuel to the owners of the pirogues. In return, they are obliged to sell their catch to the centre. The different generations of young people who have worked with the centre report receiving nothing and have achieving nothing. The centre is seen as an infrastructure that brings nothing back to the young people and the community. Moreover, young people sometimes leave the centre directly to engage in migration. For good reason, since what the centre provides in terms of income cannot even cover their basic needs:

*'Did what you were paid when you worked in the centre cover your needs?'* *'No because when you had to go to sea the centre would give you all the necessary expenses and on your return it would deduct the amount due and give you the rest, which is also divided into shares, one of which is for the material. And after this division you could receive the rest of the money.'* (AB, Missirah, September 2020).



**THE DEPLETION OF FISH STOCKS IN THE SALOUM ISLANDS IS ACCOMPANIED BY THE EXHAUSTION OF THE SHIPPING SECTOR.**

In recent years, the Senegalese state has been subsidising engines for fishermen. This approach might be seen from the outside as worthwhile, in that it allows those who cannot afford to buy fishing gear to obtain it. However, this policy is considered useless and uninteresting by many young people in the islands of the Saloum Delta, because it has come

about in a context of increasing scarcity of fish resources. And the state is pointed out as the main culprit for this scarcity through the fishing agreements it has signed with the foreign powers we mentioned above. It is not uncommon to hear that 'equipping pirogues with engines without fish makes no sense'. It is also important to mention that the fisheries agreements do not materialise in public investment in the islands to compensate for the decline in fishing or catches and to generate income generating activities in other sectors. A simple glance at the shores of the villages of Dionewar, Niodior, Falia etc. is enough to give the impression of being in a graveyard with pirogues. Almost all of them are moored. Even if some fishermen go out to sea for two or three weeks, the income from the sale of the meagre catch does not manage to cover the expenses incurred for the organisation of the fishing campaign. The depletion of fish stocks in the Saloum islands is accompanied by the exhaustion of the shipping sector. If in the past islanders were favoured for jobs related to navigation because of their experience of fishing and their knowledge of the sea, today things have become more complicated. They have little or no access to it due to the hardening of conditions and the rush to the sector. One alternative to this state of affairs is for fishermen to use their pirogues as local transport. However, each pirogue can only hope for one trip every fortnight and the earnings generated hardly cover daily needs. The other adaptation strategy is based on migration. This migration is either seasonal, taking the direction of the most dynamic fishing areas of the country, sub-region to other destinations in Africa, or oriented towards Europe, notably Italy and Spain via Mauritania and Morocco, Gambia or through the Senegalese coasts:

*'I want to migrate. ...] I once tried to go to Europe but we didn't make it. [...] I don't remember the date, I forgot. But I tried four times. ...] I took the sea [...] with the pirogue, like everyone else, we left from Saloum, on the Gambia side.'* (MN, Missirah, September 2020).

### 4.3.2 LOW PAY, SOCIO-ECONOMIC VULNERABILITIES

The Saloum delta contains a great diversity of landscapes and special ecosystems. In view of the assets linked to eco-tourism, the local cultural wealth and the establishment of the Saloum Delta as a World Heritage Site under the initiative of the Senegalese authorities, the Saloum Delta region has hosted a number of hotels and campsites. However, the tourist activity, which has been in crisis since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, mainly benefits foreign owners of accommodation establishments (holiday camps, campsites and other hotels). The local population is content to sell objets d'art or to animate the folklore and music troupes for the tourists. The few young people who find work in the development structures are poorly paid. In order to promote the different components of the cultural and tourist heritage of the area an Interpretation Centre of the Saloum Delta has been built in Toubacouta. The guards and the secretary, who is at the same time the librarian of this centre, receive meagre salaries (below 30,000 FCFA). It is because of these precarious conditions that they justify their desire to migrate in order to achieve their aspirations.



**THE ASPIRATION TO MIGRATE OFFERS THE POSSIBILITY OF IMAGINING A MUCH BETTER ECONOMIC SITUATION.**

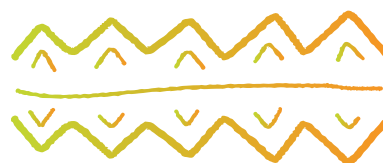
Far from being unique to the staff of this centre, the low income and economic vulnerability that accompanies them is shared by most young people in all the contexts considered. This economic vulnerability is one of the key causes of social immobility, of the inability to bridge the gap between expectations and resources. The testimony of a young migrant returning to Thiès, who speaks of a real 'blockage', perfectly sums up these vulnerabilities and their interrelationship with obligations linked to family responsibilities:

*'What blocked me when I was here in Senegal was that I couldn't get work, sometimes I had work that I was paid 60,000 FCFA [per month] and that couldn't satisfy my needs, I spent 20,000 FCFA on transport every month and I woke up at 5 a.m. to go to work and the salary couldn't be used for anything. ...] A salary of 60,000 FCFA is not enough because we have to contribute to the household expenses so this salary will be useless and we won't be able to make savings with it; the older brothers should help the younger brothers but they don't do it, the parents are starting to become old so we can't ask them for help anymore.'* (DF, Thiès, July 2020).



**THIS ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY IS ONE OF THE CLAIMED CAUSES OF SOCIAL IMMOBILITY, THE INABILITY TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN EXPECTATIONS AND RESOURCES.**

This discourse can be related to the inequality of opportunity mentioned above. If socio-economic vulnerability is the order of the day, the aspiration to migrate offers the possibility of imagining a much better economic situation. The average income of a migrant is estimated to be much higher than the 60,000 FCFA mentioned above. In addition to this, as we shall see in the next and last sections, there is an important emancipation from family pressures and social logics linked to success.



4.4

# DECISION-MAKING TO MIGRATE BETWEEN FAMILY PRESSURES, LOGICS AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

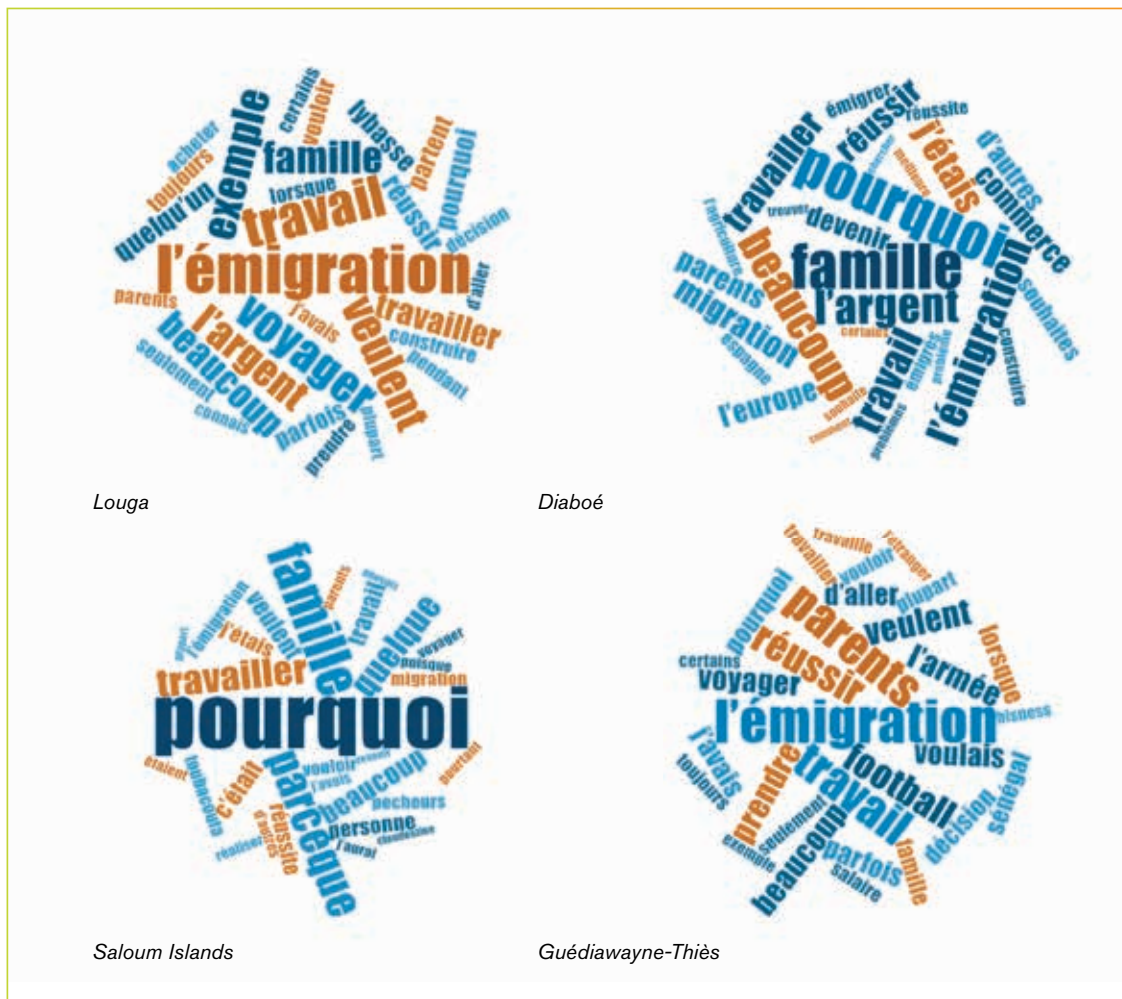
## 4.4.1 TO EMERGE FROM UNCERTAINTY BY ASPIRING TO MIGRATE

Today's young people seem to be constantly expressing, through the aspiration to migrate, a desire to get out of the socio-economic uncertainty in which they find themselves. The main factors contributing to this uncertainty are those described in the previous paragraphs: devaluation of qualifications, frustration with unequal opportunities, failure to complete development interventions, difficult access to resources and projects, ineffective public policies, vulnerability and socio-economic

immobility of young people in the face of a highly unfair and unequal labour market.

But when we question the decision to migrate or to stay, we enter into a perspective that articulates other existential and contextual dimensions. Young people in different contexts, in relation to their aspirations and decision-making processes, use the words that are reported in the clouds below:

World clouds from textual data analysis



What emerges across the different sites is the recurrence of the words 'family' or 'parents', and 'work/work' and 'money'. 'Succeed' is also a statistically recurring element in these word clouds.

In order to understand the aspirations and decision-making to migrate it is therefore necessary to put all the factors we have highlighted above in relation to family pressures as well as the weight and social logics linked to success.

Moreover, the notion of 'money' should not be reduced to its literal, purely economic meaning. In West Africa money, beyond its function as a means of exchange, represents an element of every interaction, a means of producing and strengthening social ties. Thus, money is a highly valued gift within interactions, rites and ceremonies, and a necessary gift within households. The most intimate family relationships are constantly animated by gifts of money. Being a good child, parent, or friend, in short 'being someone' means circulating as much money as possible around you. Social success thus begins at the heart of family intimacy and is sanctioned by this liquidity. It then extends to the spheres of the neighbourhood and the communities to which one belongs, while remaining strongly anchored in the ability to give and consume one's own money. For an adult man, finding money is a fundamental requirement. In order to be considered as such, one must be constantly able to circulate money.



### MIGRATION THUS REPRESENTS, IN THE IMAGINATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE AS WELL AS IN THE GESTURES AND WORKS OF MIGRANTS, AN EXTRAORDINARY HORIZON OF ACCESS TO A LIQUIDITY THAT FORGES AND REINFORCES SOCIAL TIES.

The impossibility of helping one's relatives, as well as providing for one's own needs, is thus often linked to the possibility not only to circulate, but also to save and invest through migration.

Migration thus represents, in the imagination of young people as well as in the gestures and works of migrants, an extraordinary horizon of access to a liquidity that forges and reinforces social bonds. In contrast, the social immobility of young people is synonymous with a lack of capacity to give, receive and save money and therefore to meet obligations, responsibilities, hopes and aspirations.

*'My goal is to have money and wherever I can earn money suits me, [...] to leave, have money and come to take care of my family and build a house.'* (AD, Louga, January 2020).



*'Most of them want to succeed in order to help their mother, because when you help a mother in a family, you have helped the whole family.'* (C, Louga, February 2020).

*'No one decides for the young people, they see that the people who have left achieve great things and they make the decision to leave to succeed and do as they did. In my opinion, it is the fact that young people see their friends leave and come back to build a house, have a car that makes them want to leave to succeed and help their family.'* (CJ, Louga, February 2020).

*'Every mother wants her son to succeed, but it's a personal decision. In my opinion, sometimes it is the young people who want to leave and ask their mothers for help, so the mothers do their best to give them money even if they get their tontines back. In some cases it is the parents who need help and do everything possible to take their child abroad, but for the most part it is the young people who make their own decision.'* (KJ, Louga, March 2020).

*'Young people make their own decisions. For example, last year I saw a young man who stopped studying and he told me he wants to leave and he told me he was going to be a motorbike taxi driver all year round to get away. And he's leaving right now as I speak to you.'* (MS, Louga, February 2020)

*'It is not with a happy heart that one leaves one's family to expatriate with all the freedom one leaves behind. Here there is no work, but over there you can find work. Irregular emigration, everyone knows that it is not good, but you have no choice with all that people encounter on the road to success at the risk of their lives. You just want to work in order to have money, but here there is nothing and even if there were a glimmer of hope, it is in the hands of people who are already rich. Even the graduates can't find anything to do. ...] After an examination of conscience, I realised that many of the people I went to school with have now gone on to university and others, more than seven people, have migrated illegally. At that point I thought, since all my friends are emigrating, why not me? Because it's just one person I know who is still stuck in Morocco, but all the others have arrived either in Spain or Italy, and even Germany for some of them. I decided to try this route because almost every night they explain it to me on WhatsApp. I even have a friend from my class who did three years at university before going to Morocco and then to Spain.'* (ID, Diaobé, April 2020).

*'My parents never discussed the subject of migration directly with me. However, if they go out and return home, I often hear them talk about the return of a migrant saying that the son of such came with a lot of money or he sends money at the end of each month or he has built a house. When I hear my parents say this I want to leave for a better life so that I can send them money and build buildings.'* (YS, Diaobé, April 2020).

Thus, the exit from uncertainty is not a simple calculation of the marginal gains that the implemented strategies could bring at the individual level. It is a process of personal, social and family affirmation that is part of a set of pressures, responsibilities and hopes that take shape in relation to the expectations of lineage members, neighbours, communities and contexts of belonging with a view to becoming an adult 'person'. This desire to assert oneself, often expressed through the aspiration to migrate, also reflects an individual refusal of social immobility and economic vulnerability.

## 4.4.2 SOCIAL MOBILITY AND MIGRATION: SPATIAL COMPRESSIONS AND TEMPORAL DISTENSIONS IN THE ERA OF 'IRREGULAR' MIGRATION

While most of the young people interviewed during our study openly declare that they aspire to international migration, particularly to Europe or North America, very few are able to do so or have actually taken the necessary steps to organise it.

However, some of them have experience of international or cross-border mobility, particularly in the Louga and Diaobé sites. Most of them are travelling to North African countries: Morocco, Mauritania and Libya are the main destinations. And even if behind many of these mobility experiences there was the long-term project of 'trying' to 'attempt' to enter Europe, most of them 'fail' and become internal migrants on the African continent.

A young person determined to migrate is today capable of attempting many trajectories and attempts, and the result is never linear or certain. The first generations of transnational migrants in the 1980s and 1990s, which we discussed in the first part of this report, differed from current migrants and aspiring migrants in two main dimensions. The first concerns the fact that the migration policies of host countries and the processes of externalisation of European borders have made access to regular migration increasingly exclusive and elusive. The second is a consequence of the first. As intercontinental migration has become an increasingly restricted possibility, the social, family and religious networks on which legal migration decisions and trajectories were based seem to have weakened. Even in contexts with a strong migratory tradition such as Louga, where lineage networks were the most direct means of realising a migratory project, we are today witnessing a progressive individualisation of the decision to migrate and of its organisation.

Restrictive migration policies have *irregularised* and spatially compressed mobility, as mobility is only legally possible in geographically more restricted spaces. On the contrary, the times of migration, as well as of social mobility, have become distended, because a young

person can attempt dozens of mobilities towards North Africa or Europe without realising his or her emigration project. The increasingly 'irregular' nature of intercontinental migration has therefore compressed the spaces of movement and lengthened the times of geographical mobility. The conditions of socio-economic vulnerability of young people have lengthened those of social success and uncertainty. But the individualisation of the decision is also explained by another factor: travel is no longer only within the reach of those who had privileged access to migration networks and legal procedures. It is within the reach of those who have a little money to finance a journey in 'irregular' trajectories and attempts. Today the cost of an irregular emigration attempt is more accessible than legal emigration at the time of the first migratory waves and the crisis linked to the covid-19 pandemic seems to confirm this downward trend in departure costs.



**MIGRATION THUS REPRESENTS, IN THE IMAGINATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE AS WELL AS IN THE GESTURES AND WORKS OF MIGRANTS, AN EXTRAORDINARY HORIZON OF ACCESS TO A LIQUIDITY THAT FORGES AND REINFORCES SOCIAL TIES.**

The resilience that pushes a young adult to attempt the crossing of the Mediterranean or the Ocean dozens of times only differs in degree and context from the resilience of a young person 'who stays'. It is proportional to the rejection of the social immobility that characterises daily living conditions. Today's decision to migrate therefore involves a permanent, non-linear and increasingly individual effort to find a successful path out of the uncertainty and social immobility intensified by policies restricting international mobility.





**Promote access to resources** (energy, financial, natural, social) **to combat the socio-economic vulnerability of young people**, with particular attention to the gender dimension. The aim is to avoid discrimination against both young women and young men.

**Support a better knowledge and valorization of local economies and territories** (both rural and urban and mixed), of the concrete needs and trajectories of social groups, of cultural identities, as well as of the internal perspectives of local development, in order to strengthen the attractiveness of the territories. This also involves the construction of a less technical language of interventions with the aim of designing more inclusive practices that aim to bridge the distance between development actors and the population, as well as to encourage participation in the incubation and implementation of projects that are closer and more respectful of concrete experiences and local models of success.

**Replace information and awareness-raising campaigns on 'irregular' migration** with a systemic fight against social inequalities, based on the fact that these are no longer so much articulated on the North and South axis as they are internal to local contexts. The fight against inequalities requires a strengthening of the quality of public education and professional training that is more firmly rooted in the key economic sectors in each context.

**Reduce the tendency to produce emergency interventions** by opting for a distension of incubation and project implementation times, a greater rationalization of the management of migrants, a diversification of support and partner networks and an active participation of the populations and the citizen fabric.

**Contribute to an opening towards more legal opportunities to migrate** by enhancing the correlation between social mobility, migration and development.





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B15 2TT, United Kingdom  
[www.birmingham.ac.uk](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk)

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