



# The role of diasporas in migration from Africa to Spain. The case of Senegal

José M<sup>a</sup> Mella Márquez

Luis A. Collado Cueto

Laura Pérez Ortiz



4<sup>me</sup> CONFERENCE INTERNATIONALE  
SUR L'INTÉGRATION RÉGIONALE

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- 1-Objective
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- 3- Methodology
- 4- Results
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Co-funded by the  
AMIF Programme  
of the European Union

# Objective of the research



Partners:  
Spain (UAM)  
Greece (UoP)  
Germany  
Malta  
Portugal

Broader research:  
Informant Diaspora in EurAfrica for Legal Migration

IDEAL-M aims to raise awareness of illegal migration and misinformation:

Highlight opportunities for legal migration

Counter-narrative through digital media and local press

and provide information through mobilisation of diaspora communities settled in Europe



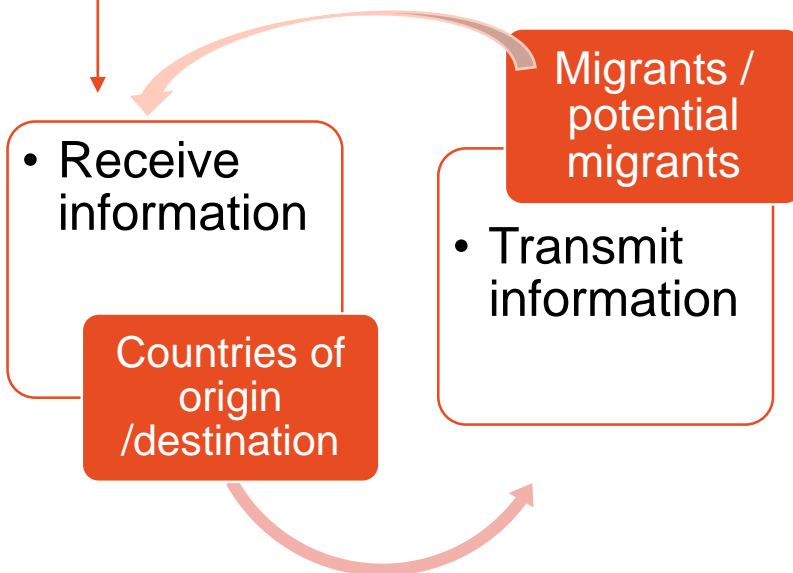
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# Objective of this part of the research

The **role** played by the **diasporas** and the information from them on Senegalese migration

→ **migrant population**  
→ *remittances*

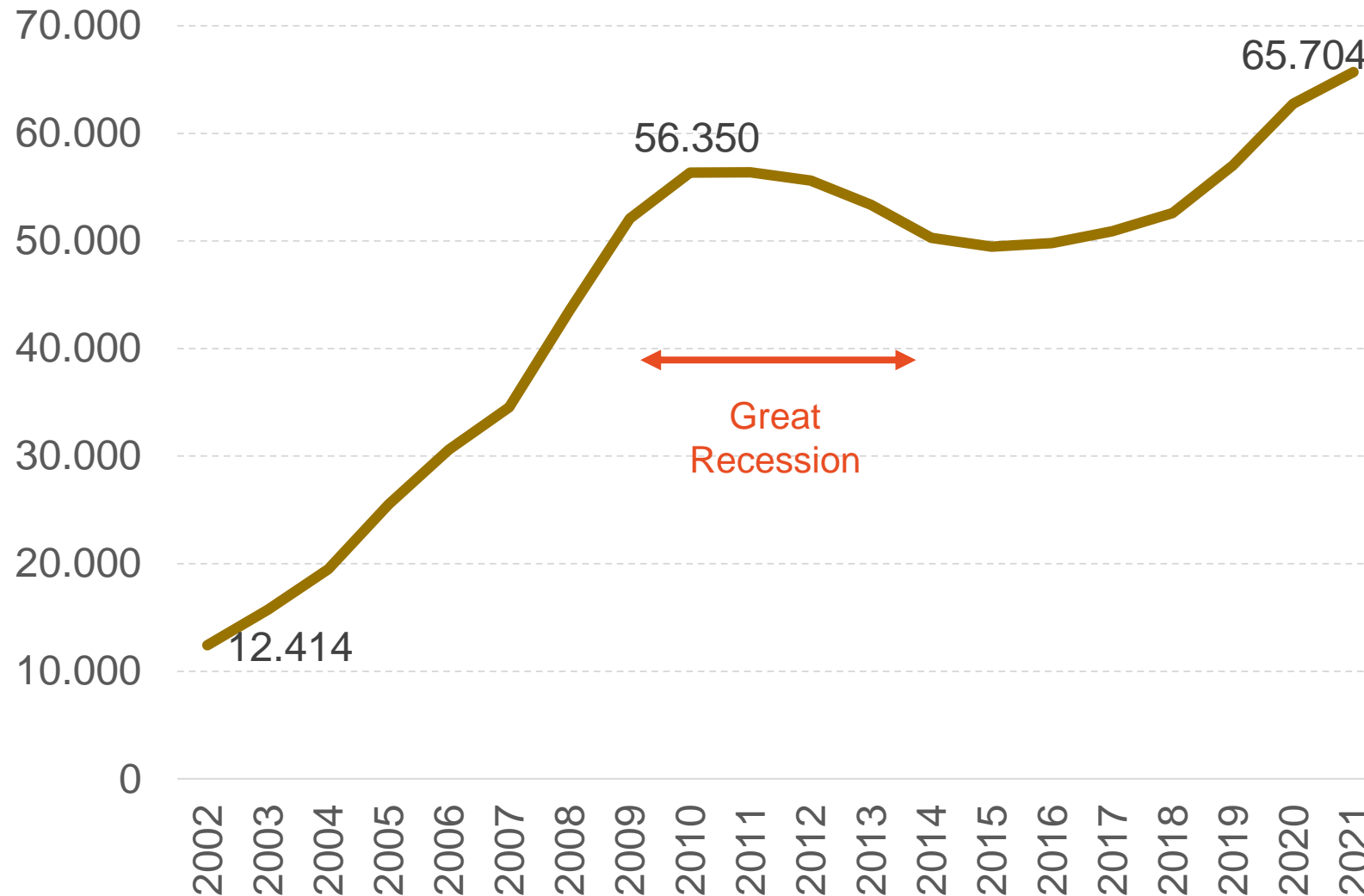
“migrants and descendent of migrants, whose identity and sense of belonging have been shaped by their migration experience and background”



DIASPORAS



DEVELOPMENT

## People in Spain born in Senegal



Source: Register of inhabitants (INE).

Some figures

76%  24% 

Destination	%
Barcelona	14,3
Almería	11,6
Lleida	5,8
Granada	5,2
Balears	5,1

Source: Flujo de autorizaciones de residencia concedidas a extranjeros, 2019, Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones.

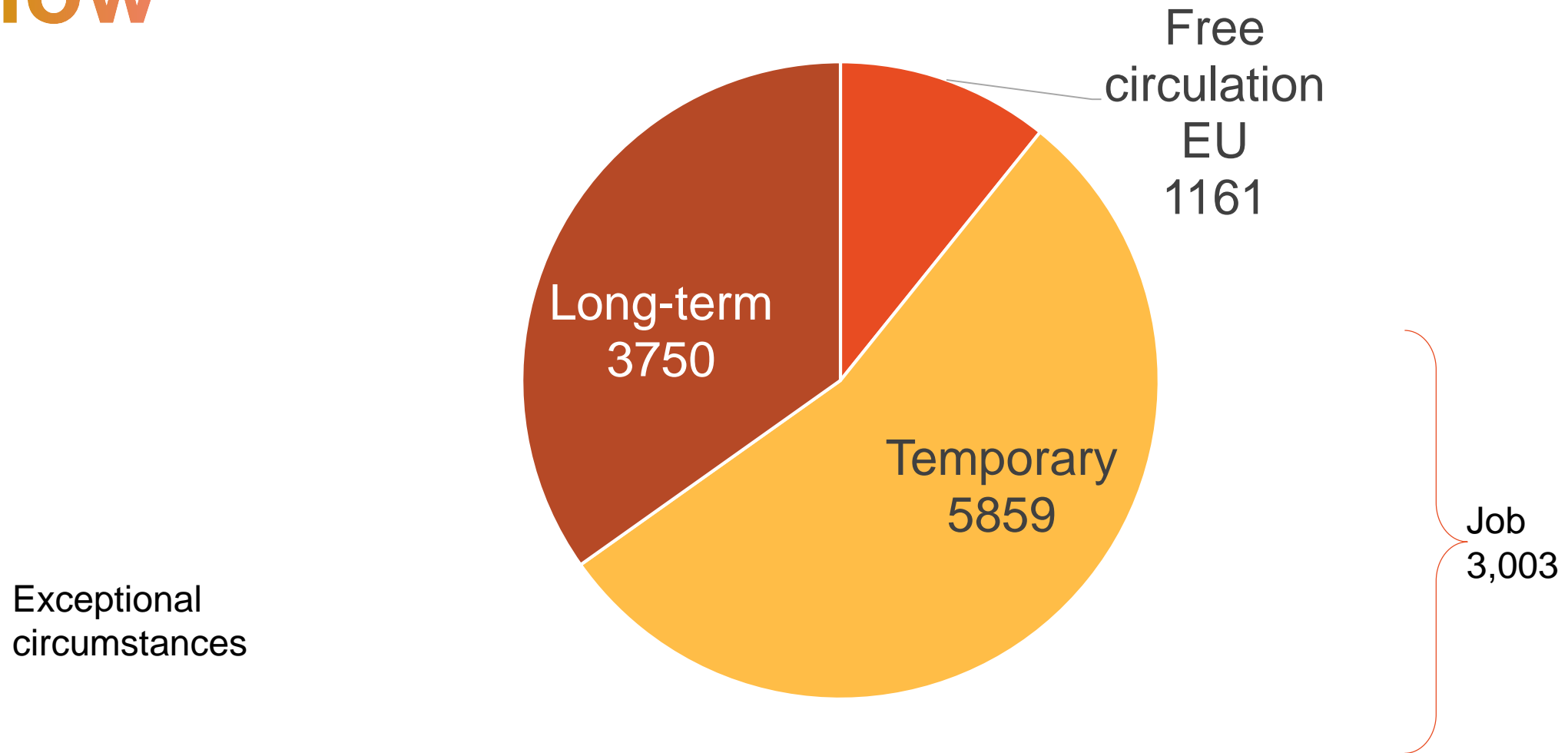
# Regular migration: visas

## Visas to Senegalese people



Source: Visados expedidos por nacionalidad, Ministerio del Interior.

# Regular migration: authorisations flow



Source: Flujo de autorizaciones de residencia concedidas a extranjeros, 2019, Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones.

# Irregular migration

Inmigration arrivals	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total arrivals	342,114	414,746	532,132	643,684	750,480	465,721
Senegalese arrivals	3,408	3,974	4,525	6,973	8,162	5,214
Irregular arrivals Spain	14,558	16,292	27,834	64,298	32,449	41,861
Seaway (Canary Islands)	875	672	425	1,307	2,687	23,023

Sources: Migrations Statistics (INE) and Informe Quincenal sobre Inmigración Irregular, M. del Interior (several years).

# Main ideas to study

## Legal mechanisms to migrate from Senegal into Spain

- How a person can migrate to Spain: requisites
- Difficulties and barriers

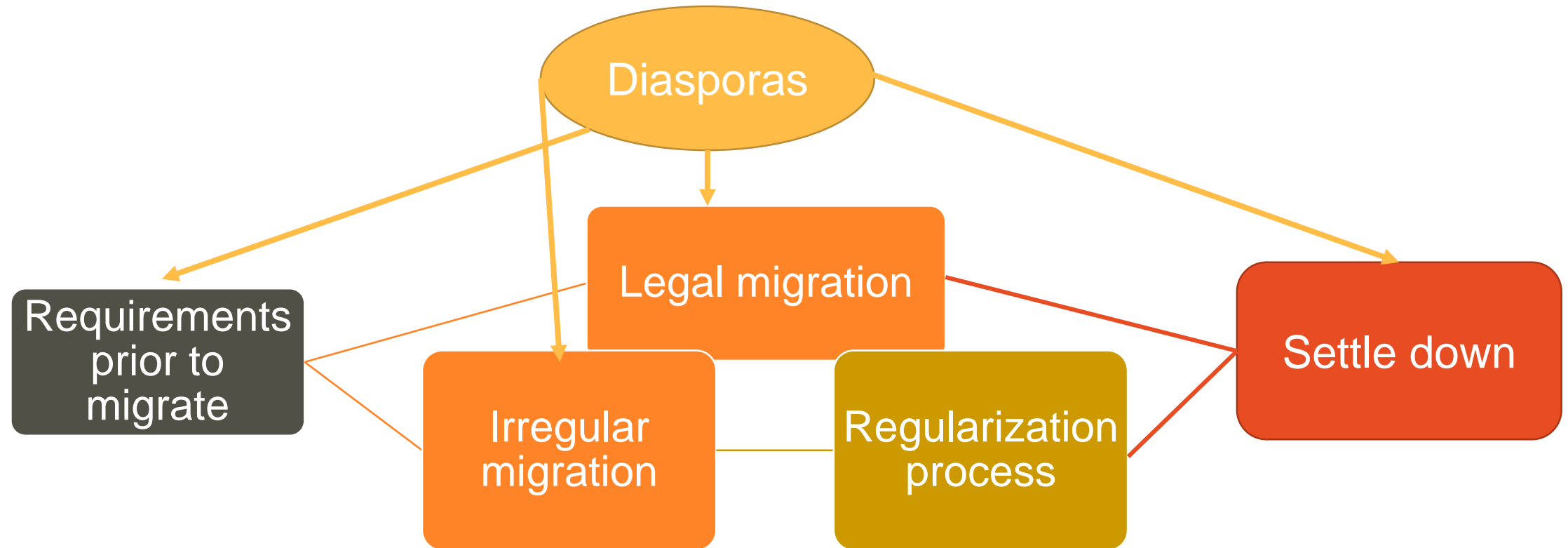
## Why a person decides to migrate irregularly

- Profile of migrant people from Senegal: prospect vs reality

Improve mechanisms for legal migration and regularization processes by working with diaspora communities



# Migrating is a process



# Methodology

Interviews carried out during April to May 2021 period

Semi-structured  
interviews to study:

- migration channels to Spain, both legal and irregular
- how the Senegalese community transmits and disseminates information about migration channels

Interviews to:

- members of Spanish Ministry (in Spain and in Senegal)
- heads of NGOs
- Senegalese migrants
- representatives of the organizations responsible for migration processes
- experts from trade unions
- technical experts and researchers in the field

# Questions

## Conditions and requirements to fulfil prior to entry

- Different regimes
- Main obstacles and barriers

## Irregular migration and regularisation process

- Causes of irregular instead legal migration
- Regularisation

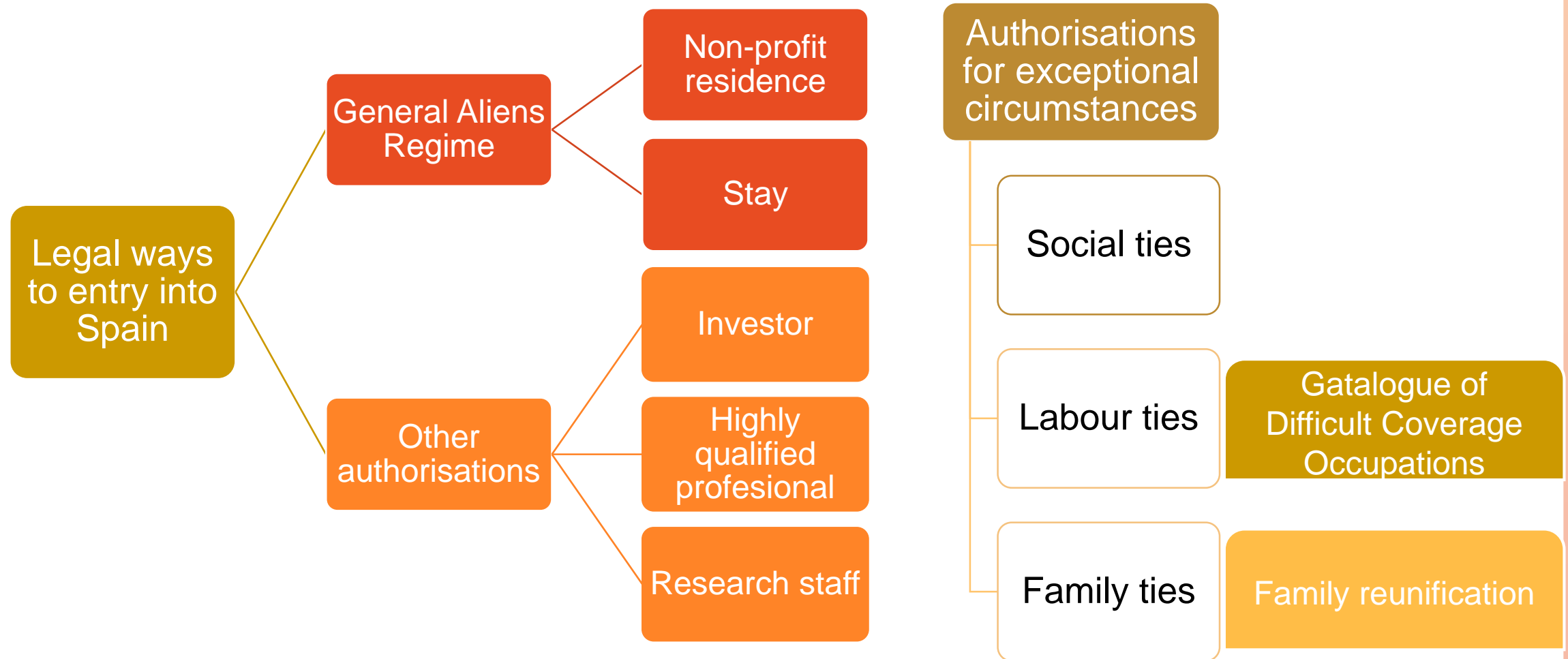
## Institutions for migration and civil society

- Bilateral agreements
- Public programmes
- NGOs, CSOs and Senegalese Immigrant's Associations

## Profile of migrants

- Spain as the final step
- Prospects vs reality
- Family reunification

# Results and discussions: main legal channels



# Results and discussions: legal channels

## Difficulties obtaining a visa

Lack of administrative *capacity* in diplomatic representations

Limited resources in consulates: only one consulates in Senegal that also deals with The Gambia

Need for transparent information about the reasons for denying a visa

# Results and discussions: legal channels

**Need to improve legal migration channels, because mechanisms are insufficient**

Great demand for migration

Little knowledge about legal channels

Mechanisms require very high prior knowledge and information

Processes are slow  
→ these long periods facilitate irregular, but faster and easier access mechanisms, despite cost and high risks

# Results and discussions: irregular migration

**Legal access channels are very limited**

Success stories usually reach the countries of origin more easily than failure stories

Networks of relatives, friends... that put in contact with a “passer by”

Information on the procedure to migrate is extremely costly, because is complex and slow

# Results and discussions: institutions

**One consulate in Senegal that also deals with The Gambia. Some bilateral agreements**

Social  
Security  
Convention

Pilot project  
(2019)  
about non-  
permanent  
circular  
migration

Two  
Agreements  
signed in  
April 2021

Incentive  
Voluntary  
Return  
Program: social  
and productive  
programs



# Results and discussions: civil society

## Public programs and important role of the civil society and NGOs

Directorate-General for Inclusion and Humanitarian Assistance and ESF and AMIF

Red Acoge  
(Host Network)

Senegalese Immigrants' Association and Dunia Cato Association

Popular Union of Street Vendors or "Mantero Union")

# Results and discussions: Senegalese migrants profile

**Senegalese migrants are very atypical migrants**

Young  
**man** (31  
years old)

Higher degree  
of information  
than migrants  
from other  
countries

Greater  
facility with  
languages

Migrants are  
above the  
average in terms  
of education and  
ability to obtain  
information, even  
in income

# Results and discussions: Senegalese migrants profile

## Senegalese migrants want to return to their country

Extension of stays to achieve regular status → entry and exit by regular means

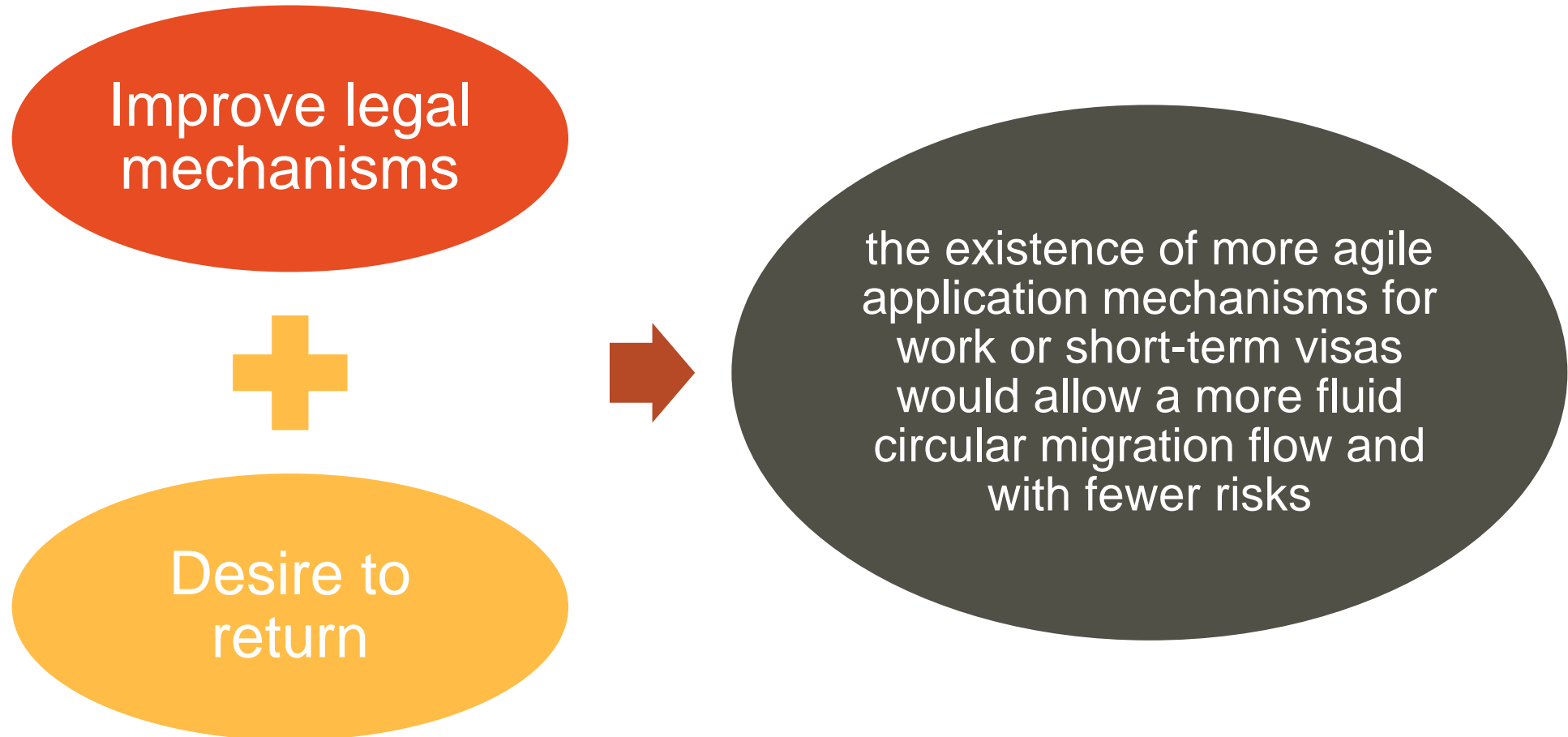
Spain and Italy preferred destinations → because of the existence of a diaspora (hosting network), and also bc the more flexible regulation processes for irregular immigrants

Small number of applications for family reunification

Obtain income to support their families in Senegal


Obtain savings to undertake projects when they will return

# Results and discussions



# Results and discussions: diaspora role

There is a community and there are networks settled in Spain (migration was new 20 years ago)



This diaspora not only acts as a host network but also as a transmitter of information to Senegal



The information and communication of the Senegalese community are very fluid and fast, both between the settled community and with the residents of Senegal

# Narratives on migration

It is important to know the stories to change narratives

Real living conditions are not as good as can be perceived from countries of origin: there is a majority of Senegalese living in poverty and exclusion

high precariousness



Irregular migration is about **5% of the total**



By sea: **less than 1%**

It is a minority, but dramatic, phenomenon

# Recommendations

- Important to focus attention on regular avenues and regularisation processes
- Irregular migration is a minority

Change  
focus  
attention

1

- Circular migration
- Job search visas

Promote  
regular  
migration

2

- Not every migrant project is a successful one
- Visas that permit entry and exit to explore employment and life opportunities

Measures for  
voluntary  
return

3

- Advance the facility to acquire Spanish nationality
- Need to progress in democratic maturity

Political  
rights and  
acquisition of  
nationality

4

# References

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