

Since the late 1990s, internal migration in Senegal has significantly increased. Several factors contribute to add complexity, such as the combined impact of population growth and underemployment, the progressive degradation of the natural resources, and restrictions to international movements.

This trend of internal migration, which is the result of a broader structural crisis, is reshaping the national space, calling for a territorial redistribution around regional development hubs.

THE LITTLE-KNOWN ASPECT OF SENEGALESE MIGRATION

Senegal has a strong tradition of migration that is essentially turned toward the African continent and Europe (respectively 45% each). Migratory levels between 2008 and 2013 indicate that the main regions of emigration abroad are Matam, Diourbel, Thiès and Saint-Louis, where this type of migration is historic. Since the 2000s, the geopolitical context has imposed tougher conditions of travel towards Europe (more stringent entry in the Schengen area since the Treaty of Lisbon of 2007), while socio-economic tensions at national level continue to heighten.

Indeed, with 13.5 million inhabitants (last census), Senegal retains a high population growth rate (2.7%/year) and its population is expected to double by 2035. 296,000 young people arrive every year on the labour market while the formal offer of employment is estimated at 30,000. Urbanisation is ongoing but marked by strong polarisation and a highly unequal distribution of people: the Dakar region is home to nearly one quarter of Senegal's population on 0.3% of its national territory. Despite this, the country remains mostly rural (55% in 2013) and the living conditions of rural people are deteriorating due to land pressure, the impacts of climate change (drought) and low and unstable income.

If departures abroad are widespread in the traditional regions of emigration, internal migration is playing an increasingly central role in the diversification strategies of households in the face of economic and natural risks and the deterioration of living conditions in rural areas. Thanks to improved communication (transport and mobile phone), rural people are moving and in permanent search for real or perceived opportunities for better income in the most dynamic urban or agricultural areas.

YOUNG MIGRANTS IN SEARCH OF EMPLOYMENT

This mobility firstly concerns the age group of 15 to 34 years (almost 60% at the national level) but also young girls under 15 years of age who are employed as domestic workers in the city (nearly 13%

against 4% for young boys). The integration of young people in the agricultural sector consistently comes up against the power relations and weight of the elders. According to recent surveys in the Groundnut Basin, the Delta and the Niayes regions, 51% of young people who had migrated to an urban area did not possess any resource (land or livestock) in the locality of origin. This situation is even more pronounced for women (76%). Other investigations that also included the Casamance region show that migrants have generally achieved a level of basic education, with 40 to 60% of them having reached the secondary level. The search for work is overwhelmingly present and is the main motivation of migration (between 60% and 95% depending on the areas). However, the continuation of studies as well as apprenticeships is also a reason for leaving, in particular in the region of St Louis which benefits from wide educational offerings.

GEOGRAPHICAL REORIENTATION AND GROWING COMPLEXITY OF MIGRATION FLOWS

In the past, migration that was essentially from rural to urban areas but also towards other rural areas, came from semi-arid regions (Middle Valley of the Senegal River, silvo-pastoral region of Ferlo) towards Dakar or the Groundnut Basin (seasonal migrants known as «navetanes», i.e. those who come during the rainy season to provide additional support in groundnut cultivation). Today, if internal migration has evolved and diversified in terms of the profiles of migrants, destination areas, and sectors of industry, cities still constitute the main destination of rural people. Firstly, the Dakar region but more generally the urban axis Dakar - Thiès - Touba (stronghold of the mouride brotherhood in the Diourbel region and second largest city in the country) polarises 60% of migration and represents 47% of the country's population (2013). The attractiveness of this megalopolis in the making structures the Senegalese territory. It stimulates specific activities such as the provision of domestic services from the region of Ziguinchor that is affected by isolation and security issues. It is also a learning opportunity for many rural youth (in particular from the Groundnut Basin) who then

seek employment in other agricultural regions. It is especially the engine of many circular short to medium migration that is facilitated by the size of the country and its road network, and marked by city-countryside return trips that enable the rural youth and their families to access activities and additional income.

Migratory urban-rural movements are also observed with the classic phenomenon of returning migrants who invest in the agricultural sector and/or who build in their villages of origin. However, the rural-rural type migration towards the new dynamic agricultural areas is the most remarkable. They illustrate the income diversification strategies of the rural youth who move from rain-fed production areas toward well equipped or irrigated areas, especially during the dry season. The two main destinations are the Delta region which is structured by the rice and tomato sectors, and the Niayes region, which represents the main horticultural production area. These agricultural territories show strong growth and have benefited from substantial public and private investments with many projects that aim to increase their productivity and stimulate the demand for agricultural workers. In addition to these two centres of attraction, migration linked to the system of transhumance still constitute a strategy used by the people of Ferlo to adapt to climatic vagaries. However, seasonal movements are increasingly taking place in the south-east towards eastern Senegal, in search for grazing areas and pastoral water points.

MIGRATION AND TERRITORIAL RESTRUCTURATION

These restructurations of the Senegalese territory linked to internal migration highlight the spatial imbalances; however, they also reveal the opportunities and the potential for a better use of local resources. To meet the youth employment challenge, a regional investment policy that structures the employment basins around investment in small towns and their agricultural hinterland would contribute to easing the tensions associated with the hypertrophy of Dakar, the megalopolis. The territorialisation of public policies, supported by Act III on decentralisation and whose operational phase is overdue, should contribute to find local responses to structural employment challenges of young people.

Fig. 6.1: A representation of spatial dynamics

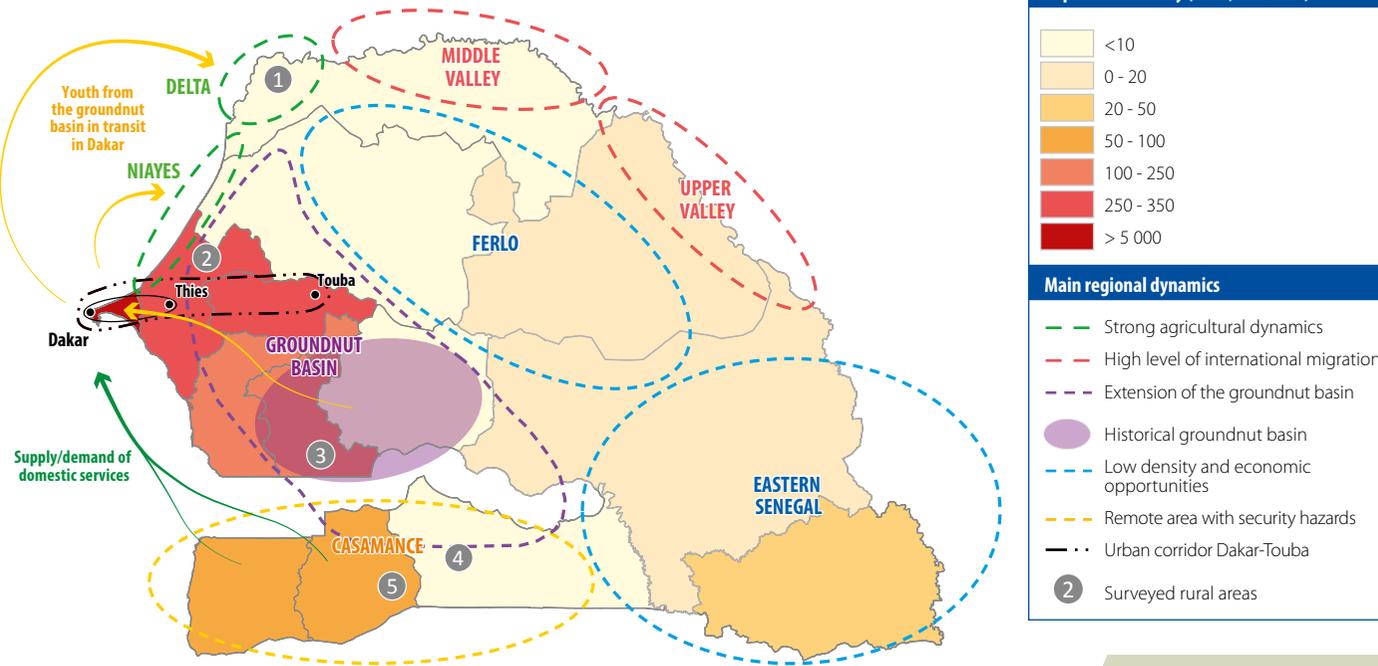


Fig. 6.2: Destination of international migrants (2013)

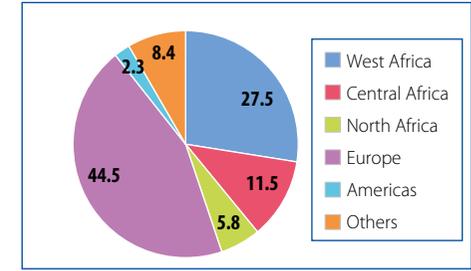


Fig. 6.4: Migration flows between regions

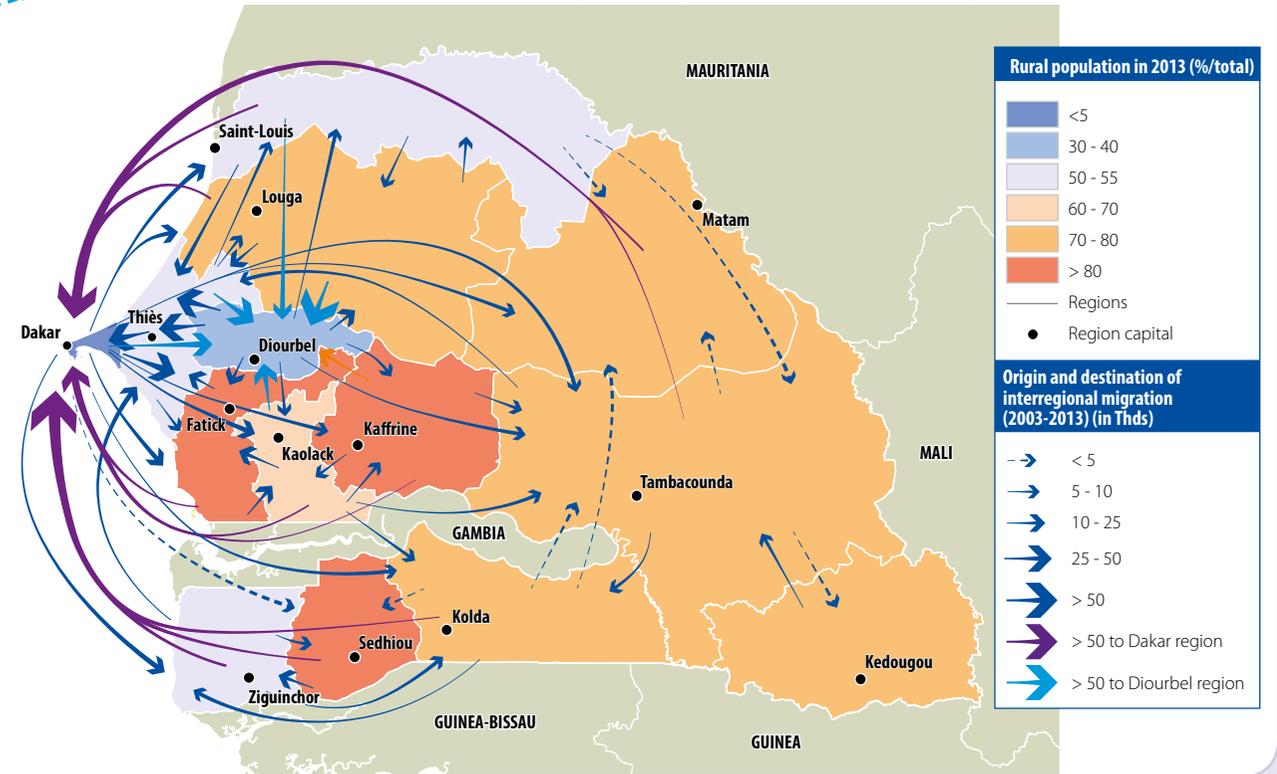


Fig. 6.3: Characteristics of migrants in surveyed regions (2012)

