

The West African Migration Dynamics: Between Change and Status Quo

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Summary

Though West African Migration is basically driven by survival needs, it is more and more difficult to attain this goal on the continent especially due to the degradation of ecosystems, recurrent socio-political crises and tougher economic conditions. The resultant effect is that the greater demand for mobility all over the sub-region is in contrast to the numerous impediments that hinder the free movement of people and/or the rejection of the other. These practices have considerably changed the traditional migration pattern as well as the strategies of the potential migrants who are compelled to devise by their own means as way of getting all the resources needed to achieve their desired migratory goal.

Among the preferred solutions, the opening and/or confirmation of destinations outside the continent has become a new deal. But, looking at the generalized protectionism regarding migration both at the continental and global levels, the West African responses to issues pertaining to mobility cannot be solved by a single country but they need to be examined on a supranational basis, which sub regional integration institutions are unable to put in place.

On the whole, the control of migration flow in West Africa, as regards the management of the movement, depends, to a large extent, on the capacity of all the actors to accept its importance and its justification.

Introduction

The demand for mobility observed in the West African sub-region is in sharp contrast with the various obstacles to free movement of persons and rejection at the borders, which have become the rule. Such practices have considerably changed the traditional migration pattern and promoted a new configuration of the migration terrain. Much as the works on West African Migration continue to underscore the growing intensity of the phenomenon, the changes that affect the phenomenon remain scantily documented. .

The major objective of this presentation is to give a general and current overview of international mobility of the citizens of sixteen countries that make up the West African sub-region. In the light of the changes observed, it analyses the

determinants of the exodus, the composition of the movements, the geospatial orientation etc., the functional implications of the management of the migration space by the actors etc.,

The ideas advanced in the text are based on research outcomes carried out over a period of more than one decade at the RÉMIGRAF¹ and on the abundant literature devoted to what is referred to as the « new African Diaspora »².

The first part of the text takes stock of migration in West Africa. The objective is to elicit the principal spatial and human developments which enable one to say that the current migration architecture is the product of the scanty interest shown in the movement of the population by political authorities and /or the tinkering made by the migrants who were left to their own devices.

The second part focuses on the knowledge drawn from the study of long distance movements by West African peoples. The review of the literature on the subject matter shows that in spite of the need to renew some theses, there exists a relative good knowledge of the different forms of mobility.

Finally, the third and last part notes the shortcomings observed in the research findings and their defects before coming out with the major thrusts that future research needs to focus on.

A- General Overview of Migration in West Africa

I- International Migration in West Africa

1. Two main forms of International Migration characterize the movements. These are:

- migration of labour was from the onset influenced and organized by colonization both in terms of choice of destinations and in the mode of organization. It is basically motivated by the search for additional income which for a long period of time had assumed a seasonal character. However there is an exception: we have the Senegalese and Malian diamond-cutters of the 1950s who passed through Sierra Leone to Central Africa or to East Africa from Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire.

1 Based at the Fundamental Institute of Black Africa, the Network of Study on African International Migrations is an independent research. It brings together teachers-researchers of different disciplines and nationalities. Its major aim is to produce credible knowledge on migration dynamics in West Africa. For more information, check from : www.matrix.msu.edu/~ucad/papadembafall/maoumy/

2 Koser K., *New African Diasporas*. London & New York, Routledge, 2003.

Today, migration of labour seems to give way to more complex forms like the migration of blind Malians or marabouts from the Sahelian regions and major capital cities like Abidjan, Accra, Dakar, Freetown, etc.

Return migration is a marginal phenomenon that was observed over the last decade in Burkina Faso as well as in Ghana;

- Political migration is based on periodic conflicts that have often degenerated into civil wars leading quite often to serious displacement of the population: Liberian refugees in Guinea, Black Mauritians in the valley of River Senegal and Chadians in Niger, etc.

2. The determinants of the long distance exodus have not changed much with time. In fact, both in the past and today, long distance migration appears as a survival strategy³ which prolongs internal migration. It must be noted that in West Africa, the economic crises in port cities always engendered the redeployment of migrants to quite distant environments. Thus, the Woodaibes of Niger whose destinations in the past were Accra or Abidjan went as far as Dakar through Freetown⁴;

Though there is a real correlation between the causes of international migration⁵, more specific reasons can explain these movements:

- for certain ethnic groups like the Suninkes of Mauritania, Mali and Senegal, the Mossi of Burkina Faso or the Dogons of Mali, migration is often interpreted, in the light of circumcision as a transitional or an important stage in the individual's development⁶. One must develop to « become a man », to attain social status and be accorded recognition;

- the presence of members of the family including neighbors abroad is very often a triggering factor. In fact, it is the social capital and one of its forms of expression is the more or less well structured network of reception and integration which operates as one of the principal levers of the international exodus;

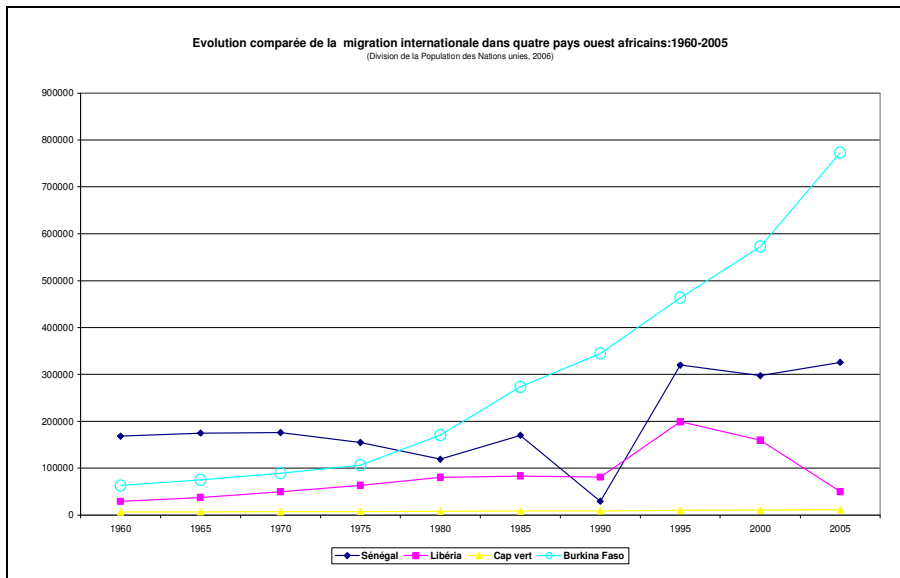
- The bases of the brain drain are found in the attractiveness of the rich countries but also the less favourable nature of the African environment especially at the political level as demonstrated by the large exodus of Nigerian executives during the military regimes, which showed blatant disregard for democratic principles

3 Robin N., Lalou R. et Ndiaye M., Facteurs d'attraction et de répulsion à l'origine des flux migratoires internationaux. Rapport national du Sénégal. EUROSTAT/NIDI/IRD, 1999.

4 Boesen E., «Nomadisme et modernité: Les Fulbe-Wodaabe entre pastoralisme et culture mondiale », *Annales de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences humaines* 35, 2005.

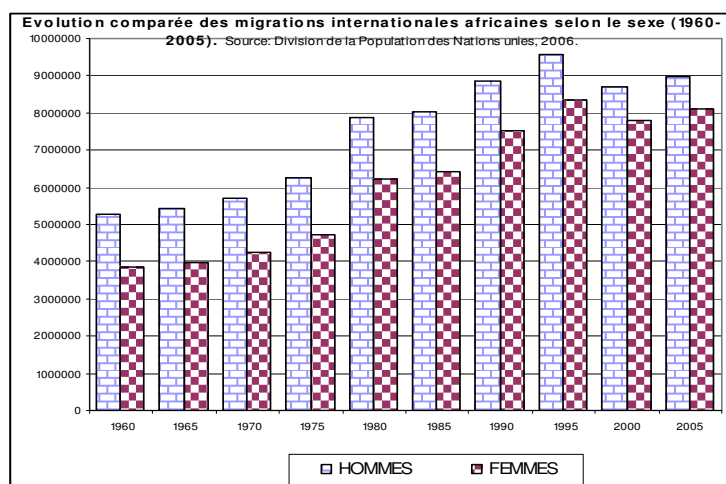
5 Club du Sahel et de l'Afrique de l'ouest/ OCDE, *Le contexte socio-économique et régional des migrations ouest africaines*, Paris : novembre 2006.

6 Dupraz P., «Les enfants du jujubier. Le voyage dans la tradition orale sooninke», *Studia Africana* 6, 1995 (mars) : 69-82 ; Petit V., *Migrations et société Dogon* Paris : l'Harmattan, 1998.



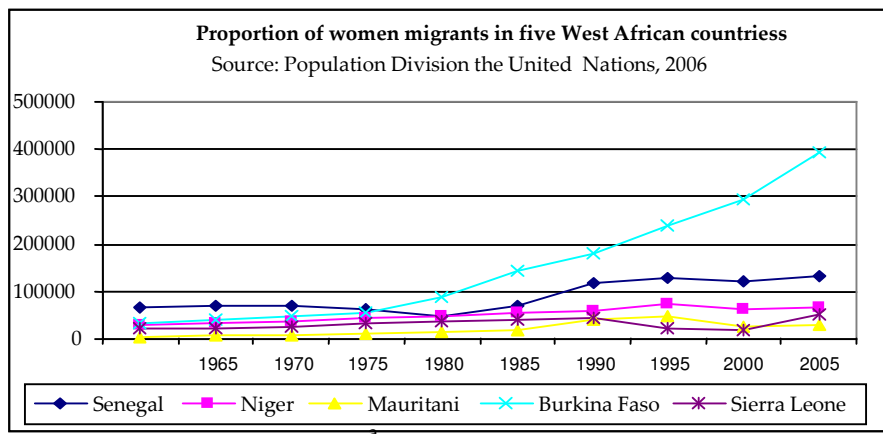
3. Apart from their spontaneity, the new wave of migrations in West Africa must be appreciated as being the result of migration movement rather than a desire on the part of the actors to settle in the host country⁷.

4. The gradual feminization of the movements is a major novelty. Essentially male and youth oriented, this international migration is gradually becoming an adventure for women who migrate alone and independently and this is in relation to their status as family heads. The increasing proportion of women is not constituted by small numbers of accompanying family members.



⁷ Fall P. D., « Travailler en circulant. La circulation en Afrique de l'Ouest et de l'Afrique de l'Ouest à l'Afrique du Sud », *Migrations-Société* 18 (107), 2006 : 233-251.

The graph above indicates that though migration of women has been on the ascendancy for some years now, it is nevertheless influenced by socio-cultural considerations. Available data indicate that Senegalese or Burkinabé women are by far more than Sierra Leoneans, Nigeriens or Mauritians (from the figure below).



For some years now, the turn of events in the area of migration goes beyond sexual considerations. The current crop of women migrants are those who have been engaged in trading activities for several years now, do not come from smaller nations like Benin, the Gambia or Togo but from much bigger nations. The Senegalese⁸ Guineans, Malians or Sierra Leoneans are engaged in buying and selling and after their adventures into North African, European and American markets, they have now launched themselves into the conquest of the Asian market: particularly the Emirates of Dubai and China.

5. In its current configuration, the West African migration landscape is certainly a historical heritage but nevertheless carries the traces of recent events like decolonization, drought cycles, discovery of oil or phosphate deposits, armed conflicts, etc.

Previously based on regional complementarity, the migratory movements observed in West Africa follow the pattern of traditional trade lines reviewed and corrected to promote colonial projects⁹. At the beginning of the 20th Century, these resulted, particularly in the French controlled territories, in a

⁸ Diop M-C, *Les sociétés sénégalaises entre le global et le local*. Paris : Karthala/UNRISD, 2002.

⁹ : Barry B. & Harding L. (éds), *Commerce et commerçants en Afrique de l'Ouest: Sénégal*. Paris: l'Harmattan, 1992; Manchuelle F., *Willing Migrants. Soninke Labor Diasporas, 1848-1960*. Athens - London, 1997

development model of the territory greatly influenced by the policy of producing natural resources and transporting them to France.

In fact, the migratory flow referred to as traditional was characterized by a clear antagonism of two territories:

- The converging centers of job seekers which are the coastal areas especially major port cities : Côte-d'Ivoire (about 30 % of foreigners before the crisis) or Nigeria after the oil boom ;
- The hinterland which corresponds to the labor pools where workers can be recruited for development, mining or agricultural purposes: These are Upper Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

In spite of slight changes, one can observe a relative status quo of this historical antagonism *between two West Africas*.

Another feature of these migratory movements basically concerns the typology of the actors and the organization of the movement. Though these two factors have one thing in common, that is bearing the influence of the prescriptive framework within which they originated, two major phases can be distinguished : :

- the colonial period marked by the rigorous control and management of the movements within the territories under the tutelage of a single colonial power ;
- the accession to national sovereignty which from the sixties translates into a laissez-faire attitude in the area of labor migration.

Labour Migration in the Colonial Era

Historical research indicate that intra-African migrations at the beginning of the 20th Century were organized movements by the French Colonial Administration: forced labor, transfer of civil servants to French West Africa, seasonal labor force to the groundnut production zones or plantations managed by the major commercial Companies.

The meticulous organization of these migratory movements was in keeping with the need to satisfy the labor needs of Metropolitan France at a cheaper cost. The two thrusts of this policy were the provision of policy direction and harnessing of the resources of the various territories.

Concentrated around administrators sent from France, the political direction also called for junior administrative and auxiliary staff. These were the functionaries and skilled workers. They were *enlightened Africans who* enjoyed many privileges

in the countries to which they were posted but who appeared to the people of the host nation as servants¹⁰

These initial waves of migration promoted the settlement of transnational communities in all the African countries particularly the colonies of the former FWA. The best known examples are the Senegalese in Guinea¹¹ and Dahomeans (now Benin) in the countries of the Gulf of Guinea¹². The cooperation with the Whites (Europeans) created a feeling of rejection and scorn, which has stuck to the the skin of these *Black French citizens* even till today.

Pambo-Loueya (2003) perfectly describes the feeling of the indigenous people vis-à-vis the foreigners: « *The Senegalese imported like a militia soldier is "reputed" to be much capable of countering the warlike tendencies of the "Pahouin" (the Gabonese). It is therefore from the period of conquest that one can explain the phenomenon of the exclusive presence of Africans in tasks related to security, control and even supervision of the population in carrying out certain duties but also much later in supervision of tasks deemed as punishment* »¹³.

In the early stages of colonization, development of natural resources was centred on a labor force, which, in certain cases, was an important support for their production. It centred on a despicable system of forced labor, ¹⁴ which gave way, by virtue of its abolition in 1946, to recruitments by specialized agencies in the countries of origin. Thus, « farmers in [Côte-d'Ivoire], meeting under the auspices of the African Agricultural Union, established relations with the Upper Volta traditional authorities to organize recruitment of workers. With the support of recruiting officers from Upper Volta, who were paid according to the number recruited, the employers came to make direct recruitments from the villages. Transportation, income and status of the sharecroppers became attractive issues which easily motivated them to leave»¹⁵.

¹⁰ Mbokolo E., *Noirs et Blancs en Afrique équatoriale, les sociétés côtières et la pénétration française*. Paris: Mouton, 1981.

¹¹ Fall P. D., «Dynamique migratoire et évolution des réseaux d'insertion des Sénégalais à Conakry (République de Guinée)» (: 63-75), in: Coquery-Vidrovich C., Goerg O., Mandé I. & Rajoanah F. (éds), *Être étranger et migrant en Afrique au XX è siècle. Enjeux identitaires et modes d'insertion. Vol. 2: Dynamiques migratoires, modalités d'insertion urbaine et jeux d'acteurs*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003.

¹² Challenor H. S., "Strangers as colonial intermediates: The Dahomeyans in Francophone Africa", (: 67-83), in Shack A. & Skinner E. P. (ed.), *Strangers in African Cities*. London: University of California Press, 1977.

¹³ Pambo-Loueya C. F., «Les étrangers et le travail au Gabon: rapatrier...unique solution?» (: 333-352), in: Coquery-Vidrovich C., Goerg O., Mandé I. & Rajoanah F. (éds), *Être étranger et migrant en Afrique au XX è siècle. Enjeux identitaires et modes d'insertion. Vol. 2: Dynamiques migratoires, modalités d'insertion urbaine et jeux d'acteurs*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003.

¹⁴ Fall B., *Le travail forcé en Afrique occidentale française (1900-1946)*. Paris: Karthala, 1993.

¹⁵ Blot O., *Epiphénomènes burkinabé*. Paris I-Panthéon-Sorbonne: Mémoire de DEA d'Etudes africaines, 2003.

Based on regional complementarity, the intra-African migratory movements centred on the opportunity for people in deprived localities to get additional resources. This was particularly true of the navétanes or seasonal migrants who left the Fouta Djallon or Mossi land for Senegal¹⁶ during groundnut harvests. Even today, the Dakar-Bamako¹⁷ railway and the RAN¹⁸ are the major transportation links for migration in West Africa and the living relics of the linkages between the former French territories.

The settlement of transnational communities in the different countries of the sub-region is basically related to the first waves of tradesmen who responded to the requests by their compatriots living in other countries. In the specific case of Senegalese migrating to the Gulf of Guinea, a greater part of the migrants in this particular case were tailors and metal smiths who relied on the community network for reception, and they in turn, invited their family members. It is in this context that the crucial role played by the Senegalese Mosque in Conakry¹⁹ can be seen. That is in the area of integration of different generations of migrants but also in the preservation of the identity of the group.

From Organized migrations to Voluntary Migrations

As opposed to migrations during the colonial era, accession to independence by Nation-states was not accompanied by the maintenance of tight organizational policy which always promoted cross border migratory flows. It must be noted that the control by the colonial administration was not in any way intended to be a stumbling block but a way of optimizing the management of the labor force. Faced with the inactivity of the post independence leaders, the migration trend took on a voluntary turn which was a source of problem both in terms of reception and integration. .

The major importance of migration based on geographical proximity, cultural unity and circulatory traditions is quite current: Malians to Senegal, Burkinabé (former Upper Voltans) to Côte-d'Ivoire, Ghanaians to Togo, Nigeriens to Nigeria, etc.

16 David P., *Les navétanes. Histoire des migrants saisonniers de l'arachide en Sénégal des origines à nos jours*. Dakar/ NEA, 1980.

17 La ligne de chemin de fer du Dakar-Niger relie Dakar (Sénégal) à Koulikoro (Mali). Elle se développe sur 1287 Km dont 641 Km au Mali et dessert de nombreuses villes sénégalaises (Thiès, Tambacounda, Kidira) et maliennes (Kayes, Kita, Kati, Bamako).

18 Régie Abidjan-Niger, dénomination de la société de transports ferroviaires unissant la Côte-d'Ivoire au Burkina-Faso. Elle gère le chemin de fer qui dont les têtes de pont sont Abidjan et Ouagadougou.

19 Fall P. D, *op. cit.*

The voluntary nature of migration of people leads to chaotic situations, which, depending on circumstances, lead to massive exodus of citizens of a country who are handpicked²⁰. Strictly speaking, the gaining of independence by African countries from their former colonies opened the door for a «*liberalization of migration based on a right and freedom of movement taken away from the colonizer*» (Discussion with A. Bèye, Abidjan-Treichville, December 1999).

As indicated in responses obtained from a survey carried out among Malian migrants resident in neighboring countries between 1960 and 1970, the choice of a destination country is never based on a good knowledge of the economic environment of the host country but on sketchy information gathered from compatriots residing in those countries who never talk about the actual living and residential conditions prevailing in those countries. The same survey emphasized that for a selected panel, the decision to travel derives from a personal initiative with the aim of ensuring reproduction of the family unit.

The welcoming speech of *fathers of independence* like Félix Houphouët Boigny of Côte-d'Ivoire, Ahmed Sékou Touré of Guinea or Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, for a long time, constituted a favorable basis for the settlement of African communities in countries undergoing construction, but calls for unity and Panafricanism were quickly countered with shouts of " balkanization".

It is however not out of place to recall that though colonialism fostered nationalist consciousness, it is also under French colonization that French West Africa (FWA) -1895-1958, experienced its only genuine territorial integrity.

In spite of the politicization of space and the rigidity resulting from numerous crises or identity crises, the historical porousness of the sub-region is an ongoing feature without any institutional framework.²¹ The resultant connection of spaces is discernible both at the level of spatial dynamics and daily practices which rarely coincide with the State framework²². Regardless of political boundaries

20Afolayan A. A., "Immigration and expulsion of ECOWAS aliens in Nigeria", *International Migration Review* XXII (1), 1988: 4 -27; Bredeloup S., « Expulsion des ressortissants ouest africains au sein du continent africain (1954-1995) », *Mondes en développement* XXIII (91), 1995 : 117-129.

21 Fall P. D., "État-nation et migrations en Afrique de l'Ouest: le défi de la mondialisation". Paris: UNESCO-SHS, 2004 ; Amaizo Y. E. (cord.), *L'Afrique est-elle incapable de s'unir ? Lever l'intangibilité des frontières et opter pour un passeport commun*. Paris : L'Harmattan, 2002.

22 Bach D. C. (dir.), *Régionalisation, mondialisation et fragmentation en Afrique subsaharienne*. Paris: Karthala, 1998 ; Igue J. O., *Le territoire et l'État en Afrique. Les dimensions spatiales du développement*. Paris: Karthala, 1995 ; Mbembe A., «Les frontières mouvantes du continent africain», *Le Monde diplomatique*, novembre 1999 : 22-23; Bonte P., « Les commerçants « Marocains » et autres dans l'Adrar mauritanien. La vocation commerciale des Maures » (: 231-250), in : Marfaing L. & Wippel S., (dir.), *Les relations transsahariennes à l'époque contemporaine. Un espace en constante*

and monetary zones, migration is basically facilitated by ethnic groups whose trading traditions have been professionalized over centuries²³. Through the legendary figure of the Nana Benz²⁴, women are an important lubricant in the operationalisation of trading networks which are the most visible face of movement of persons and goods. This is structured around three principal migration poles:

- The Gulf of Benin sector with Cotonou as the most vibrant centre;
- The central pole revolves around Côte-d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Burkina Faso and Mali;
- The Western block corresponds more or less to the Senegambia context.

Current state of migration in West Africa

As indicated in the follow-up of the REMUAO survey carried out between 1988 and 1992, three major trends characterize migration in West Africa:

- a speedy migratory movement among the 7 countries surveyed with 1.8 million migrations noted. ;
- with the notable exception of Burkina Faso, all the countries polled have a negative migratory trend;
- the current migratory movements do not correspond any longer with the massive exodus of the rural population drifting towards the capital cities and much less from landlocked regions to the coastal countries.

Though a higher propensity of Africans to travel was observed, the restrictions noted here and there constitute a hindrance to regional or even continental integration.

A quick survey of migratory movements indicates that for the last twenty years, there have been profound changes. The change in trend since 1985 is due to factors of unequal importance. They come to add concomitantly to the economic gloom and weigh heavily on the fate of the migrant. What reasons underline this trend? How are they translated into practice?

Reasons for migration in Africa: the migrants are «scapegoats»

mutation. Paris/ Berlin: Karthala-ZMO, 2004. Traoré S. & Bocquier Ph., *Urbanisation et dynamique migratoire en Afrique de l'ouest*. Paris : L'Harmattan, 2000.

23 Grégoire E. & Labazée P., *Grands commerçants d'Afrique de l'Ouest, Pratiques et logiques d'un groupe d'hommes d'affaires contemporains*. Paris : Karthala-Orstom, 1993. ; Pourtier R., *Atlas de la Zone Franc en Afrique subsaharienne. Monnaie, économie, société*. Paris : La Documentation française, 1995.

24 Sengel M., « Nana-Benz de Nouialles », *Hommes et Migrations*, n° 1224, mars-avril 2000 : 71-78 ;

The economic variable, considered as a medium or reason for the protectionism is certainly an undeniable fact in understanding this attraction and rejection of migrant workers but it still remains a paradigm²⁵. Also, one can affirm that its impact on expulsions is real but other factors come into play. It is vital to note that there is a factual discrepancy between the measures for expulsions and the adoption of legislation in terms of immigration.

Generally speaking, the worsening of living conditions and the lack of prospects for recovery that led to the devaluation of the CFA franc in January 1994 are a decisive factor in the worsening of the condition of the migrant. It broadly affected the hospitality of the population of the host nation against "the one who comes to eat their food ». The outcome is that question mark on measures that seek to limit immigration and their affirmation calls for other immediate parameters among which are population growth and political development of host countries. In fact, the gradual filling of the population gap through natural sustained growth and efforts aimed at professional training give less room for immigration, but such an assertion is only valid in the formal sector. A lot of examples indicate that restrictive measures have limited impact on the economic integration of foreigners. The latter are more active in the informal sector which they control as a result of transnational strategies; this sector mostly includes the supply of essential foodstuff and capital goods.

The determining factor in the reasons underlining the anti-migration attitude is undoubtedly the political developments in Africa during the 1990s. In fact, if the Party-State could single handedly influence or deal with xenophobic sentiments, then the wind of democracy would have had a definite effect on the behaviour of the authorities. What one sees here is the tolerance level in matters of immigration, which have generally been subjected to an in-depth study by scientific studies, and this has played a decisive role in the attitude of governments vis-à-vis the presence of foreigners in their countries. The social malaise communicated by the media is taken into account by some political leaders who are flag bearers of nationalist or national feeling for development. Thus from 1990, the issue of immigration became a topical issue in political discourse in West Africa. The openly xenophobic postures adopted by the people are taken up by opponents of the regime by way of attacks on the ruling government. The legitimacy of this popular anti-immigration claim compels the central government to act as was the case in the painstaking attempt at legislation or "redefinition of Ivorian citizenship"²⁶.

25 Lalou R., «Les migrations internationales en Afrique de l'Ouest face à la crise» (: 346-373), in Coussy J. et Vallin J. (éds), *Crise et population en Afrique: crises économiques, politiques d'ajustement et dynamiques démographiques*. Paris: Les Études du CEPED n°13, 1996.

26 Bredeloup S., «Les Sénégalais de Côte-d'Ivoire face aux redéfinitions de l'ivoirité», *Études Migrations/Studi Emigazione* 121, 1996: 2-24.

Convenient scapegoats, accused of all manner of wrongdoing, these immigrants are accused of the crime and insecurity prevailing in the urban centres. The development of nationalist or xenophobic sentiments very quickly becomes an accepted way of thinking among all sections of the population. Though the functional character of segregationist discourse cannot be overemphasized regarding the moderation of latent interethnic tensions, its gradual inclusion in political discussions is an additional source of concern for foreigners. The desire to get an upperhand over political opponents has compelled many governments to announce a series of measures to curb unemployment and upsurge in acts criminality. Such are the numerous wrongdoings which foreigners are accused of.

When migration becomes the unfortunate parent of regional integration

Far from being an isolated case, it has been observed that countries that were previously considered as host countries have become outbound nations or have clearly reaffirmed their hostility towards foreigners through their avowed national oriented policies. This trend which dates back to the independence era of many countries was whipped up at the beginning of the 1980s²⁷.

Whilst the States have difficulties to agree among themselves and/or to regroup into economic or customs unions like the CEAO (1973) or ECOWAS (1975), the traders, main actors in the distribution of local and imported goods, are achieving actual regional integration²⁸. As they are used to crossing borders and going beyond political entities by taking advantage of the inequalities in regional development, they, by their activities, contradict the logic of States resulting from colonial interdependence which is condemned to legitimize their existence and to defend the idea of inviolability of the national territory.

Over the years, legislative measures in terms of movement were made flexible through the impact of democratic gains and compliance with international legislation. Thus, in all the West African States, nationals are no longer subject to obligations such as payment of money into the national Treasury or prior authorization sought to leave the territory. On the other hand, measures adopted by the supranational institutions remain dead instruments as each country has

27 Coquery-Vidrovich C., Goerg O., Mandé I. & Rajoanah F. (éds) *Être étranger et migrant en Afrique au XX^e siècle. Enjeux identitaires et modes d'insertion. Vol. 2: Dynamiques migratoires, modalités d'insertion urbaine et jeux d'acteurs*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003 ; Charbit Y. & Robin N. (sous la direction de), «Migrations africaines», *Revue européenne des migrations internationales* 10 (3), 1994 ; Bredeloup S. (coord.), *Dynamiques migratoires et recompositions sociales en Afrique de l'Ouest*, *Mondes en développement* 91(23), 1995.

28 Lambert A., « Espaces d'échanges, territoires d'État en Afrique de l'Ouest », *Autrepart* 6, 1998 ;

the right to regulate access to its territory²⁹. The result is that legislation in respect of foreigners varies from nation to nation, thus threatening the status of the migrant.

For large number of migrants, obtaining a residence permit or visitors' permit in the host country does not absolve them from harassments by the immigration authorities. There is a tall list for African citizens expelled from neighboring countries. No country is free from blame regarding this practice which sometimes takes on a more gruesome turn that the dissemination in real time of the event causes scenes of vengeance in the country or countries of origin of the victims.

Far from discouraging the migrant who remained or sought temporary shelter in another country and even the one who intends to settle, the repeated expulsions have enriched the migration experience. As the eventual return home is a less desirable option, migrants who are still strong seem to have adopted new attitudes.

Strategies for the preservation of the continental migratory landscape

Interpreted in different ways, the new migratory trends are still limited to merit an appeal for strategies. They are more like identifiable impulses both in the host nations and the countries of origin. It is difficult to assert that these attitudes are recent, but the crisis has undeniably deepened them. By changing the architecture of migration in West Africa, the ongoing changes radically transform behaviours observed among migrants.

- the spatial redeployment of the migrant is the most spectacular and the most visible of new behavioural patterns among the migrants in West Africa. It is properly demonstrated here with movements to Côte-d'Ivoire, Congo or Cameroon, which to some people is a return to their first destination. Also, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon which had previously been considered as destination countries for Malian or Senegalese migrants seem to become stepping stones or transit points to Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, and South Africa³⁰, etc. The same is applicable to Senegal for Cape Verdians³¹ who are migrating to Europe or North America, etc.

29 Adepoju A., "Fostering free movement of persons in West Africa: achievements, pitfalls and projects for intra-migration," Paper presented at IUSSP Conference in Brazil, 18-24 August 2001; Afolayan A. A., "Immigration and expulsion of ECOWAS aliens in Nigeria", *International Migration Review* XXII (1), 1988: 4-27 ; Bredeloup S., « Expulsion des ressortissants ouest- africains au sein du continent africain (1954-1995)», *Mondes en développement*, 91(23), 1995 : 117-129.

30 Fall P. D., «Les Sénégalais au KwaZulu-Natal (Afrique du Sud): les «naufragés» de la migration internationale», Communication au IVe Congrès international des Etudes africaines. Barcelone 12 au 17 janvier 2004.

It is for purposes of transiting and traveling out that migrants leave their first destination to settle in a new land of better prospects. As they are only men, they do not hesitate to join the underground or criminal networks³². The major “ stop over points” in the process of widening the migratory landscape of West African people are the Central African cities of Yaoundé and Brazzaville, which are still today, stepping stones in the search of lands of promise and / or the need to anticipate recurrent crises.

- renunciation of community regrouping

Even though the popular suburbs are the most preferred zones of migrants due to the low cost of rent, one can observe a dislocation of ordinary households. Compared to the calling into question of ethnic solidarity among the Senegalese in Cameroon³³, the desertion of shared homes by inhabitants of the same village, places the migrant who arrives in an often dramatic situation. In fact, the need to rethink a migratory strategy led the early migrants to refuse the territorialisation of their communities in a foreign land.

- a closer collaboration with the local population

Contacts with the local population were previously less developed but it seems to have taken on a new turn; recruitment and training of young tailors or masons, marriages or consensual unions. In fact, for the new migrant, the unbridled search for a partner is an alternative to the crisis of initial reception networks and structured integration into one’s community.

The practice underscores the broadening of the relational space of the migrant who depends not only on the support of indigenes but also on other foreign communities. In fact, the visits to the same spaces ended up by bring together immigrant communities to the point of engendering trans ethnic strategies³⁴.

31 Fall P. D., «Les étrangers au Sénégal. Regards sur les stratégies économiques de la communauté capverdienne» (: 569-582), in: *La Population africaine au XXI e siècle*. Durban: Union pour l’Étude de la Population africaine, 1999.

32 Shaw M., “West African Criminal Networks in South and Southern Africa,” *African Affairs* 101, 2002: 291-316; Morris A., “Our fellow Africans makes our live hell: The lives of Congolese and Nigerians in Johannesburg,” Paper for the French Institute, 1996: 47 p.

33 Ba C.O., 1995. “Un exemple d’essoufflement de l’immigration sénégalaise: les Sénégalais au Cameroun”, *Mondes en développement*, 91(23) :31-44.

34 Igue J. O., *Les Yoruba en Afrique de l’Ouest francophone 1910-1980 : essai sur une diaspora/The Yoruba in French-speaking West Africa 1910-1980. Essay about a diaspora*. Paris : Présence africaine, 2003 ; Fall P. D., « Protectionnisme migratoire en Afrique noire : les migrants sénégalais face à la politique de “gabonisation ” », *Bulletin IFAN*, B 49 (1-2), 1999-2000: 102-134.

These relations are however superficial due to the unusual reserve of the migrants concerning their conversations with the local population. Every immigrant, certainly, has an adopted << Father>> or << Mother>> but these options are without any ulterior motive and are very often limited to a relationship between two persons. The children born in a foreign land are the preferred points of contact for the entrenchment of such relationships in the suburbs where the child lives or in his school, but parents try as much as possible to limit these contacts to the barest minimum. In fact, ethnic and religious prejudices constitute the main hindrance to integration. It is however not rare to hear migrants referring, with a rather surprising humour, that certain local morals are contrary to their own values of civilization.

- **a more systematic transfer of funds ----- securitization of property.**

The loss of property recorded by migrants during their forced expulsion (600 West Africans expelled from Zambia in 1984) or the tragic events that occurred in the host country (240 000 Mauritians repatriated from Senegal and 80 000 Senegalese expelled from Mauritania in 1989) compels the migrants to envisage establishing links with the banks in their countries of origin, through more credible fund transfer systems. In addition, the mortgage investment appears as a new product for the expatriates³⁵. In fact, though a greater proportion of the migrant's income is transferred for the family back home, the migrant is now concerned about the prestige of acquiring a real estate and is gradually seeking qualitative improvement of his house, telephone, satellite dish, water, electricity, etc.

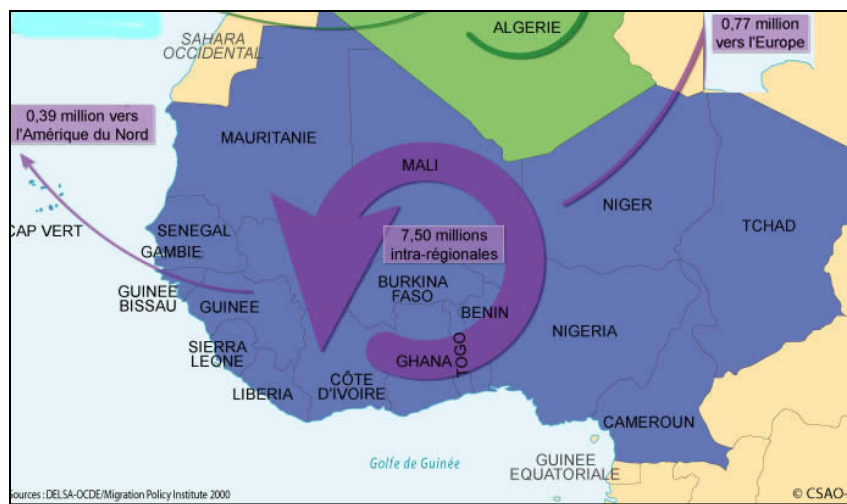
II – Migrations originating from West Africa

Though it is true that no African country is among the first ten countries that top migration all over the world, the new emigration ratio (ratio between migrant population and demographic size) is very high in almost all West Africa countries.

³⁵ Bertrand M., « Compromis locaux et concurrences foncières dans deux villes maliennes », *Politique africaine* 40, 1990: 21-30. ; Tall S. M., *Les investissements immobiliers à Dakar des émigrés sénégalais*. Strasbourg : Université Louis Pasteur : Thèse de géographie, 2000 ; Ma Mung E., *Mobilités et investissements des émigrés : Maroc, Tunisie, Turquie, Sénégal*. Paris : l'Harmattan, 1996.

It must however be pointed out that in spite of the high migratory pressure experienced in some parts of the continent and the increase in the phenomenon, the idea of African invasion often used by the proponents of migration protectionism is an exaggeration. In fact, the total volume of migration is by far below the European migratory movements to America during the last century.

Today, international migration in West Africa is mainly intra-regional at the rate of 88.44%. Europe and America only received a low percentage of 9% and 0.02% respectively of migratory flows from the year 2000.



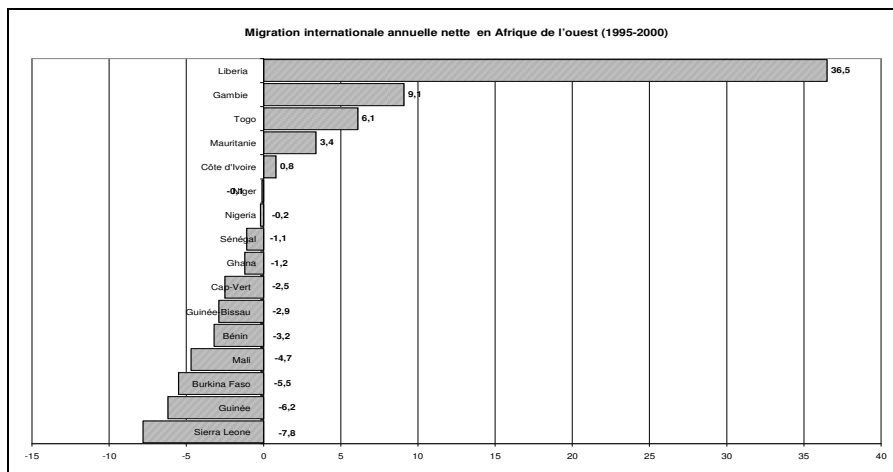
MAP 1. Weight and direction of West African migration in 2000.

Designed from data over the period 1995 – 2000 ³⁶,

The figure below gives an idea of the status of migration in the different states that constitute the West African sub-region:

- eleven countries have a net negative migratory balance: Sierra Leone, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali Benin, Guinea Bissau Cape Verde, Ghana Senegal, Nigeria and Niger;
- Only five countries represent a net positive balance: Cote d' Ivoire, Gambia, Mauritania, Togo and Liberia.

³⁶ Division de la Population des Nations unies : <http://esa.un.org/migration/index>



Exodus to the former colonial countries is massive

The reconstruction of post-war Europe marks an important turning point in transcontinental migration in West Africa. The Parisian suburb of Montreuil is now the largest Soninke village in the world due to the huge concentration of people from the Kayes regions of Mali, Selibaby in Mauritania and Bakel in Senegal.

Even though there is a reduction in the movement to the capitals of the colonizing countries, the latter are still ahead as host countries for Africans from West Africa. Thus Cape Verdians and Bissau Guineans take the preferential routes used for colonization and are among the first five foreign groups in Portugal with 64,300 and 25,300 persons respectively in 2004. The same applies to Senegalese, Nigeriens or Malians for whom France remains the first destination with 82100, 3400 and 40,200 migrants respectively in 2000. On their part, Gambians and Sierra Leoneans willingly choose the United Kingdom as preferred destination where their number accounted for 3900 and 1700 persons respectively in 2000

Development and /or confirmation of new destination.

The major novelty in the configuration of the migratory space in West Africa is that the movements to new immigration territories are gradually increasing. In fact, in the last ten years, many factors have sometimes influenced in a sustained manner the migratory patterns that previously prevailed in West Africa. Armed

conflicts, cyclical environmental crises and/ or the collapse of local economics led to the tightening of migratory protectionism both in Africa and the countries in the North. This brought about profound changes in the migratory landscape. These are mainly two-fold: exponential increase in transcontinental³⁷, movements and renegotiations of migratory strategies within the continent.³⁸

With effect from the 1980s, this process was the result of crisis in the traditional African destinations and networks to the former colonial countries. It led to Senegalese, Burkinabe or Ghanaian migrants moving to Southern Europe especially to Spain³⁹, and Italy⁴⁰ or North America.⁴¹ These movements sometimes derive from networks developed from historical movements such as those which led Cape Verdian seamen to the USA or the Netherlands⁴² or which gave rise to new migratory network particularly among the groups which until then, used to migrate over long distances : the Bidda of Burkina Faso⁴³, the Mourides of Senegal.⁴⁴

³⁷ Robin N., *Atlas des migrations ouest- africaines vers l'Europe, 1985-1993*. Paris: Editions de l'Orstom, 1997; Bredeloup S., « Itinéraires africains de migrants sénégalais », *Hommes & Migrations* 1160, (décembre 1992): 16-22 ; Fall P. D., « Travailler en circulant. La circulation en Afrique de l'Ouest et de l'Afrique de l'Ouest à l'Afrique du Sud », *Migrations-Société* 18 (107), 2006 : 233-251.

³⁸ Robin N., « Une nouvelle géographie entre concurrences et redéploiement spatial. Les migrations ouest -africaines au sein de la CEE», *Revue européenne des Migrations Internationales* X, 1994(3): 7 - 31

³⁹ Sow P., *The Senegalese and Gambians in Catalonia (Spain). Analysis geo-sociological of their spatial and social networks in a new country of immigration*. Universitat Autònoma of Barcelona (Spain) : Ph D thesis, February 2004 ; Lacomba, J. "Immigrés sénégalais, islam et confréries à Valence (Espagne)", *Revue européenne des Migrations Internationales* 16,(3), 2000: 85-103.

⁴⁰ Fall P. D., «Stratégies et implications fonctionnelles de la migration sénégalaise vers l'Italie», Paris: *Migrations-Société*, vol. 10, 1998: 7-33 ; Carter D. M., *States of Grace. Senegalese in Italy and The New European Immigration*. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997; Schmidt di Friedberg O., *Islam, solidarietà e lavoro : i muridi senegalesi in Italia*. Turin : G. Agnelli, 1994. Schmidt di Friedberg O., « Burkinabè et Sénégalais dans le contexte de l'immigration ouest africaine en Italie », *Mondes en Développement* 23 (91), 1995 : 67-80.

⁴¹ Ebin V., « À la recherche de nouveaux 'poissons'. Stratégies commerciales mourides par temps de crise », *Politique africaine* 45, (mars 1992): 86-99.

⁴² Fall P. D., « Les étrangers au Sénégal. Regards sur les stratégies économiques de la communauté capverdienne », (: 569-582) in. *La Population africaine au XXI e siècle*. Durban : Union pour l'Étude de la Population africaine, 1999.

⁴³ Hazard B., « Entre le pays et l'outre-pays », *Journal des africanistes*, 74 fasc. ½, 2004: 249-274.

⁴⁴ Bava S., "Variations autours de trois sites mourides dans la migration", *Autrepart* 36, 2005:105-122 ; Schmidt di Friedberg O., "L'immigration africaine en Italie : le cas Sénégalais," *Études internationales*, XXIX (I), 1993 :125-140 ; Riccio B., 'From "ethnic group" to "transnational community"? Senegalese migrants' ambivalent experiences and multiple trajectories', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27(4), 2001: 583-599; Fall P. D., « Ethnic and Religious Ties in an African Emigration. Senegalese Immigrants in the United States ", *Studia Africana* 13, 2002: 81-90.

The remarkable fact in the modification of destinations is the ability of the actors to go beyond the inherited colonial barriers like the migration of Francophones from Africa to Great Britain⁴⁵ or the United States of America which have experienced a huge increase in the number of migrants from West Africa 6,162 in 1960, 18641 in 1990, 15,134 in 1995, 21,505 in 2001.⁴⁶ Previously these movements were from Nigeria and Ghana, Liberia, Cape Verde which were among the first in terms of classification of stocks from West Africa with 140,200, 67,200,40,900 and 27100 in 2003 respectively the recent West African migratory flows to the USA⁴⁷ come more and more from Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal and Guinea.

In most East Africa countries, the international migration to countries in the North is today seen as the only credible alternative. The admiration of the migrant from Italy, America and Germany and the way they are respected by the State and their fellow citizens explain the ardent desire of the youth to migrate. The obsession to migrate which is the result of adoration of the migrant leads the youth who do not have any social recognition to embark on unusual adventures like this young Senegalese or two Guineans who could not find any other solution than to get hooked to the landing wheels of an aeroplane from their countries to Europe. Other potential candidates of this migration mission embark on dangerous Transaharan migration to Europe through the Maghreb and again by attempting "to cross over" in traditional boats. The major novelty in the obsession to undertake a migratory adventure which is difficult to find an expression on the continent is the intensification of transcontinental migrations. Those who are unable to procure visas from the consulates and even mafia networks in their countries of origin therefore choose to ply these trans-Saharan routes⁴⁸. They are however conscious that to reach the "Promised Land" through the straits of Gibraltar⁴⁹ will require a miracle just like the uncertainty surrounding the subsequent regularization of one's stay. Decorative pieces of

⁴⁵ Styan D., "La Nouvelle Vague? Francophone Africans in London", Paper presented to the Colloquium on New African Diasporas, London: SOAS, May 5th 2000.

⁴⁶ SOPEMI, *Tendances des migrations internationales*. Paris : OCDE, 2002.

⁴⁷ Stoller P., *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City*. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2002.

⁴⁸ Pliez O., *Villes du Sahara, urbanisation et urbanité dans le Fezzan libyen*. Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2003; Bredeloup S. & Pliez O. (coord.), *Migrations entre les deux rives du Sahara*, *Autrepart* 36, 2005 ; Escoffier C., *Communautés d'itinérance et savoir - circuler des transmigrant-e-s au Maghreb*. Université Toulouse II : Thèse de Sociologie et Sciences sociales, 2006 ; Brachet J., "Constructions of territoriality in the Sahara: the transformation of spaces of transit", in V. Bilger and A. Kraler (eds), *African Migrations. Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Dynamics*. Wien : Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien, special issue, Nr. 8/2005 : 237-253.

⁴⁹ MIGREUROP, *Guerre aux migrants. Le livre noir de Ceuta et Melilla*, juin 2006.

cities and towns in the Maghreb, those who arrive by the desert route are welcomed by their compatriots who joined the networks of canvassers whose bridgeheads are found several thousands of kilometers away particularly in Mali and Niger⁵⁰.

Migration to the Canary Islands⁵¹ from the Atlantic coasts (from Morocco to Sierra Leone to Senegal and the two Guineas) is certainly an unusual practice but it lies within the framework of a projected migratory dynamic because it is linked to the tightening of controls in the Spanish enclaves and the transit countries.



MAP 2. The new West African Migratory Routes to Europe

⁵⁰ Brachet J., »Migrants, transporteurs et agents de l'Etat : rencontre sur l'axe Agadez-Sebha », *Autrepart* 36, 2005 : 43-62.

⁵¹ Fall P. D., « Ndaraw, Sekka, Sidi Bara, Yéri et les autres. Enquêtes sur le *mbëkk* dans la banlieue dakaroise », Communication au Séminaire de la Commission scientifique de l'IFAN Ch. A. Diop sur *Barça* ou *Barsaq*: quelles lectures des Sciences sociales sur l'actualité des migrations internationales ? Dakar, 22 mars 2007 ; Choplin A. et Ba C. O., « Tenter l'aventure par la Mauritanie », *Autrepart* 36, 2005.

Highly Educated and better trained migrants.

Whereas 60% of the early international Malian migrants did not complete primary education⁵², the West African migrants, on the whole, are highly educated and better trained. The resultant effect is that the exodus of the African elites to developed countries is a serious drain which affects the sporting world⁵³ and other sectors like health (in Ghana), higher education (in Nigeria, Senegal, and the Gambia etc.)

The transcontinental migration of intellectuals is an extension of the movement of intellectuals observed at the sub-regional level between Ghana, Gambia and Nigeria, between Burkina, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire and even at the continental level.

It is further intensified by a strong mobilization targeted at the search for high level training which attracts Gabonese and Ivorian students to Senegal especially since the devaluation of the CFA franc and / or the European migratory protectionism.

B- A Field of scientific interest ---- large areas richly documented.

The renewed interest for studies into migration in general and in particular African migration, led to a stocktaking of studies conducted into this area. Three observations can be elicited from this assertion:

1. A longtime tradition for research.

The totality of knowledge obtained from migration relates, to a great extent, to approaches peculiar to such disciplines as geography, anthropology and sociology. In West Africa, these studies were mainly conducted within the framework of French research carried out at ORSTOM which has since then become IRD. Recently, demographers at the Canadian school built around V.Piche, contributed greatly to the understanding of West African migratory phenomenon. It is important to state that within the framework of partnership between State and international research institutions, specific programmes were

⁵² Ministère des Maliens de l'Extérieur et de l'Intégration africaine :

<http://www.maliensdelexterieur.gov.ml/cgi-bin/index.pl>

⁵³ Poli R., « Réseaux transnationaux de footballeurs africains : quel nexus entre migration et développement ? » (: 265-280), in A. Mayor, C. Roth, Y. Droz, *Sécurité et développement*. Münster : LIT Verlag , 2005.

carried out during the last twenty years. Such is the ORSTOM-IFAN-CERPOD⁵⁴ programme which was also a training ground for young researchers.

In a quite different register, the curiosity generated by the West African presence in the new destination country of West Africans, Southern Europe to be precise, led to the conduct of a brief and isolated research on the culture of origin of migrants outside their communities. It was imperative to wait up to the 1990s for a scientific analysis of African migration⁵⁵ to emerge. It was not until recently that a well crafted programme saw the light of the day between universities or research institutions in Italy and Spain on the one hand, and those of countries like Senegal or Burkina Faso on the other. If the basic research is not lacking from these research programmes, it is incorporated particularly when the initiative is from NGOs within the framework of research dubbed development research⁵⁶, whose unintended objective is to answer a basic question: how do we help Africans return home or remain in their countries?

Within the framework of Senegalo-Italian interuniversity cooperation, knowledge-based production research was carried out between the Gaston Berger de Saint Louis University in collaboration with teachers –researchers at the Universities of Turin and Padua⁵⁷, between the University of Lecce and Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar⁵⁸ which are linked by a cooperation Agreement that has been in existence for over ten years old.

2. A cultural block examined separately as result of linguistic prejudices.

The dichotomy observed in the West African research between the Francophone zone and the Anglophone countries is both an ugly feature and an indication of the low rate of exchanges between the two scientific communities. In fact, the West African migratory landscape has, until then, been studied along linguistic blocks to which the researchers belong, the most illustrious ones being A. Adepoju of Nigeria and D. Ouedraogo of Burkina Faso.

⁵⁴ Voir les communications du colloque consacré aux *Systèmes et dynamiques des migrations internationales ouest africaines*. Dakar, 3- 6 décembre 1996.

⁵⁵ Travaglini D. & Reyneri E., *Culture e progetti migratori dei lavoratori africani a Milano*. Milano: IRES/ Lombardia, 1991; Ambrosini M., « Les immigrés réguliers en Italie : liens ethniques et modes d'insertion dans le marché du travail' », *Revue européenne des Migrations Internationales* 13 (1), 1997 : 95-124.

⁵⁶ Ceschi S. & Stocchiero A. (a cura di), *Relazioni transnationali e co-sviluppo. Associazioni e imprenditori senegalesi tra Italia e luoghi d'origine*. Torino : L'Harmattan Italia, 2006.

⁵⁷ Castagnone E. & al., *Vai e vieni. Esperienze di migrazione e lavoro di senegalesi tra Louga e Torino*. Milano : Franco Angeli, 2005.

⁵⁸ Perrone L. (a cura di), *Tra due mondi . Forme e grado di adattamento della comunità senegalese*. Milano: Franco Angeli [Sociologia urbana e rurale 64-65], 2001.

3. One of the sad developments concerning the interest shown in international migration is the increase in the number of stakeholders and/or the dispersal of strengths. Thus, apart from UNESCO and the International Organisation for Migration which operate in West Africa from their regional offices in Dakar, many NGOs are involved in migration –related issues.⁵⁹

The lack of synergy between Governmental agencies, development partners, universities and stakeholders in the area of migration ended up with a chaotic situation in this field and there is the need to streamline matters.

The launch of a joint project in Masters in Migration Studies between two Senegalese Universities (UCAD of Dakar and UGB of Saint-Louis) should contribute to the training of West African specialists who would address the hydra-headed problems bedeviling the migration phenomenon. Though experience is quite crucial, other sub-regional educational institutions could take advantage of this.

4. From the large amount of documentation available on West Africa, the outcome is that some analysis on migration studies are relatively rich in terms of information. Among these issues, the following deserve to be mentioned here :

- the bases of the exodus are embedded in the degradation of ecosystems and the phasing out of the Welfare State which impact adversely on living conditions and household incomes. The survey carried out by Eurostart/NIDI⁶⁰ undoubtedly provide rich information on the determinants of migration but this information is not static;
- the geography of the migratory space and its reconfiguration driven by the protectionism in the area of African and global migration is relatively well known- new migratory routes, networks, etc. As the changes lie within the purview of a dynamic that is hardly going to die down, a continual monitoring of developments is vital. In fact, the outcomes or lessons from research on migratory routes can completely change in a short period of time;
- Financial transfers or remittances to countries like Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso and their impact on poverty reduction have been captured in a lot of monographs. If , in certain cases, the financial flows cover 70 to 80% of

⁵⁹ Blundo G., « Les courtiers du développement en milieu rural sénégalais », *Cahiers d'Études africaines*, 35 (137), 1995 : 73-99.

⁶⁰ Robin N., Lalou R. et Ndiaye M., Facteurs d'attraction et de répulsion à l'origine des flux migratoires internationaux. Rapport national du Sénégal. EUROSTAT/NIDI/IRD, 1999.

family budgets, then the contribution of migrants to the development of localities of origin is a very topical issue;

C. Some shadow areaspriority areas that need to be researched into.

1. **Three unavoidable steps** are needed in the light of a more empirical knowledge on the West African migratory phenomenon :

- promotion of a multidisciplinary approach;
- constitution of transnational research teams
- search for resources to address the lack of a viable evaluation of migration and the confusion between flows and goods. As national censuses provide only sketchy data that are spread over a period of time⁶¹, the REMUAO survey carried out simultaneously and through the same methodology used by CERPOD in eight countries(Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal), between 1988 and 1992 is an extremely exciting reference;

2. Calling into question of some absolutes

For the simple reason that research outcomes change over time and space, it is necessary to revisit some absolute issues relating to major topics that have been dealt with: the determinants of the exodus, the sociology of the migrants needs to be put into proper perspective as against ethnic, associative and transnational strategies, the participation of the Diaspora in national development, etc;

3. The priority research topics on West African migration that deserve to be looked at are:

- A reflection on an optimal policy management of international migrants by the countries of origin. This choice implies the evaluation of appropriate State institutions in charge of migration in the countries of origin and host nations, etc;
- Detailed analysis of relations between the migrants and their countries of origin on the basis of a comprehensive evaluation of their associations, their aspirations and their achievements;
 - the need for the identification of the relations between mobility and the creation of an environment for free movement. The issue of integration from the grassroots is often mentioned which is far ahead of the policy programme

⁶¹ Ba H., Les statistiques des travailleurs migrants en Afrique de l'ouest. Synthèse régionale. Dakar, 2005.

espoused by ECOWAS, but the reality of borders remains the same because of the affinity to the nation state, which in many cases, needs to be legitimized or built up. The deliverables relate to the restructuring of a participatory model of citizenship and a change in the mindset of the State or the Nation;

-Another important thrust for research is the issues on family reunion and integration in host countries on the continent and outside the continent. One of the leads of such a research lies in the need for compliance with the laws of host countries; divorce, disobedience of children etc,

-One of the major challenges in the area of research on migration in West Africa is to state the parameters for its linkage with development by channeling financial resources to the productive sector. The migrants contribute undoubtedly to the improvement in living conditions of the family and communities but the observation from the studies carried out in different countries is that the impact of the money from migration on development of the countries of origin is still not enough.

Conclusion.

By devoting a special session to the migration issue⁶², the General assembly of the United Nations addressed on old claim while at the same time emphasizing that the migration issue is an imperative factor in the formulation of development strategies. In fact, if the migration issue is designed into a development strategy, no development policy worthy of its name can now disregard the new state of affairs which migration is.

As an old land of migration dating as far back into history and the complementarity of political and regional cultural entities that came one after the other, West Africa cannot do without a justified control of migratory movement which feeds it and affects it in all regions.

⁶² The High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development which was held in New York, 14th-15th September 2006 in accordance with Resolution A/Res/60/227 of the UN General Assembly 23rd December 2005.