Choosing between African and French Destinations:
The Role of Family and Community Factors in Migration
from the Senegal River Valley

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The Upper Senegal River Valley stretching from Matam, Senegal to Diamou, Mali is one of the more underdeveloped river regions of the western Sahel. Subject to enormous changes in level between the dry and wet seasons, at least until the recent construction of two major dams, it has never supported a year-round river transportation network. In addition, most of its length passes through rough terrain unserved by railroad or adequate road service, and it remains largely inaccessible to the outside world.

In part associated with this physical inaccessibility, the region is known as one of the least economically developed of Senegal or Mali, where the bulk of the population living in the Valley are located. Although partially served by the Dakar-Niger rail line, the region has failed to generate a strong set of exports, and its economy remains basically a subsistence agro-pastoral economy (Min. du Plan, 1985; OMVS, 1980). Further, due to the inaccessibility of the region, loans or other assistance to develop its mineral resources have passed over the region.

Perhaps due to the lack of economic alternatives in the region, the Senegal River Valley has long been the source of African labor migrations. Dating from the pre-colonial days when the river served as a major trade route, the Soninke who dominate the region have been engaged in trade, both of goods such as gold or arabic gum, and of people, slaves drawn from the more interior regions. The taxation system imposed by the French transformed the existing trade patterns into an involuntary system, where villages were required to pay the head tax, with payment enforced by the threat of forced labor on the construction of the Dakar-Niger rail line or other colonial public works projects. As it was intended to do, the imposition of the head tax drove many men out of the Valley and toward the newly established peanut plantations where they worked each season as "navetanes." In the absence of industrialization, those seeking cash had few alternatives but to migrate. With the worldwide drop in the prices of arabic gum, the shift into migratory circuits was further intensified (Delaunay, 1984: 60-61). Though to a lesser extent, the Soninke also left the region to develop commercial activities in other parts of West Africa (OMVS, 1980). By the 1980s, the men of the Senegal River Valley had had a century of experience in circulatory migration, cycling each year between the peanut crops or, more recently, the streets of Dakar, and the subsistence millet crops in their home villages (Adams, 1977; Weigel, 1982; Amselle, 1976).

Throughout this period, however, there is little evidence that this seasonal migration was viewed as beneficial in the long run for their families. Rather, it only just barely served to meet the cash requirements of the colonial governments (Adams, 1977; Weigel, 1982). The men and their families were perpetually threatened by the fall in peanut prices, which in a single season could cut by one-fourth the demand for their labor, as in 1932 (Delaunay, 1984: 70). There existed a ready group of men who eagerly sought an alternative to the grueling life of a "navetane." Like other Africans under French domination, the Soninke served in the French army during the Second
World War, and many of these "anciens combattants" decided to visit France to take advantage of the opportunity to be readily employed in postwar France. In the late 1950s when the reports began filtering back to the region of the favorable wage and employment situation, there were massive shifts in the migration away from Africa and toward France. The number of immigrants in France rose sharply, and by the late seventies, one survey of families living near Bakel, Senegal showed that approximately one-half of all migrants had gone to France (Weigel, 1982: 26).

France had clearly become the preferred destination for migrants from the Senegal River Valley. Despite the restrictive immigration laws instituted in 1974, in 1975 the census enumerated 32,865 migrants from Mali, Senegal and Mauritania, the three countries comprising the Senegal River Valley. By 1981 the number of Senegal River Valley migrants who had officially registered with their consular offices as resident in France numbered 40,593 (Conde and Fleury-Brousse, 1983: 134-137). The actual number of Valley migrants working in France is expected to be much higher than either of these figures, due to underreporting in the census and to underregistration at the consular offices. The restrictions on immigration since 1974 and additionally tightened in 1981 are a significant factor blocking migration, yet thousands go each year. How do they manage to get to France anyway? Where do the other men go who do not succeed in going to France?

In this paper, the men who migrate to France are contrasted with those who go to African destinations. The analysis concentrates on the differences in the families and communities involved in the alternative migrant circuits, consistent with earlier analyses of migration patterns, especially international migration patterns, that family and community factors determine the patterns of migration adopted by members of the impoverished peasantry (Weist, 1973; Wood, 1981; Roberts, 1982; Findley, 1987; Bilsborrow et al., 1987; Minvielle, 1985). Are the families that have placed migrants in France simply continuing a well-established tradition, as the historical perspectives of Delaunay (1984) suggest, or are there other significant features of their socio-economic situation that shunt their members into the more difficult and risky French circuit? Is such migration the migration of an conservative elite, as the work of Minvielle suggests (1985: 228-230), or is it the migration of a group which has fewer options, who may seek to change their situation through the migration process? Studies of migrants who move internal to the African continent generally portray these migrants as the disadvantaged who have no choice but to move to look for work or land (Fieloux, 1980; Coulibaly, Gregory and Piche, 1980), yet we do not know if this is the case for the people of the Valley. One study of Toucouleur migration to African destinations shows that it is these migrants, and not the migrants to France, who invest their savings in agricultural improvements (Minvielle, 1985), surely not the usual practice of the economically disadvantaged. Do the migrants to France come from the more economically disadvantaged villages, or do they come from villages with enough development that the cash sent back by the migrants is used to further commercialize the economy? Do the migrants come from the most drought-prone areas, where it may
be viewed as pointless to invest a son's time in agriculture when he could be earning money in France, or from those where the periodic droughts hit less severely, where either the migrants' savings can be invested at less risk in agricultural improvements or the migrants' family is at less risk for disaster during the long intervals between return visits? These are the questions that will be addressed in this paper.

By studying the differences between these two groups of migrants we hope to be able to identify the ways that changes in the development process, either actual or planned, are likely to affect subsequent migration patterns. Because the migration levels from the region are so high, with the average number of current migrants per household in 1982 at 1.5 and fully 42% of the families having had at least one member in France at some time in the past, development programs in the near future are not likely to stop migration totally, but with better understanding of the dynamics of the choices between the two migration circuits, French and African, we hope to identify the policy levers which might tip the scales more towards African than French migrations, a shift agreed as desirable by the French and regional governments (Conde and Diagne, 1986.)

METHODOLOGY

With the goal of identifying the underlying family and community processes that lead to the placing of sons in France, as compared to Africa, a different type of study is needed than the kind previously undertaken in the zone. The existing studies either concentrate on a handful of villages where the full diversity of migration experience is not covered or they focus on only the flows to France, neither of which elucidates the differences between the families and communities that might have lead to migration to Africa, as compared to France. If we assume that the men who end up in France as compared to Africa are playing distinctly different roles in their families' strategies for survival and getting ahead in the world, then we must study enough communities and families that the diversity of patterns is covered.

In order to address this diversity, in 1982 a major South-North migration study was conducted jointly by the OECD Development Centre and the Sahel Institute of CILSS. The study started with a survey of Senegalese, Malians, and Mauritanians working in the two major immigrant catchment areas of France, Paris and the Seine Maritime regions. This survey covered 1219 individuals, or 14% of the "authorised" residents from the Senegal River Valley. As part of this survey, the migrants were asked to give their places of origin, and based on the places enumerated, a second sample was drawn in 99 villages in the three countries of origin. The sample included three strata of villages: those from which 20 or more migrants had been enumerated in the French survey, those with only a few (1-19 respondents), and those with no respondents, added in to represent villages with a presumably low level of French emigration. The 99 selected villages were stratified by size and different sampling fractions were used in each size group to obtain a sample of approximately 100 individuals per
village. Due to larger households than expected, the sample exceeded the target of 10,000, with the result that the survey in the Valley included a total of 12,558 individuals, coming from 1032 households. (For additional details on the sample design and the survey instruments, see Conde and Diagne, 1986:17-23 and the Annex).

This paper presents analyses solely from the survey conducted in the Senegal River Valley. These data were collected using four different interview schedules: household listing form which included basic demographic characteristics and census-type migration questions; head of household interview which focused on the economic characteristics of the household unit; migration histories collected for each man over age 15 in the household; and village characteristics questionnaire.

Because we are interested in distinguishing the African and the French migration patterns, the migration histories for the 1581 men over age 15 were used to group them into the following migration categories:

1) Nonmigrant: No migration with a duration greater than 6 months
2) Africa migrations only: All migrations in the African continent
3) French migration: One or more migrations to France

This information was then added to the information from the truncated migration histories for all adult males of the household to categorize the household by its migration pattern: No recent migrations, Recent migrations to Africa, Recent migrations to France. Recent migration is defined as a departure within the five years preceding the interview in 1982. The different measures of migration are given in Table 1.

As the data for households and communities was collected only at the 1982 date of the interview, in order to conduct an analysis of the household and community differences underlying the alternative migration patterns we restrict the migration to a recent period and assume that the household and community characteristics observed in 1982 were comparable at the date of migration. Therefore, the analyses are restricted to migrations within the five years previous to the date of the interview. With this narrower period for eligible migrations, we need only assume that the pattern of differences (not the absolute levels) between households and communities of the different migrant groups remained roughly constant throughout the five-year period. Several factors argue for the plausibility of this assumption. First, the period under consideration was not a period of severe drought, so we do not risk the major local perturbations to agricultural and economic situations that might have occurred in such a period. Indeed, observers of the region agree that the 1978-82 period was fairly stable, as far as crops and revenues are concerned. Second, with a 7.7 year average length of stay in France, a five year period is too short for migration itself to have produced significant changes in the family’s living standards. Third, we are studying household, not individual, differences, and existing ethnographic material underscores the conservative nature of the Soninke household, the dominant ethnic group of the region (Pollet and Winter, 1971).
The material from the 1982 survey was supplemented by in-depth interviews conducted in 1987 with 71 families in seven of the 39 Malian villages in the original 1982 sample. The villages were chosen as being representative of all the villages in the sample which had aggregate proportions of temporary or permanent migrants significantly higher or lower than the average for all the villages in the 1982 survey. This material is used to introduce the different patterns of migration included in this study.

These data are used in three ways to explore the family and community factors structuring the migration choices of the men of the region. First, the 1987 case study material is used to introduce the alternative migrants and their families. Second, the 1982 data are used to examine the differences between the various migrant categories. Third, regression is used to estimate the parameters of the models for predicting the propensity for household members to migrate and the choice between French and African destinations.

PORTRAITS OF ALTERNATIVE MIGRANTS

The 1982 survey of migrants in France showed that the 61% were from Mali, 28% were from Senegal, and the remaining 11% were from Mauritania. Although the migrants reported starting to arrive in France as early as the 1950’s decade, three-quarters arrived in the 1970s decade. The strength of the attraction to France is evidenced by the fact that over half (51%) of the migrants surveyed had arrived after the imposition of the 1974 migration restrictions (Conde and Diagne, 1986: 84-6).

The average length of stay in France was 7.7 years, but this stay is broken up by visits to the village. The first return visit occurs after an average of five years, long enough for the migrant to find a job, earn enough to pay off the cost of his voyage, and save enough to bring a substantial sum back with him. After that visits occur on average every three years. The emigrant generally stays one to six months using up accrued vacation and then returns to his work. In this way, migration to France for many becomes a working-life migration, with definitive return only when the migrant retires (Conde and Diagne, 1986: 87-92).

This pattern of migration to France, either directly or in stages with a stop of 2-3 years in Dakar or Ivory Coast to earn money for the passage, was found among 13.9% of the men interviewed in 1982. In the 1987 case studies we encountered a returned migrant who reflected this dominant sequence of migration directly to France:

It was during a dry year, in 1962, that I decided that migration would be better than staying here with the family. At that time, it was relatively easy to enter France and one could earn a lot. Also, my older brother was there and he wanted me to come. So, I decided to go
to Paris. My older brother sent me a ticket, and I went straight by train from Kayes to Dakar and then from Dakar to Marseilles by boat, finally arriving in Paris by train. When I arrived, I stayed with my older brother and began asking for work at factories. After one month, I found a job sweeping floors. Since then, I have worked in a plastic bucket factory and am currently at a bronze factory. In the early days, I used to send money back by postal money order, but now I send it back with other family members. After my first two visits (which were after 8 and 5 years of work) I have returned home for the cultivating season each two or three years. I have no difficulty returning to France, because I have my residence card.

Migration to France is clearly a family matter. These migrations are viewed as a means for the family to capture some of the wealth of its youth, which is otherwise difficult with the extremely low levels of agricultural production or economic diversity in the region. The young men go to France to earn money to send back to their natal family and in order to marry and establish their own family. Even if in actuality the migrations may span a period of one or two decades, they are never viewed as permanent. Rather, they are a modified form of target migration whereby the migrant is free to return after he has attained certain goals for himself and his family. Not surprisingly, savings from work in France are generally used for the benefit of the family, e.g. improvement of housing or purchase of wives, and much less frequently for agricultural implements. When savings are used for productive investments, the pattern of investment is much more likely to be in development of tertiary enterprises than in agriculture (OMVS, 1985).

Perhaps because it is the family and not the migrants who reap the benefits of their migration, there are contrary attitudes toward migration to France. The wives recognize that if they want to have a more secure economic existence, they have to encourage their husbands to go to France. While the men also recognize this financial imperative, they are almost universal in saying that migration is a bad thing, because it keeps them away from their family. Nonetheless, they say they will encourage their sons to leave if there are no opportunities to earn money in the village. The men say that if their sons must leave, they would prefer they go to France where they at least will earn enough to be able to marry and establish themselves. Thus, the families evidence a love-hate attitude vis a vis migration to France.

In contrast, migration to Africa is in many ways simpler. It involves less planning and financial risk, and is often undertaken as a stop-gap measure at the end of the cultivation season when a poor harvest reveals the need to supplement the family’s income with additional earnings. Whereas a migration to France cannot be orchestrated spontaneously, the migrations to Africa can and are, as the following case illustrates.

In 1983, the harvest was very poor, and our income was very low. I had a wife and two children, and I felt I had to go in order to bring them back money for food. I decided to go to Manantali (where a large
dam was under construction), because it was close and I could quickly return with something for my family. I would not have minded going somewhere else, but this was also the only place to which I could afford to go. In fact, it was my wife who paid my train fare. I was fortunate to get a ride from the train station to the dam site, and went to stay with an acquaintance from my village. For 15 days, I went to the construction site and asked the foreman for work. The food I had brought with me ran out. Just to have a little something, I began gathering straw to sell for roofing. Finally, I found work helping out the bricklayers. I worked for three months before returning to cultivate my fields. I sent back to my wife half my salary each month, and when I returned I was able to pay the taxes, buy some clothing for the family, and buy enough food to last until the next harvest. I will not migrate again, because I must take care of my wife and children. Migration isn’t good: If it were not for the lack of food which pushes the head of the family to leave, nothing would separate him from his wife and family.

In the 1982 survey, 23% of the men had migrated only within the African continent. Where did they go? For the migrants who have moved within Africa only, 71% first moved to another location within the Sahel, with fully half going to Senegal. The remainder went primarily to coastal West Africa on their first move. 77% of the migrants on the African circuit returned home to stay after this first migration, while another 17% migrated again within the Sahel and 6% went to other parts of Africa. Only 9% of the migrants moving within Africa moved a third time, and most of these moves again were made within the Sahel.

The migrants who have only circulated between African destinations fall into two groups: those who have migrated each season, returning each rainy season to cultivate their own fields, and those who migrated without returning each season.

The 1987 interviews show that the migrants who migrate only seasonally are poorer and lack the means to finance long-distance migration. They go during the dry season to earn enough for their taxes or other cash necessities, but they remain primarily farmers, deriving most of their needs from their own agricultural activities. Typically, the seasonal migrants would prefer not to migrate again, and they do not consider migrating to France.

Family structure and responsibilities also constrain the migration choices of these men. As several men indicated, if one is the sole adult male in a household, long distance and long duration migration to France is out of the questions, as the man is obliged to be present every rainy season to cultivate food for the family. Although women may help with the planting and weeding of the millet fields, only men are accorded millet fields by the village head and only men actually till the soil for the planting of the millet (Pollet and Winter, 1971: 396). Thus, without a man
present at the time that the crops are sown, the family has no means to raise subsistence food crops.

The youth who lack the family resources to go to France yet who are not obliged to return to help cultivate the millet crop each year are the ones who at least have the option to go to Dakar, Abidjan or Bamako to seek out some form of more permanent employment or trade. Not all young men in this situation will go to the more distant cities, as the ties to the family are strong and many young men prefer to earn relatively small sums as agricultural laborers or haulers than to be long absent from their family. Those that do go to the distant cities tend to stay longer away, in periods of years rather than months. They, too, stay with kin and are helped by kin to find work. If they are successful, their work gives them the option of staying away and making a life for themselves in the new community. Some may return to marry, and others may return to take over the role of household head when their father or uncle dies, but it is only in this pattern of migration that one finds the permanent emigrant. If they return, they may continue to engage in trade activities, and they appear to be more likely to achieve some upward economic mobility as a result of their migration than are the seasonal migrants. The following is an example of the migration circuit to regional or African destinations.

In 1960 I wanted to be independent. I did not want to work for the French, so I decided to go into commerce. First I went to Kayes, where I earned my fare by working for a blacksmith. Then, I went to Koutiala, where my uncle worked. He lodged me, and I worked carrying baggage for one year. Then, I had enough saved to start selling cloth, which I did as an itinerant trader until 1962. In 1962, I started taking livestock from Mali to be sold in the Ivory Coast. In 1963, I went home for a short visit, and then again in 1967 in order to marry and bring my wife back with me. In 1974 I returned to the village to care for my ailing father. After his death, I stayed in the village, as I became the head of the household. Now, I have a store in the village. I leave the village only periodically to go to Bamako to buy merchandise for my business.

The last migration pattern is that of nonmigration, namely the individuals who never have left for a period of more than six months. Some of these may have migrated seasonally, but in the 1982 survey these temporary migrants can not be distinguished from the nonmigrants. In 1982, 63% of the men interviewed had never migrated. The case studies of 1987 show that this group is a mixed bag: Some regret never having migrated, and feel that their life is more miserable than if they had been able to migrate. Some are managing fairly well, but admit that they are dependent on brothers who have emigrated for assistance during bad years. And some consider themselves to be doing well and have no desire to migrate. The following are the comments of this latter form of nonmigrant:

I certainly do not want to leave. What I want are a cart and water
pump (to irrigate my vegetable garden). With these I could prove that migration does not pay. I think that agriculture can lead to a better life than emigration.

Consistent with the ambivalent attitudes described above, most of the men say they have no plans to migrate in the future. The dream of migration and its view as a positive factor to resolve life’s problems is reflected in the nonmigrants, who with 39% intending to migrate reflect the highest level of migration intentions. The French migrants, many of whom have been fairly successful and who may be pressured to continue to remit money to the family are the next most likely to plan to migrate, with 12% planning another migration. The African migrants are the least favorable to subsequent migrations, with only 7% of the African migrants consciously planning another migration.

Where do they plan to go? France is the preferred destination for all the men, with 19% of the nonmigrants and 8% of the men who already went to France saying they would go to France. 4% of the men who had never been to France would like to try France, but otherwise, there is virtually no other preferred destination for that group. Some (13%) of the nonmigrants would prefer Senegal or Ivory Coast to France, and there is a slight interest in Gabon and central Africa (6%).

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO FAMILY MIGRATION DECISIONS IN THE VALLEY

Studies of migration from the Senegal River Valley have unanimously noted that it is the Soninke who go to France, while it is the Peul or Toucouleur who go to African destinations (DeLaunay, 1984; Weigel, 1984; Minvielle, 1985; OMVS, 1980). But what is it about their ethnic identity which propels men into such different circuits? We believe that the underlying structure of their families and of the communities in which they find themselves are the underlying reasons for these migrations, and if we can get beyond the black box of ethnicity we would have a clearer identification of the constraints that might be addressed by policies responding to the almost universal desire of the men to stay home and not spend their lives in the French migration circuits.

To do this, we adopt a family perspective on migration, where migration is viewed as part of a family’s strategy to maximize family rather than individual income. Such a perspective is very compatible with the patterns of social influence in the Senegal River Valley. In this region, dominated by the Soninke, the gerontocracy system is still strong, and younger persons remain under the authority of the oldest, the head of the family, long past the customary adolescent or early adult years (Minvielle, 1985; Weigel, 1982). Indeed, it is not only the senior head of the family who must approve the migration plans of a young man, but if he plans to leave behind a wife and
children, he must also obtain the approval of his older brothers, who will have to take charge of his family in his absence (Pollet and Winter, 1971: 376).

The 1987 case studies confirmed the continuation of this authority pattern, particularly for migration to France and further showed the direct interest the family takes in the migration plans of its sons. Responses by the heads of the family show that they consider migration more as a family investment than a chance for the youth to make their way in the world. The process of migration to France, viewed as the migration with the highest potential payoff for the family, was carefully orchestrated in such a manner as to maximize the chance that the young man would find a suitable place to work. Older brothers and cousins spent a long time trying to find work for their younger relations, and it is the family which collectively raises the money to send the "chosen one" off to France.

Even for men going to African destinations, the family concerns continue to be dominant, but in a different way than among the families attempting to send sons to France. Among the families sending men to Ivory Coast or Dakar, for example, the search for immediate cash for the family could be heard repeatedly as the major motive for young men to leave. The cash imperatives pushing this migration are much more salient than for the families considering the long-term strategy of sending men to France, however, and this should be reflected in differences in the way migration is integrated into the household reproduction and production processes. As in Latin American societies, the family's strategy in African migration is much more one of survival, while that of French migration is upward socio-economic mobility (Urzua, 1981).

If we are to predict the type of family migration decision, therefore, we must understand the ways that family and community constraints operate to place families in situations where their survival concerns dominate, versus those where a long-range view is possible and a strategy to advance the family's fortunes becomes feasible. Based on what we have observed among the families in the region, we believe that the fundamental distinction is evidenced in the choice between migration to France and migration to Africa, with the migrations to France indicating a mobility strategy and the African migrations indicating a survival strategy.

The different family and community factors expected to influence this choice are given in Table 2, and their measures are given in Table 3. In this research the household compound is the definition of family used. Although 12% of the members are nonkin, these individuals, usually foster children, share meals and sleeping quarters with the family and they live and work with the family, hence they are considered as if they were members of the family by the household head. The village is the unit of community.

Previous research has shown that members of the Soninke ethnic group are more likely to migrate to France, and we do not expect our findings to
contradict this pattern. Where we differ, however, is in the expectation that controls for the appropriate household and community factors underlying migration will reduce the influence of ethnic membership.

At the household level, families which have more human resources are expected to be more likely to send one of their sons abroad to France. There are several measures of the higher level of human resources. Families at a later stage in their lifecycle, i.e. with an older head, have had a longer period in which to establish their authority in the village, are likely to have control of more land, and are more likely to have access through the extended kin network to extrafamilial resources that can be applied to the cost of sending a migrant to France (Minvielle, 1985; Pollet and Winter, 1971: 375-6). Polygynous families also increase the network of potential supporters for funding migration, but they also play another positive role, namely increasing the pool of support available to the wife and children of the absent migrant. Larger households and a greater number of men, usually but not always associated with polygynous structures, may facilitate the departure, because the man may leave without jeopardizing the subsistence production of the family, a contributing factor in another major South-North migration flow (Weist, 1973). A larger number of men also gives the family access to more crop land, as plots are allocated to each adult male member of the family. The availability of previously migrant kin to obtain visas, purchase airline tickets, and to support the new immigrant until he has found a job also are expected to increase the likelihood of a decision to go to France (Tilly and Brown, 1967; Graves and Graves, 1980). Finally, the families where there has been an investment in human resource development, as evidenced by headship by a literate head, are also expected to be more likely to send sons to France, as part of their strategy to emphasize returns from human resources, as compared to agricultural resources (Moock, 1973).

Economic factors are likely to constrain the family's ability to send someone to France. Given the high cost of migration to France, well over $1000, only the families with somewhat higher levels of cash income, whether from remittances or local commerce, will be able to finance migration to France. The very poorest are not expected to go to France, as their low level of income and low level of agricultural production would place in jeopardy the survival of the family left behind. Only those with more than the minimum level of agricultural production would be able to risk the potentially lengthy periods when the family has not received anything from the migrant in France. Thus, we hypothesize a positive effect of the level of nonremittance family income on the probability of sending sons to France.

As part of their strategy for upward economic mobility, the families sending men to France are likely to view the remittances as capital that can be invested in establishing commercial enterprises or development of cash crops (Stark, 1981). Thus, the absence of a means to earn cash in local activities would be another force driving the family towards placing a member in France.
The drive for additional cash with which to commence commercial activities may also be viewed as a facet of a family strategy to gain a foothold in the monetary economy. The strategy of upward economic mobility involves developing sources of income that are perceived as stable and relatively isolated from drought and other local economic vagaries. Commerce, a traditional Soninke activity has long served this role, and in the economy of the 1980s it continues to provide the means by which families can insert themselves into the world economy. Families interviewed in 1987 agreed that migration to France was considered the most efficacious, if not the only, manner by which to generate enough capital to start their own businesses.

Just as families can be viewed as having survival strategies, communities may view certain economic strategies more favorably than others (Caldwell, Reddy and Caldwell, 1985). Communities which are frequently and/or severely afflicted by drought are less likely to view agriculture as their most promising route to development, as the risk of failure is great if they do not devise means to produce in the face of drought. In these communities, we expect that the community will tend to look outward to external sources of support and will attempt to diversify its revenue base. While migration to Africa does not offer the same prospect to continue to be rentable during a severe drought, migration to France does, and for this reason we expect that the more drought-prone communities will be more likely to send their men to France.

Development planners for the region have assumed that migration would be curtailed by creation of a commercialized agriculture through the introduction of small-scale irrigation and cash crops, such as rice, bananas, or market vegetables (Adams, 1977; OMVS, 1980; Ba, 1987). Cash crops and irrigated agriculture require resources and planning, which would seem in scarce supply among the poorer families concerned with their day-to-day survival. Hence, it is expected that the presence of irrigation and cash cropping would reduce the chance of French migration, but not the migrations to African destinations.

The level of economic diversity in a community also is expected to increase the chance that families of that community will send migrants to France. Why? Essentially, this follows from the logic of a strategy which seeks to decrease the dependence on non-monetarized and erratic subsistence agriculture while increasing the degree to which the community is inserted into the world economy. In such communities we expect a greater pressure on the families to develop outside income-generating activities, and migration to France is clearly one such linkage. If we take as a measure of the community insertion into the world economy the presence of commercial activities and the presence of cash crop activities, we expect the families in the more economically diverse communities to have a higher probability of sending their sons to France. Further, we expect that the better off families will be more likely to pursue this option in the communities already inserted into the

13
world economy, all else being equal. Hence, we expect an interactive effect of the community commercial activities and the level of family non-remittance income.

In other migration studies, it was shown that the more accessible communities had higher migration rates, but we do not expect access per se to affect migration to France (Brown et al., 1987; Findley, 1987). Accessibility in terms of better road access is expected to facilitate migration to Africa, where it is important that the migrant be able to leave and return easily and frequently. For the French migrations, however, returns are seldom, so road access is not expected to be important. However, accessibility to social services is expected to have a positive effect on the probability that families will opt for the French migration strategy (Findley, 1987; Bilsborrow et al., 1987; Brown and Sanders, 1981). Because of the low level of social infrastructure in the region, primary schools are about the only social service that is present in sufficient numbers at or near the village level. Because ready access to a large school is expected to increase confidence in the feasibility of the strategy of investing in non-agricultural activities, a feature of the French migration strategy, we expect that families in communities with superior access to schools will be more likely to adopt the strategy. Because the variable of school accessibility combines both the size of the school and its accessibility, we do not separately control for accessibility.

Following earlier work by Findley (1987) and Bilsborrow et al. (1987), it is expected that families living in villages with a high level of emigration will have higher rates of migration than similar families living in villages with lower levels of migration. In the high migration villages, each family is likely to know other families who have migrants in France, and from these families they can learn of migration possibilities and benefit from financial and social support for their own attempts to send sons to France. As for other reference groups (Merton and Rossi, 1968), the group of families with migrants acts as a socializing agent for the families aspiring to increase their status in the same manner (Findley, 1987).

Just as membership in the Soninke ethnic group can increase the chances that sons are sent to France, families living in villages dominated by the Soninke group may have a higher probability of sending members to France. This may be because the Soninke villages have other structural features which collectively raise the probability of members' migration to France, and whether or not the individual family is Soninke, all families in the village will experience these same forces. Again, we assume that controlling for the relevant household and community factors will reduce this collective effect, however to the extent that there are other unmeasured collective factors associated with the dominant ethnic identity, we expect a residual positive effect. In addition, we expect an interaction effect, whereby the Soninke families will experience less of this collective unmeasured effect as they will already have experienced these residual effects at a household level.
Although family and community structure are the focus of this research, let us start by considering the characteristics of the men themselves. After removing the men for whom all data items were not complete, we are left with a sample of 1460. Because unequal fractions were drawn in each village, the statistics pertaining to each category of migration were calculated after weighting the individual records to be representative of the total population of the 99 villages. The characteristics of the men by migration category are given in Table 4.

Compared to the migrants who have been absent for long periods or to those who returned after earlier migrations, the recent migrants, either to France or Africa are significantly younger, with an average age of 26-27, compared to the 37 years for nonmigrants and 45 plus years for the returned or long-gone migrants. As expected, nine out of ten of the recent French migrants are Soninke, compared to only half of the total population. Few of the recent migrants either to France or Africa are heads of household, a strong indication of the subordinate role played by the actual migrants in the family migration strategy. Indeed, fewer than 1% of the recent French migrants are heads of households.

Though generally the more educated are expected to migrate the long distances, in this case French literacy plays almost no distinguishing role. If anything, it is the illiterate rather than the literate who are selected for migration to France. This international migration of the illiterate may be seen as consistent with the view of international migration articulated by Portes and Walton (1981: 30), where the international migrant is a labor migrant pulled by the international order to work as cheap unskilled labor, where educational qualifications are not as important as the ability of the migrant to "self-transport" and insert himself into a network wherein he can seek an economic niche for himself. While educational qualifications may not be relevant to this search vocational training and experience is, and the recent migrants to France are more likely than any other group to be artisans.

Migrants to France at any date are more likely to come from polygynous households: 51% of the recent migrants and 63% of the earlier migrants, compared to 32% of all households. Their families average 18.5 and 20.3 members, respectively, compared to the nonmigrants' average household size of 15.4. The differential with respect to the average number of men in the household is even more striking. While the nonmigrants' households average 3.1 men, the households of the recent migrants to France average 4.1 men, 133% greater in number. They do not necessarily have a greater proportional labor force, as the proportion working does not vary significantly between the categories of migrant households, but it is clear that the human resource element, especially the number of men, is a contributing factor.
The migrants generally have lower per capita nonremittance annual incomes than the migrants. Contrary to expectation, however, the recent migrants to France have the lowest per capita incomes, 11,586 F CFA or $39 per capita, while the recent African migrants have the next lowest levels, 19,085 F CFA or $64 per capita, both significantly lower than the average level of 31,119 F CFA or $104 for all households. On the surface, it appears that having low income pushes families to send sons to France rather than to Africa.

While the families with migrants to France have a smaller per capita food deficit than the nonmigrants, their deficit is greater than the families with migrants to Africa. While the nonmigrant-French migrant food deficit differential is in the direction expected, that between the French and the African migrants is not as expected.

The statistics pertaining to migration background of the household clearly indicate that the French migrants are drawn from the most mobile families. They have the largest number of current migrants, the largest number of relatives already in France, and they have family experience with migration to France.

The community context of the French migrants as compared to the other forms of migration are given in Table 5. The pattern of differences in community context are roughly consistent with the expectations outlined in Table 2. The migrants to France, as compared to those who go to Africa, do come from villages with high levels of temporary and permanent migration and villages dominated by the Soninke ethnic group. They are in the most accessible villages, with only 14% of the families living in villages with no road access. Their villages have better access to primary schools and, to a lesser extent, health units.

The agricultural and economic differentials, however, do not consistently conform to our expectations. Whereas the French migrants do come from the more drought-prone villages (59% compared to 41% in the total sample), the level of agricultural development is higher by two of the three measures of agricultural development and no different on the third. The migrants to France come from villages with have both a higher level of food self-sufficiency and irrigation facilities (all of which existed in the villages prior to the 1978 departure date at the beginning of the recent migration period). This is a relation exactly opposite our prediction. Perhaps what is critical is the use of the irrigation facilities, and the complementarity between the remittance income and the feasibility of conducting irrigated agriculture. These results are consistent with another study of small-scale irrigation along the Senegal River, where the remittances from French migrants were necessary to pay water fees and purchase agricultural inputs (Diemer and van der Laan, 1987).

The differences between the French and the African migrants' communities are also not what we expected. Compared to the African migrants...
the families sending sons to France are less likely to live in communities where there are cash crops, but there is no difference in level between the French migrants and the nonmigrants’ villages. And while the French migrants come from villages with a level of commercial activities or insertion into a monetary economy higher than for the nonmigrants, the differences are not great, and, more importantly, the African migrants come from villages with a similar level of commercial activity.

ESTIMATION OF THE ALTERNATIVE MODELS FOR MIGRATION CHOICES

While these descriptive statistics portray some of the differences between the households and communities with French versus African migrants, in order to test the hypotheses regarding the underlying household and community structures which are associated with the alternative migration choices, we must use regression estimates to control for the simultaneous influence of the factors under consideration. The results of the alternative models are presented in Tables 6, 7 and 8. Due to simple correlations exceeding .40 between family size and three of the other variables, the models to not include family size, since the main effect of family size was expected to operate through the number of men. In addition, age of household head, the measure of lifecycle stage, and Marriages also had a correlation exceeding .40. Age was deleted, because the polygynous nature of households appeared to better reflect the extensive ties to other families and the building up of community power that are expected to affect migration to France.

To provide some perspective on the families with versus those without migrants, the first set of models in Table 6 give the linear regression coefficients for the prediction of the number of migrants currently absent from the family in 1982. In the first model in panel (a) the variable for household ethnicity is included, and in the second panel both the household and the dominant village ethnicity are included. These regressions highlight the increased explanatory power accorded to the village ethnicity, as opposed to the household’s ethnic identity. In the models with only the household ethnicity, the number of current migrants from the household is significantly higher in the case of the households belonging to the Soninke ethnic group. However, when the village’s dominant ethnicity is included, the results clarify the role of ethnicity. After controlling for the other relevant variables, ethnicity does influence the number of migrants from a household, but the village ethnicity is more important than the household’s ethnic identity. Regardless of their own ethnic identity, families living in Soninke villages have a higher level of migration than do other families. Indeed, once this effect is controlled, the number of migrants from a household is lower for the Soninke families than for other families.

What else can be learned about the household migration propensities from these regressions? Regardless of ethnic identity, the migration context of the family exerts a strong influence on their propensity to migrate. Families which have already succeeded in placing relatives abroad are likely to do so again, as are families living in villages with a high rate of temporary and
permanent migration. In addition, the greater the number of men in the family, the greater the number of migrants. This effect can be due to the replacement effect outlined above or to the size effect also embodied in the variable, number of men in the household. Finally, there is some indication that the households in the more difficult economic situations are the ones with the greater number of migrants, as suggested by the negative coefficients on the variable for nonremittance income and for the presence in the village of cash crops.

While these regressions help to portray the situations of families that tend to have a high level of outmigration, they do not distinguish these migrants by their destinations. The regression results presented in the remaining tables show the interplay of these different factors in the choice between French and African destinations for the recent migrants from these households.

Because we are interested in isolating the effect of ethnicity from other aspects of the household and community situation, this series includes five regressions, with each regression equation reflecting the measurement of ethnicity at a different level. The full equations are given only for the last three equations, while the range of changes between the five models is summarized in Table 7.

This series of equations clearly document the importance of ethnicity for decisions about migration to France. The equation with both family and village ethnicity is a significantly better fit than the model with no ethnicity variables. However, as for the prediction of the numbers of current migrants from a household, the role of ethnicity is not the same as we had predicted. When the other family and community background variables are included in the fully specified model, the family's own ethnic identity is not as important as its location within a community dominated by the Soninke. Whether or not a family is Soninke, if it lives in a Soninke-dominated village, it has a significantly higher chance of sending someone to France. Indeed, the interaction of the village and family ethnicity variables highlight the lesser role that family ethnic identity plays. In the villages dominated by the Soninke group, the importance of their own ethnicity is reduced for the Soninke households.

The alternative logistic regression estimates for the family's choice of France over Africa call into question some of the standard expectations about why the men of the Valley go to France. Once the other family and community factors are controlled the salience of drought does not significantly increase the odds of families sending sons to France. While the level of harvest and presence of irrigation are significant predictors in the incomplete equations, in none of these equations are the signs in the hypothesized direction. Where it was expected that families living in communities with poor agricultural situations, e.g. insufficient harvests and no irrigation, the coefficients are positive, not negative. Apparently, migration to France is not part of the community's overall drought survival
strategy, nor is it part of the community's traditional mechanisms to offset poor harvests. Rather, the communities appear to use migration to Africa as part of their drought and poor harvest coping repertoire. More families send their sons to Africa in the poorer farming communities with only dry farming options, while where irrigation is possible it complements the French migration strategy.

At a family level, however, there is some merit to the economic "push" thesis for migration to France. Compared to men who go to Africa, the men who go to France have lower nonremittance income, as we had predicted. The evidence is mixed regarding family agricultural productivity. In several of the models, the families with a larger per capita family food deficit are more likely to send their sons to France than to Africa, contrary to our hypothesis. The combination of family and community results regarding agricultural structure suggest that it is the worse off families in the better off communities who send their sons to France, while the converse, the better off families in the worse off communities, opt for Africa.

Schooling is another variable where the family and community results differ. We had expected that families that aspired to the non-farm world, as measured by the French literacy of the head, would be more likely to send their sons to France, but in no model is this variable a significant predictor. However, access to schools is a predictor of the French migration pattern in all but the final model with the interactions. These results are suggestive that going to school but not actual learning may be a factor in facilitating French migrations.

Community economic diversification and insertion into an external monetary economy, as measured by the presence of commercial activities, also affects the choice of France over Africa. In the models without the interactions, the men in the villages with commercial activities are more likely to go to France, as hypothesized. But when the interaction of the family nonremittance income and the presence of commerce is included in the model, the coefficients show that the influence of commercial activities is principally due to a heightening of the negative family income effect, consistent with our prediction. Where there are few commercial activities, families with low income are even more likely to send their sons to France. The presence of the commercial activities alone has no independent influence on the migration choice.

The series of equations documents the importance of demographic structure to the choice of the French migration circuit. In all models, the families with a larger number of adult men to cultivate the millet fields are more likely to send sons to France. This confirms the importance of the labor constraint on the decision to attempt migration to France. Households constrained by a small number of men simply cannot afford to be without the men for the extended periods involved in this pattern of migration.

It had been expected that the polygynous households would be more
likely to send men to France, but the results in Model 5 (Table 10), show that the opposite is true: Households with a monogamous structure are more likely to send sons to France. While we know that men often leave for France monogamous and become polygamous over the course of several visits home, we had expected that these men would be drawn from polygamous households, and they are not. By controlling for the number of men in the household, we are able to see that the earlier relation observed between migration to France and polygyny is due to the number of men in these complex households rather than the number of wives.

Where family and community patterns reinforce each other is in the realm of ties and support for migration. These equations consistently show that families that have migrant kin and who live in villages with high levels of migration have higher probabilities of sending sons to France. Both findings are consistent with our hypotheses. The findings, however, are all the more striking for their resilience with and without the various controls for ethnic identity. After controlling for family and village ethnic identity, the family and community migration history continues to exert a strong influence on migration choices. Going to France is much less likely in family or village contexts little accustomed to migration of any form. Where migration is new to the family or community, the chances are much greater that it will be an African than a French migration that is adopted.

CONCLUSIONS

Taken individually, the men who migrate to France conform to the expectation that it is the Soninke who choose France over all other destinations. However, when the underlying demographic and economic situations of their families are taken into consideration, it is seen that their ethnic identity is much less important than the demographic composition of their household and the economic and agrarian context in which the family finds themselves. Regardless of ethnicity, the families with more adult men are able to send men to France. Having kin to assist in the migration process and extensive information about the migration process from other families in the village also facilitate migration to France. Low income is a push to any migration from the region, but particularly for men going to France. The regression equations predicting the numbers of current migrants from a household show the same patterns of relation, indicating the salience of human resource constraints and underlying poverty to migration flows from the region.

Using multivariate analysis, a technique of analysis not yet employed in the analysis of migration flows from the Senegal River Valley, we have been able to clarify in part the complex ways that ethnicity influence the choice of migration destinations. By adopting a perspective that the migration decisions reflect fundamental family and village constraints, we have shown that being Soninke is not so important to the current choice of France as other analyses of past flows have shown. What is more important is living in a Soninke village. As local observers have noted, the other ethnic groups,
especially the Khassonke, are picking up the behavior patterns of the Soninke and clearly migration to France is one of them.

This analysis also differs with some other "givens" of migration analysis for this region. Though the bivariate tables showed that men coming from villages hard-hit by drought are more likely to go to France as part of the family's strategy to diversify their economic base, in fact we find no evidence after controlling for other aspects of the household and community structure that drought is a factor in the choice of France or Africa.

In many migration analyses we find that migration rates are higher for the literate or for those aspiring to the modern or urban world, and, at the community level, for communities with good educational facilities (Findley, 1987). There is, however, no evidence of this relation in the Senegal River Valley. Perhaps because the level of literacy is so low, it is simply not relevant to most migration decisions. There is some evidence that access to a primary school does facilitate migration to France, after controlling for relevant interactions, access to schools is no longer a significant predictor of recent migration to France. At least in this region, families are not educating their children for migration as part of their mobility strategy.

Another conventional assumption about the region is that access to irrigation slows migration. However, both the bivariate and the multivariate results show that families living in villages served by irrigation are more, not less, likely to send sons to France, as compared to African destinations, a relation that is consistent in the bivariate and multivariate analyses, as well as with other research on migration and irrigation in the middle Senegal River Valley. This finding casts doubt on the efficacy with regard to slowing emigration to France with the major new irrigation projects to be made available as a result of the completion of the Manantali dam.

Note, however, that the complement of this relation is that these irrigation projects are likely to reduce the migration to the African destinations. Interviews with the families of the villages with the small-scale irrigation projects in the Kayes portion of the region illustrate the dynamics of this relation. Men in these villages view the irrigation possibilities as a means to generate cash income by raising vegetables and fruits. They already have a sufficiently productive subsistence agriculture that when they are able to raise this money at home through irrigated cash crops, they no longer are obliged to leave during the dry season to seek work outside the village. For the families of the men already in the French migration circuit, their incomes and production are already so low that the cultivation of cash crops in the dry season still does not suffice to meet their needs.

Indeed the likely effects of efforts to diversify the economy and to link it to the external monetary economy via increased commercialization, should only further increase the flows to France relative to other destinations. This pattern is consistent with the bivariate relations, and
compatible with a bivariate pattern that washed out when the other economic factors were considered, namely of more migration to France among families with nonmigration cash income sources. All evidence points to the utilization of migration to France as a strategy to foster insertion of the family and the community into the global economy, a tendency apparently little influenced by the local farm situation or crop cycles from year to year.

While the direction of influence is not as we had hypothesized for these economic variables, they are consistent with the view of a two-tiered system of family migration options. It is a system which is not stratified by economic class so much as it is commitment to the local economic structure, with all its difficulties. Whereas the migrants in the African circuits remain committed to their local economies, arranging their migrations to reinforce their efforts to make the local economy work for themselves, the families with men in the French circuits appear to use migration to France as a way to break away from the local constraints and to develop linkages with the global economy. Despite the years of migration to France undertaken by the men of this region, they have reaped little in the way of local economic development. The only tangible result appears to be reinforcement of the dependence of the families with French migrants on the remittances.

If French migration is viewed as a base for developing enterprises with external linkages, the continued dependence of a few families on the increasingly exclusive French migration circuit may signal the emergence of a more inegalitarian class structure, comprised of the affluent who have insulated themselves from the vagaries and stagnation of the local economy by French migration and the much poorer who continue to be locked into a circulation between the home subsistence economy and labor migration elsewhere in Africa. In a village of 2000 there may be only 30 distinct family chains, current social norms calling for wealth sharing among kin have dampened the tendencies toward unequal accumulation, but if the economic forces continue to press hard on these families, can the indigenous redistribution mechanisms continue to work? The record from other world regions is not encouraging.

The combination of results pertaining to the number of men in the household and the families prior migration experience imply that falling fertility ultimately, currently a very distant prospect, may shift men out of the French migration circuit. One of the strongest and most consistent family constraints on migration to France is a manpower constraint. If family sizes were significantly smaller, due either to changes in fertility or in the propensity to live in large extended units, families will not be able to juggle their labor resources to enable one member to go to France. At the same time, prior migration to France by someone in the family increases the chance of migration to France, so if there are fewer going due to the manpower constraints, there is less chance of the pattern getting established. In conjunction with the continued difficulties of families new to the French migration circuit to get established in the French circuit, these demographic realities should have an increasing dampening effect on migration to France. Given the clearly ambivalent attitudes toward French
migration expressed by the men and their families, faced with these constraints, there is likely to be even stronger searching for a migration or staying option that can substitute for the French migration circuit so that the disadvantages of long absences are minimized. So far, the youth of the region have not yet identified this alternative, but they continue to search.


OMVS (Organisation pour la mise en valeur du fleuve Senegal). 1980. ETUDE SOCIO-ECONOMIQUE DU BASSIN DU FLEUVE SENEGAL. Dakar/Saint Louis:OMVS.


