

Migratory Dynamics Over Half a Century in Senegal: A Longitudinal Perspective Over Four Generations

Abdou Salam Fall, Rokhaya Cissé
Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, Dakar, Senegal

The interplay between migration and development has for some time been high on the policy agenda of international institutions and national governments in Northern and Southern hemisphere countries. This political context has encouraged the scientific community to brainstorm on the issue and by so doing on the different aspects of the links between migration and development. There are various migratory patterns that present serious difficulties of observation and analysis, and this is because many migratory characteristics are interconnected and become confused in the migratory routes: Seasonal migrations from rural areas to cities can evolve to international migrations. However, a major problem remains that official statistics on migrations are either fragmentary or quite inexistent and generally fail to cover most of the patterns of mobility. There is a general lack of systematic research on migrants and particularly on those from African countries. Moreover, in Senegal, migration remains of one the alternative responses that mobilize a sizeable working population both in rural areas and socialized urban communities. Amidst these strategic responses, international migrations are dominant in that they entail dynamics pervading in society. However, the research findings overshadow a sizeable number of migration patterns within the continent and contribute therefore to the “African invasion” myth (Haas, 2008). The mobility dynamics are not selective because the profiles are diversified. The migratory networks are no longer the only factors that foster such selectivity, but there is also a diversity of social groups and segments that interpose and put the potential migrants in psychological, relational, and material conditions. The question is thereby a new migration economy that considers migration as either an individual or collective choice made by a group of individuals within the prism of a logic legitimated by the individual and/or by the group, to downsize the risks of a sudden change and to militate against the effects of multiple vulnerabilities. Paradoxically, most of the theories on migrations underestimate the strategies of actors; these theories attach no interest to social and economic dimensions of the imbalances of such living conditions. It becomes easier to consider that the link between poverty and migration should be questioned again in the analysis of migration processes marked by important dynamics of reconfiguration, and new patterns of mobility with specific logics. This paper tries to plug the gap by analyzing the data of the “Vulnerability and chronic poverty in Senegal” survey (Fall et al., 2010) and aims at valorising a micro approach of the migratory phenomenon in that it focuses on individual behaviour. The data proceed from the biographic survey “Vulnerability and chronic poverty in Senegal”, (Fall et al., 2010) that focused on a pattern of 2,400 biographies taken from a sample framework of the poverty monitoring survey (ESPS, 2006) over 75 district censuses nationwide. The contribution has thus proposed a comparative focus on the mobility of the Senegalese people, according to their

Abdou Salam Fall, Ph.D., Sociologists Research Laboratory of Economic and Social Transformations (LARTES), Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar.

Rokhaya Cissé Ph.D., Sociologists Research Laboratory of Economic and Social Transformations (LARTES), Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar.

socioeconomic status but also according to their residence and generation. For each generation, the mobility status is correlated with the poverty experience of the individual.

Keywords: migrations, generations, poverty, strategies of actors

Introduction

Senegalese people are reputed to be mobile, hence their eagerness to explore the dynamics of migration. The reality of statistics is so strong that the number of migrants is ostensibly increasing; but their tendency to live systematically in community remains a multiplying factor that reinforces this myth. The media hype around the alleged rush of African migration across the Sahara and the Mediterranean regions that overshadows the sizeable number of mobility patterns within the continent is a key element that explains why migration is of great interest to researchers and decision-makers. This contributes then to fostering the “myth of invasion” (Haas, 2008). However, internal migration flows are extensive due to the structure of the Senegalese colonial and post-independence economy which was mainly agrarian. The agricultural crisis in the 1970s and 1980s has accelerated migratory movements from rural to urban areas.

This type of migration principal cause is the search of better living conditions. However, voluntary or forced migrants of the countryside population to the cities that are made from the colonial period to the present are deeply connected to the policies of agricultural development of the conquered countries with the production of cash crops, the payment of tax and urbanization.

These movements continued after independence, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, two particularly important decades on the economic, political, and social level in the history of Senegal. Economically, they are marked by the oil crisis, the drought in the Sahel (early 1970s) and the start of structural adjustment policies. In Senegal, as in most parts of Africa, the 1980s is characterized by the governmental disengagement from social sectors and the increasing effects of the debt. In rural areas, the withdrawal of the state is characterized by the removal of fertilizer subsidies, pesticide, and equipment and by the privatization of companies that produce and market them.

Faced with this situation, migration appears as one of the main solutions. Even more massive departures to the cities and capitals (rural exodus), then abroad occur. Those highly publicized thousands of young people at the risk of their lives, brave the ocean and the police repression to seek work in Europe have shown us. Migration is clearly a development issue, and the correlation between migration and development is evidenced by numerous publications including the grey literature.

Two positions have been identified from studies consulted. The authors who profess a negative view of migration focusing on the adverse effects of the phenomenon (Massiah, 2004): brain drain, depopulation of villages of their forces, exploitation of migrants in host countries, and breach of their human rights. A second group of authors highlights its positive effects in terms of development (Trujillo & Schiesser, 2005; Husson & Sall, 2000; World Bank, 2004). Their arguments are based on the opportunities offered by emigration with the

transfer of significant sum of earned money from abroad to meet the needs of the families left at home, and the contribution of migrants to the development of their villages and region. For example, specifically in the region of the Senegal River Valley, they note that migrants from this region send between 15% and 65% of their salaries to their families (Husson & Sall, 2000).

While internal migration flows have come to a stable level following the deceleration in the late 1990s, despite the expansion of the service sector, international migrations have taken over, stimulated by the anti-immigration policies mainly set by countries in the Northern Hemisphere. In fact, migratory policies in such countries while promoting stringent border controls have further strengthened the migratory networks that were channelled underground and have proved most effective. The traceability of a changeover into the illegality of migratory networks marks the advent of tougher and tighter migratory policies by recipient countries.

This paper is trying to plug the gap by analyzing the data of the survey “Chronic poverty and vulnerabilities in Senegal” (Fall et al., 2010). The findings refer to a two period observation set: during the survey (2008-2009) and in a dynamic way, essentially cover details during the lifetime of the actors surveyed.

It establishes a comparative focus on the mobility of the Senegalese people, according to their socio-economic status (chronic poverty, transient poverty, and non-poverty), but also their residence and generation (childhood, youth, adulthood, old age). For each generation, the mobility status is correlated with the poverty situation of the individual. Similarly, the mobility flow during the 2009 survey is compared to the mobility in the last 80 years. This contribution makes it possible to hint at the apparent intense mobility of the Senegalese people while showing the structure of such mobility tendency over the last 50 years.

When the Evidence on Mobility Demands a Conceptual Renewal

Although more intense internal migrations within the continent, have not been extensively studied. These discrepancies result from financial and institutional constraints: the lack of research funding, the accessibility of official statistics and the political agendas of funding international organizations and countries in the Northern Hemisphere (Berriane & de Haas, 2012).

Such a situation corroborates various migration theories, among them the theory on the standard neoclassical approach that sees migration as an interaction between labour supply and demand. Similarly, it mentions the “cumulative causative” theory that emphasizes modifications caused by migrations within the social context in which migratory strategies develop and eventually create a number of potential migrants (Myrdal, 1957).

These dualistic approaches have been criticized in the 1970s by Todaro, because of their simplistic nature in favour of a migration theory in which the decision to migrate comes under a rational and strategic choice by actors who do not amount to large-scale historical factors.

All these theories perceive migration in quite the same way, as challenges and problems rather than the

capacity to reach a more profound comprehension of the nature, causes, evolutions, and consequences of migrations. As regards policies, this perception is evident, particularly in the document “Global approach of mobility and migration issues” that delves and attempts to explain the guiding principles of Europe’s future migration policies.

The question remains a matter of order, or even of public security that is confined to a police regulatory system based on the management of migratory flows despite the principles of mobility, circularity and dialogue with third countries. This vision spreads to certain southern hemisphere emigration or transit countries like Morocco where the legislation on the entry and stay of foreigners is the main management instrument for migrants’ rights. The provision that bans illegal migration and immigration contrasts with article 13.2 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights which stipulates that “All people have the right to leave any country, including theirs and to return to their own country”.

Beyond posing the problem of migration, the different theories also show that factors perpetuating migration are intrinsically placed at the heart of migration processes. Moreover, regarding one of the major theories on social sciences, no social action is comprehensible without understanding its larger context. The methodology to study social facts in an isolated way facilitates neither a comprehension of more and more complex processes in question nor a pertinent consideration that informs public policies. As we can see, the links between internal and international migrations can be interconnected and remain a little misapprehended from a historical perspective.

Consequently, the historical and contextual perspective becomes essential to analyze the social phenomenon and the migratory fact. Moreover, Mills (1959) highlighted the necessity of linking history to biography to understand not only the impact on the context of the individuals’ pathways but also on the category of individualities. In such an analytical framework, Mills (1959) therefore proposed reconciliation between two disparate characteristics of classic works of the social sciences. These are the distinction between the personal problems of individuals and their closest relations with others, and public and social interest issues that transcend local environments. This hybrid characteristic is found in Berger and Luckmann (1966), two fervent advocates of the constructivist approach, who consider that knowledge about social relations and practices is constantly created and modified through social interactive processes.

Such an opening seems quite obvious when recent researches in this field (Fall, 2003) show that the migrant does not stand alone. He/she depends on various membership groups. The access to international migrations becomes much open and remains inherent to the relationship that potential migrants eventually build in their entourage and relations at a distance.

Previously seen as an extension of internal migrations, international migrations are becoming self-directed. Migrants leave their rural environment to swarm Northern Hemisphere countries and other continents including Africa without having lived in secondary cities or in the capital (Fall & Cissé 2007). All of them are likely to try their luck according to the most effective and least risked interactive processes.

Migrations According to Dynamic Observation: Sedentary Living Among the Chronically Poor

With a biographic data collected, it was possible to build a longitudinal poverty variable and to classify each individual's life period, according to his/her poverty or non-poverty status. A sharp break could be observed, compared to the usual approaches: The analyses are longitudinal and focus on individuals according to a non-monetary poverty composite indicator. This indicator has been thus built from the following characteristics: (1) type of housing at each individual's life period; (2) main source of energy; (3) water access in the household; (4) type of bathroom installations, size of household; (5) nature of sleeping arrangements; (6) presence of housemaids in the household; (7) appreciation of income conditions; (8) estimated resources for the individual's living; (9) forms of assistance and support; (10) selling of assets to cover vital needs; and (11) individual's perception of his/her own status.

These biographical data have made it possible to put into perspective various demographic and social events concerning the life of an individual since his/her birth up to the period of the survey. Given that these periods are classified by date, it has been possible to merge the files and mark the different stages of each individual's life (Fall, Gueye, & Tall, 2000).

The data collected focused on different individuals aged between 19 and 50 years. This wide ranging age group has resulted in comparing generations, on the basis of the individuals' life routes. The analysis was carried out according to the four basic stages of human life: childhood, youth, adulthood, and old age. For each generation, the migration patterns are correlated with the poverty status (chronic poverty, transient poverty, and non-poverty).

Similarly, the situation of mobility during the 2009 survey is compared to the mobility in the last 50 years. This contribution makes it possible to set a slight difference on the apparent intense mobility of the Senegalese people by showing the structure of migratory flows over the last 50 years. Considering their places of residence, in 2008/2009, 38% of individuals in cities and 43% in rural areas were non-migrants. In fact, only 1.3% of migrants had left Senegal for countries abroad whereas a little more, representing 1.5% of them had returned. In these international migratory movements, departures and returnees had counterbalanced each other.

According to a comparative analysis between generations, international migrations of children remain residual, considering the duration of their stay abroad. In other words, the situations of vulnerability are restricted particularly during the periods of conflicts and within households or socioeconomic groups exposed to destitution and lack of or limited access to quality and community-based social services.

Among adults, more than 62% of rural people remain non-migrants and are chronically poor. This means that the rural chronically poor are sedentary. The selectivity of migrants keeps steady over time. The transiently poor (25%) have a slight edge over the non-poor (24%). This situation contrasts with that of urban non-migrants among whom the non-poor represent 45% while the transiently poor account for 37%. The chronically poor non-migrants hardly total 18%.

The international migration is intensified by the economic, political, and socio-cultural dynamics. The migrants are very important to Senegalese households. In rural areas, small farmers have survived many decades of agricultural crisis owing to non-agricultural income that was mainly remittances sent by migrants. Towns like Ourossogui, Louga, and Touba are the most urbanized cities in Senegal because of migrants' remittances and investments. These remittances are so considerable that they are seen as the leading monetary wellspring to for the migrants' countries of origin. The non-poor are big migrants but they are not the only ones. Among children as well as adults, the transiently poor are most inclined to migrate. In conclusion, it is clear that the rationale behind migration is the hunting for optimistic opportunities for better socioeconomic situation for potential migrants.

If the chronically poor remain sedentary, this reflects the low social mobility of this category of migrants whose members are almost doomed to wallow in poverty. Those who migrate are among the poorest in their society of origin.

International migration is residual and practiced by the transiently poor and the non-poor, all generations considered. The chronically poor of all generations remain a highly sedentary group, reflecting the fact that migration is not made without important resources. The routes taken by migrants show that their mobility plays a significant role in the experiences endured both in international and national migrations. These considerable remittances, the easier access to job opportunities, and the extension of the support network remain the motivating factors behind such an attempt to individual and social advancement.

Migrations During Childhood

During childhood, 66.7% of urban non-migrants are non-poor, 35.3% are transiently poor, and 16% are chronically poor. This trend is reversed in rural areas whereas 13.4% of rural non-migrants are non-poor, 28.4% transiently poor and 58.3% chronically poor.

More specifically for urban-rural mobility, 3.3% of individuals who leave their urban residence for rural areas are non-poor, while the transiently and chronically poor account for 4.9% and 1.5%, respectively. Rural-urban mobility is more intense (13.3% of routes). Some 4.7% of them who leave rural areas for cities are non-poor while the transiently poor represent 19.8% and the chronically poor total 15.7%.

Relative to interurban mobility, rural-urban movements are not intense because they hit 5.4%. This pattern of mobility is practiced by the non-poor with 8.6% of individuals leaving villages to cities while the transiently and chronically poor make up 5.9% and 3.7%, respectively.

At international level, the non-poor migrants from Senegal to countries abroad make up 2%, while the transiently and chronically poor represent 2.5% and 2.4%, respectively. Migrations from abroad to Senegal, representing 1.2% of children opting for this reverse movement are non-poor migrants, 3.1% are transiently poor and 2.5% are chronically poor.

Most of children migrate according to the situation or the path mapped out by their parents and guardians.

There are other circumstances that put children preciously in the frontline such as conflicts, wandering, delinquency, begging, etc..

Urban migrant children are by majority non-poor people whereas rural migrants are born in poor households. Rural areas are proved to be repellent to children. International migration during childhood remains residual if the duration is taken into account.

Migrations During Youth: The Flow Is More Intense for Transient Poverty

During youth, 66.7% of urban migrants were non-poor while 35.3% were transiently poor against 16% of rural migrants.

Contrarily as in rural areas, 65.8% of non-migrants are chronically poor while the transiently poor and the non-poor represent 29.7% and 17.2%, respectively. In short, the poverty trend observed in urban areas is opposed to figures in rural areas. Meanwhile, urban-rural mobility has recorded relatively stable flows among the chronically poor, the transiently poor, and the non-poor as well. Rural-urban mobility is more intense. In fact, 10% of individuals who leave rural areas for cities are non-poor.

Conversely, the flow is more intense for transient poverty that registers 19% of individuals. Chronic poverty only accounts for 11% of the causes of rural migrations to cities.

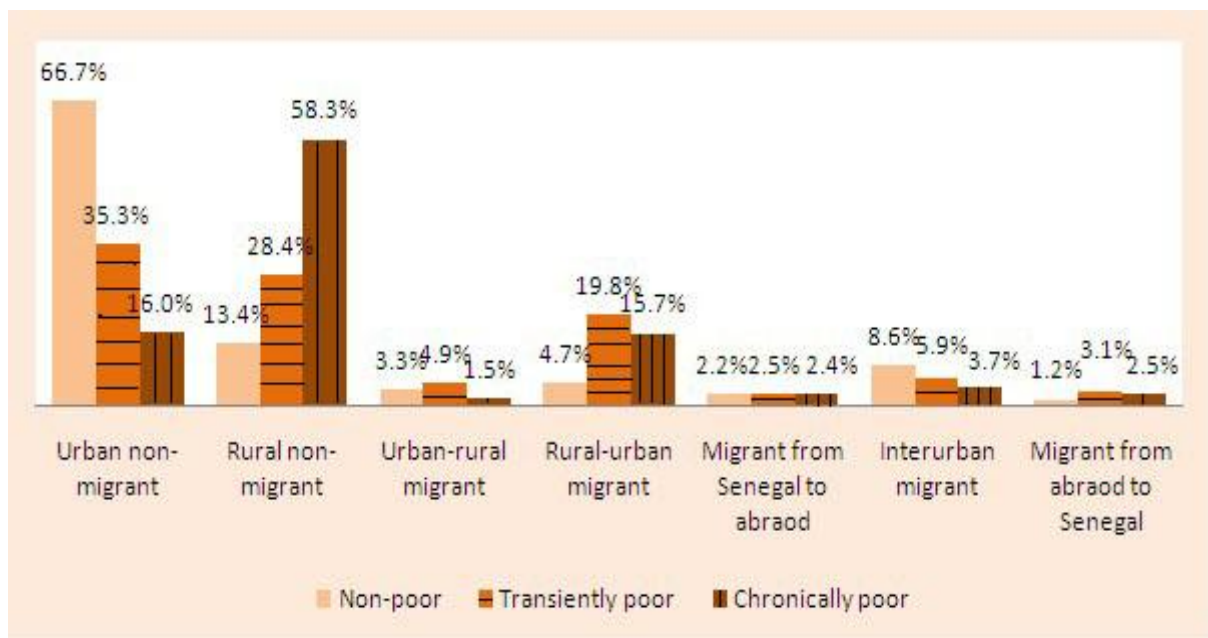


Figure 1. Poverty level according to mobility during childhood (between 0 and 14 years old).

Note. Source: Fall et al., 2010.

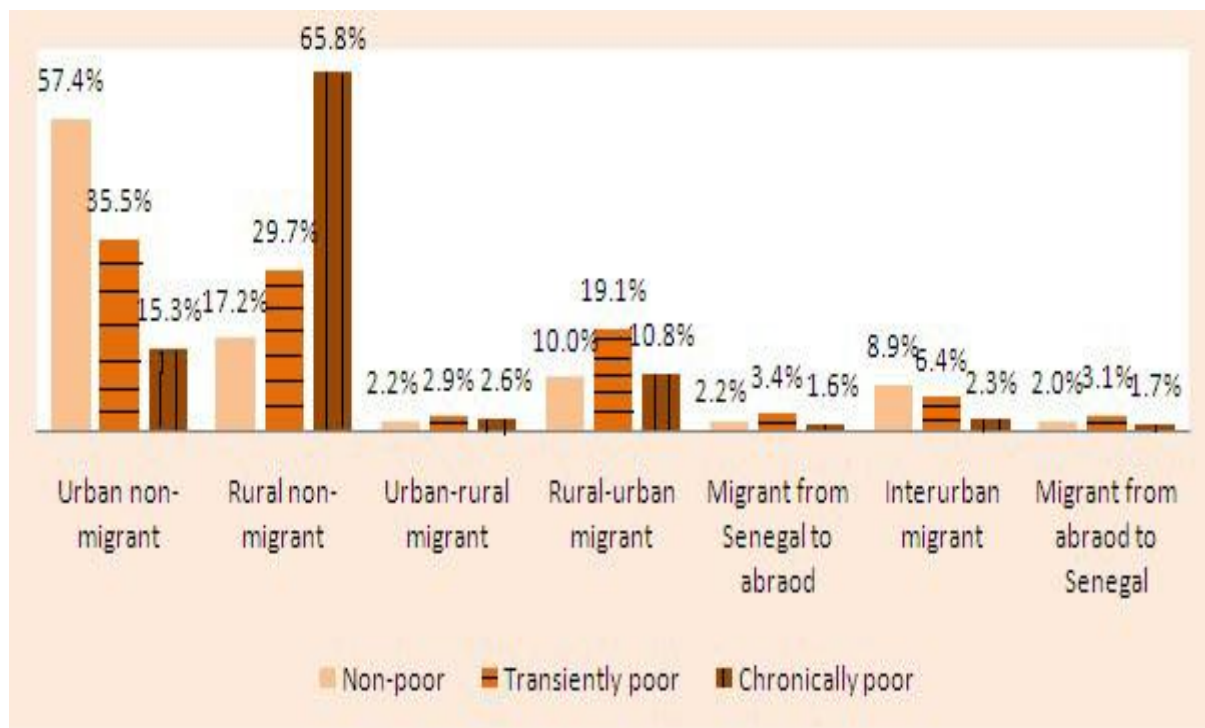


Figure 2. Poverty level according to youth mobility (between 15 and 34 years old).

Note. Source: Fall et al., 2010

Interurban mobility is more intense among the non-poor (8.9%) and the transiently poor (6.4%) compared to the chronically poor (2.3%) of the youth's interurban flow. International mobility—from Senegal to countries abroad and vice-versa—is comprehensively balanced. In both types of migrations, the transiently poor represent the largest flows with 3.1% and 3.4%, respectively.

Migrations During Adulthood

Despite the many surveys carried out, internal migrations remain insufficiently examined. The trends observed as regards urban-rural mutual movements based on the recent national retrospective survey data on adulthood migrations, show that internal rural emigration tends to stagnate, even decline whereas internal urban emigration has been on the increase.

An urban-rural migration analysis shows that rural exodus is the most studied issue. This also shows that rural areas are becoming deserted in favour of cities. Urbanization is correlated to a series of factors, namely employment and education opportunities as well as health care provided. Conversely, there is a certain number of unfavourable factors in departure points similar to poverty, climatic shocks, etc. This statement of fact is so strong that the findings which show that this phenomenon is stabilizing in favour of other forms of migrations are not taken into account.

The EVPC survey findings show that in 2008/2009, 38% of urban people and 43% of rural individuals were non migrants. During the survey, urban people during that period migrate more than rural inhabitants. This fact questions a deep-seated bias that presents rural exodus as the wellspring of the urban population

growth rate. However, when comparing the types of mobility, rural migration to cities remains the most intense (see Figure 1). Only 1.4% of people surveyed have left cities for rural areas whereas 8.1% took the opposite trajectory and 2.6% opted for interurban migration.

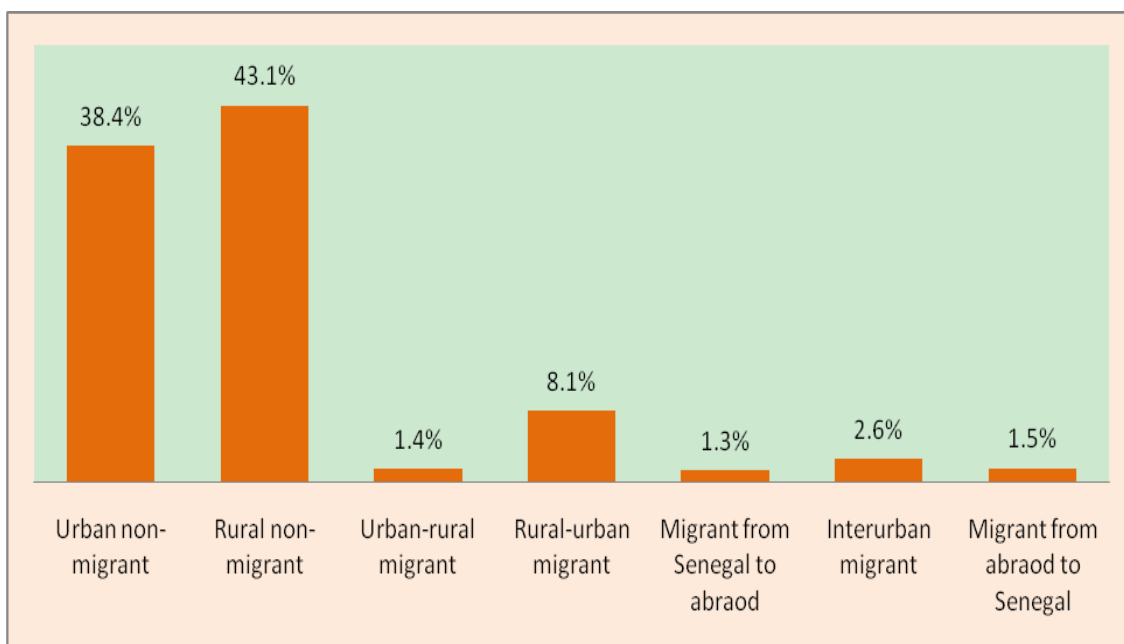


Figure 3. Cross section of mobility.

Note. Source: Fall et al., 2010

Many tracks can be privileged: There are many migration opportunities to the cities, notably Dakar as a transit point with market and living conditions encouraging people to migrate. Rural areas seem to be duller with fewer movements than cities.

The strategies of exiting poverty through exodus and migration often produce unexpected effects, considering internal migrants' socio-professional characteristics they experience situations that exacerbate their precarious status during their migratory trajectories. The survey data show then that when leaving their origin locality, most internal migrants are prompted by the degradation of their living conditions which may exacerbate during their migration process. In other words, even when they find a precarious or lower-paid occupation, internal migrants in the main experience housing problems like precarious accommodation, water and electricity shortages, they may also endure various hardships, notably inadequacies in food and medical care etc..

The low professional income of migrants and the high cost of urban living do not absolutely explain the persistence of poverty in their lives. It is also clear that the relational network found on the ground is often inadequate to provide assistance for the new migrants because of their own poverty status. Internal migrations have the edge on international migrations that hardly exceed 1% in both directions. In fact, only 1.3% of people left Senegal for abroad whereas a little more (1.5%) of Senegalese people return from abroad. In these international migration flows, departures and returns counterbalance each other. In total, the cities attract much

mobility. Interurban mobility comes in second position.

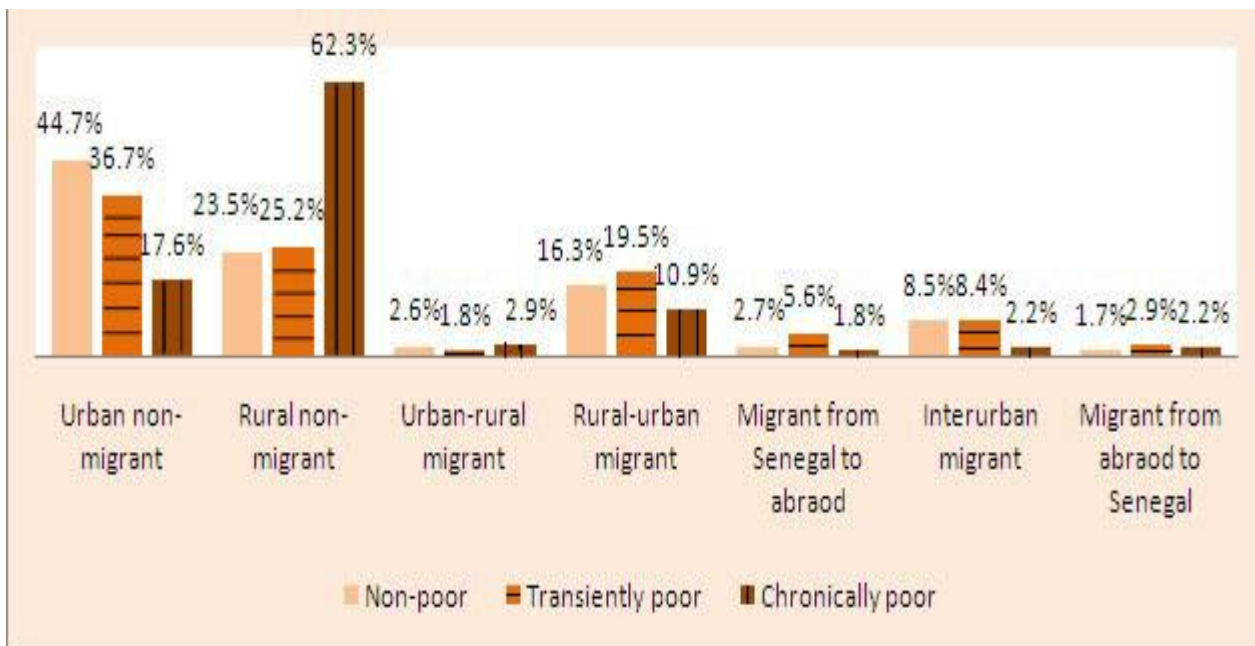


Figure 4. Poverty level according to adulthood mobility (between 35 and 54 years old).

Note. Source: Fall et al., 2010.

Rural people migrating to cities are among the most mobile groups. They are dominated by the transient poor who account for 20% among the adults. Some 16% of the non-poor migrate from villages to urban areas while 11% of the chronically poor among the adults leave rural areas for cities. This type of migration is followed by the interurban movements that reach up nine percent of the non-poor and the transiently poor. The chronically poor hardly move between urban areas. International migrations during adulthood barely exceed two percent and are much practiced by the transiently poor.

Migrations During Old Age

The data suggests that the overall trend among both urban and rural non-migrants is still high. However, the flows are less intense. In fact, migratory flows in urban areas have declined compared to the adult generation, irrespective of the type of poverty under review.

In rural areas, the trend remains unchanged regarding transient poverty (33.9%) compared to 25.2% in the previous generation. In respect of urban mobility to rural areas, the flows of the transiently poor are low, while also the non-poor (2%) and the chronically poor (1.6%) have generally kept the same trend as the adult generation.

Compared to the generation of adults, general migratory influxes at all levels have increased. There is an increase of 3.1%, 13.8%, and 4.2% among non-poor, transiently poor and chronically poor, respectively. Thus in respect of old age, the migration is more intense whatever the individual’s status.

At the international level, there is a slight increase of migratory flows from Senegal to countries abroad

among the chronically poor representing 3.4% and the transiently poor, accounting for 6.3% compared to the adult generations and the old age category. International mobility between countries abroad and Senegal is inexistent for transiently poor old aged people. For the non-poor and the chronically poor, there are identical flows to the adult generation.

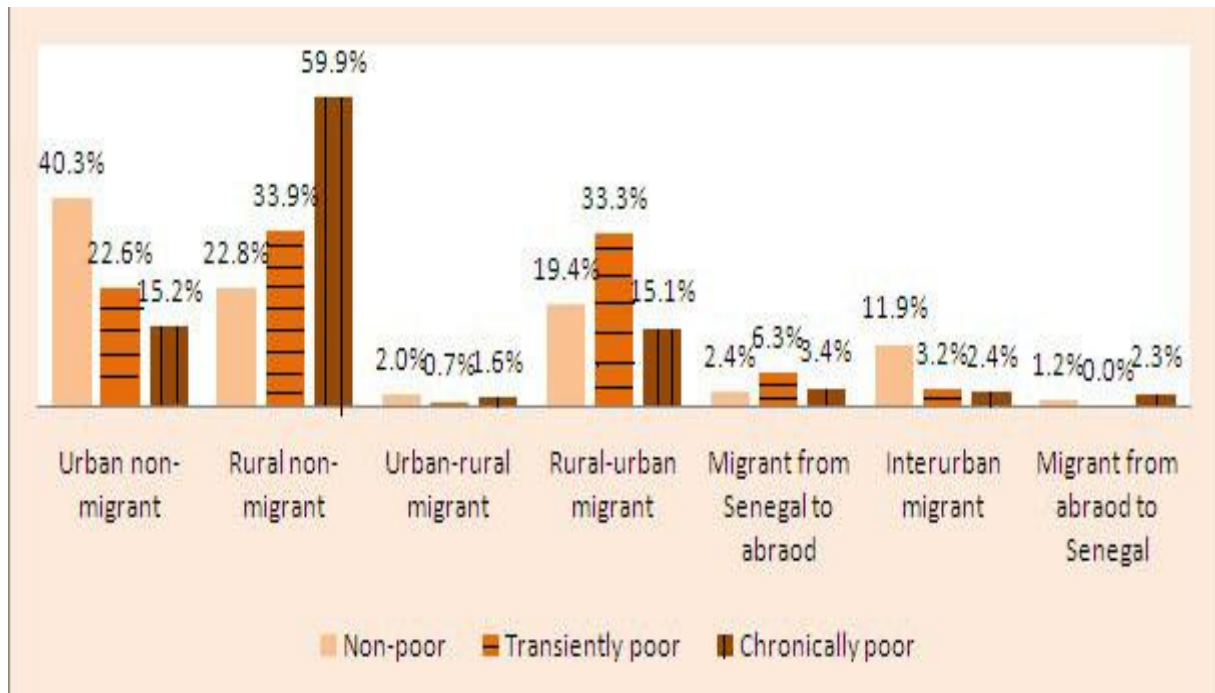


Figure 5. Poverty level according to mobility during old age (55 years and more).

Note. Source: Fall et al., 2010.

Conclusion: The Chronically Poor's Sedentary Nature and the Transiently Poor's Moderated Migration

Internal migrations are dominated by rural exodus featuring various groups among them the poor. The degradation of rural living conditions and growing difficulties to meet basic needs such as food and healthcare or the descent into poverty following a family or circumstantial event are the factors that trigger such an exodus. Internal migrations significantly influence the distribution of populations and are closely related to the accelerated urbanization process experienced by many African countries. This urbanization is correlated with a series of complex attraction factors that are the employment opportunities, education and the improved access to health care offered by urban centers. Besides these pull factors, there exists a number of push factors in areas of origin which relate to poverty, environmental degradation, conflicts, etc..

Under such circumstances, the exodus is meant to offset poverty since cities are seen as areas presenting opportunities to secure better paid jobs. These migrations that were mainly observed during the lean period have become long-lasting given that rural households depend on these migrants settled in cities and commit themselves to doing "menial jobs".

Such type of exodus still obtains among the younger generations of migrants but suggests an evolution related to the seasonal stays, the to-and-from movements between cities and villages, and professional placement difficulties. The precarious professional situation is also severe and is marked by a chronic instability and low income, giving rise to roadside peddlers of sweets, biscuits, lingerie, peanuts, etc..

International migrations are independent of internal migrations. This explains why international migrations stemming from suburbs and by urban people are increasing particularly among children. The returns of international migrants remain more intense than expected by public opinion.

Situations of conflicts, begging, and low coverage of community-based and quality social services are the motivating factors of mobility among children. As for youths and adults, the transiently poor are the most inclined group to migrate. In conclusion, it is clear that the rationale behind this type of migration is to grab opportunities to improve the prospective migrant's socioeconomic status.

If the chronically poor remain sedentary, this reflects the low social mobility of this category which is destined to be eternally trapped in poverty. Those who migrate are not among the most poor in their society of origin.

It is erroneous to reckon that there is a country where almost all people are ready to migrate. Over time, international migration is residual and practiced by the transiently poor and the non-poor, with all generations taken into account. The chronically poor of all generations remain highly sedentary, which suggests that migration is not done without considerable resources. If selectivity in migration tends to come to an end, it is more in keeping with the tradition of opting for destinations where the unskilled workers find menial jobs as the networks of migrants receive all those who manage to sneak through the rigid barriers put up by countries in the Northern Hemisphere.

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