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“The cultivator is tired”: Senegalese Councilors and the Struggle over Development in the Late Colonial Senegal River Valley

Dimitri Diagne

Abstract: In an extraordinary April 1956 meeting, Senegalese territorial councilors confronted French colonial administrators over a massive agricultural project designed to transform the Senegal River Valley. The *Mission d’Aménagement du fleuve Sénégal* (MAS) was one of several postwar colonial development initiatives that France pursued to bolster its economy and reassert political authority over its empire. I argue that in the 1956 meeting, the councilors did more than critique the impact of one project on the rural communities they represented. They articulated a vision of agrarian political economy that diverged dramatically from the aims and infrastructures of French colonial capitalism.

THE SENEGAL RIVER FLOWS NORTHWEST from the hills of Guinea, spreading across a fertile floodplain before reaching the ocean at Saint Louis. Here, in what had been the colonial capital of Senegal and French West Africa before 1902, the governor of Senegal and several high-level French administrators met in April 1956 with councilors of the Territorial Assembly, an elected body with a mostly Senegalese membership. The topic at hand was the agricultural development of the Senegal River Valley. For the past twenty years, the French administration had been directing financial and technical resources towards this region, hoping to transform the river valley into a large-scale agricultural production zone. The administration approached the meeting as a chance to provide updates on this endeavor, which they had promised would raise the living standards of the valley’s agrarian communities. The councilors—several of whom hailed from the region—took it as an opportunity to offer criticism of chronic failure to follow through on this promise. In their eyes, the *Mission d’Aménagement du Sénégal* (MAS), the massive agricultural project at the center of midcentury French efforts to develop the Senegal River Valley, posed several serious threats to the economic system of their rural constituencies.

The varied critiques the councilors voiced in the meeting penetrated the logic of the French developmental agenda. Contrary to the benevolent assertions of its administrators, the MAS was primarily designed to bolster an economy that aligned with Jairus Banaji’s characterization of colonial “commercial capitalism” as a system where metropolitan merchant firms control the production of cash crops by indigenous populations.¹ The rice produced

by the state-funded MAS was intended to feed, and thereby reproduce, valuable labor forces that in 1950s Senegal included not just cash crop growers, but a class of urban workers whose ranks were swelling with rural migrants. It would do so by supplanting small-scale agrarian production—an expansive and varied set of practices that the terms “domestic economy” and “subsistence agriculture” both try and fail to capture—and instituting plantation agriculture.² The councilors worried that by disrupting agrarian lifestyles for the benefit of other economic activities, the MAS contributed to a vicious cycle of emigration that would push agrarian communities to demographic collapse.

They expressed these concerns alongside demands for interventions that, in their telling, would improve their constituents’ livelihoods. Much like the *métis* elite of nineteenth-century Saint Louis described by Hilary Jones, they tried to direct colonial resources towards a set of “Senegalese interests.”³ These interests cannot be taken for granted as representative of mass sentiment—indeed, the councilors may have shared the interests of an elite that controlled land and labor, privileging the preservation of class hierarchies that accompanied agrarian production.⁴ With this qualification in mind, the historical importance of their comments lies in their advancement of an economic program that centered agrarianism and opposed late colonial visions of state development, which many scholars have usefully critiqued as a hegemonic ideology that cloaks domination and dependency in the language of progress and rationality.⁵ When contextualized by other Senegalese responses to French colonial economic and agricultural policy, the heated discussion in the 1956 meeting illuminates tensions between industrialization and agrarianism, urbanization and ruralism, economic integration and autarky. These tensions shaped colonial economic management during the twilight of empire.

A history of colonial agricultural visions

The development projects of the 1950s enacted longstanding visions of progress that had fueled France’s earliest territorial ambitions in West Africa. In the aftermath of the disastrous Seven Years’ War, the Haitian Revolution, and British efforts to end the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the French viewed Senegal—and the Senegal Valley specifically—as an alternative to an embattled Caribbean imperial economy.⁶ Operating with notions of tropical land and Black labor as fungible and docile means of production, colonial boosters predicted that the conquest and subsequent development of cotton, indigo, and sugarcane plantations in Senegal would benefit both France and the native population. Advocates like Julien Schmaltz, an early nineteenth-century governor of Saint Louis who initiated the agricultural colonization of the Senegal

Valley, reported that the “indigenous inhabitants, who are very poor, seem to urgently want us to give them the means of working.”⁷ Schmaltz advanced an originary vision of French colonization as an agricultural enterprise that would produce profits and transform colonial populations through the introduction of supposedly superior farming methods.

Like so many colonial projects, French agricultural ambitions in Senegal quickly floundered due to administrative negligence, local politics, and ignorance of ecological conditions. By 1831, Richard Toll, the main experimental garden in the Senegal River, had been abandoned.⁸ The colonial administration eventually turned its attention to highly profitable peanut farming in other regions.⁹ Through the 1920s, the French government protected a mercantilist cartel of commercial firms without investing extensively in agriculture—cost cutting was the priority for both the state and its corporate clients.¹⁰ As Jane Guyer and Ndobegang Mbapndah show in their research on agriculture in colonial Cameroon, production, especially as far as food crops were concerned, was largely left in the hands of African farmers.¹¹

However, beginning as early as 1924, the colonial administration adopted a more active role in the Senegal Valley.¹² Following World War I, France committed itself to the *mise en valeur* of its African colonies—development for the sake of national rebuilding, reducing the costs of empire, and curbing the perceived threat of communist agitation.¹³ During what Michael Cowen and Roger Shenton call the “mid-century experience of state development, a part of the passage from colonial to post-colonial administration,” both the French and British Empires would mostly abandon earlier commitments to conserving African social orders and modes of production in favor of socio-economic transformation.¹⁴ In the interwar years and especially following World War II, France channeled metropolitan funding—largely through FIDES, the *Fonds d’Investissements pour le Developpement Économique et Social*, established in 1946—into intensive projects designed to reshape agricultural economies from Algeria to Madagascar.¹⁵ Administrators expected this investment to yield increased agricultural production for the imperial market, an expanded industrial sector, and a larger proletariat (Boone 65). Corey Ross characterizes this period as the era of “developmental imperialism”—“the heyday of the scientific expert, the comprehensive plan, and the monumental mega project.”¹⁶

The MAS, founded in 1934 as the Mission d’Études du Fleuve Sénégal, was one such project.¹⁷ Though originally designed as a cotton and rice cultivation scheme, the Great Depression, the failure of cotton cultivation, and wartime interruptions to food supply chains spurred its administrators to focus entirely

on rice farming.¹⁸ Economic and social transformation were the initiative's connected imperatives. In a 1954 report, the MAS's chief, G. Nesterenko, offered this outline of its objectives: "To assure social progress and to fulfill the charges that this progress imposes, Senegal finds itself obligated to develop its production."¹⁹ In Nesterenko's vision, irrigation, the establishment of a residential neighborhood with social services, and the introduction of mechanized agriculture inspired by "American methods" would once again make Richard Toll a locus for the modernization not only of the colony's agriculture, but of its people (Nesterenko 10, 11). The MAS was intended to reshape rural society, much as the architects of conquest in the early nineteenth century expected agricultural development to bring African productive practices and attendant lifestyles into accord with colonial socioeconomic objectives.

As in the early nineteenth century, things did not go as planned. French administration failed to account for local conditions, ignoring sandy soils, locusts, rainfall and flooding patterns, the dreaded quelea bird that descended on cereal fields in flocks one million strong, and preexisting agricultural practices. The MAS chronically disappointed its planners, meeting just a quarter of expected rice yields in the 1958-1959 season.²⁰ In the face of these failures and in line with increasing demands for African voices in colonial governance, administrators turned to Senegalese territorial councilors.²¹ But they had also ignored that for the rural communities of the Senegal Valley—or at least for their official representatives—the variety of agricultural change envisioned by the French administration was not necessarily desirable.

Protecting the farmers

The transcript of the April 26, 1956, meeting between French administrators and Senegalese territorial councilors offers an exceptional window into conflicts over agricultural development in the later years of colonial rule. In this text, we witness councilors responding with striking candor to French administrators' claims about the economic and demographic struggles facing the Senegal River Valley. After opening the meeting, Governor Don Jean Colombani introduced Martin, Chief of the MAS, who outlined a litany of failures. Martin clarified the project's current objective to be the construction of dike-dams to regulate flood levels, which the MAS considered the primary barrier to consistent agricultural yields, and outlined a plan to make each hectare of the Senegal Delta more "profitable" through mechanization.²² He concluded that hydrological infrastructure and the accompanying acculturation of peasants to irrigated agriculture would transform the valley into a region of global economic significance.

Martin was followed by Mortas, the Director of Public Works, whose appraisal of the agricultural situation in the Senegal Valley drew on the trope of African laziness that permeated development planning.²³ After noting the importance of building a dam hundreds of miles from the mouth of the river, he expressed skepticism at the usefulness of irrigation amidst current local attitudes towards agricultural labor. Mortas claimed that in years when rain-fed agriculture (*diéri*) yielded a large harvest, peasants simply chose not to cultivate the floodplain (*waalo*). It would be “useless to water thousands of hectares if they won’t be cultivated,” that is, until peasants had learned to be more industrious and stop maximizing leisure time when their immediate needs were met (Procès-verbal 3). This depiction fails to account for, among other factors, the long history of market production in the Senegal Valley, which encouraged the allocation of labor beyond that which produced the means of subsistence towards what Marx calls “the formation of a social fund for reserve and accumulation” practiced by non-capitalist communities.²⁴ Mortas’s framing of Senegalese agricultural practices as inefficient and unproductive reflects what Pauline Peters identifies as the colonial tendency—often reproduced by post-colonial developmentalist states—to force agrarian populations “into the modern world of ‘progressive’ farming.”²⁵ When populations opposed the imposition of “modern” agricultural standards, metropolitan observers saw them as backwards and consigned to obsolescence in the face of industrializing society. As Cedric Robinson notes, the image of Africans as lacking in civilization “was closely associated with the economic, technical, and financial requirements of Western development from the sixteenth century on.”²⁶ This dynamic not only applies to Atlantic slavery, but also forms the ideological basis of colonial development in Africa.

The first Senegalese councilor to offer a substantive response met Mortas with a frustration that marked the councilors’ remarks throughout the meeting. Issa Kane established his and his colleagues’ local origins as the source of their legitimacy, introducing his remarks with a pointed question: “[A]s *originaires* of the river, can we not respond to these claims” (Procès-verbal 4). Kane took Mortas’s description of farmers’ productive priorities and their influence on productive patterns as a total misreading of local economic reasoning. He argued that fertile land remained uncultivated not for a lack of industriousness, but due to a labor deficit caused by urban migration. Millet, he argued, is “a poor crop, [and] is not sufficient to fully satisfy the needs of the inhabitants of the river. This is why every year, the youth leave for the cities” (Procès-verbal 4). In order to combat this migration, improvement work must “above all aim to fix populations” in the valley (Procès-verbal 4).

The French had failed to invest in infrastructures that would make cultivation more economical than migration to cities in search of wages—wages necessitated, another councilor later noted, by French taxation. A passage attributed to Kane in a 1932 edition of the *Bulletin de l'enseignement de l'Afrique Occidentale Française* reads, “‘Become what your father was’ is a prevalent adage here,” referring to the region of Fouta Tooro in the middle Senegal Valley.²⁷ Kane’s remarks about labor migration are echoed by his colleague Oumar Sy’s comment that agriculture is threatened by a lack of “bras valides” (Procès-verbal 11). Kane, Sy, and councilor Boubou Sall, who drew his electoral support from the rural outskirts of Saint Louis, expressed deep concerns over the precarity of agriculture and the difficulty of adhering to the adage Kane cites.²⁸ But what processes were destabilizing agrarian production? Why, in Kane’s words, was there “never enough millet, never enough rice”? (Procès-verbal 4).

Kane identified three primary problems—millet monoculture, the “very capricious river,” and the proliferation of protected forests, which, he claimed, harbor insects that eat millet and maize. The second of these problems—protected forests—was a recurring source of resentment throughout French colonies and in the metropole. In mid-nineteenth-century Algeria, communities used arson to protest the conversion of community-managed woodland into plantations.²⁹ Not long before, on the other side of the Mediterranean, peasants outside Toulouse set fire to forests reserved for naval construction. Eugen Weber cites a French prosecutor who wrote that with this act of resistance to the 1827 Forest Code, rural populations expressed the sentiment that “‘they have been unjustly despoiled of property rights they have held for time immemorial.’” Weber notes that peasants saw the forest officers charged with enforcing the Code as “corrupt and overbearing.”³⁰ Boubou Sall was similarly dismayed at this form of enclosure, complaining about Water and Forest Agents (*Agents des Eaux et Forêts*) who thought that “being an agent consists of harassing any Peuls and Toucouleurs who have an ax on their shoulder” (Procès-verbal 14). Sall argued that strict forest policy enforcement was not necessary because farmers valued the ecological services forests provided. Under heavy-handed and opaque forest governance, however, farmers “return to their fields and find a protected forest” (Procès-verbal 14). Sall voiced a sentiment shared by agrarian communities throughout the French Empire, including the metropole.

Eight years before the 1956 MAS meeting, Aliou Abdoulaye, President of the General Union of *Originaires* of the River Valley (*l'Union Générale des Originaires de la Vallée du Fleuve*), decried forest management policy in a

letter to Governor Laurent Marcel Wiltord. The letter is a summary of grievances expressed in a meeting between delegates of the Union and the Cabinet Chief that, like the 1956 meeting, had brought together French high authority with Senegalese representatives. In his 1948 letter, Abdoulaye warned that the “numerous abuses” committed by forest guards were a source of universal resentment, as was the forest commission’s failure to include local voices.³¹ Like Sall, he went on to argue that farmers’ investment in forest preservation rendered extensive forest law enforcement unnecessary. In the margin of these comments, Wiltord typed the note “Add two or three [Senegalese] notables,” presumably to the commission, before passing the letter to the Agricultural Service with a note that it raised interesting questions and instructions to respond quickly.³²

Wiltord’s comment on the forest commission was the sole response to one of several grievances that, Abdoulaye wrote, “demand an urgent solution.”³³ Abdoulaye urged the government to waste no time in softening penal measures in the forest code, supplying draft animals, converting elementary schools into regional schools, and developing “large villages into urban centers” in order to discourage migration to major cities. Abdoulaye concluded his argument with a warning, predicting that if the administration failed to act, residents of the valley would think themselves willfully forgotten and would leave for “the most favored regions: the peanut regions and the industrial centers.”³⁴ Like the councilors eight years later, he doubted that the colonial government’s commitment to its rural subjects matched its investment in cash crop production and growing urban industry, a doubt summarized in Kane’s confrontation, “What we ask is, I repeat, what will be done in the immediate term to increase the living standard of populations?” (Procès-verbal 15).

Economic change

French agricultural development policies offered no clear answer to Kane’s question. A general apathy towards the vitality of rural communities is apparent in the report on the French Overseas Minister’s 1952 visit to Richard Toll. According to the report, the goal of establishing extensive rice paddies at Richard Toll was to “reduce, through intensive production, Senegal’s current food deficit.”³⁵ But the French were concerned with providing for a particular Senegalese population that was integral to the *pacte colonial*, the exploitative system under which the colonies provided France cash crops in exchange for subsistence and luxury goods (Bamba 5). “The goal of the operation,” the report reads, is “essentially to feed the peanut planters and not to develop a population that will consume its own production.” Administrators envisioned

the MAS as a resource for producers of a valuable cash crop, not as an infrastructural improvement for the inhabitants of the Senegal Valley, whose population would have to be suppressed.³⁶ The “Plan Quadriennal d'Équipement et de Modernisation de l'A.O.F. (1953–1957)” illustrates the parallel objective of feeding urban laborers, asserting that the state's construction of rice fields near Richard Toll “will provide a very substantial supplementary food supply for Senegal's urban centers.”³⁷ Through the MAS, the state subsidized the reproduction of labor in export agriculture and urban industry at the expense of agrarian communities.

Before the Senegalese councilors, however, the Director of Economic Services painted a picture of a colonial administration concerned with the sustainability of the Senegal Valley's inhabitants. Director Marcoin summarized a “certain apprehension” among the councilors with a series of rhetorical questions: “Won't the projected improvements lead to an upheaval of the lifestyle of the river populations? Has the administration sufficiently considered this question?” (Procès-verbal 18). In his answers, Marcoin tried to appease councilors' concern about the effects of socioeconomic transformation. “There is no need to fear,” he assured, “a brutal transformation of living conditions of the peasant of the valley. Neither the *milieu*, nor his living conditions, nor his methods of farming will be changed in the immediate term” (Procès-verbal 16). The MAS, in his formulation, would not upend rural livelihoods in the way Kane and his colleagues feared. Instead, dams and dikes would augment the natural flooding on which farmers depended, improving the current productive system.

Given the ongoing failures of the MAS, the councilors were not prepared to accept Marcoin's assurances. Sall contended that regardless of whether dams were built, farmers would need other forms of aid. He argued that in the current situation “where there are not enough able bodies,” this aid must come in the form of technology that would enable farmers to cultivate greater areas of land (Procès-verbal 17). Oumar Sy agreed that it was useless to increase cultivatable area without addressing the labor shortage. The Agricultural Service had a responsibility to recognize that “[t]he cultivator is tired” and to provide mechanized equipment (Procès-verbal 17). Sy believed that French policy had depopulated the Valley to the extent that increasing agricultural production was no longer possible without technology to replace lost labor.

Marcoin responded with demographic data from MAS and Agriculture Service studies. He insisted that years of high flooding that inundated a greater surface area witnessed a corresponding increase in cultivated area “*with the same workforce*” (Procès-verbal 18–19, emphasis in original).

According to his data, there was no lack of labor, only a lack of irrigation. People were leaving the valley because of a dearth of arable land.³⁸ Sy countered that French taxes drove the migration that impoverished the valley. “[M]ost of our relatives,” he claimed, “leave their full granaries to go work in the city in order to be able to pay their taxes. So it is not because their stomachs are empty that they migrate” (Procès-verbal 19). His argument is consistent with a wide literature that identifies taxation as a widespread colonial technique for coercing Africans into wage labor.³⁹ In Sy’s view, French policy simultaneously deprived Senegal Valley farmers of the means of agricultural production and saddled them with increased financial burdens.⁴⁰ Sy’s remarks point to how under French fiscal policy, agrarian communities’ “cycle of reproduction was now largely and crucially shaped by capital,” as Jairus Banaji summarizes Henry Bernstein’s theorization of agrarian change. The agrarian communities represented by the councilors were not, like other peasant classes described by Banaji, forced to meet “*subsistence requirements through cash crop production*” (Banaji 411, emphasis in original). Rather, commercial capitalism entailed the neglect and erosion of agrarian economies that were not involved in cash crop production. Sy and his colleagues called on the administration to interrupt a vicious cycle where taxes and insufficient land and equipment drove migration, producing a labor shortage that rendered rural livelihoods untenable.

The direct conflict between urban wage labor and agrarian production is apparent in a sole councilor’s positive stance on urban migration. Born in Calais, Councilor Albert Touzard had established himself as an industrialist in Saint Louis, where he served as president of the Chamber of Commerce.⁴¹ He agreed with the other councilors that investment in the valley would likely prompt migrants to return to rural communities, but he framed this possibility as a threat to industry. “[If] we see a sudden *en masse* migration of populations from urban centers towards the valley,” Touzard argued, “it would pose a labor problem for the industrialization of cities that would be very important to resolve.” For Touzard, the most important labor shortage was that which plagued smaller cities like Saint Louis. “In Dakar, there is currently too much labor, non-specialized it is true, but in other urban centers, there is not enough” (Procès-verbal 22). The distance between Touzard and his colleagues’ viewpoints evokes the tension anthropologist Claude Meillassoux identifies between neighboring economies characterized by different relations of production—one based on small-scale agriculture destined primarily for local markets and household consumption, and the other based on wage labor in industry and export crop production.⁴²

In 1956, Senegal's economy and class structure were in a transitional state. Historian Ibrahima Thioub shows that over the 1920s, Senegalese urban laborers had begun agitating for labor rights and wages sufficient for their own reproduction as they developed into a working class (Thioub 437). Rising class consciousness is apparent in the 1946 Senegalese general strike and other labor actions throughout French West Africa during the 1940s.⁴³ Thioub argues that proletarianization accompanied a "progressive marginalization of local products in the reproduction of the labor force" (Thioub 443). Senegalese urban workers were increasingly treated as consumers dependent on an extensive imperial market rather than on household production and local markets. During the 1930s, this imperial market became progressively integrated through the efforts of administrators and merchants seeking to stimulate and systematize the flow of goods and capital between Southeast Asia, Africa, and the metropole—while always ensuring that colonial industries could not compete with metropolitan production.⁴⁴ Following wartime disruptions, postwar public investment in colonial production largely focused on territorial and regional autarky, but only insofar as autarky served broader imperial economic interests. As we have seen, the MAS was designed to provide sustenance to agricultural and industrial laborers whose work contributed to the economics of the *pacte colonial*.

With the rise of developmental imperialism, agrarian economies were sidelined in the name of rational and modern food production. As Guyer and Mbapdah demonstrate empirically, before this midcentury moment, colonial economic interests had largely satisfied themselves with appropriating the surpluses of supposedly unruly and inefficient agrarian producers. Drawing on Banaji's analysis of these producers' conscription into the logic of capital, Harry Harootunian theorizes the exploitation of agrarian production through Marx's concept of "formal subsumption." In *Marx after Marx*, Harootunian interprets Claude Meillasoux's research on West African agrarian communities as exposing "capitalism's reluctance to undermine the domestic economy, especially subsistence agriculture, which was immediately aligned with the process of reproduction" (Harootunian 208). Because agrarian production effectively served the reproduction of the labor forces on which colonial capitalism relied, it appropriated this productive process.⁴⁵ Agrarian production thus experienced "formal subsumption" into service to the imperial economy without "real subsumption" into capitalist relations of production, that is, without the total transformation of the "process of production" and the attendant introduction of wage labor and technological change.⁴⁶ The French state and its mercantile clients were generally content to exploit agrarian production as it stood.

But Harootunian's analysis of Meillassoux, void of dates or periodization, elides the specific changes that occurred in the French imperial economy from the 1920s onward. The policy of *mise en valeur*, oriented around extensive state intervention in productive processes, reduced the systemic importance of agrarian economies. Projects like the MAS attempted to replace them with modern state-run agricultural enterprises that would drastically reduce the role of agrarian production in reproducing labor. The councilors responded to the concurrent, intertwined, and orchestrated institutionalization of colonial capitalism, modernization of agriculture, and marginalization of agrarian communities that had no clear role in the colonial capitalist economy.

Conclusion

In contesting development, the territorial councilors did not adhere to a simple conservatism—they did not merely ask to be left alone. They wanted colonial resources directed towards projects that would ensure the viability of the Senegal Valley's agrarian communities in the face of urbanization, industrialization, and French investment in export agriculture. Their discursive interventions call to mind Mamadou Diouf's analysis of the intensely political quality of late colonial and early postcolonial debates over territorial and, later, national development.⁴⁷ Influenced by the stagism of Marx and Mao, Léopold Sédar Senghor, West African deputy to the French National Assembly and Senegal's first president, espoused a vision of development that emphasized the vital role of industrialization in the construction of a flourishing African socialism.⁴⁸ In contrast to Senghor, Senegal's second president, Abdou Diouf, called for national development based on small-scale family production, rather than on "a proletarianization of peasants."⁴⁹ Intense political conflict occurred not just between Senegalese and French political actors, but also among Senegalese actors with differing visions of what policies would generate futures of economic prosperity, autonomy, and social well-being.⁵⁰ In critiquing the particular shortcomings of the MAS during the April 1956 meeting, the councilors identified systemic problems in the late colonial approach to development. Faced with state-led economic change, they sketched out an alternate future of revitalized agrarianism.

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Notes

1. Jairus Banaji, "Merchant Capitalism, Peasant Households and Industrial Accumulation: Integration of a Model," *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 16:3 (2016): 424.
2. For a brief critique of the application of these terms to non-capitalist West African economies, see Keith Hart, *The Political Economy of West African Agriculture* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1982), 8–9.
3. Hilary Jones, "Rethinking Politics in the Colony: The Métis of Senegal and Urban Politics in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century," *The Journal of African History*, 53:3 (2012): 344.
4. Unfortunately, little information about the councilors' class backgrounds is available to me. Post-independence data suggests that labor migration often reduces caste inequality in the Senegal River Valley. Muneera Salem-Murdock, Madiodio Niasse, and Vivian Carlip, *Landuse, Labor Dynamics, and Household Production Strategies: The Senegal River Valley* (Institute for Development Anthropology, 1993), 364. Referenced in Jeanne E. Koopman, "Globalization, Gender, and Poverty in the Senegal River Valley," *Feminist Economics*, 15:3 (2009): 264.
5. Balakrishnan Rajagopal, *International Law from Below: Development, Social Movements and Third World Resistance* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2003), 3. Aaron Windel, *Cooperative Rule: Community Development in Britain's Late Empire* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2021), 10.
6. Boubacar Barry, *The Kingdom of Waalo: Senegal before the Conquest* (Diasporic Africa Press, 2012), 174. See also Marion F. de Borms, "La Guerre de Sept Ans et ses conséquences atlantiques: Kourou ou l'apparition d'un nouveau système colonial," *French Historical Studies*, 32:2 (2009): 167–91; Pernille Røge, "1763 et la reconquête française du Sénégal," *Vers un nouveau monde atlantique*, Laurent Veysseyre, Philippe Joutard, and Didier Poton, eds. (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2018); Christopher L. Miller, "Forget Haiti: Baron Roger and the New Africa," *Yale French Studies*, 107 (2005): 39–69.
7. Julien Schmaltz, "RAPPORT d'un voyage que vient de faire dans l'intérieur le Commandant du Sénégal. —Envoi des traités qu'il a conclus. —Modifications qu'ils nécessitent." In *Annuaire du comité d'études historiques et scientifiques de l'Afrique Occidentale Française* (1916), 73.
8. Antony G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (New York: Routledge, 1973), 137.
9. See Mamadou Diouf and Steven Rendall, "The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora and the Making of a Vernacular Cosmopolitanism," *Public Culture*, 12:3 (2000): 679–702.
10. Catherine Boone, *Merchant Capital and the Roots of State Power in Senegal, 1930–1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2006), 39–40, 42.
11. Jane I. Guyer, "The Food Economy and French Colonial Rule in Central Cameroun," *The Journal of African History*, 19:4 (1978): 577–97; Ndobegang M. Mbapndah, "French Colonial Agricultural Policy, African Chiefs, and Coffee Growing in the Cameroun Grassfields, 1920–1960," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 27:1 (1994): 53.
12. A. Minot, "Contribution à l'Étude du Fleuve Sénégal," *Bulletin du Comité d'Études Historiques et Scientifiques de l'Afrique Occidentale Française*, no 1, vol. 17 (January–March 1934), 385–416. 413–14.
13. Abou B. Bamba, *African Miracle, African Mirage: Transnational Politics and the Paradox of Modernization in Ivory Coast* (Columbus: Ohio U P, 2016). 6.
14. Michael P. Cowen and Robert W. Shenton, "Agrarian Doctrines of Development: Part I," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 25:2 (1998): 54.
15. Muriam Haleh Davis, *Markets of Civilization: Islam and Racial Capitalism in Algeria* (Durham: Duke U P, 2022), 12.
16. Corey Ross, *Ecology and Power in the Age of Empire: Europe and the Transformation of the Tropical World* (New York: Oxford U P, 2017), 352.
17. Another such project was the larger *Office du Niger* in French Soudan (present-day Mali). See Isaïe Dougnon, *Travail de blanc, travail de noir: La migration des paysans dogon vers*

- l'office du Niger et au Ghana, 1910–1980* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2007); Monica M. van Beusekom, “Disjunctures in Theory and Practice: Making Sense of Change in Agricultural Development at the Office du Niger, 1920–60,” *The Journal of African History*, 41:1 (2000): 79–99; Laura Ann Twagira, *Women and Gender at the Office du Niger (Mali): Technology, Environment, and Food ca. 1900–1985*, diss., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey–New Brunswick, 2013.
18. Mahamadou Maïga, “The Policy of Rice Import Substitution: The Case of the Senegal River Valley and Delta,” *Africa Development/Afrique et développement*, 1:2 (1976): 9.
 19. G. Nesterenko, “Aménagement de la Vallée du Sénégal et Casier Rizicole de Richard Toll,” Mission d’Aménagement du Sénégal, 1954. Archives MAS—Fonds Aménagement Hydroagricole, Centre de Documentation et des Archives de l’Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal (OMVS CDA). 8.
 20. Plan Quadriennal, 13; Delisle, “Notes sur la M.A.S.” Institut Fondamental de l’Afrique Noire (IFAN) Centre des Recherches et de Documentations du Sénégal, DI (1949). 2. R. J. Harrison Church, “Problems and Development of the Dry Zone of West Africa,” *Geographical Journal* (1961): 192.
 21. Cooper contends that the Brazzaville Conference of 1944, in which African politicians negotiated a more democratic political order for the postwar era, yielded an approach to colonial economic management that would, at least on paper, mediate between African welfare and imperial economic objectives. Frederick Cooper, “Modernizing Bureaucrats, Backwards Africans, and the Development Concept,” *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*, Frederick Cooper and Randall M. Packard, eds., (Berkeley: U of California P, 1997). 69.
 22. Archives Nationales d’Outre-Mer, 2 TP 294, “PROCES-VERBAL de la conférence du 26 AVRIL 1956 SUR l’AMENAGEMENT de la VALLEE du FLEUVE,” 3.
 23. See Davis, 78.
 24. Capital I 5.17.4. On markets in the Senegal Valley, see Daniel Delaunay, *Migrations et pénétration de l’économie marchande: Le Waalo (région du fleuve Sénégal)* (Centre ORSTOM de Dakar, 1975).
 25. Pauline E. Peters, “Land Appropriation, Surplus People and a Battle over Visions of Agrarian Futures in Africa,” *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 40:3 (2013): 550.
 26. Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2000), 81.
 27. *Bulletin de l’enseignement de l’Afrique Occidentale Française* (April 1932), 102; Gallica (BNF), <https://z.umn.edu/9c1g>.
 28. “L’Élection de Saint-Louis: Salzman (S.F.I.O.) 11.983 voix, Boubou Sall (B.D.S.) 7.985 voix, N’diaye Mamadi (R.D.A.) 742 voix,” *Paris-Dakar*, 4008 (March 21, 1949), Gallica (BNF), <https://z.umn.edu/9c1h>. Membership in territorial councils was locally apportioned and determined by election, following the postwar expansion of the franchise in West Africa. The loi-cadre, which greatly expanded the power of territorial assemblies across French West Africa, passed the French National Assembly less than two months after this meeting. See “La loi n°52-130 du 6 février 1952.”
 29. David Prochaska, “Fire on the Mountain: Resisting Colonialism in Algeria,” in *Banditry, Rebellion, and Social Protest in Africa*, Donald Crummey, ed. (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1986). 229–70.
 30. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen* (Stanford: Stanford U P, 1976), 59–60.
 31. Archives Nationales du Sénégal, R00054. Aliou Abdoulaye, Président de l’Union Générale des Originaires de la Vallée du Fleuve, à Monsieur le Gouverneur du Sénégal. Dakar, July 16, 1948. 1.
 32. Abdoulaye au Gouverneur du Sénégal. 1.
 33. Abdoulaye au Gouverneur du Sénégal. 4.
 34. Abdoulaye au Gouverneur du Sénégal. 4.
 35. OMVS CDA (Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal Centre de Documentation et des Archives) SL116B8/4B E0002. Visite à Richard Toll, May 1952. 3.
 36. French administrators frequently conceptualized agrarian populations as food producers for populations involved in urban labor and cash crop production. See Guyer, 578.

37. "Le Plan Quadriennal d'Équipement et de Modernisation de l'A.O.F. (1953–1957)." Haut Commissariat de la République en A.O.F. (1957), 13.
38. Marcoin relies on broad demographic surveys that fail to account for seasonal labor migration common in Senegal and in much of West Africa. See Olga F. Linares, "Going to the City... and Coming Back? Turnaround Migration among the Jola of Senegal," *Africa*, 73:1 (2003): 113–32; Sally E. Findley, *Choosing between African and French Destinations: The Role of Family and Community Factors in Migration from the Senegal River Valley* (Cambridge: Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1989).
39. See François G. Richard, "The Ruins of French Imperialism: An Archaeology of Rural Dislocations in Twentieth-century Senegal," Mark P. Leone and Jocelyn E. Knauf, eds., *Historical Archaeologies of Capitalism* (New York: Springer, 2015), 452; Findley, 2.
40. In his study of the evolution of the market economy in Waalo, Daniel Delaunay concludes that in the 1930s, migration out of the Senegal Valley was driven by deteriorating terms of trade between millet and imported products. Delaunay, *Migrations et pénétration*.
41. Archives Nationales 19800035/0347/46754. Procès-Verbal de Réception, Légion d'Honneur. 1960, <https://z.umn.edu/97kv>.
42. Claude Meillassoux, *Maidens, Meal and Money: Capitalism and the Domestic Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1981), 94.
43. Frederick Cooper, "The Senegalese General Strike of 1946 and the Labor Question in Post-war French Africa," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, 24:2 (1990): 199.
44. Jonathan A. Bone, "Rice, Rubber, and Development Policies: The 'mise en valeur' of French Indochina on the Eve of the Second World War," *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society*, 16 (Lansing: Michigan State U P, 1992), 165; Samir Saul, "Les pouvoirs publics métropolitains face à la Dépression: La conférence économique de la France métropolitaine et d'Outre-mer (1934–1935)," *French Colonial History*, 12 (2011): 169.
45. For a brief critique of the application of these terms to non-capitalist West African economies, see Keith Hart, *The Political Economy of West African Agriculture* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1982). 8–9.
46. Capital I Appendix 470.
47. Mamadou Diouf, "Senegalese Development: From Mass Mobilization to Technocratic Elitism," in Frederick Cooper and Randall M. Packard, eds., *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1997). 301, 313. See Bone; Stephan F. Miescher, *A Dam for Africa: Akosombo Stories from Ghana* (Bloomington: Indiana U P, 2022).
48. In a 1954 report to the 6th BDS congress titled "La Conscience, Vertu Majeur du Socialisme," Senghor wrote in support of French investment in colonial industrialization. Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Liberté II: Nation et voie africaine du socialisme* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1971), 133.
49. Tarik Dahou, "L'autosuffisance rizicole, chronique d'un échec annoncé," Tarik Dahou, ed., *Libéralisation et politique agricole au Sénégal* (Karthala/Crepos/Enda Graf Diapol (2009), 151.
50. For a discussion of the postcolonial politics of development, see Alden Young, "African Bureaucrats and the Exhaustion of the Developmental State: Lessons from the Pages of the Sudanese Economist," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 81 (2017): 49–75.