



INTRODUCTION



Migration phenomena and their impacts on territories of origin and destination now occupy a major place in national and international political agendas. In the Mediterranean region that has been historically and structurally shaped by movements of people, today, they question our perception of inequalities and territorial imbalances with regards to the emergence of new socio-economic and environmental issues.

As the first manifestation of these migrations, rural exodus has an impact on most Mediterranean rural and agricultural areas. It affects local economy and services, hampers the attractiveness of the territory, especially in the eyes of the young population and leads to the waste of invaluable local knowledge and know-how. It also leads to the loss of valuable human potential despite the fact that the agricultural and fisheries sectors are providers of sustainable jobs and training for a growing youth.

At a time when food crises are resurging and pressures on available natural resources are increasing, migration can also affect the food and water security of the most fragile and poorest areas. It is therefore necessary to recall that migrants firstly move within their country and in their region of origin. South-North flows remain marginal when compared to South-South migration.

At the same time, migration is recognised as an important factor in achieving the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. Given the significant income that rural populations receive from migrants and the transfer of technology and skills made possible by their mobility, it is essential to support the development potential of migration. It brings new life to abandoned territories, lifts them out of poverty and can be a lever for rural development and a provider of sustainable and innovative food value chains.

Food security and agriculture: the pillars of conflict prevention and crises

The Mediterranean region holds some of the world records in terms of conflict, unemployment, food dependency and resource depletion. In particular, the challenge of food security is immense. The planet that will have to feed 10 billion people by

2050. We will therefore have to produce much more and much better. If, ten years after the food crisis of 2008, global agricultural issues are less present on the international scene, after a decade of moderate fall, hunger in the world has certainly regained ground, progressing significantly in recent years. The number of undernourished people has increased from around 804 in 2016 to almost 821 million in 2017 (1 in 9 people worldwide)¹. These people largely depend on the agricultural sectors. In the Mediterranean, the climate crisis in Syria between 2006 and 2010 has above all, penalised farmers who were often pushed to leave their villages and survive thanks to aid from the World Food Programme. Since then, the war has, among other things, increased food insecurity in the country.

As elsewhere, in Syria, hunger and peace are related. Conflicts have a major impact on local food systems and contribute to the worsening of hunger in the world². They are, along with climate change, the main driver of food insecurity, the growth of which in recent years is linked to their intensification³. The FAO Report of 2018 on the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* stresses the importance of building the resilience of agricultural systems to face climate change.

In the Mediterranean, these climate changes and their consequences – acceleration of salinization and soil erosion, increased frequency of droughts – are likely to increase during this century. The agricultural sector is the most affected by climate change shocks. It must absorb most of the costs of extreme weather events and bear the side effects of extreme weather, including increased health crises and the resurgence of crop pests. When rural populations rely on agriculture for their main livelihood and can no longer operate due to this type of disaster, they are forced to migrate to cities or other countries. Water, land, climate and food insecurities therefore catalyse these distress migrations.

Thus, indirectly, we measure the extent to which food and agriculture are geostrategic topics. Yet their importance is often underestimated. There can be no peace without food security, no food security without agricultural production and no agriculture without rural development. Food security and agriculture closely depend on peace and stability in the territories and vice versa. In this way, they must be considered as priority issues to prevent migration and forced displacement.

The Mediterranean at the heart of the global migratory phenomenon

If men have been moving for thousands of years, the phenomenon has increased over time due to population growth, increasing inequalities, globalisation, the frequency of conflicts and even natural disasters. The Mediterranean has therefore been a major migratory area for a long time but the drivers of mobility have gradually

1 - FAO, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, Building Climate Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition*, Rome, FAO, 2018 (<http://www.fao.org/state-of-food-security-nutrition/en/>).

2 - K. von Grebmer, J. Bernstein, A. de Waal, N. Prasai, S. Yin and Y. Yohannes, *2015 Global Hunger Index: Armed Conflict and the Challenge of Hunger*, Bonn, Washington (D. C.) and Dublin, Welthungerhilfe, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Concern Worldwide, 2015 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.2499/9780896299641>).

3 - FAO, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*, op. cit.

diversified. It is both a region of departure and transit and a host region for Mediterranean populations and for populations coming from peripheral regions like sub-Saharan Africa. Mostly taking place within countries, migration is usually from rural to urban areas. If migratory dynamics in the Mediterranean are historical and polymorphous, in the current regional context, they are forming an increasingly complex geopolitical pattern.

Although in recent years many people in southern Europe have left their country due to the economic crisis, it is important to stress the extent to which this international migration mainly concerns eastern and southern Mediterranean countries. With for instance the massive arrival of populations fleeing wars or seeking better living conditions in the Near East and North Africa, these countries have become transit or even host countries. Several million people have been displaced or migrated in recent years towards this region that is simultaneously facing many economic difficulties. This makes it even more difficult to implement significant budgetary and logistical resources to provide these people with assistance and ensuring their integration within societies. In the African continent, the Maghreb is becoming an increasingly central transit and host region. This trend will be accentuated in the coming years with a growing population pressure and the sharp workforce increase in sub-Saharan Africa⁴.

The current situation must be apprehended in the light of the sometimes forgotten root causes of these migrations but also of the trends and patterns they draw in order to be integrated into a model of sustainable development that also benefits the agricultural sector and food security. This perspective of climate, agricultural and food tensions constitutes a major challenge for the Mediterranean region.

Economic, social, gender, territorial inequalities: drivers of instability

The globalisation of trade, the amplification of social and economic inequalities within countries and between the nations themselves, demographic growth, anarchic development of certain territories, tensions provoked by the scarcity of vital resources such as water, land and food or even the accentuation of climate constraints are all factors that contribute to increase migration. In rural areas, it is particularly the issues related to the status and condition of farmers or fishermen (working conditions, informal employment, low income, precariousness and lack of perspective in the long term, low professionalization of actors, inadequate social protection, etc.) that generate migratory flows.

In recent years, the classical Mediterranean model of migration towards Europe has undergone profound changes: there has been an exponential growth in the number of asylum seekers and refugees due to the socio-political crises affecting the region since 2011, as well as the development of new forms of displacement such as environmental and climate migration. The latter concern the poorest Mediterranean

4 - S. Mercandalli and B. Losch (Eds.), *Rural Africa in Motion. Dynamics and Drivers of Migration South of the Sahara*, Rome, FAO-CIRAD, 2017 (www.fao.org/3/I7951EN/i7951en.pdf).

countries and, within them, the most marginalised rural populations who are both the most exposed to climate change and, at the same time, the least equipped to deal with it.

In order to face these multiple and interdependent challenges, agriculture seems able to provide keys to understanding but also ideas for action. Therefore, it is important to question the role of agriculture and rural development in preventing the exodus to cities but also to address certain issues brought by this migration⁵. More generally, these reflections are part of a strategic approach to the reclassification of rural territories and agriculture as major determinants for the stability and economy of the countries of the region.

Highlighting solutions provided by rural worlds: agriculture as a tool for resilience

A profound change in agricultural practices is required to improve agricultural productivity, provide more sustainable food production and prevent migration to cities. This means that we must not forget the fundamentals underlying better agricultural and rural development: improving living standards and logistics in rural territories, sound management of natural resources, adaptation to climate change, food and nutrition security of populations, and the resilience of farming and fishing communities faced with crises (market, price, health, due to natural disasters or conflicts, etc.). In this regards, we know the extent to which, in the Mediterranean, agriculture and rural territories are sources of resilience for many families faced with economic shocks. In this sense, the development of a triply efficient agriculture at economic, ecological and social levels, is a project that can mobilise Mediterranean countries as it is able to federate human traditional knowledge, innovation and very diverse local specificities that constitute the region's wealth.

Agriculture can be a tool to prevent risks and manage tensions related to migration while the formulation of adapted agricultural policies is a way to create rural well-being. According to the FAO, investing in agriculture is eleven times more effective in reducing poverty than in any other sector. Agriculture must therefore be considered as a lever of economic and social development for rural areas, able to lessen the number of people wishing to leave the countryside or their country due to the lack of attractive prospects. Without being a magic solution, agriculture has an immense potential as a source of development, resilience and peace.

Agriculture, inclusive development and multilateral dialogue at the service of resilience in the Mediterranean

Mediterranean countries have strong human, economic and agricultural assets. Several economic, social and demographic indicators show a general improvement in

5 - Declaration of the General Director of the FAO, José Graziano da Silva, on the occasion of the 2nd Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, Palermo, 28 November 2014.

living standards, but with great disparities between and within countries. Mediterranean countries share a common problem: the migration of young people, a real waste of human resources for the whole region. Inclusive development ensuring social and territorial cohesion is therefore a top priority for Mediterranean states. In addition to providing food, the agricultural sector also provides employment and stability in fragile rural areas that must therefore be enhanced by more inclusive social and economic policies.

This calls for an investment in the new generations of disadvantaged areas, which are a component that is vital and hard to replace. The often-unexploited potential of these young people, their employability and their active participation in the life of rural territories are a major avenue of reflection and a course of action to be undertaken to provide them with decent living conditions thus preventing rural exodus. If the trend of population aging in these regions continues, it will bring about certain difficulties. We must therefore strive to create viable and innovative jobs, by boosting for example, entrepreneurship or the social economy in rural areas to make rural territories more attractive culturally for these young populations in search of a more urban lifestyle but also to consider inclusive development models that associate all communities with local policies and the organisation of social life.

However, providing only technical and economic solutions is not enough. We must also provide meaning, set an ideal to achieve, propose political goals and a social contract to which individuals can adhere. Participatory initiatives based on dialogue and co-building can help to lift rural and young people out from their triple spatial, economic and social marginalisation. They can be a bastion with the most radical ideologies that feed on feelings of frustration, injustice and despair. Counteracting the “rural brain drain” and the “radical shift”, establishing a sense of belonging to a community of interest, require better inclusion of hinterlands and agricultural areas in dynamics of development and economic growth of the countries as well as enhanced, diversified and socially significant employment opportunities for young people in these regions.

Today, a constructive dialogue between Europe, the Mediterranean and African countries is an indispensable tool to strengthen agriculture, foster a more inclusive development and prevent distress migration. The international community must multiply multilateral partnerships for greater stability across the region. Europe can act in a concrete manner to reduce uncertainties and contribute to agricultural development in North Africa and the Middle East without losing sight of the necessary respect for food balances, by placing food, climate and co-development issues at the top of the Euro-Mediterranean agenda. In this constructive dialogue, the Mediterranean, which is a bridge between the two African and European continents, is a key actor for greater regional integration.

Diasporas: at the heart of co-development

Migrations can lead to shared economical, political, social or cultural benefits for both the host society and that of origin. Throughout history, interculturality has participated to the consolidation of the State. Many nations have used this diversity

and melting pot as their main strength maintaining their ability to stimulate innovation and openness. At the crossroads of three continents, the Mediterranean has been a space of permanent and multidirectional migration animated by flows of human, economic and cultural exchanges for centuries. This constant intermingling of cultures has gradually settled to compose a social mosaic where identities interweave and cosmopolitanism becomes denser.

It is interesting to note that in the history of the region, agriculture has represented a geographical parameter for the settling of migrating populations. Since the first plant and animal domestication thousands of years ago, like the wheat growing in the fertile Crescent in the Eastern Mediterranean, men have gradually settled in the region, abandoning their nomadic way of life. Successive population flows have also enabled the emergence of regional cuisines, both rich in their diversity but sharing common gastronomic and cultural features. This has favoured the emergence of the Mediterranean diet, which is both a lifestyle and a sustainable consumption pattern that travels through ages and borders.

Migrants from rural areas have excellent agricultural skills. The integration processes in their host countries would benefit from taking this into consideration. In many European and Mediterranean countries, it is precisely they who come to revitalise rural and mountainous areas, strengthen the workforce and meet the need of skilled agricultural workers. In this context, the benefits brought by seasonal agricultural migrations when they are well organised must be enhanced. Similarly, it would be appropriate to not only strive to improve the working conditions of migrant agricultural workers but also to set up educational and training schemes, which is a major issue, particularly for forcibly displaced populations. Language training must be supplemented by technical training adapted to the knowledge and employment opportunities that host countries are likely to offer, especially in rural areas.

Besides, in rural areas of origin of migrants, there is an influx of investment and a transfer of know-how that plays a fundamental role in their development. According to the FAO, 40% of international remittances are destined to rural areas and their amounts would be three times higher than that of public development aid. This reinvestment represents a real asset and an opportunity to reduce rural poverty and set up a more inclusive development model. Diasporas around the world play a vital role in this field. According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) which analysed the evolution of money transfers from expatriates to their countries of origin, in 2016, the African diaspora sent 36% more money to the continent than then years ago, thus contributing to boost African economies. An increasing number of young Europeans of African origin are both attracted to the country of their parents and courted by African companies. This new generation of diaspora origin is a significant asset for the economic integration and dynamism of the African continent in terms of employment and wealth⁶. At the heart of

6 - M. Baumard, "Les enfants de la diaspora tentés par l'Afrique de leurs parents", *Le Monde*, 21 September 2018 (www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/09/21/les-enfants-de-la-diaspora-tentes-par-l-afrique-de-leurs-parents_5358538_3212.html).

co-development, their potential is yet undervalued. As illustrated by the various platforms and initiatives that are being set up such as the Talent2Africa or the Global Diaspora Week, although the impact and scale of this phenomenon is still difficult to measure, the dynamic is very tangible⁷. It therefore seems crucial to redefine and rethink the development of the African continent by increasingly involving the diaspora and by investing directly in companies, endorsing new technologies and social networks.

Migrations have always played a fundamental role in development dynamics. Due to the issues they pose and the emotions they generate, political action and cooperation tend to focus on the effects and consequences of these dynamics overlooking the policies that could be implemented to prevent or better regulate them.

Mediterra: an invitation to change perception and better prepare the future

This report is an exchange of views on migration from the perspective of agricultural development and food security regarding issues that are specifically Mediterranean. The refugee crisis that we are currently experiencing and the effects of which are still difficult to measure, should lead us to think more broadly about considering the root causes of these voluntary or forced migrations in order to propose, for the Mediterranean, solutions that guarantee inclusive agricultural and rural development and food security. Although it is impossible to predict the population movements in the medium or long term, everything leads to think that the Mediterranean, and generally, Africa and the Middle East, will remain at the heart of strategic attention.

The current displacements of populations oblige us to consider them as a double challenge. Firstly, we must manage this humanitarian and political crisis in the most respectful way possible by faithfully complying with international law. However, we must also look ahead to a more distant future in order to identify the most effective instruments to mitigate long-term tensions in the Mediterranean. Insecurity problems related to water, land, climate and the management of rural areas cannot be dissociated from economic migration and refugee movements. Faced with these crises, rural areas are the most vulnerable and are therefore the first ones to be abandoned. We must therefore strive towards the emergence of rural well-being and improved resilience by promoting sustainable and inclusive agricultural development.

We must act in depth on the causes of crises to combine short-term security and long-term stability. It is precisely in this perspective that this new edition of the *Mediterra* report, co-published by the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) and the *Agence française de développement* (AFD) wishes to contribute to improving knowledge on migration in the Mediterranean in order to identify sustainable, inclusive and long-term solutions. It seems more than ever necessary to address agricultural issues through an interdisciplinary and resolutely multi-sectoral approach.

7 - Global Diaspora Week (<http://machconsulting.net/en/global-diaspora-week-2018/>).

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