

Return migration to Dakar : Do policies meet migrant's needs?

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Short abstract

This paper combines quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate assumptions underlying return migration programs in Senegal. More specifically, the objective is first, to study the sociodemographic characteristics of return migrants to Dakar and the determinants and motives of return migration. Secondly, we explore the reinsertion of return migrants to Dakar. Finally, we examine the coherence between return migration and reinsertion programs and the sociodemographic characteristics and determinants of returns and reinsertion to Dakar. The quantitative data for this study comes from the MAFE survey (Migration between Africa and Europe) implemented in 2008, which collected data both at household and individual level at origin (Senegal). Life-histories were also collected in European destination countries (France, Spain, and Italy). The qualitative analysis is based on semi-structured interviews conducted in the region of Dakar during spring and autumn 2009, with institutional actors and return migrants, beneficiaries and non beneficiaries of return programs. The first part examines the profile and reintegration experiences of return migrants in the region of Dakar through quantitative and qualitative analysis. The second part of the study identifies *key* hypotheses and objectives underlying return and reinsertion programs through a qualitative analysis. This will allow us to contrast the policy objectives and perceptions as formulated in the return and reinsertion programs as well as in the institutional discourse on migration with the profile and reintegration experiences of return migrants in the region of Dakar. This study contributes to the better understanding of return migration in the context of Sub-saharan Africa. It also gives incites for the assessment of programs and policies put in place to enhance return migration.

Introduction and research objectives

The role of return migration for development has been of increasing interest to policy makers in both origin and destination countries. However, little evidence exists on return migration and returnees' reinsertion in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. The objective of this paper is to investigate assumptions underlying return migration programs in Senegal. More specifically, the objectives are :

1. To provide evidence on the sociodemographic characteristics of return migrants to Dakar and the determinants and motives of return migration
 - 1.1 What is the profile of Senegalese return migrants (age, sex, length of stay...)?
 - 1.2 Which are the determinants of return migration to Senegal? After how long do the individuals return? Where do they come from?
 - 1.3 Why do the migrants come back? Are the reasons of return linked with the reasons of departure?
2. To study the reinsertion of return migrants to Dakar

2.1 What are the key factors in explaining a « positive » reinsertion? Do return migrants from an African country have better chances to succeed in their reinsertion process? Is it easier to come back for old return migrants compared to young return migrants? Does a short term migration make the future of migrants easier in their origin country?

2.2 Do the positive or negative motives of return influence the reinsertion process?

3. To explore the coherence between return migration and reinsertion programs and the sociodemographic characteristics and determinants of returns and reinsertion to Dakar

Data and Methods

This paper combines quantitative and qualitative methods to confront *the migration and return experiences of return migrants in Dakar with the programmes put in place to support them*. The first part examines the profile and reintegration experiences of return migrants in the region of Dakar through quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The quantitative analysis uses a new set of survey data collected in 2008 in the framework of the MAFE-Senegal project¹ (Migration between Africa and Europe). Surveys have been carried out in Senegal and among migrants in France, Italy and Spain. In Senegal, data have been collected at both household and individual levels. The household data are a cross-section at the time of the survey and concern 12 360 individuals in the Dakar region, including 306 return migrants. Various variables pertaining to return migrants are available in the household dataset. Life history data on 1,200 individuals in the Dakar region, including 200 return migrants, have also been collected. The life histories provide very detailed information on a large number of life domains, focusing in particular on experiences related to migration. These include information on motives of departure and return.

Descriptive analyses are realised to compare sociodemographic characteristics of return migrants with those who stayed abroad. In a second step we use biographic models in discrete-time analysis to explore the determinants of return migration. The biographic survey is used to study the link between motives of return and departure. Descriptive analyses are conducted to explore the reinsertion process of return migrants to Dakar. Finally, we rely on Poisson regression to assess the determinants of a good reinsertion of return migrants. We will also rely on qualitative analysis of thirty semi-structured interviews, which were conducted during spring and autumn 2009 with return migrants living in the region of Dakar, to provide a complement to the quantitative analysis by providing additional sources for interpretation of quantitative results and adding detail on the reinsertion process.

The second part of the study contrasts *the migration and return profiles and experiences of return migrants in Dakar to the return and reintegration programmes put in place*. Key hypotheses and objectives underlying return and reinsertion programs are identified through a qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted in Dakar in November/December 2009 with

¹ See website : www.mafeproject.com

international and national institutions and organisations working on the facilitation of return or the reinsertion of return migrants in the region of Dakar. These include, among others, various Senegalese ministries with specific programmes on return migration (Ministère des Sénégalais de l'extérieur, Ministère de la Jeunesse, Direction de l'assistance technique); French, Italian and Spanish technical cooperation (among others) as well as at the level of the European Union (DG Development, DG JLS); International organisations such as the IOM and the ILO; internationally active NGOs, such as Caritas and COOPI; Senegalese NGOs, such as USE and ASCODE. Qualitative interviews have also been conducted with return migrants beneficiaries of return programmes in November/December 2009 in Dakar.

In a last step, both the policy discourse and the activities carried out by the various actors identified and interviewed are placed into perspective by examining the profile and reintegration experiences of return migrants in the region of Dakar as identified in the first part of the study. The experience of beneficiaries of return programmes as well as of return migrants returning without the support of return programmes are studied to complement the analysis, emphasising in addition the role of legal/illegal status during the last migration experience, the migration motive, the level of education, age and gender. This will allow us to contrast the policy objectives and perceptions as formulated in the return and reinsertion programs as well as in the institutional discourse on migration with the concrete return and reintegration process as illustrated by the quantitative and qualitative data.

This study contributes to the better understanding of return migration in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. It also gives incites for the assessment of programs and policies put in place to enhance return migration.