

Senegalese Migration to France

(Destination Countries)

- **Beginning and evolution of the Senegalese migration to France**

The Sub-Saharan migration to France is based on migration systems established during the period when Senegal was a French colony. During the First and Second World Wars, Senegalese and Sudanese citizens were recruited for the infantry, after which time most of the combatants were repatriated to Senegal. The more regular flow of Senegalese citizens to France started during the 1960s as French colonies were granted independence. The pioneers were the Soninkes from the Senegal River Valley. Before the colonization, Senegal was involved in the gum Arabia and the slave trade. Colonizers used the Soninkes to work in peanut plantations in the region of Senegambia. At the beginning of the XIX century, the Soninkes worked on French boats in Marseille and then arrived in other cities. Until the middle of the XX century, there were no new migration flows although there was a gradual and sustained increase in flows closely linked to preceding mobile and nomadic groups in Senegal. At the end of the 1980 decade, half of Sub-Saharan migrants originated from the Senegal River Valley.

The liberal migratory regime after decolonization favoured these movements in spite of changes that took place in migration policies in 1974, 1981 and 1990 which limited the entry through restrictive measures. With such restrictions the Senegalese started to settle for longer periods in France and started regrouping their families, thus changing the circular pattern during which they alternated periods of work in Senegal and in France. Irregular migration has been increasing since 1974.

- **Number of Senegalese persons residing in France**

According to the World Bank report it is estimated that in 2006 there were close to 90,551 Senegalese persons residing in France.¹

- **Feminization of Senegalese migration to France**

The Senegalese migration has a marked male tendency. However, in recent years a proportional growth is observed in migrating women. History demonstrates that the Soninke community in France replicated the highly socialized structures of their region of origin; it was expected that men from certain groups would migrate to become main providers of households with different structures. Nevertheless, Savina Ammassari (2004)² speaks about the feminization of migrations since the 90s, which could be explained, among other things by the socio-cultural changes that characterized modern African society and due to the fact that women's level of education increases although the access to schooling continues to be unfavourable. The data, however, shows that women represent almost 15% of migrants in Senegal and 14% of migrants in Europe.

- **Level of education**

According to the Eurostat/NIDI (2000)³ report the level of education of the Senegalese before migrating, or five years before the survey was null for 70% of the population; 21% of the population was at primary level, 3% had a secondary level and hardly 1% had a higher level. It is presumed that women had less access to the higher levels of education.

- **Social and labour market insertion**

According to the synopsis report of the second survey on Senegalese homes (July 2004)⁴, the situation of emigrants before their departure was distributed as follows: 46% employed, 29% unemployed, 14% students or pupils, 7% domestic women workers and 4% inactive. The employed population represented the largest number in urban areas (50% versus 42%). The number of unemployed is greater in the field (31.3% versus 26.7%). In general, Senegalese migrants as other Sub-Saharan Africa migrants are employed in street vending, in construction work and in the informal labour market. In the case of women, their insertion is strongly determined by the gender discourse, class, education and ethnic origin which are predominant in recipient societies.

- **Sending of remittances and their utilization**

According to Cerstin Sander and Issa Barro⁵, remittances of emigrants were estimated at 270 million Dollars in 2002. Senegal is the fourth Sub-Saharan country recipient of remittances after Nigeria, Lesotho and Sudan.

According to Cerstin Sander and Issa Barro, recent studies carried out by NIDI/Eurostat-2000, indicate that the emigrants who live in France send an average of 1,000 to 1,350 USD per year and per person, which in some cases represent 15 or 65% of their annual income. The average remittance is of 160 to 240 USD, with higher remittances during periods of Muslim religious festivities. Since the transfers are made in Dollars, the rate of Exchange of the CFA Franc causes fluctuation in the amounts received in local currency.

According to the synopsis of the second Senegalese household survey, (July 2004)⁶, international migration have a positive impact on the household living standards, contrary to internal migrations. At the same time Savina Ammassari (2004) points out that several sources have documented the existence of associative, individual or family investments, in the Senegal River Valley. These reports highlight the improvement and diversification of the agricultural production, commercial, handicraft and transportation development; the construction of wells, food supply, water towers and dams, health and maternity centres, schools, school cafeterias, pharmacies, cooperative stores, cereal storerooms, post offices, literacy courses and training on installed equipment, etc. In Senegal, for example, it is known that the migrants of the Mouride brotherhood invested large amounts of money in the construction of the great Touba mosque. Cultural activities have also been promoted such as the Pikine theatre.

1. "South-South Migration and Remittances. "Development Prospects Group, world Bank"
2. Savina Ammassari, Gestion des migrations et politiques de développement : optimiser les bénéfices de la migration en Afrique de l'Ouest, Cahiers de Migrations Internationales, 72F, Secteur de la Protection Sociale, Programme des Migrations Internationales, Bureau

International du Travail, Genève.

3. Push and Pull factors of international migration, a comparative report, European Commission, Eurostat, NIDI, 2000

4. Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, République du Sénégal, Direction de la Prévention et de la Statistique, Rapport de Synthèse de la Deuxième Enquête Sénégalaise Auprès des Ménages (ESAM-II), Juillet 2004

5. Cerstin Sander e Issa Barro, Etude sur le transfert d'argent des émigrés au Sénégal et les services de transfert en micro finance, Document de Travail N.40, Social Finance Programme, International Labour Office, Geneva.

6. Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, République du Sénégal, Direction de la Prévention et de la Statistique, Rapport de Synthèse de la Deuxième Enquête Sénégalaise Auprès des Ménages (ESAM-II), Juillet 2004