

From the colonial communalization movement in 1872 to the establishment of rural communities in 1972: ten decades of urban decentralization and local development in Senegal

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Abstract

Examining the trajectory of decentralization and local development in Senegal continues to generate considerable interest. Senegalese historiography teaches that decentralization, at its core, is not foreign to pre-colonial societies. It has endogenous historical roots, although it was driven at the time by a number of factors. Delegated democracy was a distinctive feature of these societies. Suffice it to say that, within these kingdoms, kings were elected by a representative assembly of the society, but could also and above all be dismissed by it. Against a backdrop of the establishment and imposition of colonial power, the native populations, along with the mulattos, fought fiercely for the erection of their localities as full-fledged communes, in the image of the cities of the metropolis which had already acquired this privileged status. Driven by a concern to safeguard their own interests and endowed with solid economic, demographic and social power, the mulattoes entered the urban political arena to put an end to the economic domination of the metropolitan merchants. The colonial municipalization movement initiated in Senegal in 1872 was the overall result of more than two decades of hard-fought struggle by the population to gain autonomous management and the promotion of local freedoms. Senegal's accession to independence was marked by the generalization of full-fledged communes, the emergence of communes with special status and the birth of rural communities from 1972 with the Administrative, Territorial and Local Reform (RATL). Although the major question of the autonomy of decentralized communities has arisen, successive attempts to implement controlled local development in Senegal have been salutary.

Keywords: colonization, rural communities and communes, decentralization and local development, municipalization, Senegambia, African socialism.

INTRODUCTION

Senegal's experience of decentralization is both secular and evolutionary. Secular in the sense that the origins of this policy can be traced back to the colonial period, in particular to the XIX^{ème} century, through the municipalization processes set in motion in the four full-fledged communes that constituted the first territorial structures for the management of local affairs (Benga 1995). Evolutionary insofar as, a century later, in 1972, it extended beyond urban areas to the rural level, with the introduction of administrative, territorial, and local reform, which established the birth of another type of decentralized authority: the rural communities.

But if this classification is historically accurate, it does not take into account, in the reflection and analysis on the Senegalese political system, an important stage neglected or even forgotten, as much by jurists and political scientists as by other social scientists, in the historicity of African societies: the existence of decentralization in Senegalese institutions. If we are to reconstruct the institutional history of Senegalese political institutions, which is all-important in this study of decentralization and governance in Senegal, it is not without interest to delve further into Senegal's pre-colonial past in order to understand the historicity of

decentralization in Senegal's pre-colonial political society. As the German sociologist Peter Wagner (1994) aptly put it: "The current state of affairs can only be understood through a historical redescription of modernity". As if to say that the decentralization of local power (Thoenig 1996) in Africa, and in Senegal in particular, has a history that is very often omitted, dating back to the pre-colonial period, and which it is important to retrace and restore here (I). We then turn our attention to the history of these territorialized policies initiated during the colonial and post-colonial eras with a view to consolidating local development in Senegal (II).

1. The historical foundations of decentralization in Senegal or pre-colonial experiences

Senegal's pre-colonial past is rich in decentralization practices. Its historical roots lie in the political institutions of the Senegambian states (empires and kingdoms) which, for reasons linked to a number of constraints relating to geography, technology, and politics, were led, willy-nilly, to resort to such a policy (Touré 2012; Touré 2013; Touré and Dione 2021). This thesis has been developed by the historian Joseph Ki Zerbo (1979), who supports the idea that pre-colonial Africa, with the exception of Lower Egypt, has never known a centralized system, but rather a mosaic of indigenous communities coordinated, admittedly here and there, by hegemonies condemned to decentralization, due to distance, the absence of wheeled vehicles, firearms or state religion.

While such situations were common in the suzerainty-vassalage relations of all the great empires, it must be said that the use of decentralizing methods to manage the empires' territories, which constituted an element of strength and weakness for them, was a reality. For example, the effective autonomy of the Sérère of the Ngohé Mbayar province in the Baol kingdom. The majority of this kingdom's inhabitants were Sérère, although political power was held by the Wolof dynasty. This demographic dimension led the latter to take this into account by granting real autonomy to the Serer. Jean-Marc Gastelu (1976) has more to say on this point: "This explains why the monarch intervened very little in the life of the Serer communities. This non-intervention was institutionalized and translated, on the one hand, into a balance of power at the Lambaye court, and on the other, into a particular political regime for the Sérère provinces".

The case illustrated here is not, in fact, an isolated one. For this reason, it is essential to remember that within the kingdom of Saloum itself, the provinces neighboring Kahone — which was the capital — such as Ndoucoumane (Kaffrine area), Pakala (Nganda), Langhem (Ndoffane), etc., were governed by a sovereign master in his own right, who recognized the authority of the Bour Saloum. This situation prevailed despite the political control exercised by the Bour Saloum over a large part of west-central Senegal.

Elsewhere, in other kingdoms, particularly the Wolof, the situation was identical. Delegated democracy was a distinctive feature of these societies. Suffice it to say that, in these kingdoms, kings were elected by an assembly representative of society, but could also

and above all be dismissed by it. Mamadou Badji's (2007) study of power in the ancient Wolof kingdoms of Senegal confirms this hypothesis. Mamadou Badji teaches that in the Waalo, the king was elected by a council whose composition varied. In particular, it was made up of the master of the land tenures or *lamane*, the master of the slaves or *gawdin*, the master of the water or *jogoma*, and the treasurer or *mala*. This council was not only responsible for electing the king but also for overseeing his actions. In Djoloff, the council was made up of seven members of the *garmi*, headed by the *Djarraf Djambour*. In Cayor, the council was also chaired by the *Djarraf Djambour* and included a representative of the free citizens and a representative of each caste.

To take a closer look at how power was exercised in the Wolof political society of pre-colonial Senegal, Mamadou Badji (2007) points out that in the Waalo, the people's complaints reached the king via a member of the council. According to Badji, it is remarkable that in important circumstances, the king would convene the council and follow its recommendations as far as possible. In the event of disagreement, serious disputes, or serious breaches of his customary obligations, the *Djarraf Djambour* could argue that there was no popular support for the king's action and obtain his removal from power, with the throne then reverting to one of the heirs of the rival dynasties. In other words, according to Badji, the king of the Wolof principalities was not an absolute monarch. Despite his authority or personal merits, he had people close to him who shared power with him, and who could depose him if it turned out that he did not have all the intellectual or moral faculties to carry out his task. The authorities' main tasks were state administration and management services. State administration was decentralized, with the king and his advisors dealing only with matters of primary importance. The regional administrative framework reveals a high degree of autonomy for the provinces. The Waalo, for example, was divided into regions, each headed by a viceroy, the *Kangam*.

All in all, without denying the internal dysfunctions inherent to the functioning of these kingdoms (successive civil wars in Wolof principalities, where different royal families clashed) (Barry 1988) following the introduction of European and French trade into Africa (Becker and Martin 1975¹), we can repeat that the existence of decentralization and deconcentration in the political institutions of pre-colonial Senegal is an effective reality, notably in its principles of autonomy and delegation. As Gerti Hesselting (1985:113) reminds us, in those Senegambian states where political power was decentralized :

"The institution of the palaver, which allowed everyone to have their say, testifies to freedom of

¹ For example, according to C. Becker and V. Martin. Martin, (1975), Kayor and Baol underwent a profound upheaval in socio-political structures and relationships. The changes that occurred were closely linked to the intervention of European trade, and French trade in particular, whose concern was to export as many captives as possible. This led to the outbreak of internal conflicts and civil wars, the multiplication - if not the establishment - of "pillaging" of Wolof and Serer peasant populations, and the frequency of campaigns against neighboring countries.

expression....Political opposition, in the sense of a group seeking to seize power, was institutionalized in the Wolof states in the form of a "substitute oligarchy" around unsuccessful pretenders to the throne. Opposition was based not only on the struggle for power but also on ideological issues - Islam versus animism, for example - or on the conflicting interests of the various royal families... These various elements make it possible to attribute the following designations to Wolof regimes: moderate monarchy or limited monarchy, constitutional monarchy... This sketch of social and political structures leads to the conclusion that in its ancient history, Senegal had a number of states which, in terms of structures and democracy, were able to rival their "counterparts" of the same period to the north of the Mediterranean".

2. Decentralization in the four full-fledged communes: the product of a long indigenous struggle for citizenship

Decentralization officially began in Senegal in the 19th century, with the creation of the first four French communes under the law of April 4, 1884 (Benga 1995). These communes, whose citizens were French, were called :

- First, the island of Gorée in 1872;
- Then, the city of Saint-Louis in 1872;
- Then came the town of Rufisque in 1880;
- Dakar in 1887.

The fact that these four towns - which, it should be remembered, are the cradle of modern political life in Senegal - became fully-fledged communes is by no means fortuitous. This was due to a number of factors, largely linked to their geographical position and their administrative and economic functions, which made them important centers of French settlement. In these four towns, the population was made up of metropolitan, native, and mulatto populations (Mercier 1959; Benga 1995).

This mixed-race population played a leading role in the economic life of the colony, which over time experienced an intensely organized and animated political life, like that of the metropolis. The native populations gradually took part, fighting fiercely with the mulattoes for the erection of their localities as full-fledged communes, in the same way as the towns of the metropolis, which acquired this privileged status in 1848. Driven by a concern to safeguard their own interests and endowed with solid economic, demographic, and social power, the mulattoes entered the urban political arena to put an end to the economic domination of the colony's metropolitan merchants.

This demand was pursued institutionally and formally by most of the deputies of the Senegalese colony, notably in the French legislative chamber. However, the colonial administration, with the backing and political support of traders from the metropolis, gave the go-ahead to the advent of any communal institution for these towns. This was because, in addition to the risk of reducing their power, the establishment of such municipal institutions represented

a potential threat to the system of colonial domination, which was based, it should be remembered, on a rigorously centralized administrative system.

This context was also valid for the British colonies in Black Africa, despite the application of the doctrine of *indirect rule* and the reality of a long-standing pre-colonial urban tradition in the colonies of Nigeria and Ghana, where the municipal councils established were mostly composed of Europeans and always presided over by an administrator appointed by the British colonial authorities.

In the case of Senegal, it wasn't until 1872, i.e. twenty-four years after the first demands were made, that this demand for communalization was met. In February of that year, 150 native Senegalese² and 79 mulattos signed a petition addressed to the Minister of the Navy, in charge of the colonies. In other words, the colonial municipalization movement initiated in Senegal was the overall result of more than two decades of hard-fought struggle by the population to gain autonomous management and promote the enshrinement of local freedoms. This process of municipalization served as a backdrop, through the example of nationalist demands alone, to the country's evolution towards international sovereignty. However, it did not stop with the four full-fledged communes. It continued progressively in other forms³ during and after colonization.

3. From colonial municipal governance to Senegalese municipal governance: beyond semantics, the same logic of confiscating local autonomy

Alongside the towns of Gorée, Saint-Louis, Rufisque, and Dakar, other communes came into being from 1904 onwards, but they did not enjoy the same autonomy due to their status as mixed communes. They were governed by municipal councils, half of which were appointed and half elected, and mayors who were always appointed. The municipal council was headed by the cercle commander, who then bore the title of administrator-mayor. The latter headed a municipal commission that could be appointed (first degree), elected by restricted suffrage (second degree) or by universal suffrage (third degree).

With the spread of peanut cultivation to certain parts of the country, other localities were gradually established as communes.

² In these political battles, it is instructive to note the effective participation of blacks. In Saint-Louis, the 1872 municipal councillors included such natives as Abdoulaye Mar Diop and Waly Baoré; in Gorée, Dussy Benga and Ndiogou Dieng.

³ These included: the mixed commune, headed by an appointed administrator-mayor who was responsible for managing a municipal commission that could be appointed (first degree), elected by restricted suffrage (second degree) or by universal suffrage (third degree); the medium-sized commune, whose municipal council was elected but headed by an administrator-mayor; and the indigenous commune, which was a council of notables chosen by the colonial administration in a given locality. The indigenous commune was more a consultative body than a municipal institution.

The first of these was Cayor, a province of the groundnut basin, followed in 1907 by Thiès, Tivaouane, and Louga. In 1911, Mékhé followed, and with the transfer of the groundnut basin to Baol and Sine Saloum, other mixed communes were created in 1918, including Kaolack, Fatick, Foundiougne, and Diourbel; in 1925, Kébémér and Khombol were added. By 1925, according to Paul Mercier (1959), Senegal had 18 communes, 4 of which were full-fledged, and of the twenty mixed communes existing in Senegal in 1953, 14 had an elected municipal commission.

In 1926, Bambey, Mbour, and Gossas took over. This process continued in other regions. In 1952, the mixed communes of Kolda, Guinguinéo, Tambacounda Podor, and Matam were established. A new era of communalization began in 1955, with the adoption on November 18, 1955, of Law 55-1489 on municipal reorganization in French West Africa, Central Africa (Cameroon), and Madagascar. This law abolished the less mixed communes and replaced them with medium-sized communes with an elected municipal council, but where the mayor was an appointed civil servant. On the basis of this law, mixed communes were transformed into medium-sized communes. Six new medium-sized communes have been created: Kaolack, Thiès, Louga, Ziguinchor, Diourbel, and Gorée. It should be noted that Bignona was made a commune de moins exercice in December 1957. This law of November 18, 1955, was an essential step, enabling the creation of several large full-function towns, including Thiès, Kaolack, and Ziguinchor. On the eve of independence, the system of communes was threefold: mixed commune, full-function commune, and medium-function commune⁴. This new orientation was linked to the fact that the colonial authorities had embarked on a policy aimed at giving greater freedom and promoting more democracy on behalf of the colonies. This orientation was confirmed by the Framework Law of 1956, which granted a degree of administrative and political autonomy to the colonies.

With the attainment of independence, the period 1960-1972 was marked in Senegal by the generalization of full-fledged communes and the appearance of communes with special status (Joana 2000). Law 60-01 of January 13, 1960, created 07 administrative regions in the country. Law 60-23 of February 01, 1960, transformed mixed communes into full-fledged communes. Law 60-24 of the same date also transformed the communes de moins exercice into full-fledged communes. Law 60-25 of 1960 also created new full-function communes: Niour du Rip, Kaffrine, Oussouye, Sédhio, Vélingara, Kédougou, Bakel, Linguère and Dagana. The legislature also expressed its desire to unify the system of communes in Senegal. This period was marked by the emergence of communes with special status. Law 60-28 of February 01, 1960, which established regional assemblies, announced special legislation for Dakar.

Law 61-01 of January 14, 1961, on the reorganization of the communes of Dakar and Gorée, created the first special status.

⁴ We should also mention the existence of indigenous communes in colonial times. Indigenous communes were councils of notables chosen by the colonial administration. They were more consultative bodies than communal institutions.

Dakar commune had a municipal council but was governed by an elected governor. In 1965, Saint-Louis became a commune with special status, and other communes followed: Thiès, Kaolack, Diourbel, Tambacounda, Ziguinchor. During this period, the communal administration code was adopted by law 66-64 of June 30, 1964. This law provides for the autonomy of two categories of communes: communes under common law and communes with special status governed by special texts. This law is a reworking of the French law of 1884. It governs the creation, organization, operation, powers, and control of communes. In 1966, the Communal Administration Code was promulgated.

More generally, the municipal system has two statuses: the commune with special status and the commune under ordinary law. Law no. 64-02 of January 19, 1964, established the commune for the first time, as a grouping of inhabitants of the same locality united by a sense of solidarity, resulting from neighborliness, willing to look after their own interests and able to find the necessary resources for action specific to them within the national community and in the interests of the nation. The commune is a legal entity under public law. Its representative bodies exercise the powers defined by the Code of Communal Administration within the corresponding territorial district. Since that date, the map of communes on the Senegalese territory has evolved remarkably.

Overall, in Senegal's communalization process, it's clear that the legislator, and hence the central government, has been prevaricating for a number of reasons of a strictly political nature. The relevance of such an idea can be seen in Law 72-63 of July 26, 1972, which conferred special status on the communes, the regional capitals, with the exception of Dakar, which was granted the same status in 1979. Such a municipal system implied direct control and management of these territorial entities by a municipal administrator who exercised, as stipulated in article 135 of law 72-63, under the authority of the Prime Minister and the minister in charge, all the powers conferred on the mayor by the laws and regulations in force. The mayor is solely responsible for the administration of the municipality and the execution of its decisions. He also appoints municipal officials. It was against this backdrop that, until 1990, governors were placed at the center of commune management, prompting specialists to say that this was nothing more and nothing less than a return to the mixed communes of the colonial era, twelve years after independence.

However, the key issue for the autonomy of communes was the prior approval of municipal council resolutions by the supervisory authority. We might as well admit that the decentralization policy pursued at the time was, for a long time, stripped of its essential foundations: the free administration of local authorities. In reality, local authorities were more an instrument of central government domination than an essential link in the decentralization process in rural areas. Very often, this policy was no more than an effective means of reinforcing State control and improving the administrative network. The reasons for implementing such measures are hardly plausible: the complexity of urban management, the lack of highly qualified personnel to manage them. It's hard to understand why the Senegalese authorities waited until more than a decade after their accession to sovereignty to

become aware of the effects of the glaring lack of executives capable of managing their municipalities. By not investing in the training of elected officials and citizens to enable them to take ownership of decentralization themselves, the central government's Jacobin tendencies were clearly in evidence, preventing this policy from fully developing. If we look at the socio-political and economic context of the time, everything suggests that the public authorities took advantage of the communes to broaden their political, economic, and social base.

In this respect, we need only point out that municipalities have always been major sites of political positioning, patronage, clientelism, and mercenary support, and their political control by the state authority and the party/state remained a fundamental issue for the perpetuation of the patrimonialist system in place. It's hardly surprising, then, that between the 1960s and 1970s, and even well afterwards, they were at the heart of scandals concerning the mismanagement of public resources. Such deviations from urban decentralization were highlighted in a seminal work (Diop and Diouf 1992). According to these two authors, Senegal's communes have been held captive by a State which, according to a totalitarian logic, prevents any hint of autonomy and does not guarantee them the resources to meet the needs of the population.

In all cases, the principle of empowerment and participation of local populations and their representatives has long been sidetracked by the advent of autonomous decision-making centers. This situation is easy to understand, given that the commune is not a strictly endogenous reality, i.e. one rooted in the socio-political history of African societies. Rather, it has been an external given, borrowed from the West by central governments and not always adapted to local realities. It is in this sense that Ibou Diaité's (1976:25) thesis should be understood: *"The commune in Senegal is a creation of the colonial power, which essentially organized it according to its own needs, with a view to assimilation. Whereas in the former metropolis, the commune was a historical fact corresponding to natural societies, in Senegal, it was merely an artificial institution designed to encourage rather than consecrate communal groupings, without being able to embrace all Senegalese realities. It could therefore only function correctly and effectively if it were first and foremost adapted to these realities"*.

To this objection, it may be added that this situation was not exclusive to communal institutions. It also applied to rural communities since laws 72-25 of April 19, 1972, 80-14 of June 1980 and their implementing decrees, which placed rural councils under the heavy tutelage of the Ministry of the Interior between 1972 and 1990: their decisions were enforceable only after approval by the sub-prefect who, under article 84 of law 72-24, was responsible for preparing and drawing up the rural community's budget, for which he was also the authorizing officer. They were also responsible for managing the local authority's revenues, awarding contracts, and supervising works. In 1990, a reform transferred budget management powers to the rural councils, and in particular to their Presidents. It is through these successive legal frameworks that the central administration has consolidated, over decades of exercising power at commune and

rural community level, its strategies for strengthening the political system in order to extend its own domination (Leroux 2005).

4. Rural areas and their attempts at communalization at the dawn of independence

It should be noted that the 1959-1962 period was marked by the public authorities' determination to profoundly transform Senegal's rural world on three levels: economic, social, and cultural. The ideology of African socialism, inspired by scientific socialism, provided the framework for this desire for change. This ideology was to be adapted to Senegalese realities. Developed by Léopold Sédar Senghor on the basis of the negritude thesis and a critique of Marxian theory, this Senegalese socialism, also known as "humanist socialism", "open socialism" or "socialism of dialogue", was essentially built on a "return to Africanness" and a "sense of community". It was President Mamadou Dia (1957) who conceived the structural aspects of economic and social development.

For both authors, Marxist theories were to serve more as an analysis of the capitalist system than as an instrument of economic and social construction for African societies. Indeed, many African intellectuals at the time seemed to see Marxian and Marxist theses as the key to the problems of disalienation. However, several of these Marxist theses, combined with the excesses of many communist parties, were gradually undermined:

- Religious values that could not be integrated into scientific socialism, itself conceived as a total, totalitarian vision of the universe. Yet, for African leaders, these values were instruments of reference. As Léopold Sédar Senghor (1961:42) objected: *"That was fine; it wasn't enough. Most of the time, we were content with stereotyped formulas and vague inspirations... As if socialism were not a return to the sources, but above all an effort to rethink the basic texts and confront them with the realities of Black Africa"*;
- The class struggle was a sociological analysis, alien to Africa; the dictatorship of a class was contrary to social relations considered in Africa as traditionally democratic and communitarian;
- Karl MARX's idea of the nation as an illusion devalued the national idealism on which many African leaders based their struggle for international sovereignty;
- The Marxist theory of knowledge, based on a materialistic, positivist conception of nature and man, subjected the free, creative mind to rigorous determinism. To this theory, Léopold Sédar Senghor (1961:62) replies: *"We must be wary of believing - African politicians have often succumbed to the temptation - that dialectic solves all problems and dispenses us from reflection, still less that the word can justify our cowardice, our denials, and the least justifiable electoral tactics. Dialectics is just the opposite. It is a conscious and honest effort of research, which analyzes all the data of reality in their singular aspect, their reciprocal reactions and their future"*;

- Communism has often forgotten, in its day-to-day implementation, the concern for human dignity and the demand for freedom that animated the original Marxist thought and gave it its revolutionary ferment;
- The attitude of European socialists towards decolonization deeply disappointed Africans. This is echoed by Senghor (1961: 51): "*The proletarians of Europe benefited from the colonial regime; consequently, they never really, I mean effectively, opposed it*";
- Reformist methods such as federalism, cooperation, syndicalism, and mutualism, advocated by utopian socialists but radically rejected by scientific socialists, were all positive elements in the revolutionary struggle in both Europe and Africa.

The Senegalese way of socialism sought to detach itself from Western socialism, even if Senghor also found a humanism in this type of social doctrine. In his mind, this humanism had to be cleansed of the limitations that characterized Karl Marx and European socialism. In Mamadou Dia's words, this African-style socialism is rooted in a native sociological structure that abounds in strong community formulas. This socialism was to have a profound influence on the administrative and development policies initiated at the start of Senegal's independence. As Mamadou Dia (1961: 90) explains, "*Our socialism emerges very precisely from basic human communities. Without this root, it would be meaningless, and our whole commitment consists in extending the logic of grassroots responsibility to all levels and all the way to the top*"⁵.

This socialist path was enriched by the economic and social thinking of the Reverend Father Louis Joseph Lebret⁶, then government advisor and theorist of authentic development, which he defined as the passage, for a given population, from a less human phase to a more human phase at the fastest possible pace, at the lowest possible cost, taking into account the solidarity between all populations.

For Mamadou Dia⁷, the President of the Senegalese Socialist Council, moving from theory to practice required a series of

structural reforms as a prerequisite for harmonized development (see Box 1 on democratic planning). These were to involve the articulation of a bold and original policy of socializing production and exchange relations in the countryside since development at that time was not just a question of quantitative growth in national income, but also of all sectors of social life; it resulted, according to the political decision-makers of the time, from the harmonious growth of all sectors of human activity, many of which could not be measured by production indices.

Box 1: Democratic planning

"The day after the Rufisque council, I announced the creation of study committees to define Senegal's first development policy... It was the day after this historic decision that I said: "We must now prepare for independence. We need to set up the necessary structures and institutions. I then realized that the most essential thing was to prepare a development plan. I called a meeting of the Study Committees and asked Roland Collin to find me an expert capable of supporting this development plan. It was on this basis that I made my choice. Father Lebret," he told me, "has already worked for Latin America and is currently working for Lebanon. He will be visiting Dakar shortly. This will be an opportunity to get in touch with him and see if he agrees to take charge of Senegal's development plan. That's how I decided to get in touch with Father Lebret /.../ I told him about the political situation in Senegal and the difficulties we were facing with all the problems of rebuilding our country. I informed him that I had just set up commissions to carry out studies and gather all the information needed to draw up a long-term development plan. Father Lebret agreed. That's how things started. It wasn't easy, because the very idea of a development plan was something new /.../.

One of the essential ideas I was developing at the time was the establishment of a contractual relationship between the integrated and organized state apparatus and the grassroots cells, the democratic cells of the peasant world, with development proceeding from a contractual relationship established on both sides, which was the guarantor of socialism and redefined the relationship between the state and the nation... This was fundamental, as we could see, for example, with regard to planning. Democratic planning didn't just take place at central government level, at the level of the Ministry of Planning. First of all, we had to go down to the grassroots, discuss with the local communities, with the RECs, with the local development committees, and gather the elements of the Plan. From there, the plan was drawn up at central level. So it wasn't a plan imposed from above. On the contrary, all the data and needs were expressed at grassroots level. There was a sort of contract between the top and the bottom, once the plan had been drawn up in this way - we in government were justified in saying to the bottom: "This is your plan because we drew it up on the basis of the needs you expressed. Now it's been costed; it's time to move on to implementation, and it's up to you to carry it out".

⁵ M. Dia, 1961, "Un socialisme existentiel", in IRFED, *Sénégal "an 2"*, pp. 90-91.

⁶ Louis Joseph Lebret, 1958, *Text of a conference on development problems in Senegal, held in Dakar on October 31st of the same year*. Father Lebret (1958) was the author of the first development plan applied in Senegal. This plan (1961-1965) emphasized agrarian development through cooperatives, rural animation and diversification of agricultural products. The plan forecast 8% growth in national income and 31% growth in per capita income. The results of this first plan were not great: national income grew by only 0.9% and the introduction of new products, such as rice, sugar and cotton, did not produce the expected results (Hesseling 1985:61). The second plan (1965-1969) abandoned the idea of cooperatives and rural animation in favor of peanut production. The economic situation deteriorated during this period, leading to violent social unrest.

⁷ M. Dia, 1962, *Lettre d'un vieux militant, contribution à la révolution démocratique*, Dakar, 202 p. See also M. Dia, 1985, *Mémoires d'un militant du Tiers-monde*, Paris, Publisud, 245 p. and M. Dia, 1991-2004,

Lettres d'un vieux militant. Contribution à la révolution démocratique, Dakar, 202 p.

Mamadou DIA, 1985, *Vicissitudes de la vie d'un militant du Tiers-monde*, Paris, Publisud.

To kick-start the development process in rural areas, it has been proposed to restructure the territorial space based on various strategic orientations⁸ such as rural animation, rural expansion, and the cooperative system.

Rural animation was based on the training of peasant elites, rural craftsmen, and animators. The aim, in the words of the President of the Council, was to develop a new type of man, animated by a certain sense of the rural world, but also by a certain intuition of the spiritual values of the vital force, whose rhythm informs our aesthetics. Its primary aim was to raise awareness among the masses, transform mentalities and social structures, forge civic consciousness among the population, generate and disseminate new ideas and technical innovations among the rural population, and breathe new dynamism into the community way of life by building new spaces of solidarity that go beyond the restricted traditional communities; it was with this in mind that the technical services, the territorial command, the political leaders, the religious leaders, the peasant masses and the populations were all mobilized.

However, it is important to remember, as we can read in the *Report on Human Investment* produced by the Direction de l'Animation on April 25, 1962, that the population considered that work of public interest was the sole responsibility of State services. This widespread attitude was seen by the people in charge of Animation as a legacy of the colonial administration. In the groundnut-growing zone, for example, cases of human investment were even rarer. In most villages, it was felt that these operations were the sole responsibility of the administrative services and that community participation had nothing to do with these infrastructure investments: everything was expected of the welfare state (République du Sénégal 1964: 49). Yet from the outset, the Senegalese government had sought to make human investment the key to success, enabling grassroots communities to develop their sense of collective responsibility. It was seen as "the gesture of an animated grassroots cell that decides itself to mobilize its available labor force to carry out local infrastructure work with the assistance of the State" (Direction de l'Animation 1963).

Rural expansion provided a technical framework to support the local population in drawing up and implementing development plans, popularizing new environmental enhancement techniques, improving rural housing, and promoting the cooperative movement.

The⁹ cooperative system was part of a broader framework of grassroots community development, and fulfilled three major

⁸ We do not intend in these passages to retrace all the stages these processes took and the results they produced. There are good works on this subject to which we have had recourse, and which we do not pretend to replace. Our purpose is different and more limited. See, for example, El Hadj Madior Cissé (2004), who witnessed the implementation of these programs from the inside.

⁹ Mamadou Dia (1961) demonstrates the importance of cooperativism in the process of social change and economic progress. For him, cooperativism is not a pressure group fighting against an established

objectives: to put an end to the milking economy by reorganizing marketing channels and making production systems profitable for the local population; to put an end to usurious peasant indebtedness; to ensure the modernization of farming activities through an accessible policy of equipping the peasantry; and to promote new social relationships in rural areas to kick-start the dynamics of development. In Mamadou DIA's view, the cooperative movement was the best way to preserve ancient community values and promote modern development, capable of taking a firm place in today's world. These service cooperatives were destined to become development cooperatives, gradually taking over all the functions required for the harmonious development of the farming community. To support them, a whole structural system of intervention in rural areas was set up, notably the Centres d'Expansion Rurale (Rural Expansion Centres) and the Centres Régionaux d'Assistance au Développement (Regional Development Assistance Centres).

In the final analysis, the central government's main objective was to eliminate a whole series of bottlenecks linked essentially to the rise of conservatism, the inward-looking nature of village society, inequalities in access to land, gaps between different social strata, and the obsolescence of the trading economy. These factors led him to implement new alternative policies based on breaking with the spirit of dependence and subservience. Based on the idea of reorganizing grassroots communities to take account of rural interests in the development process, extensive empirical studies¹⁰ were carried out throughout the country under the direction of Reverend Father Louis Joseph Lebret. Based on an overview of the country's economic, social, and cultural situation (determination of homogeneous zones according to relevant criteria), a planning scheme was drawn up, based on three fundamental stages:

- Firstly, to set up animation cells in several villages. These cells were essentially made up of a core of animators recruited in groups of 2 to 5 from each natural social cell. Their role was to disseminate the lessons learned during the training courses and to undertake microprojects. Thanks to repeated contacts with the populations of the various villages, they were then to take on leadership responsibilities for the development of the wider

order, but the constitution of an official apparatus responsible for mobilizing the population to achieve collective progress. As such, he writes: "through its educational action, cooperation shapes man without uprooting him, by giving him a taste for personal initiative and a sense of responsibility, while at the same time fortifying in him a sense of solidarity" (1961: 78).

¹⁰ These surveys were entrusted to the Institut de Recherche et de Formation en vue du Développement harmonisé (IRFED). Development techniques were perfected by the Compagnie d'Études Industrielles et d'Aménagement du territoire (CINAM) and the Société d'Études et de Réalisations Économiques et Sociales dans l'Agriculture (SERESA). Other research was carried out by the Organisme de Recherche sur l'Alimentation et la Nutrition en Afrique (ORANA), the Office de Recherches Scientifiques et Techniques d'Outre-mer (ORSTOM), the Société Grenobloise d'Études et d'Application Hydrauliques (SOGREAH), the Mission d'Aménagement du fleuve Sénégal (MAS), the Mission Économico-Sociale du fleuve Sénégal (MISOES). The inventory took the form of a 2,000-page typed document.

territory, to the point of encouraging the emergence of animated development cells.

Very briefly, this first stage certainly called for internal cohesion and a shared concern within the core group of animators, but it was above all aimed at integration between animators and populations, so as to create synergies and reciprocal impulses. The report on the Concerted Action Program Project had clearly summarized the main steps to be taken. These dialogues were :

"It's a confrontation between the facilitators and the population, and an expression by the population, worked on by these facilitators, of what it wants to do and obtain. The reasons for the participation of all the basic agents of the State in these discussions are explained to them, as is their role, which is precisely to be at their service, i.e. their partner in the dialogue for the development of the cell. The discussion must lead to general and precise projects, both distant and immediate" (Direction de l'Animation 1962: 12).

- Secondly, to set up development units from the outset. More concretely, this meant creating development tools such as multifunctional cooperative structures, delimiting homogeneous zones, equipping central villages that would polarize the economic and social life of the terroir, and progressively projecting cell development programs. These development cells were intended to meet all the needs of man in his natural environment and lead to the institutionalization of a social environment open to progress. As confirmed by the results of this report: *"The coverage of the country by future development cells will create economic and cultural solidarity between all populations... Articulation, solidarity, and integration will appear as results of the structuring of the country into development cells"* (Direction de l'Animation 1962: 7).

Specifically, they were to be rural communities grouping together several villages, socially, historically, and economically linked, in a homogeneous area, with an equipped village center polarizing the others within a 10 km radius. However, this homogeneity does not exclude ethnic or religious plurality or economic diversity. The rural community, with an average population of 4,000 to 6,000 inhabitants, must become a new space of solidarity to drive the national construction dynamic. The rural community must also be endowed with a multi-sectoral and multi-functional development cooperative to take care of the individual and collective needs of the population;

- Thirdly, to set up, in a gradual process, rural communes¹¹ after consultation with the people themselves, for the free grouping of

¹¹ They came into being with Decree 90-1135 of October 08, 1990. Although the general structure of rural communities had not changed since the 1972 reform, the aim of this new reform was to create communes within some of these local authorities (rural communities), often from central villages that were the chief towns of rural communities. Three waves of communalization in rural areas can be identified. The first wave dates from the same year, with Dahra, Koungheul, Ourossoqui, Ndioum, Thionck Essyl, Goudomp, Marsassoum, Dioffior and Pout. The second wave came in 1996 with Kahone, Passy, Gandiaye, Ndoiffane Langhène, Thilogne, Waoundé, Kanel, Semmé, Golléré, Nguekokh, Thiadiaye and Sébikhotane.

rural communities. Each rural commune should have a population equivalent to between 20,000 and 30,000 inhabitants. As part of the program to set up rural communes, it was planned to dissolve the administrative level of the arrondissement, to make way for the rural expansion center, which was to become the technical core of the Communal Council. The seats of the Communal Councils designated to fulfill their new role as poles for the emergence of small relay towns between rural and urban areas were chosen from the village-centers of rural communities. Under this program, the State was to eventually withdraw from its role as a backup, leaving the rural communes to manage their own development.

The leitmotif of this approach was the need to restore a sense of initiative to the people. That's why the public authorities of the time, to avoid falling into the trap of a legal-administrative framework of informal and passive policies, wanted to turn rural communes into autonomous decision-making centers and major poles of local development. To this end, they showed a clear intention to distance themselves, in this reform program, from their territorial delimitations as well as their attributions, which did not fall under the authority of the central power. Mamadou Dia supports this thesis in the following terms: *"The rural communes are regional assemblies of the central power, with powers of initiative, decision and management that should be promoted, i.e.*

The third wave, in 2002, included Diannadio, Kayar, Mboro, Rosso Sénégal, Niandane, Diawara and Ranérou. All in all, they numbered around 28 before the creation of three new regions in 2008. Beyond this process of communalization of rural areas, it is interesting to consider how it has been implemented. Article 79 of the 1996 Local Authorities Code clearly states: "Only localities that are sufficiently developed to be able to draw on their own resources to balance their budget may be constituted as communes. No commune may be established without a population of at least one thousand [1000] inhabitants". In other words, there are two criteria for establishing a locality as a commune: on the one hand, the criterion of own resources and, on the other, the demographic criterion. Further analysis reveals that, apart from the demographic criterion, the "resource" aspect of the law is not sufficiently clear to be coherent and objective. In practice, there is nothing in the texts to indicate what procedure should be used to measure the appropriate level of development of a territory, with a view to subsequently establishing it as a commune. This provision is too vague to be based on objective and transparent criteria. Worse still, law 90-34 of 08/10/1990 crowned this legal vagueness by de facto deleting a relevant provision of the 1966 communal administration code, which nonetheless imposed the obligation to have recourse to a prior inquiry commission for any communalization project. By way of comparison, between 1966 and 1990, not a single locality was erected as a commune (certainly due to objective criteria derived from the work of the commissions), whereas between 1990 and 2002, 28 localities became communes. And yet, during this same period, there were over 600 villages in Senegal with populations of over 1,000 that had their own resources identical to those of localities already constituted as communes. Today, in this process of communalization, the clientelist and discretionary logic of the central authority, which is very sensitive to its political interests and to maraboutic lobbying, seems to prevail over all other provisions laid down in the texts. This logic is currently very prevalent in Senegal's decentralization policy, as evidenced by the creation of three new regions. At the same time, it explains why many of the communes created during this period have become economically unviable rural areas, unable to make a normal transition from rural to urban due to structural and cyclical constraints and the lack of accompanying measures.

in the direction of self-managing decentralization, with the central power becoming more and more a coordinating power, while ensuring the major tasks of a modern State: currency, diplomacy, army, school and health policy, major infrastructures".

All in all, this innovative policy option of decentralization in rural areas, which is based on the theory of authentic development dear to the Reverend Father Louis Joseph Lebret and above all on the doctrine of self-management socialism specific to President Mamadou Dia, was unable to take full effect¹² for political reasons linked in particular to the political crisis of December 1962, during which Mamadou Dia was dismissed and detained for usurpation of power¹³.

Instead of such an ambitious development policy, Léopold Sédar Senghor's government preferred to emphasize a Jacobin policy of

centralization and concentration of power, inaugurated respectively by the 1963 constitution and its later revision in 1967. Indeed, few had the audacity to openly allude to Circular 32 after the arrest of the President of the Council. There was an early misunderstanding or a pretence of misunderstanding, that continuity is one of the operating principles of the administration, and that allegiances to individuals or political contingencies counted for very little. Circular 32 was immediately replaced, after almost a decade of administrative vacuum (disorder in rural supervision, lethargy in rural expansion centers, rural animation, and agricultural extension services)¹⁴ by Circular 37 of 10.09.1970, drawn up by Prime Minister Abdou Diouf, whose stated aim was to create a supervisory structure for the rural world. In his *Mémoires d'un militant du Tiers-monde (Memoirs of a Third World militant)*, Mamadou Dia wrote of these events, which marked the crisis of two-headedness in Senegal:

"I had noticed a certain uneasiness in Senghor, a growing indisposition that he couldn't suppress, as on the occasion of my trips abroad which, however, were not at all trips that I provoked myself. The fact that it wasn't he, the Head of State, who was being invited made him terribly uncomfortable. This was particularly noticeable at meetings and conferences between Heads of Government or State of the famous Brazzaville Group. Since I was the President of the Council, with all the powers, obviously I was the Authority. When it came to the Senegalese Council of Ministers, there were no problems. But when it was a meeting between states, with presidential regimes, like everywhere else, I sensed that he was a little annoyed, even if he didn't tell me so".

While President Mamadou Dia's grassroots approach to development was largely sidetracked from its initial objectives, it did have the merit of inspiring another reform ten years later, after this political crisis, the reform of territorial and local administration, which gave birth to a new form of local authority: the rural communities.

¹⁴The politicization of development organizations was such that President Léopold Sédar Senghor himself could not fail to sound the alarm, in a speech to the National Assembly on April 19 1963: "It must be recognized that these organizations have not always been satisfactory, for the simple reason that they have been regarded as political offices serving private interests. This politicization, in the wrong sense of the word, is responsible for the lagging economies in certain regions. In the same way that attempts have been made to turn the Animation into a weapon at the service of clans, and cooperatives into parallel Party cells for petty interests, the CRADs appear, here and there, as the property of petty cronies, who use their equipment, and even the funds that pass through them, for their electoral needs... The CRADs have been confiscated by regional political feudalities, and have sunk into anarchy that has resulted in a deficit for this year (1962-1963) of over a billion. How could it be otherwise, when a development organization becomes an instrument at the service of local politicians, no different from the old SMDRs and SPs whose shortcomings they should have corrected?"

¹² The Kolda circle (Casamance) was chosen as the pilot experiment. But the results fell far short of expectations.

¹³ On December 17, 1962, Mamadou DIA, President of the Government Council, was overthrown by a motion of censure passed by the National Assembly. He was suspected of an attempted coup d'état. Arrested along with Valdiodio NDIAYE, Ibrahima SARR, Joseph MBAYE and Alioune SARR, they were tried and sentenced, after a five-day trial, by the High Court of Justice in 1963 respectively to perpetual deportation, twenty years' criminal detention for the next three, and five years' imprisonment and a ten-year residence ban for the last. Imprisoned in Kédougou, Mamadou DIA was released in 1974 after twelve years in prison, then amnestied on April 04, 1976 by presidential decree. The 1962 crisis had other socio-political consequences in Senegal. Various confrontations and violent clashes between opposing parties took place. This led to the systematic suppression of all opposition parties. Between 1963 and 1967, for reasons strictly linked to satisfying the interests of the dominant party, the ruling Union Progressiste Sénégalaise (UPS) [created in February 1959 through the merger of the main Senegalese parties, notably the Bloc Populaire Sénégalais (BPS) set up in 1957, headed by Léopold Sédar Senghor and the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO) led by Lamine Guèye], a variety of strategies and means were employed, ranging from violent oppression to peaceful amalgamation, to remove opposition parties from the political arena. Thus, for example, in the case of PRA-Sénégal (Parti du Regroupement Africain), the only legally-existing opposition party at the time, its margin of freedom remained very limited. In fact, conditions were such that this political grouping was unable to organize and hold public meetings, except during election periods. For proof of this, we need only recall that its leaders were periodically questioned, without objective justification. As a logical consequence, one of its leaders, Assane Seck, was imprisoned several times in 1961 in connection with a murky arms deal (Hesseling 1985: 132.). Similarly, Majhmout Diop, leader of the Parti Africain pour l'Indépendance (PAI), which was formed in Thiès on September 18, 1957, was sentenced in absentia to 10 years' imprisonment by the Saint Louis court, for violence and possession of weapons. F. Zuccarelli (1970) adds that the PAI members arrested were sentenced on March 19, 1966, to prison terms ranging from one year to thirty months. On another level, on October 14 1966, the Bloc des Masses Sénégalaises (BMS), headed by Boubacar Guèye and Cheikh Anta Diop when it was founded in July 1963, was banned by decree (Arrêté n° 14794, MINT-APA). A few members of the BMS, including Cheikh Anta Diop and Samba Diop, did not give up and a few weeks later founded a new party: the Front National Sénégalais (FNS) led by Cheikh Anta Diop and Samba Diop was also dissolved by decree. The reason given was disturbance of public order (Décret n° 64-699 du 13 Octobre 1964 portant dissolution de l'association dite Front National Sénégal).

5. The creation of rural communities by the Local and Territorial Administrative Reform (RATL)

In order to bring the administration closer to the people, with a view to taking better account of their aspirations through participative local management, the Senegalese legislator has introduced a new administrative division of the national territory. With this in mind, the Territorial and Local Administrative Reform (RATL), introduced by the law of April 19, 1972, led to the creation of rural communities. In the African context of the 1970s, which was marked by the primacy of authoritarian projects of the state systems in place, this historic decision to set up rural communities was part of the public authorities' desire to introduce local democracy into the countryside in order to initiate a dynamic of self-sustained development. The idea of organizing rural areas into local authorities dates back to 1964, with the *Loi sur le Domaine National (National Domain Law)*¹⁵, which later, with the 1972 law, conferred on rural communities the power to manage land located in terroir zones (Cf. article 8 of the *Loi relative au Domaine National* in appendix 6). Article 1 of law 72-02 of February 01, 1972, on territorial administration, stipulates that the rural community is a local authority, a legal entity under public law, with financial autonomy. It is made up of a number of villages belonging to the same terroir, but united by a sense of solidarity resulting in particular from neighborliness, possessing common interests, and able together to find the resources necessary for their development¹⁶.

The originality of the 1972 Territorial and Local Administrative Reform lies in the fact that the rural community itself manages its own development problems, in the sense that it is the only entity in the rural environment, with a legal framework, that can have a "better" grasp of the needs of the local population. Under the terms of this law, it intends to involve rural populations in the management of public affairs. It now has the legal capacity and the human, material, and financial resources to carry out its mission of designing, programming, and implementing development activities. To this end, the local authority is managed by a number of bodies. According to Giorgio Blundo (1998), the creation of rural communities was initially a response to a hegemonic project on the part of the Senegalese state, based on three objectives: to

¹⁵ In the opinion of Etienne Le Roy (1991: 183), the *Loi sur le Domaine National* was initially conceived in 1959 by an inter-ministerial council chaired by the Minister of Finance. In relation to the *Loi sur le Domaine National*, other authoritative specialists on land issues make several arguments in favor of government responsibility for land ownership and allocation:

- to promote economic development, it was necessary to turn land into a means of production, and thus free it from its entrenchment in social relationships and "traditional" values...
- the State was to be able to mobilize land for development projects (such as irrigation);
- the State had to protect local populations from the effects of land speculation ...

See Philippe Lavigne Delville et al. (2000:13).

¹⁶ *Textes de loi de la décentralisation, Republic of Senegal, Ministry of the Interior, Dakar, 1996, p. 56.*

reinforce the politico-administrative grid, to erase the different local modes of land tenure and natural resource management through a land reform that nationalized almost the entire agricultural domain administered by rural community bodies, and to relocate political struggles within the central state, by creating spaces for confrontation and competition around local issues. In reality, the implementation of territorial and local administrative reform was part of a perspective of decentralization, participation, and deconcentration¹⁷. In concrete terms, this involved :

- Strengthening the powers of decentralized administrative authorities: governors, prefects, and sub-prefects, who are the representatives of the State in their respective administrative districts;
- Greater powers for local authorities to intervene in economic matters;
- The creation of communes with special status in regional capitals, with the introduction of a two-headed system: President of the Municipal Council and Municipal Administrator;
- The creation of rural communities is the act by which decentralization has reached the rural world.

Based on a logic of empowerment at grassroots level, this reform inaugurated, in the eyes of some observers, the first real phase of decentralization in Senegal, through the various revisions it brought to light: bridging the gap between regions dug by the colonial administration, resolving imbalances, increasing employment and properly distributing income. This reform was also prompted by the fact that the country's political and administrative capital was too far from the regional peripheries. This meant that "the process of taking needs into account was too long and too slow, and priorities were not well understood to be well managed". Consequently, the Administrative, Territorial, and Local Reform was seen as a break with the obvious intention of triggering local dynamics to drive processes of democratization, training in the management of public affairs, proximity, collective learning, and the resolution of local problems through a number of means such as deconcentration, decentralization, participation and the planning of economic and social development. Indeed, according to the National Human Development Report¹⁸, it was designed to:

¹⁷ For example, at the *arrondissement* level, the *sous-préfet* was responsible for promoting development in collaboration with the rural expansion centers, and for routinely assisting rural communities and their executive assemblies. He had more resources than the former *arrondissement* chief, and the rural development centers were hierarchically dependent on him. At the departmental level, the prefect was responsible for management and control, and supported grassroots rural communities. He was assisted in his task by a team of trainers in raising awareness and training rural councillors. At the regional level, the governor's mission was to coordinate the actions undertaken, and to encourage the technical departments in the various tasks involved in bringing this reform to a successful conclusion.

¹⁸ *Rapport national sur le développement humain/2003, 2004, Le développement local au Sénégal: problèmes et perspectives, Document de travail, Dakar, Avril, p.32-33.*

- On the one hand, the search for institutional solutions conducive to the participation of grassroots communities, with a view to transforming traditional structures into development units capable of providing a framework for proactive mobilization to take charge of the development enterprise;
- On the other hand, the organization of communalization between grassroots communities and the administrative apparatus with a view to dialogue, to move from a phase of encouraged participation to one of negotiated participation;
- Lastly, the integration of the actions of these local authorities into the national outlook.

Its origins lie in the desire of the President of the Republic to carry out a general reform of the administration, and of territorial and local administration in particular. Starting in 1971, the authorities set up commissions on the administrative organization of Senegal, involving both the Department of Regional Planning and the regional and departmental development committees. The Thiès region was chosen by expert partners of the United Nations Development Program as a test area for the reform. To this end, a mission from the regional planning department spent three months there (between January and March to be precise) to study how to divide up the region's ten arrondissements and rural communities, which had a population of between 5,000 and 15,000 that same year. An initial list of sixty villages likely to be centers of rural communities was drawn up and then studied. This made it possible to set up groups of interdependent villages, forming terroirs around village centres. It was precisely on May 12, 1972, that the results of this work were presented in Thiès at a regional development committee specially organized for the region.

Following recommendations from local administrative and political leaders, and a draft division of the Thiès region submitted to the departmental development committees for approval at their extraordinary meeting on May 29, 1972, the local and territorial reform was implemented in the region on July 01, 1972, by decree no. 72.664 of June 7, 1972. Decree 72.761 divided the region's 10 arrondissements into 31 rural communities (see Table 1) in the departments of Mbour, Thiès, and Tivaouane. Their executive assemblies were elected for the first time on November 12 of the same year, with 2/3 elected by universal suffrage and the other third elected by cooperatives.

Table 1: Administrative division of the Thiès region in 1972

REGION	DEPARTMENT	ARRONDISSEMENT	RURAL COMMUNITY
THIES	MBOUR	TFissel Thiadiaye Nguékhokh	Fissel, Ndiagianao Nguéniéne, Sandiara, Thiadiaye, Nguékhokh, Malicounda oualof, Ndiass

THIES	Pout Thiénaba Notto	Pout, Diender Guédj, Fandéne Thiénaba, Gandiaye, Touba Toul, Ndiayène Sirakh Notto, Tasséte
TIVAOUANE	Pambal Méouane Médina Dakhar Niakhène	Mont- Rolland, Noto-Gouye Diama, Chérif Lô, Pire Méouane, Taïba Ndiaye, Mboro Médina Dakhar, Koul, Pékesse Niakhène, Thilmakha, Mbayène, Ngandiouf

Source: Law No. 72-02 of February 1, 1972, on territorial administrative organization (cf. Journal Officiel de la République du Sénégal, first half of 1972).

Elected for a 5-year term, the Rural Council is essentially responsible for managing the national domain lands located on village terroirs, defining the terms and conditions of exercise, usage rights, and development projects for approval. But the rural community's autonomy was very limited. Its deliberations were subject to approval by the sub-prefect. The President of the Rural Council had no financial powers. This was the responsibility of the sub-prefect, who exercised a form of tutelage. The authors of the reform considered that the members of the rural councils did not have sufficient skills to manage local affairs. Analysts spoke of an apprenticeship in decentralization. In the wake of this administrative, territorial, and local reform, the public authorities opted for caution and experimentation. As a result, the reform came into force progressively, at the rate of one region every two years. After Thiès in 1972, it was the turn of Sine Saloum in 1974. Implementing decree no. 74-136 of February 09 1974 divided the region into 6 departments, 20 arrondissements, and 76 rural communities comprising 2,893 villages. Diourbel followed in 1976, divided into 3 departments and 33 rural communities comprising 1,162 villages; Louga in 1976 (3 departments, 11 arrondissements, and 48 rural communities comprising 2,508 villages); Casamance in 1978 (6 departments and 68 rural communities comprising 2,730 villages); the River region in 1980 (3 departments, 11 arrondissements, and 28 rural communities comprising 927 villages); Eastern Senegal in 1982. There was, however, the special case of Cap Vert, which underwent a reform

in 1983 that led to the creation of a Rural Council. On the other hand, there has been no change in the common law communes.

On the other hand, for communes with special status, the adoption of law 72-63 of July 26, 1972, established a municipal system for communes that were regional capitals, with the exception of Dakar. According to the legislator, these communes were made up of a municipal council elected by universal suffrage and an administrator appointed by the State. What's more, these communes no longer enjoyed general jurisdiction but rather were assigned powers¹⁹.

5.1. Rural community bodies

These include the Rural Council and the President of the Rural Council.

5.1.1. Rural council

It was the body responsible for managing the rural community. Through its deliberations, the Rural Council was responsible for regulating the affairs of this local authority, whether they concerned development projects or the promotion of service activities that directly contributed to satisfying the needs of the population. The Rural Council also deliberated on the administrative accounts presented by the President of the Rural Council. It was also consulted on all development projects concerning all or part of the rural community. At the same time, it gave its opinion on allocations, aid and subsidies of all kinds, the organization of civil status in the rural community, and the organization of mobile courts. It could also express its views on any regulatory measures it felt should be implemented, and which were necessary for the development of the local community. The President of the Rural Council was a central link in the management of rural communities.

5.1.2. The President of the Rural Council

The President of the Rural Council was the authority responsible for administering the rural community. The President of the Rural Council was the authorizing officer of the budget. His essential missions revolved around :

- Publication and enforcement of laws and regulations;
- Enforcement of police measures ;
- Execution of measures taken by the sub-prefect to ensure public order, safety and health;
- Certain special functions assigned by law.

Thus, for example, the President of the Rural Council was a civil registrar in the same way as the mayors of the communes. He was

¹⁹ It should be noted that the commune of Dakar was a special case. It was governed by law 72 26 of April 19, 1972, which stipulated that the commune's territory was that of the region. Thereafter, until 1979, it was the regional governor who administered the commune. Law 79 58 of June 25, 1979 amended the 72 Dakar law, bringing the commune into line with other communes with special status. The governor is no longer the municipal administrator. The latter is another civil servant appointed by the State. But in 1983, the legislator modified Dakar's municipal system as part of an overall reform of the region. Thus, 3 years later, 5 common-law communes were created in place of the regional commune. This was the first major move towards orthodox decentralization. In this direction, the legislator created 2 rural communes (Sangalkam and Sébikhotane) and an urban community in Dakar.

responsible for carrying out the deliberations of the Rural Council, and for allocating land in the national domain under the conditions laid down by law. In this capacity, it was also responsible for declaring the disaffection of these lands and controlling the exercise of any right of use, as well as authorizing the installation of dwellings or camps. However, such decisions could be appealed to the sub-prefect. As for the vice presidents, they had no prerogatives whatsoever.

5.1.3. The rural community's local development powers

Senegal's rural communities have a number of powers (Article 195 of the Local Authorities Code). Act 96-06 of March 22 on the Local Authorities Code clearly defined the powers of rural communities²⁰ in terms of planning, management, and use of the State's private, public, and national domains, the environment and management of natural resources, land use planning, health, population and social action, youth, sports and leisure, culture, education, literacy, promotion of national languages and vocational training:

It should be noted, however, that three basic principles govern this transfer of powers:

- Firstly, it must take account of the State's sovereign tasks (control of legality, coordination of development actions, the major role of the State as guarantor of cohesion, national solidarity, and territorial integrity);
- Secondly, the principle that one local authority should not control another;
- Lastly, this transfer of jurisdiction simultaneously benefits existing local authorities, i.e. the State, the region, the commune, the rural community, and the district communes.

In other words, the organization of competences must be based on the principle of complementarity between the planners and developers, i.e. the State and the regions, on the one hand, and the local managers, i.e. other local authorities, on the other. To meet their responsibilities, rural communities are entitled by law to a certain number of resources.

²⁰In addition to the rural communities, other local authorities are also responsible for exercising competencies, in accordance with the law on the transfer of competencies (Law 96-06 of March 22, 1996). In the case of the region, for example, it was responsible for initiating and coordinating development actions within the framework of a regional council. More specifically, it is responsible for promoting economic, health, cultural and scientific development, and for regional planning through the regional development agency (ARD), taking into account the allocation and opinion of communes and rural communities. The regions may also enter into cooperation agreements and conventions with other local authorities, public or private, foreign or international organizations, in compliance with the laws in force. As for the arrondissement communes, they were responsible for managing district markets; carrying out minor sanitation and hygiene work; participating in household waste collection; supervising the removal of sand from streets and maintaining streets, squares and green spaces; maintaining school, health, socio-cultural and sports facilities; and participating in the preparation of the city's development plan. The State, for its part, is responsible for sovereignty, control of legality, coordination of development actions (guaranteeing national solidarity and territorial integrity) and the non-tutorship of one local authority over another.

2.4. Rural community resources

In order to fulfill their various responsibilities, local authorities such as rural communities need considerable resources. Their main sources of revenue were local taxes (taxe rurale, impôt du minimum fiscal, taxe représentative de l'impôt du minimum fiscal, contribution des patentes, contribution des licences, taxes foncières (contributions foncières des propriétés bâties et des propriétés non bâties), centimes additionnels (additional levies on the tax du minimum fiscal, patente or licences, depending on the number of centimes created by deliberation of the Rural Council), indirect taxes (slaughter taxes, taxes on distributors of gasoline, diesel or any other fuel), non-tax revenues (income from the operation of the estate and services, income from the fees collected in the rural community's halls, markets, fairs, slaughterhouses and livestock yards, income from parking and public road occupation permits, etc.), and income from the rental of souks, the sale of goods and services, and the payment of taxes; income from the rental of souks, butcher's stalls, restaurants, gargotes, canteens, road fees, impound fees) miscellaneous income (60% of the proceeds of fixed fines and fines imposed by ordinary criminal courts for offences committed within the territory of rural communities, proceeds from copies of administrative and civil status documents, legalization fees), investment income (gifts and bequests subject to investment charges, assistance funds, loan funds, proceeds from the sale, alienation or exchange of real estate; proceeds from the sale of animals or equipment impounded and not claimed within the statutory time limits, proceeds from duly authorized extraordinary additional centimes, credits allocated by the State budget or any other public body in the form of grants for major town planning works and capital expenditure, in accordance with estimates and campaign plans deliberated by the local authority council, deductions made for the benefit of the investment section from the operating section), temporary or accidental income (resources from development partners, donations and bequests from development partners).

Conclusion

After decades of extensive centralization of power, the launch of the decentralization process has paved the way for a host of initiatives aimed at bringing civil society on board. Whether through the introduction of new legal and legislative provisions or the gradual loosening of State intervention, decentralization has gradually been given impetus by public authorities at several levels.

As already indicated, it aims to inaugurate a new approach to the management of public affairs, based on the search for ways to promote citizenship by mobilizing all the driving forces of society to build viable, controlled development.

The diachronic approach used in this article has been decisive. It has enabled us to understand the different stages of urban and rural decentralization that have marked Senegal's institutional evolution, from the pre-colonial period to the country's accession to international sovereignty. This historical overview of communes and rural communities reveals that the establishment of these local authorities was the fruit of a very long evolution.

The different resources and potentialities of the decentralized Senegambian, French colonial, and post-colonial Senegalese entities have determined the positioning issues that have emerged at central and local levels, as it is on the basis of these that actors have developed different strategies for accessing the various territorialized resources of the local urban and rural arena.

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