

WEST AFRICAN MIGRATION TO MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES AND AGRICULTURAL WORK

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The number of international migrants is increasing year after year, reaching up to 258 million in 2017 (UN-DESA, 2017a). Like all other continents, Africa is a place of significant movements, even if the absence of recent national data for several countries does not always enable to draw a precise statistical portrait of the phenomenon. Nonetheless, the existing information allows identifying trends and putting into perspective, certain fears in international public opinion as to the extent and direction of migratory flows originating in Africa.

In this Chapter, we will firstly give a brief overview of West African migration to southern European and Maghreb countries using national and international statistical data available¹. This statistical framework covers both global trends in the region as well as some of the main countries in the Afro-Mediterranean migration area for which the migratory phenomenon is the most documented, namely Senegal (country of origin), Morocco, Spain and Italy (destination countries). Since the Maghreb is often primarily considered as a transit area for sub-Saharan Africans leaving for Europe, we will focus on the real diversity of their profiles and specifically on the case of Morocco. Lastly, the third part will be devoted to sub-Saharan immigration in southern European countries, and will focus on its role in the Spanish and Italian agricultural production systems.

Putting sub-Saharan migration to Mediterranean countries into perspective

Since many years, African migrations of sub-Saharan origin are the subject of great attention, especially in European societies. The recurring images in the media of crossing the barriers protecting the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla and those of migrant rescues in the Mediterranean, fuel some fears about the

1 - This data mainly concerns stocks of residents of West African origin in the different destination countries since migratory flows are more difficult to measure and the statistical registration systems in Africa are still incomplete.

humanitarian tragedy that is occurring in this area and the potential flows of people in distress wishing to arrive on the European continent. However, the size of these flows should be kept in perspective with regards to the available statistical data.

First of all, while the African population accounts for 17% of the world's population, the proportion of migrants of African descent in the global migrant population is only 14%. Comparatively, Asia, which represents almost 60% of the world's population, accounts for 41% of migrants in the world (UN-DESA, 2017a). It is also important to recall that the vast majority of African migratory movements remain international (Flahaux and Haas, 2016; Gonzalez-Garcia *et al.*, 2016; Mercandalli and Losch, 2017), and are mainly directed to the major economies of the African continent such as the Ivory Coast and South Africa without forgetting refugee movements, as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

These migratory flows must also be analysed in light of their recent developments and the scale and pace of population growth in sub-Saharan Africa. As highlighted by Jesus R. Gonzalez-Garcia and his colleagues (2016), although the migration rate (number of migrants compared to the total population) remained broadly the same, around 2%, sub-Saharan Africa saw its population double between 1990 and 2013, resulting in an exponential growth of volumes of flows. The absolute number of migrants doubled during this period, amounting to about 20 million sub-Saharan nationals living outside their country in 2013. While migratory movements remain largely intra-regional, movements outside sub-Saharan Africa have also a tendency to increase. The share of citizens from the region and residing outside the African continent has thus increased from one quarter to one third of the total migrant population between 1993-2013, reaching about 7 million people today (Gonzalez-Garcia, 2016). While recent UN projections based on the base-case scenario, expect a quadrupling of the population of the African continent by 2100 (from 1.2 billion in 2015 to 4.4 billion in 2100) (UDAES, 2015), emigration out of the continent could *a priori* considerably increase in the coming decades.

Origin of migratory flows

Regarding countries of departure, African emigration out of the continent mainly comes from countries characterised by a higher level of economic development than that of others. This trend results from the more general observation that economic development and intensification of emigration generally go hand in hand, in the short and medium terms (Flahaux and Haas, 2016). In West Africa, emigration flows mainly come from urban and coastal areas of relatively prosperous countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal, with the exception of the Ivory Coast (*ibid.*). The strong rural exodus experienced by these countries since their independence can explain the concentrations in these areas of departure. This dynamic has resulted in the mobility of the most marginalised rural populations towards cities and fertile agricultural areas. It was also illustrated by the frequent need for emigration candidates to spend time in big cities in order to accumulate the money and the contacts necessary for the realisation of their

migratory project. These findings apply both to internal (from North to South in several West African countries) and international migration (particularly between Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast) (*ibid.*). Migratory flows in this region are particularly intense due to the existence of an agreement on the free movement of persons between member countries of the Economic Communities of West African States (ECOWAS) ², the small size of some States, the porous borders and the dispersion of certain ethnic groups with strong links in different countries (*ibid.*).

Destinations of West African flows

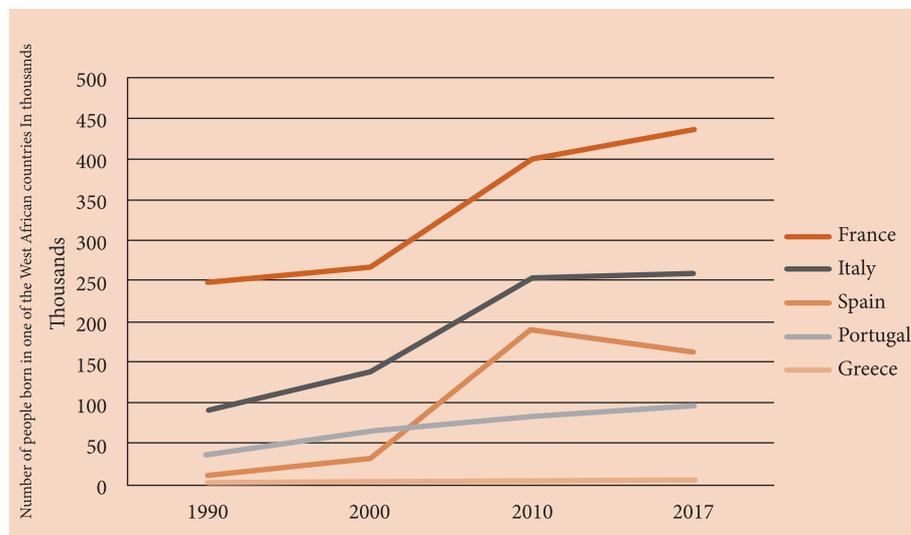
With regard to West Africa³, the increase in out-of-region flows is due to the growth of flows to Europe and, to a lesser extent, flows to North and South America, the Gulf countries and the Maghreb. The latter is considered as a step on the longer path to Europe but also as a full-fledged destination for exile candidates wishing to get training and/or work there. Since the post-colonial period, West African emigration flows to Europe have largely been determined by links with the former colonial powers: the Senegalese, Malians and Ivoirians migrating predominantly to France, Nigerians and Ghanaians to the United Kingdom and Cape Verdeans and Bissau-Guineans to Portugal (see Table 1). As illustrated by the case of Senegalese emigration described in Box 1, these flows have also been influenced by economic development, entry facilities and the possibility of being regularised in countries such as Italy and Spain that in the space of a few years have become countries of immigration rather than countries of emigration. In these two countries, the economic crises of the 2000s hit the sub-Saharan populations very hard (Bonifazi and Livi Bracci, 2014; Valente Fumo, 2017) leading them to precariousness and, sometimes, their returns (visible in the stagnation of the number of sub-Saharans in Italy and their decline in Spain between 2010 and 2017, Graph 1). As for the other northern Mediterranean countries, namely Greece (represented in Graph 1), they remain marginal destinations of West Africans⁴.

2 - Protocol Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment (A/p.1/5/79) established in 1979. However, this principle of free movement is not always respected and increasingly undermined in countries like Nigeria, where the international struggle against irregular migration requires greater control of migratory flows, both at the external borders and inside the country itself.

3 - West Africa (according to the UN-DESA classification): Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

4 - Stock figures of West African nationals in Maghreb countries that are too incomplete or unpublished are not presented here.

Graph 1 - Number of nationals from West African countries residing in main southern European countries, 1990-2017



Source: UN-DESA (2017b).

Table 1 - Number of nationals from West African countries in France, Spain, Italy and Portugal in 2017*

	France	Italy	Spain	Portugal
Total residents of foreign origin	7,902,783	5,907,461	5,947,106	880,188
West Africa	438,119 (5.5%)**	258,669 (4.4%)	162,987 (2.7%)	97,266 (11%)
Benin	20,724	2,611	401	33
Burkina Faso	8,873	11,862	1,157	n/a.
Cape Verde	22,630	6,268	4,487	60,590
Ivory Coast	91,303	26,004	2,986	132
Gambia	1,935	1,541	17,178	116
Ghana	6,797	47,366	12,157	195
Guinea	30,667	3,967	9,780	4,579
Guinea -Bissau	3,111	795	5,419	28,927
Liberia	796	2,041	826	28
Mali	76,703	4,250	17,742	115
Mauritania	18,037	688	8,612	40
Niger	5,585	1,078	282	n/a.
Nigeria	5,854	57,248	30,484	269
Senegal	119,661	86,307	49,930	2,114
Sierra Leone	1,320	1,401	1,034	53
Togo	24,123	5,242	512	75

* Based on the most recent census data for each country.

** Percentage of West African nationals in the total population of residents of foreign origin.

Source: UN-DESA (2017b).

Box 1: Trends in Senegalese Emigration to Europe from the 1960s to today

Senegal has a long migratory history towards the African continent and beyond. These movements are explained both by the common factors of attraction and repulsion of migration as well as by the importance given to migration in Senegalese culture, considered as an enriching life experience and enabling to “become someone” (Tandian and Bergh, 2014).

Initiated before the independence of the country by sailors and former Senegalese riflemen who left to work there and by some of the elite who were going there to get training, Senegalese emigration to Europe grows in the 1960s, directed towards France. In order to meet its labour needs, especially in the automobile industry, the former colonial country favours the recruitment of foreign workers through the action of the *Office national de l'immigration* (ONI)⁵ that has an office in Dakar. These recruitments are mainly carried out in the Senegal River Valley, in the Tambacounda and Casamance regions. They are generally men alone, mainly Soninke, Toucouleur or Manjack having left their family in their village of origin and travelling back and forth between France and Senegal according to the *noria* system made possible by the mobility facilities between the two countries. Although these practices decreased after the cessation of labour immigration in 1974, Senegalese flows did not dry up and became feminised as from the 1980s thanks to family reunification (Lessault and Flahaux, 2013).

The successive droughts of the 1970s, the crisis of the groundnut economy (mainly affecting the regions of Diourbel and Louga), the decline of the traditional fishing sector (strongly challenged by the arrival of large foreign trawlers) and the adverse effects of the structural adjustment policies carried out between 1982 and 1992, lead to an impoverishment of populations and an intensification of migratory movements from Senegal. From the 1990s, destinations diversify: while France remains the main European destination, migration increasingly follows strategies to circumvent restrictive policies and moves towards Italy and Spain. These countries become destinations of choice because they have experienced a rapid economic development and it is therefore easier to go there than in France and the street trade is more tolerated. For many Senegalese, the new slogan then becomes “*Barca walla Basaax*” (“Barcelona or death”). Beyond Europe, more and more Senegalese are heading to the United States and more recently to Latin America.

Diversification also concerns the regions of departure. More and more Senegalese from almost every region of the country are involved in international long-distance migration. Near the Senegal River Valley, the regions of Louga, Diourbel and Dakar rank among the largest areas of international emigration (Robin *et al.*, 2000). Dakar represents an important emigration hub, the agglomeration constituting a compulsory passage for candidates for exile who, over a longer or a shorter period, seek to accumulate money and contacts before their departure to the North.

Today, although Europe tends to increasingly close its doors to these nationals, Senegalese emigration does not decline, deploying itself towards new destinations and adapting itself to the restrictive migratory framework (Vives, 2017). As evidenced by several surveys (Carling and Schewel, 2018), young men still strongly aspire to leave. Migration continues to be a rite of passage for them. Currently, in sub-Saharan Africa, after Nigeria, Senegal is the second recipient of migratory remittances (2.3 billion dollars in 2017), representing about 15% of the national GDP in 2017 (KNOMAD, 2017).

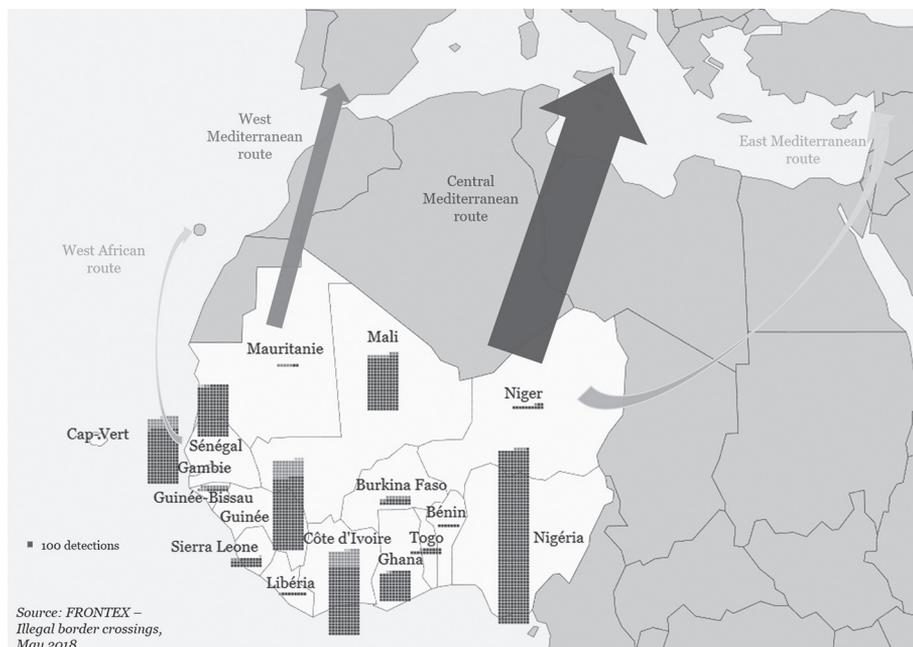
5 - Translator's note: National Office of Immigration.

Modalities of entry and residence of migrants of sub-Saharan origin in Mediterranean countries

It remains difficult to have a clear picture of the routes taken by sub-Saharan migrants to Europe and the travel arrangements of these populations. Indeed, and quite logically, these routes are adapted to the legal constraints and controls imposed by Europe. They evolve rapidly, and these questions remain quite opaque (Vives, 2017). However, it is important to recall that the vast majority of migration from African countries is done within a legal framework, with migrants usually arriving at their destination using passports, visas or other travel documents (Flahaux and Haas, 2016). These legal migrations are mainly in the context of family reunification and family formation (JRC, 2018). Analysing data from the MAFE (*Migration between Africa and Europe*) conducted with migrants from Ghana, the DRC and Senegal, Bruno Schoumaker and his colleagues (2015) observe that most migrants reach their destination directly, without transiting through another country. However, this proportion is much higher for migrants going to traditional emigration countries (that is, the United Kingdom for Ghanaians, Belgium for the Congolese and France for the Senegalese) than for those who migrated to Italy and Spain. The latter are more likely to have entered illegally and to have passed through one or more other countries in Africa or in Europe (approximately 35% of the Senegalese having migrated to Spain for example), reflecting the increasingly drastic conditions faced by candidates for departure. For these two countries, Spain and Italy, research indicates that a large proportion of sub-Saharan migrants enter illegally by borrowing either sea routes (on canoes, *pateras* or cargo boats to the Spanish coast, the Canaries, Lampedusa, Malta or even Sicily), or land routes (crossing the barriers separating Morocco from the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla) (Schoumaker *et al.*, 2015). These irregular entries to Spain, Italy and Greece have considerably increased in recent years (JRC, 2018). Nonetheless, the efforts of the European Union and Spain to limit this immigration have resulted in a reduction in the number of entrances to West African⁶ and West Mediterranean routes, thus displacing a large part of the West African migratory flows toward the Central Mediterranean route (Map 1). Currently, the most borrowed one in the region but also the most dangerous one due to the chaotic situation in Libya, nationals from West and East Africa mainly migrate through this route. In 2016, of the approximately 180,000 migrants who landed on the Italian coast, more than half came from Nigeria, Eritrea, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Senegal, Mali and Somalia (Frontex, 2017).

6 - Frontex reports that the number of illegal entries through this route decreased by 60% in 2007 following the conclusion of bilateral agreements between Spain and Senegal and Mauritania, particularly the signing of readmission agreements as well as the strengthening of border controls.

Map 1 - Countries of origin of migrants who entered the EU illegally between January 2016 and February 2018 and the main migratory routes in West Africa



Sub-Saharan migrations in the Maghreb, from transit to settlement

The migration routes to Europe shown in Map 1 show the importance of crossings through North Africa. Numerous North Africans take these routes themselves and the southern Mediterranean is generally perceived as a place of departure and transit for sub-Saharan Africans leaving to reach Europe. This is in fact why, for several years, the European Union has been developing its policy of outsourcing migration management in countries such as Morocco (Qadim, 2010). This idea of transit is all the more important because it is often shared not only by the public authorities and the local population, but also by the migrants themselves. Even when they have resided in the Maghreb for a long time, sub-Saharan migrants often continue to see their future in Europe (Cherti and Collyer, 2015).

If it is impossible to have precise information on the numbers of these populations in transit in this region, the often-mentioned figures (100,000 sub-Saharan in Algeria in 2017 according to local associations⁷; between 25,000 and 30,000 in Morocco according to the government in 2014), suggest a large-scale phenomenon, even if they are not based on sufficiently reliable sources. Faced with the reality of

7 - C. Bozonnet, "Au Maghreb, le racisme anti-Noirs persiste", *Le Monde*, 23 November 2017; Lenoël and Eremenko (2016).

the long-term settlement of a large proportion of these candidates for exile, the arrival of a second generation, but also because of the increasingly visible presence of sub-Saharanans who have come to Morocco to get training and/or work, the notion of transit to characterise these populations is, if not a “political fiction” (Peraldi, 2011), at least a very partial consideration of the situation. The analysis of available statistics – unfortunately very incomplete – reveals the diversity of profiles of sub-Saharan migrants in the Maghreb countries, and the importance of considering this region as a destination in its own right for the rest of Africa. Due to the difficulty of collecting data on a population of which a part is extremely mobile and/or resident in the country outside any legal framework, but also and above all because of the extreme sensitivity of the subject for the public authorities, we have limited data to accurately measure and describe this phenomenon. We will focus here on the case of Morocco, which, for reasons related in particular to civil society mobilisation on these issues (Lenoël and Eremenko, 2016), is better documented.

Sub-Saharan populations in Morocco

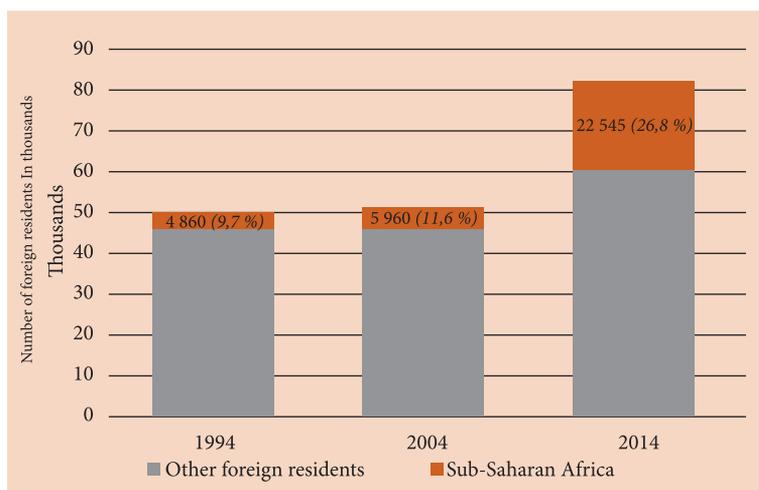
Like Algeria (Saïb Musette and Khaled, 2012), sub-Saharan migration in Morocco is not a new phenomenon, but its growth since the beginning of the 21st century and the durable settlement of a part of this population on their territories, confronts the country with the challenges of immigration and integration. Census data on foreign residents in Morocco provide a first measure of these increasing flows. While this population has dropped considerably since Independence (1956) due to massive departures of Europeans, then stagnated at its lowest level in the years 1990-2000 (50,210 persons in 1994 and 51,435 in 2004), it has experienced an overall growth rate of 63% in the last period between censuses, reaching 84,001 persons in 2014 (HCP, 2017). While this population was predominantly European (40%), sub-Saharan Africa represented the second region of origin of these foreign residents (22,545 persons). The number of sub-Saharan nationals has quadrupled in the last census period, which represents a significant increase even if the overall numbers remain modest compared to the size of the overall Moroccan population. These foreigners of sub-Saharan origin were mainly Senegalese (6,066), Guinean (2,424), Ivoirians (2,271), Congolese (1,955), Mauritanian (1,560), Cameroonian (1,310), from DRC (1,160) and Malians (1,139). They are rather young, have varying levels of education according to nationalities, Mauritians and Senegalese being on average the least educated, and more often unemployed (24.6%) than the average foreign residents (13.4%) and nationals (16.2%). Compared with foreigners from other regions, their employment situation is more often that of private sector employees (65% compared to 57.3% of all foreigners) and of self-employed workers (26.8% compared to 20.4%).

However, the census figures only reflect a part of the population of foreign residents that is the more stable and settled. Its actual number is undoubtedly much higher⁸ and certainly increasing since 2014. As noted above, an increasing flow of sub-Saharanans are trying to reach Europe via the West African and West-Mediterranean routes in the 2000s. Associations working with irregular migrants then try to

8 - Translator's note: General Population and Housing Census.

enumerate them but their estimates vary between 4,500 and 40,000 people (Human Rights Watch, 2014). In this respect, the two regularisation campaigns conducted in 2014 and 2017 have enabled a better understanding of the phenomenon. This first operation allowed the regularisation of more than 23,096 people (out of 27,322 applications filed), including all the women and children concerned. As for the second one, 25,096 applications had been submitted by the end of November 2017, of which 58% were by men, 33% by women and 9% by minors⁹. The beneficiaries of the first operation include nationals of Senegal, Syria and, to a lesser extent, Nigeria and the Ivory Coast but also Europeans. Although these figures are certainly useful, they do not allow a precise measurement of the size of the population concerned, as many irregular migrants did not participate in the operation (because they did not meet the criteria, were suspicious or did not wish to take the steps for various reasons).

Graph 2 - Number of foreign residents in Morocco and the share of sub-Saharan Africans, 1994-2014



Source: *Recensement général de la population et de l'habitat*¹⁰ (RGPH) of 2014, in HCP (2017).

These regularisation operations testify the fact that the Moroccan State has taken account of the limits of a purely repressive approach to sub-Saharan migration as well as its desire to open up to the African continent (Lenoël and Eremenko, 2016). The kingdom demonstrates this will through a number of bilateral agreements especially aimed at students, entrepreneurs and the religious. Although the presence of

⁹ - The census collects information on persons who have resided or intend to reside in the country for at least six months, regardless of their residence status. It risks excluding some of the migrants considered to have a temporary residence in the territory, such as students, asylum seekers, migrants “in transit” or foreigners without a residence permit who leave the country when their three-month “tourist” visa expires before returning (a situation that is quite common among European nationals).

¹⁰ - “Régularisation des migrants au Maroc: 26,000 demandes déposées”, *La Nouvelle Tribune*, 27 November 2017 (<https://lnt.ma/regularisation-migrants-maroc-26-000-demandes-deposees/>).

sub-Saharan students in Moroccan universities dates back to the 1960s, it has increased since the 2000s. In 2016-2017, there were 18,193 students in public university (61%) and private higher education (39%). This last sector welcomed 5,911 students of sub-Saharan origin (out of 7,020 foreign students), mainly Ivoirians, Guineans, Malians, Congolese, Gabonese and Senegalese¹¹. In addition, there are the foreigners who are students in management-training institutions (964 in 2016-2017). Although they are not always considered as migrants because of their temporary presence in the territory, many of these students stay beyond their initial period of study in order to gain their first professional experience in the country.

Whether skilled or not, sub-Saharan workers are therefore another category of migrants often hidden from public opinion and the media. Yet, they are numerous in Morocco, a country where unemployment, especially among youth and graduates is very high. Sub-Saharans manage to enter the labour market, either in sectors requiring cheap and extremely flexible labour such as construction or agriculture in the South of the country, or in more skilled sectors where their skills (especially linguistic ones, they often master better the French language than the Moroccans) are appreciated. The call centre sector is estimated to employ 10,000 sub-Saharans, mainly Senegalese (Weyel, 2017). Other jobs such as housekeeping with Moroccan or European families are also frequently held by Senegalese women.

While the Maghreb is currently more concerned with emigration and is not yet a preferred destination for sub-Saharan Africans, compared to Europe or North America, the growing restrictions on migration imposed by northern countries, as well as new opportunities provided by countries like Morocco, could gradually transform this situation. This type of transition (from a country of departure to that of arrival) has also been previously experienced by European countries such as Italy and Spain, which will be discussed here below.

Sub-Saharan migrations in southern Europe and their roles in Spanish and Italian agricultural production

From the end of the 1990s, southern Europe – and especially, Spain and Italy – became a destination of choice for sub-Saharan migrants, attracted by employment opportunities in agriculture, construction and services, as well as the possibility of gaining legal status through regularisation processes in these countries (Molinero-Gerbeau and Avallone, 2018). Although the economic crisis of the late 2000s considerably worsened reception conditions and forced some to return to Africa, the number of nationals remained broadly stable. Only a slight decrease in Spain during the last decade is observed. The number of residence permit holders has not decreased (Table 2).

11 - Statistics obtained in the various annual reports available on the website of the Moroccan Ministry of Higher Education (www.enssup.gov.ma/fr/Statistiques).

Table 2 - Number of valid residence permits from 2008 to 2016 in Italy and Spain, top 5 sub-Saharan countries

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
ITALY									
Total foreigners	3,035,573	3,587,653	3,525,586	3,638,301	3,774,613	3,885,497	3,943,259	3,914,131	3,712,563
Total Africa	943,530	1,071,553	1,086,377	1,106,055	1,152,638	1,188,077	1,211,251	1,202,580	1,157,313
Total sub-Saharan Africa	293,717	316,933	330,417	330,409	358,096	375,337	387,173	386,942	427,173
Senegal	65,943	80,359	90,330	87,325	92,125	97,481	101,590	102,766	103,311
Nigeria	50,732	53,047	55,319	57,016	64,751	68,950	73,752	74,604	93,800
Ghana	44,030	49,091	51,777	51,928	55,838	56,412	55,919	55,124	50,845
Ivory Coast	21,373	22,605	23,502	24,239	26,548	27,594	27,412	26,941	29,113
Mali	1,397	1,387	1,374	1,597	3,822	5,703	7,458	7,502	17,231
SPAIN									
Total foreigners	2,680,720	2,992,492	2,682,488	2,796,760	2,800,001	2,705,144	2,613,672	2,585,462	2,574,747
Total Africa	895,737	1,000,602	968,868	1,021,242	1,056,241	1,051,714	1,039,976	1,036,074	1,026,683
Total sub-Saharan	148,246	171,316	170,197	187,358	196,977	199,921	201,037	202,068	203,808
Senegal	33,055	38,812	42,325	48,165	52,005	53,790	55,621	57,188	59,140
Nigeria	22,258	26,297	29,446	32,533	34,064	34,374	34,055	33,906	33,018
Mali	13,445	16,216	17,178	19,842	21,086	21,825	22,536	22,870	23,818
Gambia	19,206	21,263	18,197	19,599	20,305	20,071	19,658	19,284	19,224
Ghana	10,036	11,611	12,688	13,988	15,009	15,187	15,243	15,253	15,424

Source: Eurostat (2017).

The integration of sub-Saharanans into the European labour market has common characteristics, particularly highlighted through the analysis of the MAFE (Migrations between African and Europe) survey. On arrival, they generally experience professional downgrading with no other option than to work in low-skilled or low-paid jobs, with a status that is often inferior to the jobs they held in their home country. The time spent at destination usually allows professional mobility but it takes time. It also remains largely dependent on legal status and whether or not they are able to obtain diplomas and training in the host country (Castagnone *et al.*, 2015; Obucina, 2013). However, the profile of migrants varies depending on the destination: Senegalese who migrated to Spain and Italy were on average less qualified than those in France, the latter being more often students, or having had skilled jobs before their departure (Castagnone *et al.*, 2015). This profile explains why sub-Saharanans have heavily invested the construction and agricultural production sectors in Italy and Spain.

Sub-Saharanans in Spanish and Italian agriculture

Two concomitant processes that affect Spain and Italy in the 1980s can explain the integration and current position of sub-Saharan migrants in agricultural production systems in southern Europe. First of all, both countries undergo an important economic development that makes them become countries of immigration rather than of emigration. This development slows down the massive departure of Spanish and Italian workers who start finding employment opportunities in their own country, and becoming a factor of attraction for foreign workers, especially African workers. The latter gradually become part of the less attractive segments of the labour market (Alonso and Furio Blasco, 2007; Avallone, 2017a). Another process emerges along with this development: the conversion of the agricultural sector in southern Europe to the neo-liberal model. The opening of organised markets revolving around powerful global chains of production (Moore, 2015) exposes agricultural territories to increased international competition, pushing them to adopt the Californian production model in order to guarantee their competitiveness. This transformation is accompanied by the adoption of a series of technical (such as the introduction of greenhouses for seasonal adjustment of production) and productive (such as the implementation of Fordist logics of production) innovations that are appropriate in rural areas (Avallone, 2017a), converted into export-orientated global enclaves (Pedreño Cánovas, 2014).

These two processes then converge characterising what will be called the “new agriculture” requiring a large and flexible labour force, ready to carry out heavy and low paid work neglected by the local populations (López Sala, 2016). The abandonment of the sector by national workers thus offers newcomers a gateway to the European labour market, generally as irregular workers (Gozálvez Pérez, 2000). This is how sub-Saharan migrants have acceded the agricultural sector in these countries as from the early 1980s in Italy, then in Spain a few years later, allowing farmers to produce large quantities of low-cost fruits and vegetables for export. However, this transformation is accompanied by working conditions often prone to outright exploitation, that is, a great precariousness and total flexibility imposed on workers, low wages (often below the legal minimum) and working days of more than ten hours long (Görtel and Sippel, 2014; Pedreño Cánovas, 2014; Corrado, Castro and Perrotta, 2017). These conditions are described in Box 2 by a migrant who has worked in this sector

himself. The irregular status of a large part of these workers leads to a strong extension of illegal employment or “grey work”, a term used in Italy referring to “semi-legal” situations such as mid-day work contracts which actually dissimulate full days of work (Colloca and Corrado, 2013). Using a term of Charles Tilly, the trend towards the “dedemocratisation” of migrant labour conditions in agriculture has become widespread in the agricultural enclaves of southern Europe (Castro, 2014) following a process that has altered work in the agricultural sector globally (Molinero-Gerbeau and Avallone, 2016).

Box 2: Interview with Alagie Jinkang, PhD student at the University of Palermo, research assistant at the International University College of Turin and former agricultural worker

When I arrived in Italy, I had nothing. I was alone, depressed and poorly prepared. I spent my first year in two refugee camps before being regularised. At the SPRAR of Comiso (Sicily), we were too many people with a lot of difficulties here and there. The airport and a vibrant agricultural area were very close to us. That is when I started working because I needed money to buy food and credit to communicate with my family. I also had to buy some winter clothes and a cell phone to be able to leave. In order to do this, I had to work even more.

I used to wake up at 5 in the morning to prepare myself something to eat, pray and go to work. I could not go back home before the work I was assigned with was completed even if it was often already dark. I used to arrive home exhausted and go directly to sleep. At work, I used to eat just some bread and I had to take food with me to eat when the boss was absent. There were no breaks. The only times when I used to stop was during prayers before going back to work. During the first three months of work, they used to pick us up at the camp but then I had to get a bike to do to work, which means that I had to wake up even earlier. It used to be still dark and too cold to ride a broken bike. I continued to work in these conditions until my health deteriorated.

The working conditions of migrants in the Italian agricultural sector are marked by the existence of discrimination, racism and degrading treatment. During work, migrants fall ill (including mental illnesses), are insulted and are victims of accidents at work. I met some Gambians who went crazy because of the work in agricultural camps and the life in tents. They are paid well below the legal minimum. They never rest because most of them do not have a home where they can wash and sleep on a clean mattress and eat proper food. The fact that many of these migrants do not have legal documents increases their vulnerability every day.

When I return to these areas today for the purposes of my research, I find that things have not changed much: accidents are endemic, workers complain that wages and difficult working conditions, namely the essential, remain practically the same despite promises of change. However, there are still some positive changes: many people are now paid on time thanks to the numerous complaints and protest movements and the security checks have also increased. They all hope that things, including their working conditions will improve.

This system initially relied on migrants from North Africa (mainly Morocco) who arrived in the 1980s. Sub-Saharan migrants are part of the second major wave of migrant workers who have strengthened this working force in Italian and Spanish

agriculture. However, in the 1990s, while many Maghreb immigrants from this first wave gradually managed to get regularised (allowing them to move to other sectors) but also to claim better working conditions, the arrival of sub-Saharan migrants enable local agricultural holdings to maintain a very profitable mode of production that cares little for working conditions. In some localities, the workforce then becomes mainly composed of sub-Saharanans. An important part of these workers are found in the Spanish enclaves of Murcia, Valencia, Huelva, Almeria, Albacete and Lleida and the Italian ones of Ragusa, Piana della Gioia Tauro, Foggia Piana del Sibari, Saluzzo and Nardò. Although there is no data to establish the exact origin of these workers, the various research carried out on this subject, as well as official data, show the diversity of their origins and the growing presence of migrants from West Africa (especially Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast and Ghana).

The working conditions described here above are not the only difficulties faced by migrants. Their often irregular residence status and their location in geographically isolated agricultural territories far from major cities mean that they are completely abandoned by the public authorities. On the ground, this is reflected through the emergence of shantytowns. Organisations such as Doctors Without Borders or *Medici per i diritti umani* (the latter having worked with migrants working in Italian agriculture between 2004 and 2015) regularly warn about unworthy housing conditions in these areas, especially through reports with evocative titles to local authorities: “Unjust land” (MEDU, 2015), “A season in hell” (Doctors Without Borders, 2008), “The fruits of hypocrisy” (Doctors Without Borders, 2005). They all echo the particularly difficult situations encountered in these areas: precarious housing conditions, hygiene problems, spreading diseases, difficult access to drinking water and lack of electricity. The situation is similar in Spain, as shown by the reports of Caritas (2012) or CEPAIM (2015). Inhabited by sub-Saharan and Moroccan migrants, the large slums such as that of “Las Madres” in Mazagon or the one of Lepe emerged between the strawberry fields in Huelva.

In addition to these degraded living and working conditions, there is hostility and even xenophobic attacks from the local population. In Italy, the assassination of the seasonal worker of South African origin Jerry Maslo in 1989 had a certain resonance and the Italians then discovered the harsh working conditions and the xenophobic reactions that the seasonal workers have to face in the important agricultural production of the country, especially that of the tomatoes in the South. In Spain, similar xenophobic attacks against seasonal greenhouse workers provoked riots in El Ejido in 2000 (Martínez Veiga, 2014), mainly mobilising Moroccans but also sub-Saharan workers. In 2010, it was in Rosarno in Calabria that another attack, this time against Ivoirian workers, triggered riots (Colloca, 2013). The massive protests organised in response to these attacks reflect the organisational capacity of migrants who also lead strikes to demand better working conditions such as in Huelva in Spain between 2000 and 2002 or in Nardò in Italy in 2011 (Avallone, 2017b). It is in order to avoid these conflicts that Spanish employers are seeking to develop, in collaboration with the State, a “recruitment at home” programme (Molinero-Gerbeau and Avallone, 2018) described in Box 3. In the case of Italy, no similar temporary migration programme has been launched.

Box 3: The Spanish experience of “contracts at home”

In Spain, the authorities have developed a temporary migration programme to organise migrations and try to reduce conflict situations in production areas: the *contratación en origen* (“contracts at home”). The objective of this programme was to set up a recruitment process directly in the migrants’ country of origin, by selecting the most suitable profiles for the work to be conducted and organising travel arrangements. This programme was therefore intended to control departures and arrivals to the workplace as well as the return to the country of this workforce, a central element of the programme for the Spanish State (Molinero-Gerbeau and Avallone, 2018). It is largely for this reason that this programme targeted women because they had family responsibilities in their home country (middle-aged women with children) (Helio, 2013).

In order to launch this programme, the Spanish Authorities had to sign bilateral agreements with the States of origin, or among others, clauses for the deportation of workers who did not respect the conditions of the programme. The programme to work in agriculture in Huelva (Andalusia) – a region specialising in strawberry cultivation and which, at certain periods, concentrated more than 60% of the recruitments made in the framework of this programme (Gordo Márquez *et al.*, 2014) – has only been tested in one country of sub-Saharan Africa: Senegal. The test was unsuccessful and the programme was only conducted for two years: in 2007, where 749 workers were hired and in 2008, only 40 renewed the experience. Among the reasons for this failure, employers deplored the profile of the women that were hired, often unsuitable for agricultural work, as well as the high rate of participants leaving the programme (Tandian and Bergh, 2014). Subsequently, priority was given to women from other countries such as Morocco and Romania (Gualda Caballero, 2008).

Thus, the majority of Africans who have worked and still work in Spanish agriculture, do not do so through this kind of programme. Although they were often present in enclaves where these programmes were implemented, their role was secondary in the production process, essentially strengthening the workforce when producers needed more labour than the programme provided, or to work at night when no one controls the hiring of irregular workers (Molinero-Gerbeau and Avallone, 2018).

Today, agriculture remains an important entry point into the labour market for economic migrants who continue to arrive in Spain and in Italy in a regular and irregular way (Box 4). However, the recent arrival in Europe of many asylum seekers has reconfigured the labour market and increased the number of migrants willing to offer their work at a lower cost (Dines and Rigo, 2015). In this context, agriculture is a “refugee sector” (Molinero-Gerbeau and Avallone, 2016), not because it employs refugees but because the sector offers the possibility of finding a job regardless of the legal status of the person. This situation is explained both by the location of these activities – in sparsely populated areas far from large cities and on plots that are distant from one another – and by the relative absence of the State (Avallone, 2017c) as well as a certain tolerance of local authorities for these practices (Ambrosini, 2016). These factors guarantee a certain degree of security for producers employing irregular migrants, thus perpetuating informal work that has been characteristic of agricultural work in the two countries for a long time (Avallone, 2017a). They also represent a pull factor for constant flows of foreigners motivated by the possibility of finding a job easily. For many African migrants, the European dream

involves a period of work in the agricultural sector until their status is regularised, and they can then move on to other sectors of activity or migrate to other European countries. This possibility of obtaining legal status partly explains the increase in Spain and in Italy, of flows of African workers from one year to the next, even though this sector offers very little opportunity for rise in the agricultural work hierarchy, except for illegal activities such as intermediaries. Generally referred to as *caporale* in Italy, the activity of these intermediaries is to link the workers with employers and to organise the production in return for payment. As more and more African nationals occupy this position, its name has gradually changed to “*caponero*” (Filhol, 2017).

More than an opportunity, the agricultural sector has often been the only option open to thousands of Africans wanting to start a new life in Europe. Like other developed countries, this sector is now largely dependent on migrant labour in southern European countries. Migrant labour has thus become a structural factor of neoliberal agriculture (Molinero-Gerbeau and Avallone, 2016). Providing a flexible and cheap labour-force, sub-Saharan African migrants have been a fundamental link in the articulation of global production chains.

Box 4: Interview with Gennaro Avallone, professor at the University of Salerno (Italy) and expert of migrant labour in the agricultural region of Piana del Sele

Your area of study has always been the Piana del Sele, in the province of Salerno, could you briefly describe the agricultural sector of this region from the perspective of migrant labour?

In Piana del Sele, migrant workforce is the same as the local one in terms of agricultural work production. Nonetheless, migrants face discrimination and greater discipline than locals. Over time, workers from Morocco, Romania and India have arrived, and in the last three years, men, mostly young men from sub-Saharan African countries such as Mali or Gambia, have also started to arrive.

How would you describe their professional integration?

In general, wage and working conditions do not vary much between foreigners and Italians. However, foreign workers must go through the informal labour intermediation system and, above all, face certain forms of discrimination. These are the product of national immigration legislation, the attitudes of some employers, the local population and the racist rhetoric of local institutions. Labour intermediation and racism particularly affect sub-Saharan workers who find it more difficult to find housing and better jobs. They are more generally confined to the most difficult tasks and the least paid ones. Currently, this population is experiencing the worst working conditions in the enclave.

How do you think the situation will evolve in the coming years?

It is possible that new sub-Saharan workers will integrate the agricultural sector, which could open up new relationships within the migrant workforce. Rather than stirring up competition, these arrivals could open new avenues of cooperation and exert pressure for labour-related disputes to be settled in court. We know that in other geographical areas in Italy, actions organised by sub-Saharan agricultural workers are already developing.

Conclusion and future perspectives

This Chapter has addressed the main trends of sub-Saharan – and particularly West African – migration to the southern and northern Mediterranean shores. Drawing such a picture is often a challenge in the absence of precise statistical data in countries of departure and in some host countries (particularly in the Maghreb). The migration potential in sub-Saharan Africa is likely to increase in the coming years as the demographic transition at work in the region induces an increase in the working-age population, which is likely to result in a greater emigration towards more developed countries. This is all the more plausible given that the desire to emigrate is very strong among the populations of this region: between 2013 and 2016, 31% of the respondents of the *Gallup World Poll* in sub-Saharan Africa expressed a preference for emigration rather than to stay in their country, compared to the only 14% globally¹². While taking account of the major differences between aspiration and ability to migrate (Carling and Schewel, 2018), this figure illustrates the extent to which in the region migration remains, one of the main life projects for many people, especially youth. Available data also indicate that although migration from West African countries continues to be very predominant within the region, outward flows, particularly to OECD countries and the Maghreb, have significantly increased over the past fifteen years. If projections cannot be made, it is unlikely that emigration flows will fall in the short and medium term and they will adapt, as they have always done, to opportunities and constraints of the international migratory space. Migratory dynamics in the Afro-Mediterranean space will indeed be influenced by the restrictive and incentive policies implemented in both departure and arrival areas. If demographic trends seem to point to increased emigration, some sub-Saharan migrants may opt for the return or movement of migrants promoted by the European Union and its member countries (Medland, 2017) if effective policies are implemented to this end. While northern countries are now seeking to increasingly limit the flow of economic migrants, migration to emerging countries such as Morocco could also grow.

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