

**Colonial Logics: Agricultural, Commercial, & Moral Experiments in the Making of French
Senegal, 1763-1870**

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ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTE ON SPELLING

Abbreviations

ANOM	Archives nationales d'outre-mer
ANS	Archives nationales du Sénégal

Note on Spelling

I have favored the new spelling system for place names and Wolof words over the French spelling. Thus I use Kajoor rather than Cayor, Waalo rather than Oualo, and so on. I have retained original spellings in direct quotations.

SUMMARY

This dissertation examines the development of French colonial practices in northern Senegambia between 1763 and 1870 to explain the colony of Senegal's transition from a series of small trading posts to a territory brought under French administration by military conquest. It bridges the divide between the first and second French overseas empires to examine an understudied period in French imperial history. The dissertation argues that experimentation and failure on the local level, rather than a coherent doctrine applied from above, drove the elaboration of successive colonial logics. By identifying the role of creative failure in the making of French Senegal in the nineteenth century, the dissertation shows how the failure of particular colonial logics and the elaboration of new ones traced both the possibilities and limitations of colonial rule going forward. The dissertation identifies three overlapping colonial logics that culminated in a colonial discourse and practice that prefigured the late-nineteenth-century French military conquest of much of West Africa. When the French returned to Senegal in 1817 after a period of British rule, they drew on proposals and models from the previous half century to formulate settlement and plantation schemes that reflected an agricultural colonial logic. As a result of the failure of these schemes in the late 1820s, colonial practices coalesced around a commercial logic, the failure of which in turn justified a military logic that emphasized conquest, administrative development, and infrastructural projects.

By examining travel accounts, colonial policy, administrative correspondence, missionary writing, and other sources, this dissertation demonstrates how colonial knowledge was

constructed on the ground by colonial administrators, merchants, naturalists, engineers, and missionaries. Missionaries have often been overlooked in histories of French imperialism; this dissertation shows that they played an important role in formulating colonial logics and defining the notion of “civilization.” Missionaries developed their own moral visions for the colony, though their goals often intersected with the administration’s goals of promoting agriculture and commerce. This dissertation adds to understandings of the French civilizing mission by showing the shifting meanings of “civilization” in the nineteenth century.

Introduction

In the foreword to his 1889 book *Le Sénégal: la France dans l'Afrique occidentale*, Louis Faidherbe remembered his surprise and pleasure upon hearing in 1879 that work was to commence on a railroad between Médine and Niger. The railroad would mean French expansion farther into the Western Sudan. Faidherbe, who had served as governor of Senegal in 1854-1861 and 1863-1865, made sure to underline his early embrace of a politics of expansion years before the railroad project: "As governor, I showed myself to be a partisan of penetration, like my predecessors, Brüe, Bouët-Willaumez, Baudin, etc.; I established the post of Médine, not only to protect all our possessions behind it, but also as a point of departure for the march forward."¹ By associating himself clearly with the foundation of Médine, Faidherbe cultivated a legacy as a forward thinker, an early proponent of the kind of military conquest and colonial expansion that he witnessed in the 1880s. If Médine was a jumping off point, Faidherbe would appear as key in making the railroad and the expansion of French colonial territory possible in the first place. Faidherbe thus painted himself as a figure with strong connections to the future of the French presence in West Africa.

At the same time, Faidherbe's mention of past French administrators served to suggest a kind of continuity in French attitudes toward expansion. André Bruë, director-general of the Compagnie du Sénégal for parts of the first decades of the 1700s, Édouard Bouët-Willaumez,

¹ "Étant gouverneur, je me suis montré partisan de la pénétration, comme mes prédécesseurs, Brüe, Bouët-Willaumez, Baudin, etc.; j'ai établi le poste de Médine, non seulement pour protéger toutes nos possessions en arrière, mais aussi comme point de départ pour la marche en avant." Louis Faidherbe, *Le Sénégal: la France dans l'Afrique occidentale* (Paris: Hachette, 1889), 2.

governor of Senegal from 1843-1844, and Auguste Baudin, governor from 1847-1850, all appeared as precursors to Faidherbe's plans of expansion. By portraying these figures as proponents of "penetration" with no further explanation, Faidherbe obscured the shifting priorities of French administrators over the decades. The space the book devotes to the history of the French presence in Senegambia before Faidherbe's arrival is fairly small; his reference to earlier administrators, however, serves to draw a direct line between projects of expansion over the centuries. This work, written by a man with a reputation as the father of modern French colonial Senegal, raises a number of questions. How much stock should historians put in Faidherbe's implicit claim of the continuity of French projects of colonial expansion? Did nothing happen in the century before Faidherbe became governor that would merit more than a cursory treatment? What historical forces led to Faidherbe and his successors embracing the type of colonial development that they did?

Much of the historiography on French imperialism in Senegal has in fact, perhaps unconsciously, mirrored the framework for seeing the development of the colony suggested by Faidherbe in *Le Sénégal* and raises many of the same questions. The two perhaps paradoxical strains evident in Faidherbe's foreword -- that colonial history should begin with Faidherbe since nothing of historical interest for French imperialism happened before, and that the French presence in Senegal was always marked by a drive to expand territorially in a way that looked much like the military expansion of the late nineteenth century -- have structured much of the writing about nineteenth-century French Senegal by imperial historians. Yet this view obscures not only the existence of colonial projects in Senegal in the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century but also changes in French agents' visions for the colony's future.

This dissertation looks at the development of French colonial practices in Senegal between 1763 and 1870, a transitional period between the mercantilist, slave-trading French empire of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth-century territorial empire that came with the “scramble for Africa.” I argue that a set of successive colonial logics marked a nonlinear path towards the establishment of a territorially-based colony through experimentation and failure. Failure, I argue, was the driving force behind the production of new logics, and a factor in placing limits on how French administrators and other colonial agents could imagine the colony. In Senegal, French agents moved through three iterations, or logics, for the colony, which I have loosely classed as agricultural (1814-1830), commercial (1830-1850), and military (1850-1870). The failure of settlement and plantation schemes by the end of the 1820s inaugurated a period in which French administrators and other commentators viewed the main purpose of the colony to be to serve as a series of trading posts. When commerce in turn failed to prove viable as an organizing principle for the colony, a logic of military expansion took its place. Metropolitan and colonial administrators, scientists, and merchants contributed to the formation of shifting colonial logics, and in the successive moments marked by these shifts, missionaries adapted their particular moral and religious visions for the colony in ways that sometimes supported and sometimes clashed with the administration’s goals.

By uncovering various colonial logics in this often overlooked period, I suggest that colonies were created neither as an implementation of a pre-formulated doctrine from above, nor as a series of accidents. Instead, colonial agents had to create a vocabulary of practice over time that made the creation of the colony possible. This dissertation adds to our understanding of how empire was built in the nineteenth century by analyzing the rhetorical modes and practices of

empire in one region, northern Senegambia. It seeks to emphasize both continuity and change in French colonial logics in Senegal over a long period of transition. The nineteenth century was an important period for the establishment of the colony of Senegal, though historians of French empire have tended to undervalue the significance of the period, with many accounts beginning with the last decades of the nineteenth century. I argue that the experiences of the period from 1763 to 1870 created opportunities for, while also limiting the possible directions of, the colony's development in the late nineteenth century.

Defining “Colonial Logic”

I have chosen the term “colonial logic” to emphasize the interconnectedness between the representational elements of colonialism and the work of exploring, governing, missionizing, and exploiting on the other. A colonial logic, in my formulation, comprises the discursive elements of a particular iteration of colonization along with the set of practices associated with it. As discourse was created and creative in relation to the practices of empire, I analyze ideas in published texts that were programmatic or representational in different colonial moments. At the same time, I examine treaties and decrees, administrative structures, bureaucratic exchanges, and other texts that reveal the workings of the colony and its relations with neighboring states and missionaries.

In many ways, the term “colonial logics” echoes the phrase “repertoires of imperial power,” used by Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper in a wide-reaching book on historical empires that spans more than 2000 years. Emphasizing the variable nature of empire (and attributing empires' durability to their political flexibility), Burbank and Cooper look to the

notion of “repertoires,” rather than “typologies” to explain imperial rule. They write, “What leaders could imagine and what they could carry off were shaped by past practices and constrained by context—both by other empires with their overlapping goals and by people in places empire-builders coveted.”²

In my development of the concept of the “colonial logic,” I too am more interested in understanding how the colony of Senegal “worked” in different moments than in fitting it into a fixed typology of colonialism. The logics identified here should consequently be seen as loose collections of overlapping practices rather than a strictly-defined list of features that constitute a particular kind of colony. I emphasize contingency, experiment, and failure in the rise and fall of colonial logics, a strategy that I hope will mitigate the tendency to read the word “logic” as an airtight worldview.

Periodization and the Question of Colonial Origins

This dissertation bridges the first and second French overseas empires in choosing as its focus the long chronology of 1763 to 1870. The French Revolution is a divide that is often still sacred in French historiography, even though Alexis de Tocqueville proposed an interpretation of the Revolution that emphasized the continuity of a strong central government both before and after the supposed moment of complete break.³ In the imperial context, too, the divide between the First and Second French overseas empires often appears as a bright line. As David Todd has noted, the period from 1814 to 1870 is a “historiographical chasm between two classical periods

² Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 3, 16.

³ Alexis de Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1856).

of imperial expansion.”⁴ The emphasis of the modern historical literature on French imperialism in West Africa is on the period beginning in the 1870s, as the French Third Republic was founded and the conquest of the Western Sudan began, or even the 1890s, when French West Africa was formed.⁵ Todd is right to suggest one way scholars might fill the historiographical gap is to seek out French versions of “informal empire,” a concept introduced in 1953 by John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson to describe British overseas activity in a period of low official support for empire. Gallagher and Robinson argued that Britain practiced an “imperialism of free trade” that exhibited continuities with later, official colonization.⁶ Senegal, of course, was the “formal” kind of colony, if a small one, though it did at times attempt to extend its “informal” influence through commerce, as Chapter III outlines. In any case, the notion that imperialism is not just one thing is a valuable one, and opens up possibilities for studying the French empire in the nineteenth century.

This dissertation seeks to understand the end of the overseas empire of the Old Regime and the beginning of the “new imperialism” of the late nineteenth century. Senegal provides a privileged point of reference for this question as it was an “old colony” during the First French overseas empire of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It also became the center of French West Africa in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The trajectory of

⁴ David Todd, “A French Imperial Meridian, 1814–1870,” *Past & Present* 210, no. 1 (2011): 155.

⁵ The same is true of the historiography of the French Empire more widely. The contributions to Martin Thomas, ed., *The French Colonial Mind*, 2 volumes (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), for example, nearly all focus on 1890 and beyond. There are a few recent exceptions that suggest a new scholarly interest in the French Empire in the early nineteenth century, including Rebecca Hartkopf Schloss, “Imagining the ‘Grand Colonial Family’ in French Guiana, 1819-1823,” *Atlantic Studies: Global Currents* 11, no. 2 (2014): 195-219 and Schloss’s forthcoming project *France at the Edges: Life in France’s Atlantic Port Cities, 1802-1830*.

⁶ John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, “The Imperialism of Free Trade,” *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 6, no. 1 (1953): 1-15.

Senegal is not meant to serve as an explanation for events in the entire French empire. In Algeria, for example, the existence of a large settler population made the stakes quite different. However, examining colonial change in Senegal allows us to understand how colonial practice was developed there and how a model of military conquest, territorial administration, and infrastructural improvements that prefigured the notion of colonial *mise en valeur* came to be imaginable.⁷

Focusing on colonial projects and practices in the century before full-scale French military expansion in the Western Sudan and the “scramble for Africa” provides a counterpoint to the Faidherbian narrative discussed in the beginning of this introduction. The notion that “real” colonization was only finally undertaken under Faidherbe (or even later), and the paradoxical but complementary idea that the idea of European colonization existed in unchanged form centuries earlier, have not yet been sufficiently challenged in French imperial histories. The problem is the tendency to focus on origins. Generally, the origins of the “new imperialism” are either dated neatly in the late nineteenth century or pushed back, sometimes to the period of the earliest European encounters. What comes before, then, in one narrative, turns into the precolonial, an unconnected story, a period of colonial failures that deserve attention only when they can be connected directly to later developments. In another narrative, what comes before becomes a long, unchanging period in which the colonial mentality and goals were already

⁷ On the concept of *mise en valeur*, see Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).

formed and European domination of the rest of the world is a given, even if the plan had perhaps not yet come to fruition.

As an example of this second framing, Mary Louise Pratt, in her important work on travel writing and empire, has argued that Enlightenment-era travel writing legitimized European dominance. Natural historians who traveled to other parts of the world used the language of science and observation that claimed to have “no transformative potential,” but, Pratt argues, “natural history asserted an urban, lettered, male authority over the whole of the planet.”⁸ William Cohen writes of the eighteenth century, “Filled with racial pride, French officials asserted their claims to superiority. Ignoring real power relationships, Europeans continued to weave intricate plans for ensuring French domination in Africa. They seldom paid attention to the difficulty of maintaining a persistent expansionist policy in the face of continuous assaults of tropical disease.”⁹ While claims of European superiority and racial difference were indeed significant elements in justifying colonial rule, these scholars push the origins of the kind of domination associated with late nineteenth century and beyond back into an undifferentiated past.

The problem of origins is, of course, not unique to the study of French Senegal. In a call for the study of “deep history,” Daniel Lord Smail and Andrew Shryock argue that the

⁸ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 38. Isabelle Surun has noted that Pratt’s argument flattens the chronology of colonization in “Le terrain de l’exploration reconsidéré : les explorateurs en Afrique au XIXe siècle,” in *L’Empire des géographes : géographie, exploration et colonisation, XIXe-XXe siècle*, ed. Pierre Singaravélou (Paris: Belin, 2008), 61.

⁹ William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans: White Response to Blacks, 1530-1880* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 160-161.

prevalence of “modernity” in historical work and the tendency to write history that looks forward to the future has led scholars to ignore what came before. They write,

Whenever we invoke the term ‘modernity’ as an explanatory concept, as a point of contrast that renders human experience distinct and unanswerable to the past, we are inventing a “pre” to go with it. . . The “pre” is a shadow cast by modern things, a space of simplified contrasts that is noticable yet encourages inattention.¹⁰

While the “pre” of colonialism is perhaps less shadowy, as colonialism does not have the same all-encompassing nature that “modernity” does, seeking the origins of colonialism, or of a particular type of colonialism such as the “new imperialism” of the late nineteenth century, flattens and eclipses what came before.

To move beyond the problem of origins, Foucault suggests the methodology of genealogy. Instead of seeking origins, genealogy “will cultivate the details and accidents that accompany every beginning.” Foucault writes, “The world we know is not this ultimately simple configuration where events are reduced to accentuate their essential traits, their final meaning, or their initial and final value. On the contrary, it is a profusion of entangled events.”¹¹ Instead of understanding the history of the French presence in Senegal through the lens of origins, then, or to put it another way, instead of attempting to date or explain a firm beginning of modern colonialism in West Africa, it is more fruitful to try to understand the overlapping logics that eventually allowed territorial expansion, military conquest, and the extension of administration techniques and infrastructure to become the accepted mode of colonization – at least, the mode accepted by the French administration. A study based on shifting imperial practices moves

¹⁰ Daniel Lord Smail and Andrew Shryock, “AHR Forum: History and the “Pre”” *American Historical Review* 118, no. 3 (2013): 711.

¹¹ Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, genealogy, history,” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 80, 89.

beyond the seeming dichotomy of continuity and change and redirects our attention away from defining colonial rule as one thing or another. A genealogical approach encourages the examination of how different colonial logics coalesced in particular moments, their techniques, and their discourses.

Failure

In this dissertation, I identify failure as a central theme in the development of French imperialism in Senegal in the nineteenth century. Why study failure? Georges Hardy, a colonial historian in the early twentieth century, tried his best to transform what might be seen as colonial failures of the period from 1817 (the date of the French return to the colony after a period of British rule) to 1854 (when Faidherbe became governor and inaugurated a policy of conquest and expansion of administration and institutions) into the personal victories of select colonial administrators. He wrote:

We think, and we wish to show this, that this period was not a simple preparation in the deterministic sense of the word, that is to say a series of inevitable facts, due to circumstances rather than to men, and contributing to the creation of the situation in Senegal in 1854, but rather a series of very worthy and, despite appearances, often efficient efforts that permitted Faidherbe to conceive of his plan of action clearly and to best employ his personal qualities for the interests of the colony. Assuredly, we distinguish between the resounding success of the work of Faidherbe and the partial and obscure successes of his predecessors, but we refuse to admit that these successes were purely temporary and that they add up to a failure; we wish to prove above all that men like Schmaltz, Fleuriau, Roger, like Bouët-Willaumez and many others, by their intelligence and energy, cleared the ground in Senegal of the obstacles that blocked it and sowed ideas, sketched out institutions, and traced directions that, in 1854, still endured, and that we find in the best parts of the work of Faidherbe.¹²

¹² “Nous pensons, et nous voudrions démontrer, que cette période n’a pas été une simple préparation au sens déterministe du mot, c’est-à-dire une série de faits inévitables, dus aux circonstances plutôt qu’aux hommes et contribuant à composer la situation du Sénégal en 1854, mais une suite d’efforts très méritoires et, malgré les

Hardy's triumphalist tone and emphasis on the role of the "great man" in history sound old-fashioned today, but his attempt to seek out positive events (that is, events that have value and can be identified as important in that they are not failures) is not so far from us. Hardy's need to see the years leading up to Faidherbe as something other than failure leads him to posit a narrative of gradual victories over obstacles to "true" colonial expansion.

I emphasize instead the creative nature of failure. As one logic was deemed a failure in that it had not led to the kind of exploitation the French hoped for, a new logic arose to take its place. New logics required more than just the threads of ideology and practice that they pulled together at a particular moment, then, they also needed previous failures against which they could justify their existence. Failure appears as more than just unintended consequences in this formulation. In Senegal, failures created new justifications, new practices, and new visions for the colony. Ultimately, the French succeeded in building a vast West African empire, creating colonial governments that ruled for decades, and coercing labor. However, in the transitional period of the nineteenth century, it was the failure of particular colonial practices that shaped the possibilities for this new colonial endeavor.

Catherine Hall suggests the creative power of failure in *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867*. British missionaries in Jamaica initially

apparences, souvent efficaces, qui ont permis à Faidherbe de concevoir avec netteté son plan d'action et d'employer au mieux des intérêts de la colonie ses qualités personnelles. Nous distinguons, assurément, entre le succès éclatant de l'oeuvre de Faidherbe et les succès partiels, obscurs, de ses prédécesseurs, mais nous refusons d'admettre que ces succès aient été purement passagers et que la somme en fasse un échec; nous désirons prouver avant tout que des hommes comme Schmaltz, comme Fleuriau, comme Roger, comme Bouët-Willaumez et beaucoup d'autres ont, par leur intelligence et leur énergie, déblayé le terrain sénégalais des obstacles qui l'encombraient et semé des idées, ébauché des institutions, tracé des directions qui, en 1854, demeuraient vivaces et qu'on retrouve dans les meilleures parties de l'oeuvre de Faidherbe." Georges Hardy, *La mise en valeur du Sénégal de 1817 à 1854* (Paris: E. Larose, 1921), xi-xii.

viewed the colony as one where a post-emancipation “family of man” would thrive, but a growing pessimism that Africans could ever act the way the missionaries wanted them to led to a disillusionment and change in conceptions of the colony. Missionaries left behind their vision of “a new society in which they would provide the leadership” and turned to rejecting black political representation and asserting white supremacy.¹³ Thus, racial divisions were hardened out of a perceived failure of abolitionist goals. Karuna Mantena also hints at the creative nature of failure where she describes the emergence of the British policy of indirect rule as a “distinctive ideological formation” developed to replace the liberal assimilationist policy that was seen to have failed. Thus, “It was premised as an ideological shift, one that interpreted what was *practically* necessary in strikingly new ways. What was deemed expedient depended on a distinct account of the nature of imperial order and what would be construed as threats to that order.”¹⁴ Failure, then, could inspire major shifts in the creation of new imperial discourses and frameworks.

Finally, the concept of failure as a creative force reminds us that the French presence in Senegal was limited and that the administration ran up against resistance. As Cooper and Burbank write, “How colonial administrators, missionaries, and employers thought of and acted toward Asians and Africans cannot be reduced to a general attribute of “modern” Europe; imperial strategies responded to the fact that people pushed back.”¹⁵ When Senegambians

¹³ Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 264.

¹⁴ Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 10.

¹⁵ Burbank and Cooper, *Empires*, 290.

refused to cooperate in French plans in the way the colonial agents desired, new logics emerged to maintain the colonial presence.

Imperial Histories, Local Histories

The “imperial turn” of the last several decades has inspired a great deal of work that has shed new light not only on the workings of empire but also on the imperial cultures of the nation-states of Europe. Following Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper’s call to view metropole and colony in the same frame, the French empire now appears not just as an appendage of France or an aberration in France’s history, but as a phenomena central to the making of modern France.¹⁶ This dissertation contributes to the literature on French colonialism in Senegal and to the literature on colonialism more generally in four major historiographical areas: locally-situated histories, science and knowledge, the civilizing mission, and missionaries and empire.

First, this work contributes to the literature on imperialism by revealing the local, situated construction of the colony of Senegal through experimentation, in precisely the period identified by earlier scholars as one in which enthusiasm for colonial projects was at a low point. This focus places the emphasis on actors other than the metropolitan administrators and suggests that empire was formed through local negotiations and experimentation. This notion echoes Robinson and Gallagher’s suggestion that British commercial agents created a nineteenth-century “informal empire” and C.M. Andrew’s argument that as late as the first ten years of the Third

¹⁶ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1-56.

Republic, imperialism was operating by means of an “unofficial mind.”¹⁷ Unlike the well-formed imperialism of the British “official mind,”

The first steps in the creation of the modern French Empire under the July Monarchy and Napoleon III followed no grand design or strategic obsession. Empire-building in Africa, Indo-China and the South Pacific proceeded instead by a series of fits and starts of whose significance successive governments were usually unaware.¹⁸

While Andrew’s emphasis on improvisation and actors outside of the metropolitan administration is valuable, to leave the story at this overlooks the colonial designs of the earlier nineteenth century and their successes and failures. In the search for the “mind” of colonialism, other historians have sought to show that while the French generally were lukewarm about empire, a French colonial lobby helped push imperial expansion farther.¹⁹

On the other hand, more recent work has emphasized that there was an awareness of colonialism among the public in France and that France’s colonial culture went beyond a small political group.²⁰ Scholars have examined representations of empire and imperial subjects in

¹⁷ John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, “The Imperialism of Free Trade,” *The Economic History Review*, New Series, vol. 6, no. 1 (1953): 1-15; C.M. Andrew, “The French Colonialist Movement during the Third Republic: The Unofficial Mind of Imperialism,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, vol. 26 (December 1976): 143-166. Andrew contrasts the French case with the British empire and its coherent policy decisions, or “official mind of imperialism,” as discussed in Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: The Climax of Imperialism in the Dark Continent* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1961).

¹⁸ Andrew, “The French Colonialist Movement,” 143.

¹⁹ On the “parti colonial,” see: Henri Brunschwig, “Le parti colonial français,” *Revue française d’histoire d’outre-mer* 46 (162) (1952), 49-83; C. M. Andrew and A.S. Kanya Forstner, “The French ‘Colonial Party’: Its Composition, Aims and Influence, 1885-1914,” *Historical Journal* 14, no. 1 (1971): 99-128; Andrew and Kanya-Forstner, “The *Groupe Colonial* in the French Chamber of Deputies, 1892-1932,” *Historical Journal* 17, no. 4 (1974): 837-866; Charles-Robert Ageron, *France coloniale ou parti colonial?* (Paris: Presse universitaire de France, 1978); Stuart Michael Persell, *The French Colonial Lobby 1889-1938* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Press, 1983).

²⁰ See among others Elizabeth Ezra, *The Colonial Unconscious: Race and Culture in Interwar France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000); Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur, eds., *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2001); Robert Aldrich, *Vestiges of Colonial Empire in France* (London and New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); and Alec Hargreaves, ed., *Memory, Empire, and Postcolonialism: Legacies of French Colonialism* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2005). An interpretation of European colonial culture that moves beyond the nation-state can be found in Matthew G. Stanard, “Interwar Pro-

France.²¹ Cultural and political productions formerly viewed as purely European phenomena have been shown to be “imperial” in nature.²² A French “colonial mind” might be said to have emerged along with high imperialism, and recent work has examined the mindsets and attitudes that shaped imperialism.²³

This dissertation adds to this literature to argue that specific formulations of “empire” depended on experiments on a local level in the colonies. An analysis of the local context in a particular region, like that of Senegambia, shows the imperial practices that developed despite, or perhaps because of, the lack of an organized colonial project emanating from the metropole. The details of colonial practice in Senegal reveal the way local experiment and failure turned into commentary on what colonialism should look like and what it meant for France.

There have been a number of works that examine the intersection of local practices and wider imperial discourse on the subject of Algeria in the nineteenth century.²⁴ In the case of Senegal, however, there has not yet been a great deal of recent scholarship on the French

Empire Propaganda and European Colonial Culture: Toward a Comparative Research Agenda,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 44, no. 1 (2009): 27-48.

²¹ Patricia A. Morton, *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition*, Paris (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000); Martin S. Staum, *Labeling People: French Scholars on Society, Race, and Empire 1815-1848*, McGill-Queens Studies in the History of Ideas 36 (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2003); and Dana S. Hale, *Races on Display: French Representations of Colonized Peoples, 1886-1940* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008). For Britain, see Sadiya Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

²² On the connection between empire and European liberalism, for example, see Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006). Gary Wilder argues that imperialism was not an exception to French republican ideals but rather an integral aspect of French governance in both metropole and colony in *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

²³ Martin Thomas, ed., *The French Colonial Mind*, 2 volumes (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2012).

²⁴ Osama W. Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity: Saint-Simonians and the Civilizing Mission in Algeria* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

presence in the nineteenth century. Africanist historians, on the other hand, have produced a number of groundbreaking studies on Senegambia in this period that include insights into colonial rule and an understanding of its limitations.²⁵ Studies of the *métis* class of *habitants*, that is, the descendants of Europeans and Africans in Saint-Louis and Gorée, have gone some way toward bridging the divide between African history and French imperial history, as this class had longstanding commercial and cultural relations with Europeans.²⁶ Recent work that focuses specifically on French colonial rule in Senegal in this period has often limited itself to one aspect of the development of the colony rather than taking a longer chronological view of the nineteenth-century transitional period.²⁷ By spanning the period from the Old Regime to

²⁵ Martin A. Klein, *Islam and Imperialism in Senegal: Sine-Saloum, 1847-1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968); G. Wesley Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics in Senegal: The Struggle for Power in the Four Communes*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1971); Boubacar Barry, *Le royaume du Waalo : le Sénégal avant la conquête* (Paris: F. Maspero, 1972); Boubacar Barry, *La Sénégambie du XVe au XIXe siècle: Traite négrière, Islam et conquête coloniale*, Racines du présent (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988); Mamadou Diouf, *Le Kajoor au XIXe siècle : pouvoir cédde et conquête coloniale* (Paris: Karthala, 1990); James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: The Senegal River Valley, 1700-1860*, African studies series 77 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); James L. A. Webb, *Desert Frontier: Ecological and Economic Change Along the Western Sahel, 1600-1850* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).

²⁶ Michael David Marcson, *European-African Interaction in the Pre-Colonial Period: St. Louis, Senegal* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1976); Hilary Jones, *The Métis of Senegal: Urban Life and Politics in French West Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

²⁷ Important exceptions are cited here and throughout this dissertation, but these works treat only one aspect of the period covered in this dissertation and do not look at the larger question of colonial change. An overview of the French quest for new trade products in the years after the repossession can be found in Martin Klein, "Slaves, Gum, and Peanuts: Adaptation to the End of the Slave Trade in Senegal, 1817-48," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 66, no. 4 (2009): 895-914. There have been a number of works on Roger, including Christopher L. Miller, "Forget Haiti: Baron Roger and the New Africa," *Yale French Studies* 107 (2005): 39-69 and François Manchuelle, "The 'Regeneration of Africa': An Important and Ambiguous Concept in 18th and 19th Century French Thinking About Africa," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 36, no. 144 (1996): 559-588. Works on the gum trade include James Webb, "The Trade in Gum Arabic: Prelude to French Conquest in Senegal" *Journal of African History* 26, no. 2/3 (1985): 149-168 and Margaret O. McLane, "Commercial Rivalries and French Policy on the Senegal River, 1831-1858," *African Economic History* 15 (1986): 39-67. For a widely encompassing overview of Senegal during the Second Republic, see Yves-Jean Saint-Martin, *Le Sénégal sous le second Empire: Naissance d'un empire colonial (1850-1871)* (Paris: Karthala, 1989). Faidherbe's governorship and relationship with merchants have been the subject of several articles by Leland Barrows, along with this thesis, *General Faidherbe, the Maurel and Prom Company, and French expansion in Senegal* (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1980). An analysis of responses to illness in the colony can be found in Kalala J. Ngalamulume, *Colonial Pathologies: Environment, and Western Medicine in Saint-Louis-du-Senegal, 1867-1920* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2012).

Faidherbe, this dissertation is able to explore long shifts in French colonial practices while also identifying continuities.

Science and Knowledge

The second historiographical contribution this dissertation makes is to the literature on science, knowledge, and empire. The interconnectedness of science and empire has been an important theme in colonial historical literature. Technological developments served as “tools of empire,” while also serving as a means by which to judge how “advanced” others were, creating and maintaining ideologies of difference.²⁸ Colonial knowledge, produced through map-making, racial ethnography, or other means, justified European colonial rule and provided a means of cultural and political control.²⁹ At the same time, scientific disciplines were shaped by or even created by colonial encounters.³⁰ Historians have studied the role of agricultural experimentation and empire, especially botanical gardens, in the British and French cases, but no recent work has focused on Senegal.³¹ Michael A. Osborne has explored the connections between science and

²⁸ Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance*, Cornell Studies in Comparative History (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).

²⁹ Patricia M. E. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria*, Society and Culture in the Modern Middle East (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995); Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

³⁰ Richard Harry Drayton argues that the development of botanical sciences in Britain were strongly shaped by colonial expansion, just as the scientific imperative to collect and research could be said to influence conquest. Richard Harry Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the "Improvement" of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). For a recent example of the literature that examines the connections between anthropology and related disciplines and empire see Alice L. Conklin, *In the Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850-1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

³¹ James E. McClellan, *Colonialism and Science: Saint Domingue in the Old Regime* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Drayton, *Nature's Government*; James E. McClellan III and François Regourd, *The*

empire in a study of acclimatization in France and the application of plant sciences in the colonization of Algeria. The scientific “experts” of Osborne’s account formed “a vanguard which helped the French state construct and maintain a technology of domination that was fundamental to French colonialism.”³²

This dissertation shows how naturalists, gardeners, mining experts, surveyors, and engineers brought their expertise to help construct and direct colonial rule in the particular case of Senegal. Several historians have noted the importance of the Saint-Simonian *polytechniciens* in the ranks of the French army and their role in setting the course of colonization in Algeria.³³ While the experts I discuss here may not have been as ideologically cohesive as the *polytechniciens*, they contributed to the formation of colonial logics through their activities in the colony and their writings.

This study of colonial logics in Senegal adds to the literature on science, knowledge, and empire by extending the definition of colonial knowledge. When travel accounts, correspondence, orders, and ministerial instructions are seen as a growing archive of knowledge, the definition of “colonial knowledge” becomes broader and of more significance to the day-to-day interactions that took place in the colony and neighboring areas. It was not only the scientific studies of experts that produced knowledge about the region. This dissertation examines rituals of commerce, agricultural practice, and other forms of knowledge that do not traditionally fall

Colonial Machine: French Science and Overseas Expansion in the Old Regime (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2012).

³² Michael A. Osborne, *Nature, the Exotic, and the Science of French Colonialism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

³³ Patricia M. E. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria*, *Society and Culture in the Modern Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995); Osama Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity: Saint-Simonians and the Civilizing Mission in Algeria* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).

within the definition of knowledge. This dissertation's focus on the creative power of failure suggests that the failures examined here might be seen as forms of colonial knowledge in their own right.

Civilization

My framework of shifting colonial logics helps to emphasize that the “civilizing mission,” an important feature in the colonial discourse of France in the Third Republic, developed over time and did not always mean the same thing, nor did it always have the same centrality to imperial rhetoric. The historiography on the civilizing mission and the related notion of assimilation is significant in the case of Senegal. Raymond Betts, writing on the concept of assimilation, identifies the roots of the notion that colonial subjects could be assimilated into French legal structures and culture in the French Revolution.³⁴ In her influential book on the mission to civilize, Alice Conklin identifies several examples of the civilizing mission from the French Revolution and the earlier nineteenth century to show the presence of the concept in the century before 1895.³⁵ Pernille Røge argues that the republican *mission civilisatrice* can be traced back even farther; she identifies its origins in the writings of the Physiocrats and abolitionists who proposed plantations in Africa in the eighteenth century, plans that shaped the plantation schemes discussed in Chapter II.³⁶

³⁴ Raymond F. Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890-1914*, Columbia Studies in the Social Sciences no. 604 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

³⁵ Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*.

³⁶ Pernille Røge, “‘La clef de commerce’--The Changing Role of Africa in France’s Atlantic Empire ca. 1760-1797,” *History of European Ideas* 34, no. 4 (December 2008): 431–443.

In this dissertation, I show how the process of constructing the colony proceeded alongside the slow development of a vocabulary of civilizing. “Civilization” proved to be a subject of contestation in this period as the question of what the civilization process would look like, who would be in charge of it, and how major of a role it would play in the running of the colony was being worked out. In the first years of the nineteenth century, “civilization” was predicted as a happy side effect of increased contact with the French. During the moment of the agricultural colonial logic, civilization meant a life based on agricultural production. As the colonial logic shifted to a logic of commerce, French agents divided Senegambians into civilized and uncivilized groups based on their degree of adhesion to what the French considered proper commercial practices. Missionaries felt that only they could provide civilization, as it included a religious element lost in the corrupt European settlements of West Africa. And finally, the administrative and infrastructural developments of Faidherbe prefigured the way civilization would be thought about in the Third Republic.

Missionaries

Colonial rule was created not just by the administration, but by others in the colony, such as merchants, scientists, and missionaries. My analysis of the missionary presence in Senegambia from the French reoccupation to around 1870 reveals the varied goals of groups often classed together as undifferentiated colonial agents. The literature on British missionaries and empire has focused on the close ties between missions and empire. Indeed, the famous figure of Dr. Livingstone symbolizes missionaries’ imperative to spread “Christianity, commerce, and civilization” as they paved the way for imperial conquest. John and Jean Comaroff have argued

that British missionaries in South Africa effected a “colonization of consciousness” through the religious, cultural, and material systems they brought, ultimately bringing capitalism and the structures of thought and practice that would support a colonial state.³⁷ In a study of British missionaries in Tanzania, T. O. Beidelman goes farther, conceptualizing missionaries as one “colonial institution” among many.³⁸ Because Christian missions embodied what was most “naive and ethnocentric” in colonialism, Beidelman writes, “missionaries invariably aimed at overall changes in the beliefs and actions of native peoples, at colonization of heart and mind as well as body.”³⁹ However, as other scholars have pointed out, missionaries were religious actors with religious aims, and at times they were some of the strongest critics of empire.⁴⁰ These interventions are an important corrective to accounts that portray missionaries as one element in a unified imperial culture or imperial project, often relegating the religious aspects of mission life to a secondary role.

These debates remained foreign to French imperial history for many years, since scholars tended to view the story of French empire as secular. The notion of the secular empire where missionaries are missing or unimportant is largely based on the empire's late-nineteenth-century iteration; for example, Norman Etherington writes, “The predominance of mission schools distinguished the British on the one hand from the French Empire, where a strong anticlerical

³⁷ Jean Comaroff and John L Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

³⁸ T. Beidelman, *Colonial Evangelism: A Socio-Historical Study of an East African Mission at the Grassroots* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982), 22.

³⁹ T. Beidelman, *Colonial Evangelism*, 6.

⁴⁰ J. D. Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, African Systems of Thought (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000); Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire?: British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004).

tradition permeated the Third Republic. . .”⁴¹ The neglect of French missionaries mirrors a similar neglect of religious history in France, as historians for many years focused on the secular aspects of post-1789 France. However, in the last several decades, a number of important works have emphasized the persistence of and revival of religious expression in the nineteenth century, particularly in the areas of popular religion, visions and cults, and education.⁴²

However, recent works by scholars such as J.P. Daughton, Sarah Curtis, Elizabeth Foster, and others have reinserted missionaries into French imperial history.⁴³ Missionaries may have served colonial regimes, but this did not mean the goals of the two groups were synonymous in the nineteenth century. Daughton writes that while both missionaries and administrators shared a vision of bringing “civilization” to native populations, differing motivations and understandings of the “civilizing mission” created an uneasy relationship between missionaries and imperial officials in the Third Republic. For the case of Senegal, Elizabeth Foster has also argued that there were important differences between republican administrators and missionaries during the Third Republic.⁴⁴ My analysis of missionaries before the Third Republic helps to explain why

⁴¹ Norman Etherington, “Introduction,” in *Missions and Empire*, ed. Norman Etherington, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 11.

⁴² Thomas Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983); Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789-1914* (London: Routledge, 1989); Sarah A. Curtis, *Educating the Faithful: Religion, Schooling, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000); Raymond Anthony Jonas, *France And The Cult Of The Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale For Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Suzanne K. Kaufman, *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture And The Lourdes Shrine* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Caroline C. Ford, *Divided Houses: Religion And Gender In Modern France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

⁴³ J.P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Sarah A. Curtis, *Civilizing Habits, Women Missionaries and the Revival of French Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); *In God’s Empire: French Missionaries and the Modern World*, edited by J.P. Daughton and Owen White (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Elizabeth Foster, *Faith in Empire: Religion, Politics, and Colonial Rule in French Senegal, 1880–1940* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Foster, *Church and State in the Republic’s Empire: Catholic Missionaries and the Colonial Administration in French Senegal, 1880-1936* (Ph.D. diss, Princeton University, 2006).

the relationships common in later French colonial situations; a working relationship had been established that set a precedent for future relations.

Chapter Overview

The chapters of this dissertation are thematically and chronologically organized. Chapters I through IV move chronologically through the period of 1763-1870, while each adhering to a thematic focus. Thus Chapter I addresses the history of the colony as it switched between French and British hands and examines the construction of knowledge about Senegambia from 1763-1815. This chapter sets up the French return to Senegambia in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, the beginning of the transitional nineteenth century in the history of French Senegal. Chapters II, III, and IV explore, in turn, the agricultural logic of 1814-1830, the commercial logic of 1830-1850, and the military logic of 1850-1870 to understand the transition of the colony from small posts to a colony made up of conquered territories. The illusion of a strict division between logics that may come from the need for chapter breaks should not distract from the emphasis on connections between the logics. Chapter V steps back to consider missionaries in Senegal from 1818, just after the French reoccupation, to 1870. This chapter looks at the ways that missionaries' projects alternately supported and undermined the colonial logics in play at different moments.

Chapter I examines the period 1763-1815, when France and Britain traded the possessions of Saint-Louis and Gorée back and forth as a result of wars and treaties. I trace British-French rivalry over coastal establishments, showing that France did not lose its focus on developing West African posts even during a period usually described as a low point in French

interest in imperial holdings. I examine plans by various French commentators that drew on abolitionism, physiocratic agrarianism, and a criticism of monopoly companies in order to propose that Senegal could provide new opportunities for trade (aside from slaves) and provide land and labor for plantations. Rather than turning away from the idea of a French empire, French commentators widely circulated the notion that Senegal could be an important colony. I argue that British and French abolitionism, often contrasted by scholars because of the weakness of the movement in France, had similar roles in developing colonial projects in each country. Finally, I analyze travel accounts published in the early years of the 1800s by three authors who visited Senegal in the late 1700s: Pelletan, Golberry, and Durand. These works, I argue, helped provide information about the region that filled out the sketches made by earlier Physiocrats and abolitionists advocating for an agricultural colony in West Africa, making those projects more workable. At the same time, they justified the French presence by arguing the French had been first in the region and comparing French and British character and methods of colonization. The loss of Haiti and the abolition of the slave trade made the plantation projects even more attractive. Thus by the time of the return of Senegal to the French by the British in 1817, the colonial minister proposed a model of empire that owed much to the agricultural proposals of previous decades. The new plan sought to recreate the agricultural systems of the eighteenth century, even while adapting them given the new economic regime and labor relations in the colony.

Chapter II addresses the agricultural projects the French promoted, mostly in the lower Senegal River region, between 1814-1830. This vision for the colony, I argue, was an agricultural colonial logic that drew on the proposed projects of the previous half centuries. In this model, the

colony would be founded on plantation agriculture of cotton and indigo, a replacement for the loss of Haiti. First, however, the chapter traces a settlement attempt between 1815-1817 by the Société coloniale philanthropique. The Société sent scientific experts to assess the possibility of settling Cap Vert with allegedly hard-working and moral French settlers who were disaffected by the recent political changes in France. While the Société gained subscriptions, organized the transportation of settlers to their proposed colony, and promoted the land as fertile and welcoming, the metropolitan administration began to fear the Société might overstep its territorial bounds and cause conflict in the region. The failure of the Société marked the end of settlement schemes. However, the Minister of the Navy approved of the creation of plantations near the colony. While Governor Schmaltz's initial attempts failed in 1818, Governor Roger, the main architect of the plan, successfully organized the creation of cotton and indigo plantations along the Senegal River. The plantations, worked by migrant workers or indentured servants, created the new problems of obtaining land and recruiting labor. However, Roger continued to promote a vision of civilization that would come about through agricultural labor and contact with the French. However, the failure of attempts to create plantations using Senegalese labor spurred a turn away from the vision of an agricultural colony.

The failure of the plantation moment led to a reconceptualization of the colony as a *comptoir*, or trading post. Chapter III examines the commercial moment of roughly 1830-1850. The commercial logic developed by merchants and administrators drew on older colonial models of trade, but the end of the slave trade followed by the failure of the plantations made the development of trade more urgent and more central to the colony's purpose. Thus, during this period, the colony focused its energy on tapping into existing trade networks of gum, gold, and

other products. External affairs, trade with neighboring groups, came to be of greater importance than internal affairs. In this chapter, I examine a number of missions to the interior carried out during this period. These missions, I argue, focused on categorizing the peoples of Senegal into good economic partners and bad ones. Identifying economic rationality as a marker of civility, travelers created a framework that allowed for alliances with certain peoples and an animosity towards others who were seen as oppressing the economic freedom of those they ruled. The missions were meant to find locations for new French posts, create alliances, and draw commerce away from the British, a reflection of continuing European rivalry in the region. Over time, however, the vision of Senegal as a commerce-oriented colony consisting of a web of small posts and *comptoirs* began to seem untenable. Colonial agents reporting on their trade missions directed more and more criticism at the system of *coutumes*, an arrangement where local leaders demanded gifts and tribute payments from the French in return for trading rights. Tribute payments, French writers argued, ran contrary to the rules of economic civility. In 1850, a commission on the status of the colony reinforced the commercial foundation of the colony, but the pressure of merchants reacting to their perceived failure of the commercial regime to that point led to recommendations that would legitimize increased militarization and conquest.

Chapter IV discusses the military moment in Senegal (1850-1870). The beginnings of this period are usually attributed to the influence of Bordeaux merchants and their interest in the economic prospects of the colony, particularly the emerging importance of the peanut trade. However, I identify an imperial shift that led to a conception of French power and sovereignty that went far beyond economic concerns. The failure of the commercial logic of previous decades required a new, muscular colonial state. Projects led by Governor Faidherbe and Pinet-

Laprade emphasized a strategy of annexation, indirect rule with chiefs chosen by the French, and the building of forts, as well as other infrastructural projects, like a proposed railroad.

Administrative experiments and infrastructural developments went beyond being simply the means that would allow commerce to thrive; military and administrative expansion became an end in itself.

Chapter V jumps backward chronologically to consider the role of missionaries in the colony, a presence that dated to 1818. By examining missionaries over this larger span, their affinities and conflicts with the shifting logics of the colonial administration and other secular agents become clear. Missionaries had their own vision for the colony that emphasized moral development, appropriate education for girls and boys, and the importance of legitimate marriage. Missionaries' relationships with the government were a mix of cooperation and conflict. Where their goals of education and civilization converged, they got along. However, the government also criticized missionaries who they felt were disturbing local relations. This chapter argues that neither a religious nor an anticlerical ideology structured these relationships. Instead, the government approved of missionary projects where they did not disturb the status quo. The chapter looks at the Sisters of Saint-Joseph de Cluny, who staffed the hospitals and schools, the Brothers Ploërmel and their struggle for authority with Senegalese priests who started a short-lived secondary school in the 1840s, and the Spiritan missions to the “interior,” that is, outside the bounds of the colony, in the late 1840s and 1850s. While the missions outside the colony were meant to reach Africans who were far away from the corrupting influence of colonial Europeans and to free missionaries from the authority of the secular colonial state, the move ironically brought missionaries closer to the administration as their interests converged in a

cotton-growing establishment and as missionaries came to praise Faidherbe as a protector. The government was willing to charge missionaries with the task of civilization, but moved to halt measures that disturbed the network of relations with both Senegalese in the colony proper and with neighboring kingdoms.

By 1870, the colony saw a moment of retraction in terms of territorial expansion. The end of Napoleon III's reign meant a less sympathetic environment to colonial concerns, the Minister of the Navy judged that the annexations were too costly, especially after the Franco-Prussian war, and unrest in the colony led to a return to a focus on commerce instead of unlimited military expansion, a turn favored by the merchants. Kajoor's independence was restored in 1871. However, the experiments of the previous half century had created a new vocabulary describing the range of possibilities for the colony. The military conquest of the Western Sudan and further consolidation of the colony beginning in the 1880s drew on the logic Faidherbe had introduced to inaugurate a new stage of colonization based on military predominance and infrastructural expansion.

Senegambia in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: Geography and Administration

Senegambia can be defined as the region between the Senegal River in the north, the southern rivers region in the south (including Casamance), and the Faleme in the east. The focus of this dissertation is largely on northern Senegambia, or the region bounded on the north by the Senegal River and on the south by the Gambia. While French agents, merchants in particular, were active in the southern region in the period covered in this dissertation, I choose to focus, for

the most part, on the north, as this is where the colonial administration directed its attention, particularly in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century.

For much of the time period covered in this dissertation, the colony was very limited in size. When writers in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries referred to “Senegal,” they often meant the colonial capital of Saint-Louis, situated at the mouth of the Senegal River, and its “dependencies” (*dépendances*), or fortified posts along the river. Gorée, located about 100 miles south along the coast, is a small island off the Cap Vert peninsula (the site of Dakar today). It largely served as a naval station. Gorée was under the administration of Saint-Louis except for a brief period between 1854 and 1859 when it was administered as a separate colony, along with France’s other coastal possessions south of the island. Before and after this period of administrative independence, Gorée had its own *commandant* under the authority of the Governor of Senegal.

Senegal was under company rule in the first half of the eighteenth century. Both Senegal and Gorée switched hands between Britain and France between the Seven Years’ War and the Napoleonic Wars (discussed further in Chapter I). France took repossession of the colony from the British in 1817. The colony was initially placed under a commandant, but governors soon became the head of the colonial administration. The governor received instructions and orders from the Minister of the Navy and Colonies (a position I have at times shortened to Minister of the Navy), the ministry that oversaw the colonies. Many of its early governors were in fact naval officers, not civilians. Senegal was transferred to the authority of the newly created Minister of Algeria and Colonies in 1858, but this experiment only lasted until 1860, and the colony was placed back under the control of the Minister of the Navy.

To avoid the tendency of thinking in terms of modern nation-states, I have tried to use “Senegal” as it was used in the nineteenth century. Thus I use Senegal to refer to the colony and to Saint-Louis in particular (especially before the conquests of the mid-nineteenth century widened the colony’s territory), and I use Senegambia while discussing the larger region.

Chapter I

Political Rivalries and Intellectual Debates in the Formation of a New French Imperialism for Senegal, 1758-1815

An examination of late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century French interest in West Africa alters our understanding of a period often described as a low point in the French empire, providing the context that renders the projects of the early nineteenth century understandable. The last half of the eighteenth century, a period for France of imperial wars, internal revolution, and colonial revolt, required a rethinking of the role West Africa could play in the French empire. The first half of the chapter traces the political trajectory of French possessions in Senegambia as they changed hands in the Franco-British rivalry between the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763 and the years 1814-5, when the French regained possession of their Senegambian posts. These possessions would serve as the jumping off point for French colonialism in West Africa and would remain uninterruptedly under French control until the independence of Senegal in 1960. The second part of the chapter outlines the significant intellectual project taking place in the same period, that of commentators laying out the possibilities of West Africa's place in a French empire and travelers beginning to create a bank of knowledge about the area that would serve to direct and inform future colonial projects.

Historians of French imperialism have tended to date the beginnings of the demise of the first French colonial empire to 1763, the end of the Seven Years' War. The first French colonial empire, which emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was a mercantilist one, largely

under the authority of trading company monopolies. France imported goods from colonies in various parts of the globe, including a large area of Canada and the Mississippi Valley, West Indies sugar colonies, and trading posts in India and West Africa; the latter site provided much of the slave labor on which the Caribbean plantation economy rested. The colonial losses that came about as a result of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, followed by later events like the Haitian Revolution and Louisiana Purchase, greatly reduced the amount of territory under French control. Some historians have focused on the territorial losses and criticisms of empire in this period, arguing that the French lost interest in overseas holdings. According to this view, French imperial ambitions saw a long lull beginning around the Seven Years' War and not ending until the late nineteenth century, apart from the important exception of the 1830 Algerian conquest. However, France did not give up its imperial ambitions in this period. After the Seven Years' War, the diplomatic maneuvers of the French minister Choiseul expressed France's desire to maintain an empire to the degree that it was possible, including a post in West Africa. Strategic and commercial reasons were behind this drive, but also there was a basic notion that control of an empire was the mark of a great power, and that the long history of a French presence in West Africa destined France to continue to have an influence there. Critics of empire certainly existed, but by and large they wanted reform of the old system, not an end to France's empire.

Administrators, travelers, and other writers who proposed new colonial projects in West Africa in the second half of the eighteenth century drew on Old Regime experiences of empire in that they viewed trade and plantation agriculture as foundational colonial models. However, commentators were also interested in pointing out the weaknesses of the Old Regime colonial system, particularly its reliance on slavery, which made it inhumane, insecure, and economically

precarious. Around the 1770s, both French and British commentators with abolitionist leanings proposed that West African plantations manned with free or indentured labor could replace the slave system of West Indies plantations, and that trade goods or crops might replace slaves for export. Senegal and its surrounding regions in particular, an area that had been claimed by various European powers for over a century but whose position appeared destined to change rapidly, was the subject of numerous proposals and the site of a few early attempts to found a different kind of colony in West Africa. French and British abolitionism have often been viewed as having vastly different trajectories, but by setting the West African projects proposed by abolitionist commentators and economists of both nations side by side, parallels between the colonial outcomes of these two movements in West Africa emerge.

The proposals of abolitionists and economists were buttressed by a growing body of knowledge about West Africa. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, travel accounts and studies carried out by writers who had visited the coast of West Africa began to appear in France. These accounts constructed knowledge about Senegal, shaping policies and projects into the nineteenth century, as will be discussed in later chapters. By examining a cluster of works on Senegal appearing in the years 1800-1802, I refine scholarly understandings of the nature of European colonialism in that period by highlighting the way that knowledge was situated within a particular colonial logic of commerce and agriculture. While the authors sought to argue above all for commercial and agricultural expansion, they also argued that increased contact with the French would have civilizing effects. Civilization, defined as a gradual process of learning to produce and trade in ways acceptable to the French, appeared not as a major

justification for the French presence in Senegambia in this time period, but as a side effect of encounter.

Imperial Decline or Reconfiguration? The Seven Years' War, the Treaty of Paris, and Choiseul's Policies, 1754-1770

At the end of the Seven Years' War, France lost a number of important overseas colonies, most importantly New France. Critics of empire throughout the next several decades did not see this as a loss; Voltaire's assessment of Canada as "quelques arpents de neige" (a few acres of snow) is often cited as the emblematic example of French skepticism about the utility of its colonies. Many historians have read this moment as the beginning of the end of the first French colonial empire, ushering in a period of decline culminating in the loss of Saint-Domingue after the slave revolt of 1791 and the island's independence as Haiti in 1804. However, far from being a moment in which the French empire was abandoned, France, under foreign minister Choiseul, strove to promote new projects in Guiana, Madagascar, and indeed, West Africa. If France had lost several important colonies, the ambition to develop new or renewed colonies remained.

At the time of the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in 1756, France controlled a number of stations in the Senegambia region under company rule. The two most important were Saint-Louis, at the mouth of the Senegal River, and Gorée, an island about 100 miles south. Saint-Louis had been administered by a number of French companies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with the exception of a short British occupation. As for Gorée, the island had been originally claimed by the Portuguese, then traded between the Dutch, English, and French in the seventeenth centuries. Both were turned over to the French in 1693 and remained in French

hands through the beginning of the Seven Years' War. Saint-Louis and Gorée were trading centers, largely for slaves and gum.¹ The French also held a number of other *comptoirs*, or trading posts, in the region. At the peak of its power, French posts included Portendick, Podor, Saint-Joseph and Saint-Pierre in Galam, Joal, Albréda, and Bintam.² Britain and Portugal were rivals in the broader region, and would remain so at least through the late nineteenth century.³

In the French posts, African traders and the local labor force were vital to trade. Saint-Louis was closely tied to the river trade, and its commerce was based on a system of local slave labor that would become more and more significant over the course of the late eighteenth century.⁴ The French presence was not large, and while there were fortifications, they were not imposing.⁵ Alliances and negotiation were thus more important than force in the trade system. The French paid customs payments to local kings for trading rights. Another form of alliance was the temporary marriages French merchants made with the *signares*, or powerful female merchants in the coastal centers. *Signares* rented out houses and slaves to merchants and became powerful brokers in the Senegalese trading scene. The term *habitants* is often used to refer to the descendants of Europeans and *signares*, though the category was loose and could include others

¹ See Chapter III of this dissertation for further discussion of the gum trade. The Compagnie des Indes participated in the gum trade to reduce the risk of trading only in slaves in the period of company rule. A famine and commercial crisis in the 1750s led to an increased importance in the gum trade in that it was a direct trade with more certain profits. While Senegal played a small role in the Atlantic slave trade in the eighteenth century, it dominated the gum market. Gum exports began to become more important than slaves after 1780. James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: The Senegal River Valley, 1700-1860*, African Studies Series 77 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 65, 76, 151-152, 165.

² M. Malte-Brun, *Universal Geography, or A Description of All the Parts of the World*, vol. IV, (Edinburgh: Adam Black, 1823), 217.

³ The British consolidated their presence in the Gambia over the course of the nineteenth century. The Portuguese were active in the Southern Rivers region (southern Senegambia), where Britain and France also competed for power in the nineteenth century, as outlined in Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, trans. Ayi Kwei Armah (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 166-168, chapters 14 and 16.

⁴ Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce*.

⁵ H. Dodwell, "Le Sénégal sous la domination anglaise," *Revue de l'histoire des colonies françaises* 4 (1916): 268.

as well, including free merchants of African ancestry.⁶ The *habitants* would emerge as an even more important force after the Seven Years' War, since during that conflict they were able to play a part in the French surrender and set up a mayor for themselves under the British.⁷ Even before the war, however, their role in the economy of Saint-Louis was central. In 1755, Saint-Louis had 3000 inhabitants, of which only a small percentage were Europeans. The slave population included 98 slaves belonging to the French monopoly company, the Compagnie des Indes, and 550 slaves belonging to the *habitants*.⁸ Gorée was a secondary post most important for its role as a naval station, and as it was a rocky island that relied on provisions from the mainland, its population was considerably smaller. In 1767, not long after the Seven Years' War, Gorée's population was 1044, and 718 of those were slaves.⁹

The Seven Years' War put Senegal's fate, and that of other colonies, into question. The war escalated to a global scale as European powers, sometimes allied with local inhabitants, fought to secure colonial control in North America, the Caribbean, India, the Philippines, and South America. West Africa was not spared; the British conquered Gorée and Saint-Louis in 1758. British commentators saw the commercial potential of the posts for British traders,

⁶ On the *signares* and *habitants*, see George E. Brooks, Jr., "The Signares of Saint Louis and Goree: Women Entrepreneurs in Eighteenth-Century Senegal," in *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change*, ed. Nancy J. Hafkin and Edna G. Bay (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976), 19-44; Michael David Marcson, *European-African Interaction in the Pre-Colonial Period: St. Louis, Senegal* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1976); James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce*; George E. Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, Western African Studies (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), Hilary Jones, *The Métis of Senegal: Urban Life and Politics in French West Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

⁷ James Searing, "The Seven Years' War in West Africa: The End of Company Rule and the Emergence of the *Habitants*," in *The Seven Years' War: Global Views*, ed. Mark H. Danley and Patrick J. Speelman (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 281-282.

⁸ Boubacar Barry, *La Sénégambie du XVe au XIXe siècle : Traite négrière, Islam, conquête coloniale* (Paris: Harmattan, 1988), 121. On the Compagnie des Indes, see Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce*, 65-66.

⁹ Barry, 122.

particularly in slaves, and the broader economic effect the conquest would have on the balance of power between England and France. As negotiations progressed in the later years of the war, the posts served as bargaining chips in the global colony swapping that characterized the peace talks, but the continuing importance of commercial concerns and national strategy made the West African territories more than just generic pawns to offer. The French desire to keep a West African post remained a significant factor of their diplomacy, showing France's continued interest in maintaining and even expanding their empire in West Africa and elsewhere.

Commercial motivations were the immediate cause behind the British conquest. A Quaker merchant, Thomas Cumming, dreamed up the mission to take Saint-Louis and Gorée. Cumming, who traded slaves, had been to Africa before and even claimed his plan had the support of a native prince. Cumming and Samuel Touchet (or Touchett), a Manchester cotton merchant who also dealt in slaves, were able to convince William Pitt the mission would be fruitful. Commodore Henry Marsh led the expedition, which left Plymouth in March 1758, with Cumming accompanying them. Cumming began negotiations with his local contact, but before an agreement was reached, the rest of the squadron arrived and decided to go ahead with the conquest of Saint-Louis. The French conceded the fort, as well as Podor and other stations up the river. Marsh then continued to Gorée, but he was unable to take the island. A second expedition captured Gorée for the British on December 29, 1758.¹⁰ Cumming and Touchet's motives in

¹⁰ For overviews of these events, see Sir William Laird Clowes, *The Royal Navy: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present*, vol. 3 (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1898), 186–189; Jonathan R. Dull, *The French Navy and the Seven Years' War*, *France Overseas: Studies in Empire and Decolonization* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 116; Joseph Inikori, *Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England: A Study in International Trade and Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 398–399; Kate Hotblack, *Chatham's Colonial Policy: A Study in the Fiscal and Economic Implications of the Colonial Policy of the Elder Pitt* (London: G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1917), 28–43; Dodwell, “Le Sénégal sous la domination anglaise,” 270–272.

promoting the conquest seem to have been commercial; their support for the plan was based on a supposed agreement that they would be granted an exclusive charter for trade, though this does not seem to have been granted.¹¹ However, the conquest's timing suggests there were also larger concerns tied to the global war.

Indeed, one of the justifications for the conquest was that it would weaken the French position in the war by disrupting trade. This argument was laid out by English economist Malachy Postlethwayt, a writer interested in mercantilist economy and a promoter of British trade in Africa. In 1758, Postlethwayt published *The Importance of the African Expedition Considered*, a tract outlining the strategic importance of the West African posts for the British. He argued in the letter addressed to the British ministry (printed in the beginning of the work) that the conquest of France's colonies would lead the French to sue for peace. The conquest of African holdings would put pressure on France, not because of the importance of the colonies in themselves, but rather because of their role in France's American trade:

The trade of *Africa*, as well to the *French* as to the *English*, is the great foundation of their *American* commerce and navigation, as that alone supplies both nations with negroe-labourers to cultivate their *West India* colonies for sugars, indigo, cocoa, cotton, pimento, and all other the estimable productions of the sugar colonies: and the commerce and navigation of *America* being the life and spirit of the *French European* commerce; if *England* strikes at the root of the *French African trade*, she, of course, cuts off the very stamina of the enemies trade and navigation to *Europe* as well as *America*.¹²

Thus the British could risk a small expedition in the hope of large results. Small battles in Africa would have economic effects that would ripple across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and back to Europe itself. Though the expedition was “no great military eclat to the *British* nation,” it would

¹¹ Inikori, *Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England*, 399.

¹² Postlethwayt, *The Importance of the African Expedition Considered*, (London: 1758), ii.

nonetheless be a great commercial victory that would save Britain money and lives.¹³

Postlethwayt, following mercantilist theory, saw economic warfare as the lever to ensure the political power of Britain over France. Attacking colonies, small as they were, would disrupt the flow of labor that would disturb the flow of goods into the mother country, weakening her power at far smaller risk than a full attack on other regions where bigger garrisons were stationed. Checking French power in Europe was the ultimate goal, as Postlethwayt presented it in the opening letter.¹⁴

Meanwhile, France had commercial stakes in trying to win back Senegal and Gorée, or at least to maintain some West African territory. While the French foreign minister Choiseul appears at certain points to have been flexible about the French claims to Saint-Louis and Gorée, his interest in having a post in Africa did not waver.¹⁵ In 1758, Choiseul formulated a plan to reconquer Senegal, but this longstanding project was dropped in 1762.¹⁶ However, Senegal and Gorée figured into negotiations throughout the war. In early 1760, Choiseul drafted peace terms that called for France to be returned both Senegal and Gorée.¹⁷ In a later set of negotiations in summer of 1761, France initially insisted on being returned both Senegal and Gorée. When a British counterproposal claimed the two posts, Choiseul replied he would be willing to give up Gorée as long as the French could take another slaving post in Africa, but later returned to a

¹³ Postlethwayt, *The Importance of the African Expedition Considered*, ix.

¹⁴ Postlethwayt, *The Importance of the African Expedition Considered*, xiii.

¹⁵ For a detailed account of Choiseul's policies, see Pierre H. Boulle, "Eighteenth Century French Policies Toward Senegal: The Ministry of Choiseul," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* IV, no. iii (1970): 305-320.

¹⁶ William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans: White Response to Blacks, 1530-1880* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 163. Cohen notes that this idea was dropped because France's commercial focus was on the Windward Coast because more slaves were exported from there. Jonathan R. Dull refers to a longstanding plan to reconquer Senegal, which was dropped in 1762, in *The French Navy and the Seven Years' War*, 226.

¹⁷ Dull, *The French Navy and the Seven Years' War*, 165.

more intransigent position and withdrew that offer.¹⁸ However, at no point did Choiseul give up on the idea of a West African post. The Earl of Bute wrote of Choiseul's seeming flexibility at some stages of the negotiations, "When Choiseul gives up Senegal and seems facile on Gorée, it is with an express proviso that the French be put in possession of a sea port, on the slave coast, and consequently, that they must have some equivalent for the Gum trade."¹⁹ Though these provisos existed in a much larger, more complicated diplomatic web of colonies, fishing rights, and territorial disputes, the importance of West Africa to France is apparent.

The final negotiations returned Gorée to France, but the British retained Saint-Louis. Pitt had wanted to keep both posts, but the British came away only with Saint-Louis.²⁰ This outcome likely seemed the better one to the victorious British, who may have given up Gorée because they did not see its financial value.²¹ Indeed, the small island seemed like less of a prize than Saint-Louis, since the colony situated at the mouth of the Senegal was valuable not just for its products, but because of the growing population and trade system that had emerged there.²² For the French, however, Choiseul still saw an important role for a French West African colony. Choiseul ordered naturalist Michel Adanson to compile a report that listed the region's agricultural and medical possibilities.²³ Choiseul also attempted to expand French influence by

¹⁸ Dull, *The French Navy and the Seven Years' War*, 196–199.

¹⁹ Quoted in Jeremy Black, *From Louis XIV to Napoleon: The Fate of a Great Power* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 113.

²⁰ Dodwell, "Le Sénégal sous la domination anglaise," 273.

²¹ Dull, *The French Navy and the Seven Years' War*, 234.

²² Searing, "The Seven Years' War in West Africa."

²³ Michel Adanson, 'Pièce instructives concernant l'Ile Goré voisine du Cap-Verd en Afrike, avec un Projet et des vues utiles relativement au Nouvel Etablissement de Kaine – Communiquées et présentées à Mr Le Duc de Choiseul Ministre de la Guerre et de la Marine. Par M. Adanson de l'Academie des Sciences, de la Société Royale de Londres, Serveur Roial,' cited in Pernille Røge, "'La clef de commerce'—The changing role of Africa in France's Atlantic empire ca. 1760-1797," *History of European Ideas* 34, no. 4 (2008): 438.

concentrating on other posts.²⁴ The treaty had made no mention of Albréda, a former French post on the Gambia River. The French therefore began to fortify that post, though a threat of British force followed by a diplomatic parlay convinced the French to back down. The British government, however, allowed the French to continue trade on the same terms as before the treaty.²⁵ Choiseul's continued interest in West Africa shows that France had no intention of giving up the French presence there.

Outside of West Africa too, the end of the Seven Years' War, far from marking an end to the French empire, led the French to seek out new imperial projects and to adapt existing ones. Choiseul was at the forefront of this movement; he stayed in power for seven years after the end of the war, allowing him to strengthen the French navy and replace colonial officials as he saw fit.²⁶ Choiseul organized colonial schemes in Madagascar, and on an even larger scale, the French carried out a colonization project in Kourou, French Guiana. Thousands of French settlers were sent to the Kourou colony, though the attempt ended in tragedy when many died of illness.²⁷ To be sure, the failures of these schemes slowed down France's colonial activity.²⁸ However, their existence reflects France's interest in rebuilding a colonial empire to rival the British empire and to bring wealth to France. France's colonial losses in 1763 were not, to

²⁴ Dodwell, "Le Sénégal sous la domination anglaise," 275–277, 287–294; Nicholas Tracy, *Navies, Deterrence and American Independence: Britain and Sea Power in the 1760s and 1770s* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), 48–53.

²⁵ Tracy, *Navies, Deterrence and American Independence*, 52.

²⁶ Carl Ludwig Lokke, *France and the Colonial Question: A Study of Contemporary French Opinion, 1763-1801* (New York: Octagon Books, 1976), 17.

²⁷ Marion F. Godfroy-Tayart de Borms, "La guerre de Sept ans et ses conséquences atlantiques: Kourou ou l'apparition d'un nouveau système colonial," *French Historical Studies* 32, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 167-191.

²⁸ Lokke, *France and the Colonial Question*, 18-27.

Choiseul and others like him, a sign that the empire was in irrevocable decline; they were instead the symptoms of a need for France to rebuild wealth and glory through new experiments.

Continued Franco-British Rivalry in Senegal and the Treaty Of Paris of 1814

The political reversals and colonial strategies of 1763-1814 reveal the way French ambitions ran up against parallel British plans to develop a larger influence on the West African coast. The wars of this period led to several more territorial reversals as the two powers captured Saint-Louis and Gorée from each other. However, by 1814-15, with Britain and France's abolition of the slave trade, France's loss of Saint-Domingue, and the combination of failed British experiments in Senegal and British successes elsewhere on the coast, Britain gave up Senegal and Gorée definitively to France, and France began to focus renewed attention on the colony.

In the aftermath of the Seven Years' War, while the French reoccupied Gorée and refocused attention on colonies like Madagascar and Kourou, Britain moved to develop its new West African possessions, but ran up against problems. In 1765, Britain founded a new colony called the province of Senegambia that combined Senegal with James Island on the Gambia. Two governors formulated plans to develop the colony. O'Hara began building a fort 130 miles up the Senegal River with the idea that whites would settle in the region to take advantage of gold, wax, and agricultural crops he thought existed there ready to be exploited. Another governor, McNamara, wanted to start a penal colony in Senegambia.²⁹ However, these plans came to

²⁹ Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 275; Dodwell, "Le Sénégal sous la domination anglaise," 280–295.

naught, probably because the government was not willing to spend more money and send additional troops. The British also found that the *habitants* of Saint-Louis seemed more attached to the French.³⁰ The British managed to alienate the *habitants*, to the detriment of the British participation in the gum trade.³¹ The situation had become so bad that by 1779, Saint-Louis was without leadership and had recently suffered a mutiny in which an attack on the inhabitants of the island led to many in the British garrison being massacred.³² The French retook Saint-Louis easily in that year. Christopher Brown writes, “Dissension, backbiting, and corruption plagued the first British 'province' in Africa. With the exception of the traders who imported gum from Senegal, few in England mourned the loss when the French captured Saint Louis in 1779 during the American Revolution.”³³

After 1779, the French returned to Saint-Louis for a ten-year period that seemed to mark a reflowering of the colony. The personification of the revival of the colony was Stanislas du Boufflers, or Chevalier du Boufflers, governor of the colony from 1785-1787. Boufflers was a military man, like most of the governors chosen by the French, but he was also a man of letters; he had written a novel and would join the Académie française. The experimentation in new crops and products that Choiseul had advocated, and that the British had attempted on a limited scale on the Senegal River, saw their continuation in Boufflers's policies.

However, the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789 and the war that soon broke out turned French attentions back to Europe. In 1791, a slave revolt began in Saint-Domingue;

³⁰ Dodwell, “Le Sénégal sous la domination anglaise,” 274–275.

³¹ Brown, *Moral Capital*, 276.

³² Dodwell, “Le Sénégal sous la domination anglaise,” 295.

³³ Brown, *Moral Capital*, 276.

the missions sent to restore order could not stop the independence of the colony as Haiti in 1804. These events disrupted France's colonial system; the French slave trade declined precipitously. However, this is not to say that colonial matters were abandoned during the French Revolution. British-French rivalry in the European wars also manifested itself in the colonies; the British occupied Martinique (and briefly, Guadeloupe) in 1794, and that same year the French nearly destroyed Freetown, the British settlement in Sierra Leone.³⁴

The Franco-British war provided the pretext for Britain to recapture Gorée in 1800. Since Britain had lost Saint-Louis, their attention had been focused farther down the coast; they had begun experimenting with settling Sierra Leone and continued trading at their establishment on the mouth of the Gambia. Considering their focus on these areas, Gorée might have been a logical conquest in terms of serving as a bargaining chip in peace negotiations, rather than a site to develop as a permanent British post. Yet some still had dreams of a more expansive variety. Joseph Corry, a British traveler, visited the coast of Africa, including Gorée, in 1805 and 1806. His project was to describe Sierra Leone and other parts of the West African coast, its people, and its resources and to “attempt to delineate the most eligible grounds upon which the condition of the African may be effectually improved, and our commercial relations be preserved with that important quarter of the globe.”³⁵ For Corry, the improvement of Africa and commerce went hand in hand. A European traveler to the west coast of Africa would run into problems, including “the combined influence of the native jealousies of its inhabitants, their hereditary barbarism, obstinate ferocity, and above all, an uncongenial climate.” For Corry, “To surmount these

³⁴ Joseph Corry, *Observations upon the windward coast of Africa* (London: Printed for G. and W. Nicol, 1807), 7.

³⁵ Corry, *Observations*, vii.

difficulties, commerce is the most certain medium to inspire its Chiefs and Natives with confidence, and to obtain a facility of intercourse with the interior country.”³⁶ The language of trade was a language European and African could both understand, Corry suggested, and a means to develop bonds of trust. This would allow European trade to penetrate inland, and, Corry predicted, improve conditions in a manner that could mediate some of the faults Corry found in the African character.

Corry's attention was centered on Sierra Leone, but he also saw Gorée as a valuable settlement from which to both strengthen the British position in its own right and to regulate the activity of their rivals, the French. Cory wrote,

From the Island of Gorée a correspondence with the river Gambia, and a watchful vigilance over the settlement of the French in the Senegal would be maintained both by land and sea, which, with a well chosen position, central from Cape Sierra Leone, to Cape Palmas, would combine a regular system of operation, concentrating in the river Sierra Leone.³⁷

Corry, then, saw Gorée as “one of three principal depots along the coast” that the British could exploit, though a secondary one to Sierra Leone.³⁸ However, the question remained of whether the *habitants* of Gorée would accept the British. When Corry visited Gorée in 1805, he found that the *habitants* there were “of colour, and a spurious progeny of the French; for whom they still retain a great predilection.”³⁹ In Gorée, it seemed, the British might run into the same problem they doubtless recalled from their experiment with the province of Senegambia: *habitant* preference for their longtime trading partners, the French.

³⁶ Corry, *Observations*, viii.

³⁷ Corry, *Observations*, 87.

³⁸ Corry, *Observations*, 87.

³⁹ Corry, *Observations*, 10.

When the British parliament voted to abolish the slave trade in 1807, the country's priorities on the west coast of Africa changed. Freetown, on the Sierra Leone river, had already been founded as a colony for freed slaves, so it naturally became a center for the new British presence on the coast. At the same time, it was judged that the Sierra Leone Company, which had run the colony from 1792, had not been successful, and that new oversight was needed. Thus the British government took over Sierra Leone, making the settlement into a crown colony in 1808. The British government, now charged with the dual responsibilities of ruling a colony and enforcing abolition, moved to reassess Britain's position in the region through the means of a survey of the coast. Castlereagh, British secretary of state for war and the colonies, wrote in 1808:

In consequence of the Act for the abolition of the Slave trade[,] the placing the settlement of the district of Sierra Leone under the management of the Government, and the alteration which our commerce and relations with the Native Powers of the Coast of Africa must experience, it has been deemed expedient that a Commission should be appointed for surveying all the coast of Africa to which the trade of the African Company and the Sierra Leone Company have extended.⁴⁰

Castlereagh ordered that former Sierra Leone governor Thomas Ludlum and incoming governor Thomas Thompson, along with a captain of the Royal Navy, would form the commission to survey the coast from Gorée to Cape Coast. By the time the Commission was sent, Captain Edward Columbine had been chosen as the naval captain, and Thompson was replaced by William Dawes, who had previously served as governor.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Copy, Letter from Castlereagh, Downing Street, 15 August 1808, in Columbine Letter and Report Book, p. 11, Sierra Leone Collection, Special Collections, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago.

⁴¹ Memoranda for instructions to the Commissioners of African inquiry, Columbine Letter and Report book, p. 104, Sierra Leone Collection, Special Collections, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago. Columbine would take over the governorship from Thompson in 1810. Falling ill the next year, he left Sierra Leone to return to Europe around May 11, 1811, but died off the Azores on June 18, 1811.

As the commission prepared to begin its work, however, contingent circumstances led to yet another transfer of colonial power in the Senegambia region. When Columbine arrived in West Africa, he stopped at the British post of Gorée, where he found that plans to take Saint-Louis had been in the works for some time. Columbine and Major Maxwell, citing illegal commercial activity around Saint-Louis, attacked the French settlement on July 4, 1809. Initial resistance gave way to a surrender July 13. Major Maxwell, explaining the attack later to Castlereagh, wrote,

To this attempt I was induced by considerations, which I trust your lordship will conceive to be of weight. I was of opinion, that the colony of itself would be an acquisition of importance to the nation, from its commerce; that by the French government, as it had always been much valued, its loss would be proportionably felt; and that by driving the enemy from their sole possession on the coast, his Majesty's settlements and the British commerce would be more secure, and more easily protected.⁴²

Maxwell's justifications recalled previous arguments by Postlethwayt: not only was Saint-Louis valuable in commercial terms, the British capture of the settlement would hurt France's trade and protect British settlements on the coast. British motivations were not laid out in an official policy, however; the decision was made largely on the spot, with Maxwell explaining himself only later. This was a factor of the time it would take for orders to get back and forth from the metropole, a voyage that could take a month or more in peacetime. Whether or not the metropole had direct and immediate plans for Senegal, because of the decisions of the naval officers on the spot, Britain was again in possession of France's two major West African establishments.

⁴² Copy of a letter from Major Maxwell to Lord Castlereagh, 18 July [1809], in James Ralfe, *The Naval Chronology of Great Britain; Or, An Historical Account of Naval and Maritime Events from the Commencement of the War in 1803 to the End of the Year 1816*, vol. 2 (London: Whitmore and Fenn, 1820), 269.

Senegal, then, joined the list of British possessions to be surveyed by the Commission. To collect information, the Commission sent questionnaires to British officials in the various posts along the coast. The questionnaire asked general questions about the climate and land, producing a descriptive catalog of the physical features of the coast. Many of the questions, however, were aimed at compiling data on the way the various posts could serve in the post-slave trade exploitation of West African commodities. Questions about crops, soil, export goods, the security of settlers, labor, and the loyalties of the inhabitants were aimed at identifying crops or other goods to trade and at verifying that the means to produce and export them peacefully existed.

The Commission's report noted that Senegal, meaning Saint-Louis and the surrounding mainland more generally, had some potential in terms of agriculture and export trade, but also noted that in the history of European possession, there had not been a successful agricultural trial. By painting a picture of a colony with no successful development to that point, along with other problems, the report channeled the memory of the failed British province of Senegambia. This legacy and the concerns expressed in the report served as a counterweight to the possible benefits the colony offered to Britain. Cotton and indigo could be introduced, the report stated, and even grew wild in Senegal. However, when it came to these crops, "The character of the natives is too indolent to form any reasonable hope of their ever being cultivated by them for exportation." Europeans had never been successful cultivating these crops either, though the reason the report gave for this failure was that they had been too preoccupied by the slave and gum trade.⁴³ The trickery of the natives and bad conditions also stood in the way of successful

⁴³ Columbine Letter and Report Book, Sierra Leone Collection, Special Collections, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, 28-29.

cultivation. The islands of Babaque and Safal, which had been purchased by the French, were granted out to individuals, but these trials failed, since “It is to be suspected that the natives were well acquainted with the unproductive nature of the soil, which was the cause of their being uninhabited and so easily disposed of.” The islands were too low, the soil infested with crabs and salt, and wolves menaced the livestock.⁴⁴ Other trials had simply been abandoned. Four years before the Commission's report, several residents of Goree and two British staff officers stationed on the island chose Dakar, a village on Cap Vert, as the site to attempt “the raising of some of the productions of America and the West Indies.” The report writer too chose a space for a garden, but when his garrison was moved north after the capture of Saint-Louis the site was abandoned, and, he wrote, he had heard of no other attempts.⁴⁵ The report did not rule out the possibility of agriculture, then, but previous trials’ lack of success was not necessarily a good sign.

Trade in non-agricultural goods was on the decline, the report stated, largely due to the 1807 abolition of the slave trade, which applied to Senegal and Gorée as British holdings. The survey's question “Do any individuals become wealthy through trade, cultivation etc. and in what does their wealth consist?” was answered by a pessimistic “From what has been before stated, it is unnecessary to mention that no individuals are becoming wealthy from trade. There has never been any proper attempt at cultivation. The wealth of an inhabitant of Senegal consists in houses,

⁴⁴ Columbine Letter and Report Book, Sierra Leone Collection, Special Collections, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, 31.

⁴⁵ Columbine Letter and Report Book, Sierra Leone Collection, Special Collections, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, 48.

slaves and a quantity of country gold generally made into clumsy ornaments for the women.”⁴⁶ The women were the wealthiest, the account noted, but even this prosperity seemed on the decline. The report predicted that the population of Saint-Louis would probably decrease, “the abolition of the slave trade having much diminished its commerce.”⁴⁷ In Gorée, the picture seemed even worse; commerce was limited to hides from the Gambia and surrounding rivers and rice exports.⁴⁸ The survey response claimed the wealth of Goreens had increased during British rule, but the abolition of the slave trade and “prevention of that barter which they carried on with neutral vessels” would lead to a decline in wealth.⁴⁹ The new commercial situation, coupled with the natural defects of the island, like the fact water had to be brought to it from the mainland, made Gorée seem a losing proposition.

At the close of the Napoleonic wars, then, Britain had many reasons for not insisting on keeping Senegal and Gorée in negotiations with France. The islands seemed to be in decline, their worth in a post-slave trade world had not been proven, and the memory of the Senegambia colony remained a cautionary tale. The region was more in the French orbit in any case, as complaints about *habitants*’ preference for the French show. Also, British energies were directed toward the settlement at Sierra Leone. However, the question of the abolition of the slave trade remained a sticking point in the question of whether Britain should return the captured West African establishments to the French. In theory, formerly French colonies captured by Britain in

⁴⁶ Columbine Letter and Report Book, Sierra Leone Collection, Special Collections, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, 24.

⁴⁷ Columbine Letter and Report Book, Sierra Leone Collection, Special Collections, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, 23.

⁴⁸ Columbine Letter and Report Book, Sierra Leone Collection, Special Collections, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, 72-73.

⁴⁹ Columbine Letter and Report Book, Sierra Leone Collection, Special Collections, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, 79.

the war could be returned to France. There was no use punishing the new regime of Louis XVIII, and British sea power was strong. Thus returning the minor colonies that had switched hands during the wars of the last two decades was a logical part of the peace in an era in which powers traded territories like poker chips in negotiations to end wars. However, the slave trade question gave the African colonies a new importance in the negotiations. Abolitionist opinion in Britain was high, and abolitionists pressured the British government to only allow France to return to the African territories it had possessed at 1792 if France agreed to the abolition of the slave trade. The Africa Institution, the body that replaced the Sierra Leone Company in governing the new crown colony of Sierra Leone after 1808, worried that giving France back colonies and allowing slave trading would nullify the progress of the Sierra Leone colony.⁵⁰ If some European countries were exporting slaves, the civilizing force of Sierra Leone could not reach far into the interior. In addition, one can surmise the British were loathe to see their new colony competing with others that could profit from slaves and draw the trade of unscrupulous slave traders from the interior who would otherwise be forced to turn to other forms of commerce and to frequent Sierra Leone.

Despite British abolitionists' unwillingness to give France back colonies from which slave exportation would continue, the French at first successfully resisted an immediate abolition of the slave trade. The French statesman Talleyrand argued abolition would go against French public opinion and alienate French people from the newly restored monarch. He negotiated with a mind to avoid, or at least delay, the abolition of the slave trade. The outcome was a compromise. The Treaty of Paris of May 30, 1814, returned to France the "colonies, fisheries,

⁵⁰ Betty Fladeland, "Abolitionist Pressures on the Concert of Europe, 1814-1822," *The Journal of Modern History* 38, no. 4 (1966): 359.

trading posts, and establishments of any genre” that France had possessed as of January 1, 1792.⁵¹ Senegal and Gorée then, would be returned to France, but with a moratorium on slave trading there. The major powers agreed that the French would abolish the slave trade within five years, and in the meantime, that slaves could only be bought and sold in the colonies.⁵² This was a victory for Talleyrand and the French, since the slave trade could recommence for a time after 20 years of stagnation due to war.⁵³

However, British abolitionists continued arguing against the terms of the treaty. In a meeting of the House of Lords, July 11, 1814, Lord Holland argued that the British had fully abolished the slave trade in Senegal, but returning it to a slave trading power would mean that 20,000 slaves would be exported the first year.⁵⁴ With these continuing protests as backdrop, negotiations continued at the Congress of Vienna, which began meeting in late 1814, mainly to draw the boundaries of Europe. But no immediate timetable for abolition was reached. A decision was announced to the public on February 8, 1815 that the slave trade would not be abolished immediately, but that talks would continue.⁵⁵

It was the regime changes of 1815 that forced the French to accept the abolition of the slave trade. As Napoleon returned to France out of exile in an attempt to retake power, he proclaimed the abolition of the slave trade March 29, 1815. The move was probably a bid for

⁵¹ “colonies, pecheries, comptoirs et etablissemens de tout genre” Article 8, “Traité de paix entre le roi et les puissances alliées,” in *Recueil des traités et conventions entre la France et les puissances alliées en 1814 et 1815. suivi de l’acte du Congrès de Vienne ([Reprod.])* (Paris: Rondonneau et Decle, 1815), 12.

⁵² “Articles additionnels au traité avec la Grande-Bretagne,” in *Recueil des Traites*, 23.

⁵³ Martha Putney, “The Slave Trade in French Diplomacy from 1814-1815,” *Journal of Negro History* 60 (July 1975): 414.

⁵⁴ “Historical Chronicle, 1814: Proceedings in the Second Session of the Fifth Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland,” in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* 84, part 2 (F. Jefferies, 1814), 265.

⁵⁵ Putney, “The Slave Trade in French Diplomacy from 1814-1815,” 424.

British support, but it did not prevent his final defeat at Waterloo on June 18, 1815 and the restoration of the monarchy. While French merchants were eager to recommence the trade, Louis XVIII, his hand forced by Napoleon, had also made assurances of abolition to the British. Louis XVIII issued directions on the abolition of the slave trade, Talleyrand reported in July 1815, and abolition was formally proclaimed in an article added to the November 20, 1815 Treaty of Paris.⁵⁶ The new treaty did not include any changes to the articles about the colonies, aside from the additional clarification about the immediate abolition of the slave trade.⁵⁷ Thus, it was reaffirmed that Senegal and Gorée were to be returned to France.

The diplomacy around this turnover reveals the extent to which the experience of the past half century and the British focus on abolition shaped how the West African coast looked in 1815. With the abolition clause, Britain ensured that France's colonies would not threaten British interests like they would through slave-trading. The British could focus on Sierra Leone, continue their exploration of the Niger, and compete with the French to draw the gum trade at the Gambia River. France had been returned its colonial posts, which Britain had not had much luck in developing during their periods of rule. French commentators thought of the posts as French, and the *habitants* were more closely related to the French through trade traditions, language, religion, and family. In this way, the return to the posts would be a homecoming for the French military and merchants. But France had also been forced to accept the abolition of the slave trade. Of course, abolition existed more on paper than it did in reality. The British Royal Navy's West Africa Squadron and prize courts had some success capturing slave-trading ships and

⁵⁶ Putney, "The Slave Trade in French Diplomacy from 1814-1815," 424-427.

⁵⁷ "Article additionnel," in *Receuil des traités*, 42-43.

rewarding their capturers.⁵⁸ However, slave trading continued, illegally, into the nineteenth century.⁵⁹ Still, the new law meant that at least officially, the French government had to prohibit slave trading and reconceptualize the colony.

This rethinking of Senegal's role in the French empire had antecedents in the eighteenth century. This chapter has already mentioned some of the projects colonial administrators, both French and British, carried out in Senegambia and other areas after 1763, projects that sought to create colonies that would transcend the slave-based economy of the colonial system.

Experiments in agriculture and the search for new products to export were already underway, drawing on an intellectual moment of the latter half of the eighteenth century that, while based on Old Regime models of empire, also often looked to ways to change the colonial system, especially when it came to slave labor. The second half of this chapter traces the intellectual currents that shaped the nature of the French return to Senegal after the 1815 treaty.

Intellectual Debates and New Exploration of Senegal, 1770-1814

In the years after the Seven Years' War, even as slave exports rose and the West Indies colonies became more prosperous than ever, critics began to question the colonial system as it then stood. The slave trade began to appear to be untenable, and revolutions and slave revolts in the next several decades made it clear to some commentators that a new colonial system would have to take the old system's place. Some critics, particularly adherents of the Physiocrat school

⁵⁸ Ann M. Burton, "British Evangelicals, Economic Warfare and the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1794-1810," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 65, no. 2 (June 1996): 197-225.

⁵⁹ David Eltis, *Economic Growth and The Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

of political economy, many of whom wanted to abolish the slave trade, suggested West Africa as a possible site for new colonies, thus eliminating the need for the slave trade and opening new agricultural and commercial horizons. At the same time, new information on the colony of Senegal and the region began to reach France in the form of reports and published accounts. The French reconquest of the colony during the American Revolution allowed a new wave of merchants, administrators, and travelers to visit the region in the 1780s, including the well-known governor Chevalier de Boufflers, Compagnie agents Golberry and Durand, and Villeneuve. Several of these men produced accounts published in the early 1800s. These writers produced knowledge that could be used to fill in the gaps of the earlier projects of the philosophes. They collected information about the region and its people, while at the same time using historical arguments and observations drawn from their experience in the country to justify France's presence in Senegal and the surrounding area.

Understanding the intellectual background of the idea of replacing the slave trade with other commodities – “legitimate commerce,” as it would come to be called – provides a different angle for the comparison of French and British antislavery movements. Most work on abolitionism has focused on Britain, since this where both the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery sparked a much broader popular appeal. French abolitionism, in comparative perspective, was more limited and lacked the religious context of British abolitionism.⁶⁰ However, by refocusing on the colonial alternatives proposed by abolitionists on both sides of the channel, the similarities between the two countries become more prominent. Though anti-slave trade

⁶⁰ Seymour Drescher, “Two Variants of Anti-slavery: Religious Organization and Social Mobilization in Britain and France, 1780-1870,” in *Anti-Slavery, Religion, and Reform: Essays in Memory of Roger Anstey*, ed. Christine Bolt and Seymour Drescher (Folkestone, England: W. Dawson, 1980), 43-63.

movements took different courses in the two countries, the similarity in new colonial projects and colonial outcomes suggests that on one level, both movements worked from similar assumptions of the necessity of a new kind of empire. By highlighting this parallel between the two countries, a fuller picture emerges of how abolitionist thought – whatever its form – was inextricable from new colonial movements.

Criticisms of the eighteenth-century system of empire and its reliance on slave labor emerged at a time when, by some accounts, the system appeared to be as strong as ever. Production in France's sugar islands of the West Indies – Saint-Domingue, Martinique, and Guadeloupe – saw growth, even though the French slave trade stagnated between 1744 and 1778.⁶¹ Saint-Domingue had overtaken Jamaica as the largest sugar producer in the West Indies in the 1730s, and by the 1780s, the sugar output of Saint-Domingue was 80% greater than that of Jamaica. This economy was dependent on slave labor, and the number of slave imports grew between the Seven Years' War and the beginning of the French Revolution. In the 1780s, the slave population in Saint-Domingue doubled, and in 1790, the slave population of the French empire was 50% greater than that of the British empire.⁶² Though Senegambia was not the largest exporter of slaves, especially by the eighteenth century, the Atlantic slave trade nonetheless altered the social, economic, and political structures of the Senegambia.⁶³ But these changes were not visible to most Europeans, nor would they have raised much attention; of more immediate importance was the place of slavery in the West Indies. Critics, both French and

⁶¹ Robert Louis Stein, *The French Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century: An Old Regime Business* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 25.

⁶² Eltis, *Economic Growth*, 34-36.

⁶³ James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce*.

British, began to call the humanitarian, long-term economic, and security costs of this slavery-based empire into question. One scholarly tradition emphasizes the advent of capitalism and the industrial revolution to explain the end of the slave trade. As the slave labor system became less effective, it was replaced by the machines and wage labor of industrial capitalism. In the colonies, this led to the abolition of the slave trade and a transition to “legitimate commerce,” or the exploitation of colonial goods meant to replace slaves in the British world economy. Britain, the center of the industrial revolution, benefitted most from this shift.⁶⁴ This interpretation, based on the work of Eric Williams, was challenged, most strongly by Seymour Drescher, who argued that the abolitionist movement was in fact going against commercial interests since the system of slave trade and slave labor was still lucrative.⁶⁵ The movement was strongly based in evangelical Protestantism. Petitions, public meetings, and governmental debates brought the issue to the fore as a moral problem. Abolitionist arguments were supported by propaganda, including travel writing that helped support the cause by producing evidence of the horrors of the Middle Passage.⁶⁶ Moral positions served as a kind of social capital for abolitionists.⁶⁷

Britain's abolitionism had close ties to its West African colonization projects. As Christopher Brown writes, “No one in Britain could campaign against colonial slavery or the Atlantic slave trade without also confronting fundamental questions about the structure,

⁶⁴ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944); Selwyn H. H. Carrington, *The Sugar Industry and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1775-1810* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002).

⁶⁵ Seymour Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

⁶⁶ Though not every writer of a travel account was an abolitionist. William Heffernan, “The Slave Trade and Abolition in Travel Literature,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34, no. 2 (April 1, 1973): 185-208.

⁶⁷ Brown, *Moral Capital*.

character, and purpose of empire.”⁶⁸ In response to those questions, a new project for West African colonization emerged. Instead of exporting slaves, Europeans could turn to new forms of exploitation, such as agriculture or trade in other goods. Brown has noted that the British Senegambia experiment in the 1760s-70s was an early example of the turn to “legitimate commerce.”⁶⁹ After the American Revolution, British priorities shifted. The French conquest of Senegal ended the possibility of British colonial development in Senegambia. At the same time, however, the loss of Britain’s American colonies made the search for replacement colonies more urgent. Especially in the 1780s, a number of British schemes arose to start colonies in Africa to settle British subjects, grow crops, and find new exports. The project that got the farthest in execution was the colony of Sierra Leone. Botanist and entrepreneur Henry Smeathman, with the support of scientists and abolitionists John Fothergill and Joseph Banks, spent four years in Sierra Leone in the early 1770s and proposed a colony based on African agricultural labor be founded there. With the support of prominent abolitionists in London, a voyage of settlers taken from the Black Poor of London arrived in the colony in 1787. In 1792, the colony welcomed an expedition of Nova Scotians, or former slaves who had been freed after taking the Loyalist side in the American Revolution. In the following years, the colony’s Freetown settlement served as the location where “recaptured” slaves taken off of ships were settled, a direct example of the connection between colonization and abolitionism.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Brown, *Moral Capital*, 26.

⁶⁹ Christopher Brown, “The Origins of ‘Legitimate Commerce,’” Lecture given at Slavery and its Aftermath in the Atlantic World: An International Symposium, University of Illinois at Chicago, 4-6 October 2012, <http://huminst.las.uic.edu/docs/default-document-library/panel1.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

⁷⁰ For recent works on Sierra Leone, see Dierdre Coleman, *Romantic Colonization and British Anti-Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Brown, *Moral Capital* (especially Chapter 5); and Bronwen Everill, *Abolition and Empire in Sierra Leone and Liberia* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

France's antislavery movement, on the other hand, was limited. Plantation slavery had a certain "invisibility" in metropolitan French society, and while there were moments of antislavery organization, France lacked the sort of popular religious movement and propaganda campaign that might have made the slave trade and slavery more visible and morally unacceptable.⁷¹ The Société des amis des noirs, founded in 1788, which brought together *philosophes* with antislavery leanings, was in one historian's assessment "more of an elite debating club than a real movement."⁷² Those Enlightenment-era French who did question slavery were less worried about the morality of slavery than they were about the stability of the slave colonies and their safety from attack by other European nations.⁷³ It was not until later in the nineteenth century that antislavery sentiment would gain real ground on the French political scene.⁷⁴

⁷¹ On the invisibility of the slave trade, see Madeleine Dobie, *Trading Places: Colonization and Slavery in Eighteenth-Century French Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010). There were a small number of free and enslaved blacks in France who had an important symbolic presence, as discussed in Sue Peabody, *"There Are No Slaves in France": The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁷² Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans*, 139.

⁷³ Michelle Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des lumières: Buffon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvétius, Diderot*, Bibliothèque d'Anthropologie (Paris: F. Maspero, 1971), 151–60; Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans*, 135–136. British abolitionists did not act strictly out of disinterested moral reasons, as Christopher Brown has argued. Christopher Brown notes of British abolitionists: "A few, to varying degrees, did take a genuine interest in the welfare of the enslaved. But many more wanted, above all, to be free of slavery, and thus free from danger or free from corruption or free from guilt. The self-concerned, self-regarding, even self validating impulse in early British abolitionism represents a key theme in this book." *Moral Capital*, 26.

⁷⁴ On French antislavery, see: Daniel P. Resnick, "The Société des Amis des Noirs and the Abolition of Slavery," *French Historical Studies* 7 (1972): 558–69; Serge Daget, "A Model of the French Abolitionist Movement and Its Variations," in *Anti-Slavery, Religion, and Reform: Essays in Memory of Roger Anstey* (Folkestone, Eng: W. Dawson, 1980); Seymour Drescher, "Two Variants of Anti-slavery: Religious Organization and Social Mobilization in Britain and France, 1780–1870," in *Anti-Slavery, Religion, and Reform: Essays in Memory of Roger Anstey*, ed. Christine Bolt and Seymour Drescher (Folkestone, Eng: W. Dawson, 1980); Lawrence Jennings, *French Anti-slavery: The Movement for the Abolition of Slavery in France, 1802–1848* (Cambridge, UK, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Paule Brasseur, "Le Sénégal et sa lente intégration au mouvement abolitionniste (1815–1830)" in *Reétablissement de l'esclavage dans les colonies françaises: Aux origines de Haïti*, ed. Yves Bénot and Marcel Dorigny (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2003), 375–386.

Though abolitionist sentiment was limited in France, antislavery arguments played a role in informing French critiques of the colonial system and proposals for a new type of colonization, just as it did in the British case.⁷⁵ If abolition in the two countries did not have the same popular or governmental support, it was used in part to justify similar colonial projects. In France, like in Britain, commentators criticized forms of empire that were coercive and based on slave labor, but they did not take the stance that the country should give up on an empire entirely. Instead, French commentators crafted visions of a new system that would differ from and replace the old one. Diderot stands out as a critic of the existing colonial structure. In the *Histoire des deux Indes*, published under the name of the editor Raynal, Diderot promoted a humanitarian, consensual colonisation, or *douce colonisation*. Diderot imagined a colonization based on interbreeding to remedy the current colonial system. The coerciveness of empire would have to be replaced by a more enlightened form of rule.⁷⁶

French commentators who wanted to reform the empire and mitigate the evils of slavery were faced with the question of where this kind of reform would be centered. The West Indies were too corrupted by the slave plantation system to nourish a new colonial system. West Africa was tied to the current system as well, through the slave trade. However, the African continent offered significant territorial, economic, and human resources, unlike the small, developed islands of the West Indies. While Senegal and Gorée had been longtime French possessions,

⁷⁵ A survey of French criticisms of colonialism in the eighteenth century, in an abolitionist vein or otherwise, can be found in Lokke, *France and the Colonial Question*, 15-162.

⁷⁶ Dobie, *Trading Places*, 230-242; Sunil Agnani, "Doux commerce, douce colonisation : Diderot and the two Indies of the French Enlightenment," in *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, ed. Larry Wolff and Marco Cipoloni (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); Sunil Agnani, *Hating Empire Properly: The Two Indies and the Limits of Enlightenment Anticolonialism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).

positive reports of the possibilities of the region began to appear only in the mid-eighteenth century. This new, positive portrayal of West Africa gave critics of slave-based empire a site on which to focus their new imperial visions.

Up until the mid-century, only a small number of published works on Senegal existed in French. For much of the eighteenth century, the main work on Senegal was Père Jean-Baptiste Labat's *Nouvelle relation de l'Afrique occidentale* (1728), which plagiarized an earlier work and contained many errors.⁷⁷ Accounts that did exist generally portrayed Africa as barbaric, its population backward and savage, its landscapes unwelcoming. The *Encyclopédie* reflected these negative views. The entry on the kingdom of Senegal notes that the king, far from being a noble ruler, was tributary to another king, often did not have enough to eat, and was reduced to pillaging his villages. The entry continued, "His subjects are not worth any better, they steal from each other and try to sell each other to the Europeans who engage in slave trading on their coasts."⁷⁸ This vision of Senegal as home to greedy and dishonest residents living in desperate poverty did not suggest Europeans would find many opportunities for economic gain.

This negative depiction of Senegal was altered in the middle of the eighteenth century by several positive reports. These accounts, written by men who had traveled to Senegambia and had dreams of the development of commerce in the region, provided ammunition for those who

⁷⁷ This work was plagiarized from an earlier unpublished manuscript by Michel Jajolet de la Courbe dating to 1688. Despite Labat's errors, many works after 1750 have cited his work. Prosper Cultru, "Les faux d'un historien du Sénégal," *La Quinzaine coloniale* (10 June 1910): 399-402; Prosper Cultru, *Premier voyage du Sieur de la Courbe fait à la coste d'Afrique en 1685* (Paris: E. Champion, 1913).

⁷⁸ "Ses sujets ne valent pas mieux; ils se volent réciproquement, & tâchent de se vendre les uns les autres aux Européens qui font commerce d'esclaves sur leurs côtes." Louis Jaucourt, "Sénégal, le royaume de," in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, (Paris, 1765), 15:13. University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 Edition), ed. Robert Morrissey, <http://encyclopedia.uchicago.edu/>.

would propose colonial projects in West Africa. Naturalist Michel Adanson, in his *Histoire naturelle du Sénégal* (1757), recounted his voyage to Senegal between 1749-1753 and identified many natural resources offered by the region. Though Adanson's official capacity was a clerk, he is more famous as a naturalist; in Senegal he observed plants and animals, carried out experiments with indigo, grew melons and other plants, and collected specimens, some of which he sent back to France, including barrels of fish.⁷⁹ Adanson, who had been asked by Choiseul to report on Senegal's economic prospects, proposed exporting plants and animals from the region to send to Guiana and improve its production. He offered to travel the routes between West Africa and South America himself to collect specimens and get the ten-year project started.⁸⁰ While Choiseul politely rejected the project, Adanson's insistence on the agricultural riches of the regions around Senegal suggested that the area was more than a poor country with nothing to offer but slaves. Adanson would continue to argue for the economic worth of Senegal in the following decades; for example, he promoted the gum trade in two papers read to the Académie française on the topic of different species of gum trees in Senegal.⁸¹ Another mid-century writer, l'abbé Démanet, again brought West Africa to the attention of the reading public in his *Nouvelle histoire de l'Afrique française* (1767). Démanet, who had traveled to Gorée in 1763 as a priest, provided another new account of West Africa that colonial reformers could draw upon. Démanet

⁷⁹ George H. M. Lawrence, *Adanson: The Bicentennial of Michel Adanson's "Familles des plantes,"* vol. 2 (Pittsburgh, PA: Hunt Botanical Library, Carnegie Institute of Technology, 1964), 14, 25-6.

⁸⁰ Lawrence, *Adanson*, vol. 2, 47-48.

⁸¹ Michel Adanson, "Sur l'Acacia des Anciens, et sur quelques Autres Arbres du Sénégal qui Portent le Gomme Rougeatre Appelée Communément Gomme Arabique," (read to the Académie 24 February 1773 and printed in the *Mém. Acad. Sci.* 1773), AD 286, Michel Adanson Papers, Hunt Botanical Library, Carnegie Mellon University and Michel Adanson, "Sur le Gommier Blanc Appelé Uérék au Sénégal; sur la Maniere dont on en Fait la Récolte de sa Gomme et de Celle des Acacia et sur un Autre Arbre du Même Genre" (read 11 July 1773), AD 287, Michel Adanson Papers, Hunt Botanical Library, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA.

later founded an association with the goal of exploiting the gold mines of Bambuk, a region several hundred miles inland.⁸² His project failed, but like Adanson, his work served as a source of information on West Africa.

These positive observations of Africa emerged at the same time that a number of French writers, many associated with the Physiocratic school of political economy, proposed the colonization of Africa as a solution to the problems of the current colonial system. Physiocratic thought was based on the notion that a nation's wealth came from its agricultural production. Physiocrats viewed free trade as superior to monopolies, and felt that the colonial *exclusif* would be the downfall of the untenable West Indies colonial system. Physiocrats were not necessarily abolitionists, though some criticized the slave trade or at least saw it as part of the impossible current colonial system, and as Pernille Røge notes, many of those who would become members of the Société des amis des noirs had personal connections to followers of the Physiocrat school.⁸³

The Abbé Roubaud, for example, in writings before and during his association with the Physiocrat school, suggested the slave trade could be replaced by agricultural development in Africa. Rather than relying on a colonial system based on slavery and monopoly and doomed to fail, the French could shift their commercial focus to Africa, he suggested. In his *Histoire*

⁸² Bambuk is located between the Faleme on the east and the upper Senegal on the west. Stories of the gold mines of Bambuk drew Portuguese attention as early as the late 1400s, and Bambuk gold became a focus of French projects in the early 1700s. The French set up posts in Bambuk between 1725 and 1734 under the support of André de la Brûe, but they were too costly to maintain, considering the amount of gold being produced. Projects to explore and exploit the mines continued from time to time into the 1800s. Faidherbe enacted treaties that allowed French exploitation of gold in the 1850s, but the post at Keniéba was abandoned in 1860 as a result of low gold production and high European mortality rates. See Philip Curtin, "The Lure of Bambuk Gold," *The Journal of African History* 14, no. 4 (1973): 623-626.

⁸³ Pernille Røge, "'La clef de commerce'—The changing role of Africa in France's Atlantic empire ca. 1760-1797," *History of European Ideas* 34, no 4 (2008): 441.

générale, published in 1771, Roubaud drew on Adanson and Démanet to suggest crops that could be grown in French colonies in West Africa.⁸⁴ Roubaud's project was taken up by an important member of the Physiocrat school, Du Pont de Nemours. He too saw the commercial benefit of African agricultural development, stating that free labor was more productive than slave labor. In Africa, a labor force already existed; rather than exporting Africans as slaves, they could be convinced to produce sugar and sell it to the French.⁸⁵ This was the “douce colonisation” of Diderot, one based on consent and commerce rather than slavery and oppression. Roubaud wrote that by starting sugar plantations in Africa, Africans would benefit: “we shall have perfected their ways of life and ours, we shall have made them into industrious farmers, and we will not be oppressors.”⁸⁶ As François Manchuelle has argued, colonial projects of this period were rooted in Enlightenment ideas of regeneration.⁸⁷ Both Africa and France would see the benefits of this regeneration, in Roubaud's eyes.

The proposals of the 1760s and 1770s made their way into policy slowly and unevenly in the period before the French Revolution. On the other side of Africa, one administrator, Peter Poivre, attempted to put Physiocrats' projects into practice in Ile de France, now Mauritius, in 1767. Poivre, a naturalist, criticized the Compagnie des Indes for focusing too much on trade and not devoting enough time to agricultural development. Poivre accepted that slavery was condoned by the law, but thought free labor would prove more productive and efficient. In the

⁸⁴ Røge, ““La clef de commerce,”” 436.

⁸⁵ Røge, ““La clef de commerce,”” 437-438.

⁸⁶ Quoted in William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans: White Response to Blacks, 1530-1880* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 164.

⁸⁷ François Manchuelle, “The ‘Regeneration of Africa’: An Important and Ambiguous Concept in 18th and 19th Century French Thinking about Africa,” *Cahiers d'études africaines* 36, no. 144 (1996): 559-588.

colony, he planted experimental gardens and promoted smaller scale agriculture, in contrast to the slave plantation model that had existed there. The number of slaves on Ile de France rose by 5000 during his administration, suggesting his “enlightened colonialism” did not lead to a decrease in slaves as abolitionists might have hoped.⁸⁸ In any case, his policies marked a shift in conceptualizing French colonies as agricultural establishments based on free labor rather than as plantation colonies based on slavery and the slave trade.⁸⁹ In West Africa, however, metropolitan French administrators were loathe to experiment with agricultural trials based on free labor. One proposal to found African plantations, submitted to the government by a tax official named Saget in 1770, was rejected because officials feared the establishment would be too hard to defend from other European powers and because they worried it would introduce competition with the French possessions in the West Indies.⁹⁰

However, the political changes of the period between the mid 1780s and 1800 made the Physiocrats’ projects more attractive. In the aftermath of internal political upheaval and the French revolutionary wars, the government was forced to consider policies that would control dissenting classes and prevent another destructive revolution, including the possibility of expansion to new colonies as a safety valve for rebellious subjects. Meanwhile, on the colonial front, it seemed after the American Revolution that France risked losing its sugar colonies, both because of fears of the new American influence in the region and revolts on the islands themselves.⁹¹ The 1791 slave revolt in Saint-Domingue threw the French position in the West

⁸⁸ Dobie, *Trading Places*, 220.

⁸⁹ Dobie, *Trading Places*, 220-221, William Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 168-263.

⁹⁰ Røge, ““La clef de commerce,”” 438-440.

⁹¹ Lokke, *France and the Colonial Question*, 91, 163-164.

Indies into question, as did the British occupation of Martinique and, briefly, Guadeloupe, in 1794. Thus, the growing sentiment that France's position in the West Indies was precarious and untenable drew France toward a more violent antipathy toward the Caribbean colonies.⁹² In this context, a new imperial system that would target Africa seemed more and more attractive.

Talleyrand, the French diplomat, expressed his favor of a new colonial system, suggesting that the Physiocratic projects were finding powerful allies in the changing political context of the post-Revolutionary years. In 1796, a year before being named foreign minister, Talleyrand gave a speech on the colonies to the National Institute. Talleyrand suggested that while France should focus on repairing the damage done in its old colonies, France should also “cast its eyes on other lands and prepare there new colonies that have links with us that are more natural, useful, and lasting.”⁹³ Talleyrand saw Egypt as a possible site for colonial development; Napoleon's Egypt Campaign of 1798-1801 would put some elements of this scheme into action. However, Talleyrand also made mention of West Africa, drawing on a report published by Montlinot, an official who had suggested the poor of France might be sent to found colonies in West Africa. Talleyrand suggested that islands along the West African coast could serve as the site for future colonies.⁹⁴

⁹² See Lokke, *France and the colonial question*, 119-164 for an extended treatment.

⁹³ “Mais, en même temps, ne convient-il pas de jeter les yeux sur d'autres contrées et d'y préparer l'établissement de colonies nouvelles dont les liens avec nous seront plus naturels, plus utiles et plus durables ?” Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, *Essai sur les avantages à retirer de colonies nouvelles dans les circonstances présentes, par le citoyen Talleyrand. Lu à la séance publique le 15 messidor an 5*, Extracted from Académie des sciences morales et politiques, Paris. Mémoires de l'Institut national des sciences et arts. Science morales et politiques. t. 2 (Paris: Baudouin, imprimeur de l'Institut national, 1798), 289. Hathi Digital Trust, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015073367693>.

⁹⁴ Talleyrand, *Essai sur les avantages à retirer de colonies nouvelles*, 299.

Talleyrand made it clear that new colonies would allow France to hedge its bets against not only the possible loss of France's current colonies but also the changing labor regime. New colonies could provide new sources for goods if the old colonies were lost through rebellion, as Britain had lost its North American colonies, and like France might soon face with Saint-Domingue. Talleyrand's proposal for a West African colony was preceded by the phrase: "if we suppose that our American islands become exhausted, or even slip from our hands."⁹⁵ Choiseul had already tried to obtain Egypt for France in 1769, Talleyrand wrote, in order to replace the production France would lose in the case of the loss of the American colonies. Britain was doing the same, as it had tried or had plans to try growing sugar in Bengal, Sierra Leone, and the island of Buluma. France, then, needed to be ready to replace colonies that threatened rebellion with some that had closer ties to France.⁹⁶ The new colonies would not, Talleyrand argued, be founded from populations fleeing tyrannical governments in Europe, as Britain's North American colonies had been.⁹⁷ Instead, France's new government, based as it was on liberty rather than the arbitrary whims of an absolutist leader, would direct the colony toward working to the good of humankind, not the enrichment of a leader. Talleyrand implied that under the new regime's governance, residents of the new colonies would not find themselves grumbling under the political or economic tyranny of an absolutist government, but instead would be encouraged to retain close and beneficial ties to France.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ "En nous plaçant dans la supposition où nos îles d'Amérique s'épuiseraient, ou même nous échapperaient. . ."

Talleyrand, *Essai sur les avantages à retirer de colonies nouvelles*, 299.

⁹⁶ Talleyrand, *Essai sur les avantages à retirer de colonies nouvelles*, 299-300.

⁹⁷ Talleyrand, *Essai sur les avantages à retirer de colonies nouvelles*, 292-293.

⁹⁸ Talleyrand, *Essai sur les avantages à retirer de colonies nouvelles*, 289-290.

The move toward new colonies was also a way France could hedge its bets at a moment when the slave regime appeared to be on its way out, threatening to make the current production system obsolete. In 1796, to Talleyrand, it seemed that the institution of slavery would become obsolete, if not immediately, then in the near future. Even if colonies were not lost through outright revolt, then, their importance would decline when the shift from a slave-based economy occurred. Slavery had in fact been outlawed in France and the colonies by the French Revolutionary government in 1794, and though the law was not fully implemented, Talleyrand's emphasis on colonies that would not rely on slave labor fit with the law's prescriptions. He wrote,

it is a truth that we should not seek to silence: the question so indirectly addressed, that of the liberty of blacks, whatever remedy that our wisdom brings to the sufferings that have been its outcome, will introduce sooner or later a new system for the cultivation of colonial crops: it is wise to act ahead of these great changes, and the first idea that comes to mind, that which brings the most favorable suppositions, seems to be to try this cultivation at the same place where the cultivator is born.⁹⁹

Talleyrand echoed the calls of the Physiocrats in calling on France to set up colonies in a place where a labor force already existed and thus would not have to be imported in the form of slaves.

If new colonies could address the rebellion and slavery inherent in the colonial system, they could also remedy France's internal turmoil. Talleyrand favored sending French settlers to the colonies to quell the revolutionary fervor that was only just waning in France. Establishing new colonies would provide a place for revolutionaries to direct their energies without disrupting

⁹⁹ "Il est d'ailleurs une vérité qu'il ne faut pas chercher à taire : la question si indirectement traitée sur la liberté des noirs, quel que soit le remède que la sagesse apporte aux malheurs qui en ont été la suite, introduira tôt ou tard, un nouveau système dans la culture des denrées coloniales : il est politique d'aller au-devant de ces grands changements ; et la première idée qui s'offre à l'esprit, celle qui amène le plus de suppositions favorables, paraît être d'essayer cette culture aux lieux même où naît le cultivateur." Talleyrand, *Essai sur les avantages à retirer de colonies nouvelles*, 299-300.

the political and social state of France. Talleyrand remarked that in the United States, from which he had just returned, there was relative calm despite the recent revolution. This calm could be attributed to the U.S.'s frontier, which allowed the former combatants to direct their energies

in a vast, new country, where adventurous projects prime the spirits, where an immense quantity of uncultivated lands give them the ability to find new activity far from the theater of the initial discord, to place hopes in distant expectations, to throw themselves at the same time in the middle of many trials, to exhaust themselves finally by these displacements, and to thus to deaden their revolutionary passions.¹⁰⁰

While France had no frontiers, it could recreate this kind of open space through its colonies.

France would have to be careful to send only small groups that the land could undoubtedly support and to send industrious, moral men. If settlement were not closely regulated, Talleyrand warned, the colony might repeat past disasters like the colony of Kourou in French Guiana and the Mississippi colony.¹⁰¹ If the settlements were well planned, however, they could direct French revolutionary spirits in a positive direction.

In the first few years of the 1800s, the publication of several new works on the region of Senegambia provided the information to judge the plans of the Physiocrats, test their feasibility, and legitimate French development in the region in the face of European rivalry. The accounts, written by merchants and administrators who had traveled to Senegal in the 1780s after the French repossession in the American Revolution, helped fill in the details of what a new Senegal colony might look like and where it would fit in to the colonial system. They featured often-

¹⁰⁰ “...dans un pays vaste et nouveau, ou des projets aventureux amorcent les esprits, ou une immense quantité de terres incultes leur donne la facilité d’aller employer loin du théâtre des premières dissensions une activité nouvelle, de placer des espérances dans les speculations lointaines, de se jeter à la fois au milieu d’une foule d’essais, de se fatiguer enfin par des déplacements, et d’amortir ainsi chez eux les passions révolutionnaires.” Talleyrand, *Essai sur les avantages à retirer de colonies nouvelles*, 291.

¹⁰¹ Talleyrand, *Essai sur les avantages à retirer de colonies nouvelles*, 296–7.

lengthy, detailed descriptions of the region's geography, history, people, products, and natural features. While several of the authors thought the abolition of slavery had been too hasty, they nonetheless proposed agricultural and commercial alternatives, building on the proposals of the Physiocrats, that would allow France to profit from trade with Senegal while moving beyond the slave trade. The knowledge constructed by the accounts would serve as an outline for colonial trials a decade and a half later, beginning in 1814-15, when France readied to return to the West African coast after the British occupations of Senegal (beginning in 1809) and Gorée (beginning in 1800).

Three of the central authors who published books on Senegambia between 1800 and 1802 were merchants and administrators, and they accordingly made commercial concerns a central part of their works. While historians have pointed to the role of naturalists, geographers, and other scientific figures in creating colonial knowledge, military and commercial voices were significant in constructing an image of Senegal as a land with many commercial opportunities. Jean-Gabriel Pelletan, who had been the director general of the Compagnie du Sénégal until the French Revolution ended his tenure, published a *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal avec quelques considerations historiques et politiques sur la traite des negres, sur leur caractère et les moyens de faire servir la suppression de cette traite à l'accroissement et à la prospérité de cette colonie*, in 1800. As the long title indicates, Pelletan was interested in cataloging the commercial opportunities brought about by the abolition of the slave trade. Jean-Baptiste-Léonard Durand had also been director of the Compagnie at Saint-Louis, beginning in 1785.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Jean-Baptiste-Léonard Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal ou Mémoires historiques, philosophiques et politiques sur les découvertes, les établissemens et le commerce des Européens dans les mers de l'Océan atlantique : depuis le Cap-Blanc jusqu'à la rivière de Serre-Lionne inclusivement ; suivis de la Relation d'un voyage par terre de l'île Saint-*

His *Voyage au Sénégal*, published in 1802, included an account of a voyage inland to Galam, a major slave trading center, and included a compilation of commercial treaties Durand had made with the Moors during his time in the colony. A third writer who published a book about Senegambia in the same period, Silvester Meinrad Xavier Golberry, had traveled to Senegal between 1785 and 1787 as the aide de camp and chief engineer of the governor du Boufflers.¹⁰³ His mission, as a member of the engineering corps, was commercial and strategic:

Following the instructions that were given me, I was to take notice of anything that would be of interest to our trade, English commercial affairs, and those of Portuguese commerce; to negotiate with several kings of the blacks for the establishment of new trading posts, if they seemed useful to me; reform the trading posts that seemed superfluous; examine all the points susceptible to a military force, and determine what could assure and augment their means of resistance; to finally gather as much information as possible on the countries that are subjects to the government of Senegal or under its influence.¹⁰⁴

Golberry published his *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique* in 1802. Golberry noted the difference between his work and that of learned writers in a self-deprecating phrase that could have been paraphrased by the directors of the Compagnie: "Military man and man of the world, I am far

Louis à Galam ; et du texte arabe de Trois traités de commerce faits par l'auteur avec les princes du pays (Paris: Henri Agasse, 1802), xxiii.

¹⁰³ Silvester Meinrad Xavier Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique : fait pendant les années 1785, 1786 et 1787, dans les contrées occidentales de ce continent, comprises entre le cap Blanc de Barbarie. . . et le cap de Palmes. . .*, vol. 1 (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1802), 7-8.

¹⁰⁴ "Suivant les instructions qui me furent données, je devais prendre connaissance de tout ce qui pouvait intéresser notre commerce, des affaires du commerce anglais, et de celles du commerce portugais; négocier avec plusieurs rois nègres pour l'établissement de nouveaux comptoirs, s'ils me semblaient utiles; réformer les comptoirs qui me paraîtraient superflus; examiner tous les points susceptibles d'une force militaire, et déterminer ce qui pouvait assurer et augmenter leurs moyens de résistance; prendre enfin sur les contrées soumises au gouvernement du Sénégal, ou à son influence, tous les renseignements possibles." Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 10.

from the talents of a man of letters; my book, doubtless very imperfect, will merit some criticisms, but my profession and my intention will perhaps gain indulgence.”¹⁰⁵

Even if they were not men of letters, the authors had the authority of observation behind their work. To establish their authority, the authors listed their observational experience and research bonafides. Pelletan assured his readers he had gathered journals, observations, anecdotes, historical notes, and other materials in his research.¹⁰⁶ Golberry had traveled to various points between Cap Blanc and Cap des Palmes, conversed with people from 20 different “black nations,” and collected documents after his return to France, including information from the former governor Répentigny.¹⁰⁷ The authors’ insistence that they were providing up-to-date, accurate first-hand observations allied them with explorers and naturalists in the quest to describe accurately unknown Africa, a broader theme of late eighteenth century intellectual thought. As the author of a book on the Congo and Cape of Good Hope judged in 1801, savants’ “esteemed accounts” were replacing the “absurd fables” of past works.¹⁰⁸

In keeping with this theme of discovery, the authors of the publications on Senegal stressed that part of their purpose was to remedy the lack of knowledge about the region. Pelletan highlighted the unknown nature of the lands and the problems with previous publications treating West Africa:

¹⁰⁵ “Militaire et homme du monde, je suis loin des talens d'un homme de lettres; mon livre, très-imparfait sans doute, méritera des critiques; mais ma profession et mon intention obtiendront peut-être de l'indulgence.” Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 27.

¹⁰⁶ Jean-Gabriel Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal avec quelques considerations historiques et politiques sur la traite des negres. sur leur caractère et les moyens de faire servir la suppression de cette traite à l'accroissement et à la prospérité de cette colonie* (Paris: Panckoucke, 1800), 5.

¹⁰⁷ Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 11-12.

¹⁰⁸ Louis de Grandpré, *Voyage à la cote occidentale d'Afrique, fait dans les années 1786 et 1787* (Paris: Dentu, 1801), i. Grandpré listed Savari, Volney, Sparrman, le Vaillant, Mungo Park, Browne as examples of these new accounts, ii.

This country, although cited by the ancients, and frequented for a long time by modern Europeans, is almost unknown, or what is even worse, is very poorly known. All that has been written is barely accurate, the country was so badly observed, at least in the accounts I looked at, that what I have to say about it will have, in many regards, the merit of newness.¹⁰⁹

Golberry agreed that knowledge about Africa was scant, writing, “At the time when the peace of 1783 reestablished our exclusive ownership of Senegal, a very thick veil still covered the interior countries of the continent.”¹¹⁰ Golberry suggested his work would be a point of departure for future explorers.

If the authors argued that their descriptions of Senegal contributed to a more complete picture of the West African coast, they placed equal emphasis on how their work highlighted the ways in which the region could benefit the commerce of France. All three authors focused on commercial possibilities, reflecting their backgrounds and missions. Durand, for example, used his preface to dedicate his book to France's commerce and *armateurs* (shipowners). The future of the empire, and of France, lay in commercial development, as Durand saw it. He explicitly tied merchants to the national interest: “Shipowners and merchants, you are placed in the State to there establish wealth and abundance.”¹¹¹ Senegal played an important role in Durand’s vision of commerce, and he suggested the colony would provide goods for trade, become a market for French merchandise, and produce crops, following his conviction that “agriculture is the soul of commerce.”¹¹² In the aftermath of the revolution, commerce would save the nation.

¹⁰⁹ “Ce pays, quoique cité par les anciens, et fréquenté depuis long-tems par les Européens modernes, n'est presque pas connu; ou, ce qui est pire encore, est très-mal connu. Tout ce qui en a été écrit est si peu exact, il a été si mal observé, du moins dans les rapports sous lesquels je l'ai envisagé, que ce que j'avais à en dire eût eu, à bien des égards, le mérite de la nouveauté.” Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, vi.

¹¹⁰ Golberry, *Fragments d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 3.

¹¹¹ “Armateurs et Négocians, vous êtes placés dans l'État pour y fixer la richesse et l'abondance.” Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, xxx.

¹¹² “L'agriculture est l'ame du commerce...” Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, xxxi.

Golberry, Durand, and Pelletan's works covered a coastline of at least 500 miles, nearby islands, and interior kingdoms. The northern limit of the area included in these descriptions was usually the territory of the Moors on the right bank of the Senegal River, above Saint-Louis, with the southern limit being the region around the mouth of the Sierra Leone river. The accounts examined posts claimed by the British and Portuguese, but largely, the regions described were under the control of various African kingdoms or settled by small-scale societies. But even as they described a vast area, the authors acknowledged and bemoaned the limited position of the French in Senegambia. The European posts that existed through the eighteenth century were few and far between, and Europeans could not realistically lay claim to much outside their small forts and factories. In addition, European posts changed hands or were abandoned fairly regularly, giving lie to the notion of a permanent presence. Apart from Senegal and Gorée, which alternated between British and French control, there were a number of French posts that had been simply abandoned. For example, as Durand noted, the French had left their former posts of Rufisque, Portudal, and Joal; the administration keeping only an alternating *habitant* and a "nègre" at Joal in order to ensure the provisioning of Gorée.¹¹³ Since his departure from Senegal, Durand complained, the French had also abandoned posts at Podor, on the Senegal River, and Albréda, near the Gambia.¹¹⁴ Durand did not approve of this retrenchment; he wrote of Albréda, "I think that it is proper to maintain it, less, to tell the truth, for the advantages it presents in terms of commerce, than to conserve the right of property and our relations with the kings of the country,

¹¹³ Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, 46.

¹¹⁴ Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, 218.

who have a decided taste for the French, and who prefer their merchandise.”¹¹⁵ In the face of a precarious position, France had to keep footholds where it could, not necessarily for great immediate profit but instead to stake out claims and begin to attract trade partners. With such a weak French presence, the authors truly needed the support of the French government to put their commercial plans into action and compete effectively with other European nations on the coast. As Golberry put it, “our situation in Africa finds itself so limited, so precarious, even on the coasts, and so barely consolidated, finally so generally undetermined,” that the government should set up a central administration to ensure commercial development.¹¹⁶

French writers used the argument that their countrymen had been the first to reach the West African coast in order to assert their rights to the region against the claims of other European countries. An early appearance of the assertion that French merchants traversed the West African coast in the 1360s can be traced to Villault de Bellefond's *Relation des costes d'Afrique, appellées Guinée*, an account of a voyage to the west coast of Africa in 1666-1667 published in 1669. Villault wrote that despite the common belief that the Portuguese had set up posts on the West African coast before other European states, France had actually reached the coast a half century before the Portuguese. In 1364, he wrote, merchants from the French town of Dieppe launched a voyage that went to the Canaries and passed by Cap Vert (future site of Dakar). The two ships dropped anchor by “Rio Fresco,” presumably Rufisque. The bay, Villault noted, was still called in his day the “Baye de France.” Villault described the scene in a way that

¹¹⁵ “je pense qu'il convient de le maintenir, moins, à la verité, pour les avantages qu'il présente sous le rapport du commerce, que pour conserver le droit de propriété et nos relations avec les rois du pays, qui ont un goût décidé pour les Français, et qui préfèrent leurs marchandises.” Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, 83.

¹¹⁶ “notre situation en Afrique se trouve si bornée, si précaire, même sur les côtes, et si peu consolidée, enfin si généralement indéterminée.” Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 65.

recalled other European tales of first contact: “The Blacks of these coasts, to whom the Whites had been unknown to this point, ran from all the coasts to see them, but did not want to enter into the ships until they remarked that these men, far from wanting to do evil to them, carressed them, and had brought them many trinkets, the sight of which surprised them.”¹¹⁷ In return, the Africans gave them ivory, hides, and ambergris, and the Europeans promised to come back and trade, Villault recounted. The French traders then traveled along the coast southward, past Sierra Leone, to the mouth of the Rio Sextos, where they found a village they named Petit-Dieppe. There, they traded for more goods, then returned to France after a six-month voyage.¹¹⁸ Trade for ivory and pepper continued over the next decade, as the story went. The image of Africans seeing their first white men, the trade relations, and the naming of a village all served to cement France’s right to the coast.

The story of the Dieppe merchants was taken up in the works on Senegal that appeared in the early 1800s. Durand explained that the French had organized a mission in 1365 and mounted a large expedition the next year:

They established their rights in a manner that was so clear, so authentic, that it was generally recognized that the glory and honor of these first discoveries belonged to the French. We know that the expeditions of the Dieppe residents went back to the beginning of the fourteenth century: they were established from then on on the Senegal and the length of the coast to Sierra Leone.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ “Les Noirs de ces costez, ausquels jusques là les Blancs avoient été inconnus accouroient de tous les costes pour les voir, mais ne vouloient point entrer dans les vaisseaux, jusques à ce qu'ils eussent remarqué que ces gens, bien éloignez de leur faire du mal, les caressoient, et leur avoient apporté quantité de bagatelles, dont la veuë les surprit.” Quoted in Jules Hardy, *Les Dieppois en Guinée en 1364* (Dieppe: A. Marais, 1864), 10.

¹¹⁸ Hardy, *Les Dieppois*, 10-11.

¹¹⁹ “Ils établirent leurs droits d'une maniere si claire, si authentique, qu'il fut généralement reconnu que la gloire et l'honneur de ces premieres découvertes appartenaient aux Français. On sait que les expéditions des Dieppois remontent au commencement du quatorzieme siecle : ils s'étaient établis dès-lors sur le Sénégal et le long de la côte jusqu'à Serre-Lionne [sic].” Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, xi-xii.

Durand blamed the neglect of these posts on the civil war of 1392 and on merchants who gave up their positions to join the nobility. In response to the French withdrawal, other countries moved in to occupy the posts. Durand portrayed these other nations as intruders, writing, “The Portuguese were the first and most ardent despoilers of the French establishments.”¹²⁰ Pelletan, for his part, claimed that the Dieppe traders had secured rights to trade on the West African coast around 1340. Pelletan suggested an even more continuous French presence: “Since then, the French have always maintained themselves there; in some recent epochs, events of war forced them to share the possession of them with the English. It would be just, and doubtless easy, to take them entirely from them in the new peace treaty.”¹²¹

More recent scholarship has refuted this account, and it is widely accepted that the Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach West Africa by sea. Charles-André Julien, in a survey of the earliest French voyages of discovery, notes that Villault, the initial propagator of the story, did not make specific references. The original sources Villault supposedly used no longer exist, having burned, seemingly, briefly after Villault published his work. However, Julien points out, Villault's contemporaries made no reference to the Dieppe voyagers, even though they would have ostensibly had access to the documents. The sole surviving original text, Julien judges, is obviously a fake because of its anachronisms, errors, and “the too ingenious confection of proper names.”¹²² In the end, the question of which European nation first sent voyages to West

¹²⁰ “Les Portugais furent les premiers et les plus ardents spoliateurs des établissemens français.” Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, xii-xiii.

¹²¹ “Depuis lors les Français s'y sont toujours maintenus : à quelques époques près, où les événemens de la guerre les sont obligés d'en partager la possession avec les Anglais. Il sera juste, et sans doute facile, de les en écarter entièrement dans le nouveau traité de paix.” Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, xv.

¹²² “la confection trop ingénieuse des noms propres.” Charles-André Julien, *Les voyages de découverte et les premiers établissemens (XVe-XVIe siècles)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), 8-11. This assessment is seconded in Pierre Chaunu, *European Expansion in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Katharine Bertram, Europe in the

Africa is less significant to later imperial projects than the uses to which the story was put. J. Scott Keltie, a British geographer writing in the early twentieth century, noted the staying power of the story: “French patriotism naturally makes the most of the feeble evidence on which the story of these enterprises is founded.”¹²³ More than a century before Keltie wrote this sentence in the era of high imperialism, Pelletan was already using the story of the Dieppe merchants to argue that it would be “just” for the French to regain control of the coast from their British enemies.

The British-French rivalry of the turn of the nineteenth century provided another rhetorical ground to justify French claims to the West African coast, as French commentators compared their temperament and colonial history in the region with those of the British. The notion that the French colonial temperament relied on alliance and friendship dated back to early modern French colonization of North America. As Patricia Seed has noted, French “ceremonies of possession” were built around the response of subjects and were meant to reflect the French colonial strategy of alliance.¹²⁴ The French self-perception as friendly colonizers continued into the first years of the nineteenth century, as commentators judged that France was more fit than Britain to expand their empire in West Africa because many Africans liked them better. Golberry, speaking of the possibility of imperial expansion by his countrymen, pointed to “our sociability, which inspires in African nations a natural attraction to us.”¹²⁵ Pelletan emphasized the gentle

Middle Ages Selected Studies, ed. Richard Vaughan, vol. 10 (New York: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1979), 306.

¹²³ J. Scott Keltie, *Africa*, ed. Albert Galloway Keller, vol. XIX (Philadelphia: John D. Morris and Company, 1908), 15.

¹²⁴ Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession: Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge, England, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹²⁵ Golberry, *Fragments d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 7.

paternal rule of the French Compagnie des Indes, who administered the colony before the Seven Years' War and had the monopoly of the slave trade at that time. The Compagnie had lived in peaceful understanding with the peoples neighboring the colony, and, Pelletan noted, the French agents did not enslave them or buy from others who did. The Compagnie's slave trade was limited to slaves brought from the upriver province of Galam, and, Pelletan wrote, "It seemed that the distance from the site of commerce diminished the horror of it a little." On the other hand, the British only cared to obtain the greatest number of slaves possible for trade; Pelletan argued that the French Compagnie only exported 500-600 slaves a year from Senegal, whereas the English exported 2000-3000.¹²⁶

French claims to the region also rested on apparent evidence of British incompetency. Pelletan argued that the British had not run the colony well, blaming the British government for the devastation of Waalo, a kingdom along the river between Saint-Louis and Podor. The land used to be cultivated, but 20 years before, the British had armed the Moors and incited them to act against Waalo, ruining and depopulating the land within two years.¹²⁷ With French protection, Pelletan argued, the inhabitants of Waalo would return and again become productive cultivators.¹²⁸

On the other hand, the British could also serve as an example of what the French strove to be, reflecting the schizophrenic mixture of superiority and self-loathing with which the French viewed their rivalry with the British. Golberry expressed his disappointment that despite his

¹²⁶ "Il semblait que l'éloignement du théâtre de ce commerce, en diminuait un peu l'horreur." Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, f.n. 18, 79-80.

¹²⁷ Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 78-9.

¹²⁸ Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 80.

desire to found a society for exploration, England was taking the lead in that field.¹²⁹ Golberry criticized the lack of French expansion of the colony, comparing it to the glory that Captain Cook's voyage had brought to the British.¹³⁰ He also expressed his sorrow at seeing the Scottish explorer Mungo Park's West African travel account published in 1799, as it "again gave the British the advantage of the first steps and first successes in this career that I viewed as being reserved for us."¹³¹ Despite his comments, cited earlier, about the fitness of the French as a colonial power, Golberry thought the English had taken greater advantage of their situation:

If I often speak of the English nation with praise, it is because I often had the occasion to see in Africa its activity, its infatigable industry, its enlightenment, and the great character that puts her among the ranks of the first nations of the world; and I thought that it would be useful to present this ceaselessly to the French as an object of emulation and rivalry, but I prefer France and my compatriots to all the countries and all the people of the world.¹³²

If the French were to catch up with British colonization efforts, the early 1800s seemed an ideal time to expand the French presence in West Africa. Napoleon's rise to power seemed to be about to usher in a time of stability in the wake of the French Revolution. Authors writing on Senegal in the first years of the 1800s picked up arguments that had been proposed by Talleyrand several years earlier: that Senegal and the surrounding regions could provide a site for pent-up French energy and a reflowering of the nation. Judging (wrongly) that war was coming to an end, Durand saw an opportunity for future commercial expansion:

¹²⁹ Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 23.

¹³⁰ Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 4.

¹³¹ Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 25.

¹³² "Si je parle souvent de la nation anglaise avec éloge, c'est que j'ai eu souvent occasion de reconnaître en Afrique, son activité, son infatigable industrie, ses lumières et ce grand caractère qui la mettent au rang des premières nations du monde; et j'ai pensé qu'il devait être utile de la présenter sans cesse aux Français comme un objet d'émulation et de rivalité; mais je préfère la France, et mes compatriotes, à toutes les contrées et à tous les peuples de la terre." Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 28-29.

In assuring us the integrity of our colonial possessions, the peace imposes on us the obligation to put back into action the great workshops of commercial industry. It is by them that our losses and our sorrows should be repaid; it is by them that our navy will become strong and powerful, by which we will, as before, tilt the balance of trade in our favor; it is by them above all that the *great nation* will restore to herself this title she has won, immutable and respected.¹³³

Merchants were at the heart of the movement to rebuild military might and national pride, remedying the upheaval of the Revolution. Pelletan wrote,

After ten years of a revolution that disrupted so many men and things, after the turmoil affecting every fortune, all will feel the need to recoup their losses; the disquietude of minds, the fruit of our long agitations, will be replaced by work; French industry, so long compromised, will have a revival. This will be the moment of great enterprises.¹³⁴

French commerce would remake itself through the colonies, and the colonies would remake France.

The question of whether the colony could be a safety valve for frustrated victims emigrating after the Revolution was another question raised by these authors. In the years before 1800, there had been several proposals to send the undesirable population of France to West Africa. During the Revolution, a plan to send beggars to Africa was proposed by Leclerc de Montlinot (the same one Talleyrand noted), but the project was not carried out.¹³⁵ France sent 550 priests to Rio d'Oro, north of the Senegal, in 1792, at the high point of revolutionary

¹³³ “En nous assurant l'intégrité de nos possessions coloniales, la paix nous impose l'obligation de remettre en activité ces grands ateliers de l'industrie commerçante. C'est par eux que nos pertes et nos malheurs doivent être réparés; c'est par eux que notre marine deviendra forte et puissante, que nous ferons, comme autrefois, pencher en notre faveur la balance du commerce; c'est par eux surtout que la *grande nation* rendra ce titre qu'elle a conquis, immuable et respecté.” Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, xxx.

¹³⁴ “Après dix ans d'une révolution qui a déplacé tant d'hommes et de choses; après le bouleversement de toutes les fortunes, chacun sentira le besoin de réparer ses pertes; l'inquiétude des esprits, fruit de nos longues agitations, sera remplacée par le travail; l'industrie française, si long-tems comprimée, prendra un nouvel essor. Ce sera le moment des grandes entreprises.” Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, xv-xvi.

¹³⁵ Miranda Frances Spieler, *Empire and Underworld: Captivity in French Guiana* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 25. Durand noted that he had looked over Montlinot's proposals to found colonies in Guiana, Madagascar, Corsica, and Bolama at the request of a governmental minister; Durand responded to the minister that he was opposed to Europeans settling African colonies. Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, 123-4.

anticlericalism in France, but the ships had to turn back; a 1798 proposal suggested the Upper Senegal could be a site for a penal plantation colony, but this plan also came to naught.¹³⁶

Pelletan seemed to favor sending settlers; he noted that the British colonies in North America had been founded out of “les dissensions civiles” of England and suggested that the recent turmoil in France opened up an opportunity to found colonies in Africa.¹³⁷ Golberry pointed out the flaw in this argument: “If those who have talked so much about colonizing [Africa] have meant that we would send French people to form colonies there, they have therefore forgotten the very recent example of the independence of the American colonies in the American continent.”¹³⁸ White settlement could mean eventual revolt, meaning that the colonies, and their potential riches, would be lost to France.

Another major problem that seemed to stand in the way of a French settlement campaign was the deleterious effect of the climate. Indeed, the mortality rate among Europeans in Africa was high. French merchants might live among the populations of Saint-Louis or Gorée for part of the year, but during the *hivernage* or rainy season, the climate became dangerous enough that many would return to France. Merchants relied on the *habitants*, free blacks, and slaves that kept the river trade running to do much of the work in trading slaves and gum. Golberry wrote that a third of the Europeans who made the voyage upriver to trade during the rainy season would die.¹³⁹ Medical thought in this period held that disease was linked to climate, and the quality of

¹³⁶ Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans*, 170. Other penal colonies were founded by France and Britain around this time; see Spieler, *Empire and Underworld*, on French Guiana, and Coleman, *Romantic Colonization*, on Botany Bay.

¹³⁷ Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, xvi.

¹³⁸ “Si ceux qui ont tant parlé de la coloniser, ont entendu qu'on y enverrait des Français, pour y fonder des colonies, ils ont donc oublié l'exemple si prochain de l'indépendance des colonies anglaises dans le continent de l'Amérique.” Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 64.

¹³⁹ Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 179–80.

the air and weather in Senegal were generally perceived to be unhealthy and a cause of degeneration in Europeans.

Doctors also linked disease to moral intemperance. As Sean Quinlan notes, eighteenth-century physicians suggested that intemperance in food, alcohol, and sex would lead to disease and degeneracy amongst white colonists in the Caribbean, and that one must follow the bourgeois virtues of “sobriety, temperance and diligent sense.”¹⁴⁰ In Senegal, too, the threat of disease and degeneration could be offset by choosing moral colonists who would not be tempted to weaken their constitutions with drinking and debauchery. Pelletan, in making an argument for an *exclusif* that would give a trading monopoly to a limited amount of merchants, argued that too much competition meant that Frenchmen would have to stay longer in the colony to carry out their trade. He wrote, “the stay is mortal for men of the sea. The freedom of customs in the country calls them to debauchery, the abundant sweating provokes excessive drinking; and these two causes, joined to the unhealthiness of the air, kill the largest part.”¹⁴¹ Durand attributed the failure of the English colony on Bolama to the inferior type of colonists “without manners or principles” that were sent, and Pelletan blamed the failure of the first British attempt to colonize Sierra Leone to the decision to send prisoners and immoral women there, since many died from “debauchery” as well as diseases and the climate.¹⁴² Pelletan suggested that cultivation of the

¹⁴⁰ Sean Quinlan, “Colonial Bodies, Hygiene and Abolitionist Politics in Eighteenth-Century France,” *History Workshop Journal*, no. 42 (October 1, 1996): 110–111.

¹⁴¹ “Une ature considération, de la plus haute importance, se joint à celle que nous venons d'exposer, pour limiter dans ce pays la liberté du commerce, c'est la conservation des équipages français. Plus il y a de navires dans le pays, plus ils sont long-tems à y former leur cargaison; et le séjour y est mortel pour les gens de mer. La liberté des mœurs du pays les sollicite à la débauche, les transpirations abondantes provoquent les excès de la boisson; et ces deux causes, jointes à l'insalubrité de l'air, en moissonnent la plus grande partie.” Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 90.

¹⁴² Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, 128; Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 45.

land would make the air healthier.¹⁴³ However, in the meantime, carefully chosen colonists could only provide so much resistance to diseases thought to be caused by the harmful climate, and the coast remained a dangerous place in the eyes of many commentators.

Instead of rushing into founding a settler colony, then, these authors for the most part favored a continuation of the commerce that had existed on the coast for several centuries, but with a major difference: goods and crops would be the main export, instead of slaves. Golberry, Durand, and Pelletan's proposals to seek out agricultural opportunities and goods for trade owed much to the arguments of several decades earlier made by those with an interest in reforming the colonial system and ending slavery through legitimate commerce. However, these three authors' promotion of a new approach to colonization came in a changed context in terms of the slave trade: the French revolutionary government had abolished the slave trade and slavery in 1794. Thus, the early nineteenth century writers' goal in proposing new modes of exploitation was to save the colony now that slavery had been abolished, rather than to make an argument for the workability of abolition. Pelletan noted that at the time of his writing, people in the colony were aware of the law, but only the abolition of the slave trade had so far been executed, not the liberation of slaves.¹⁴⁴ Whether it was the law or the disruption of the Revolution that was the largest cause of the drop in slave exports, the letter of the law was a reality to be reckoned with for each of the three authors discussed here. Napoleon repealed the law in 1802, without slavery having been abolished in the colony, but Golberry, Pelletan, and Durand had written their works before Napoleon's repeal; Golberry's introductory note explicitly states that his book had been

¹⁴³ Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 110.

¹⁴⁴ Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, footnote 30, 101.

finished by the time of the reinstatement of slavery. The books appeared, then, at a time when the dreams of the abolitionist Physiocrats and British opponents of the slave trade had come to pass.

Golberry was, however, unhappy with the suddenness of abolition. As he put it, “The so-precipitated abolition of slavery and of the slave trade reduced our business affairs in Africa to almost nothing. To reestablish them, we must thus discover new sources of commercial riches, and direct the flow of these new resources towards the coasts, we must open new paths for our industry, and find new markets for our productions.”¹⁴⁵ Abolition had not taken the needs of the economy into consideration and had been enacted too quickly to allow other industries to develop. Durand’s attitudes about the slave trade and slavery emerge in his discussion of the British Sierra Leone Company. Durand criticized the speed of the abolition that the English Sierra Leone Company had carried out, advocating a gradualist approach that would ready slaves for liberty through a period of indentureship.¹⁴⁶

Pelletan, on the other hand, argued that the abolition of the slave trade and the liberty it would bring to residents along the river would have advantageous effects on Senegambian production. If Africans in the interior had not yet realized the potential of agriculture there, it was because they lived in constant fear of being captured and sent overseas in the Atlantic slave trade. The problem could be found:

. . . in the vices, or rather, the lack of government and enlightened order [*police*] among these peoples, in the errant and vagabond life they are obliged to lead to avoid the traps that are set for them from all sides; in the necessity that these small groups of people find to change their domicile frequently, to escape continuous wars, the pillages carried out

¹⁴⁵ “L’abolition si précipitée de l’esclavage et de la traite des noirs a réduit presque à rien nos affaires en Afrique. Pour les rétablir, il faudra donc y découvrir de nouvelles sources de richesses commerciales, et diriger l’écoulement de ces nouvelles sources vers les côtes; il faudra ouvrir de nouveaux chemins à notre industrie, et trouver de nouveaux débouchés à nos productions.” Golberry, *Fragmens d’un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 63.

¹⁴⁶ Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, 164-165.

between the canton chiefs or the princes that call themselves sovereigns of these diverse countries. The unhappy *nègre*, placed ceaselessly between slavery or death, can never become attached to the land he lives on, because he is not the owner, and he only enjoys a very precarious usufruct. How will he sow seeds on land where he is not certain to gather the harvest? How will he apply himself to the arts that cannot grow without the help of peace and liberty? How will his industry be excited, when he is not certain to keep the fruit of his troubles, and when his ownership is always under about to become the prey of an enemy who is more adept or stronger than him?¹⁴⁷

The constant pillaging faced by Africans trying to farm was the fault of the Moors to the north of the river; the end of the slave trade would stop these raids and allow residents to farm in peace.¹⁴⁸ Employing a language of tyranny and freedom, Pelletan insisted France would be a liberator to Africans who found themselves the victims of unfit rulers and arbitrary capture. Pelletan remarked that it was the glory of the French to be the first to abolish the slave trade, and as liberators France could bask in that glory as well as the commercial outcome.¹⁴⁹ Pelletan's vision of the inhabitants of the Senegal valley sowing their seeds in peace echoed Physiocrats' dreams of an agricultural Africa, free of tyranny and slavery, replacing the slave plantations of the West Indies.

Pelletan's ideal of liberty did not extend to all residents of Senegambia, however; he opposed the portion of the French law that abolished slavery in the colonies, arguing it would

¹⁴⁷ “Ces causes, il faut les chercher dans les vices, ou, plutôt, dans la nullité du gouvernement et de la police parmi ces peuples; dans la vie errante et vagabonde qu'ils sont obligés de mener, pour éviter les pièges qui leur sont tendus de toutes partes; dans la nécessité où se trouvent ces petites peuplades de changer souvent de domicile, pour échapper aux guerres continuelles, aux pillages que se font entre eux les chefs de canton ou les princes se disant souverains de ces divers pays. Le malheureux nègre, placé sans cesse entre l'esclavage ou la mort, ne peut jamais s'attacher au sol qu'il habite, parce qu'il n'en est pas propriétaire, et qu'il ne jouit même que d'un usufruit très-précaire. Comment sèmera-t-il une terre dont il n'est pas sûr de recueillir la moisson? Comment se livra-t-il aux arts qui ne peuvent prendre quelque accroissement qu'à l'aide de la paix et de la liberté? Comment son industrie sera-t-elle excitée, lorsqu'il n'est pas sûr de conserver le fruit de ses peines, et que sa propriété est toujours à la veille de devenir la proie d'un ennemi plus adroit ou plus fort que lui?” Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 67-69.

¹⁴⁸ Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 73.

¹⁴⁹ Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 69.

only lead to resistance against the French. The *habitants*, as slave owners, would strongly oppose the abolition of slavery, and, Pelletan warned, might flee inland, taking their slaves with them. As the *habitants* were important intermediaries, this would harm trade. Pelletan wrote, “The attachment that the *habitants* of these two islands have for the French, who most of them are issued from and whose name they bear, would change in antipathy.”¹⁵⁰ Pelletan proposed the law be modified to allow the slaves owned by the *habitants* to stay and to institute an indentured servant system that would allow slaves to become accustomed to liberty.¹⁵¹

Slaves or indentured servants would provide an important source of labor for agricultural projects that, Durand and the others wrote, could prosper in Senegambia. Durand wrote that on the islands in the Senegal river, crops grew without anyone even tending them.¹⁵² Taking advantage of the cotton and indigo already growing in the region would require land, expertise, and labor. Pelletan proposed that the French negotiate with princes of the islands near the colony of Senegal, establishing the rights of the *habitants* to set up farms there in exchange for customs payments. He proposed that an agency be created to found plantations, furnish tools, and give instructions. The resulting plantations, Pelletan predicted, would be imitated by the “habitans du continent,” that is, the inhabitants of more interior lands. People would develop “a taste for the agricultural life” and “acquire insensibly the light of experience” as they learned to fertilize the land and preserve harvested crops, and the plantation model would spread.¹⁵³ The labor would be

¹⁵⁰ “L'attachement qu'ont les habitans de ces deux îles pour les Français, dont la plupart sont issus et dont ils portent le nom, se changerait en antipathie.” Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 102.

¹⁵¹ Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 103-106.

¹⁵² Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, 231.

¹⁵³ “le goût de la vie agricole,” “Ils acquerraient insensiblement les lumières de l'expérience. . .” Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 108-109.

carried out by the *habitants'* slaves, or if slavery had to be outlawed, indentured servants with terms of six, nine, or fifteen years.¹⁵⁴

Plantations were not the only source of wealth that could replace the slave trade; the colony could provide other trade goods, the three authors explained. The authors suggested that gum, ivory, hides, gold, ambergris, woods, medicinal plants, and other products might serve to replace slaves as the main export. In return, Europeans would continue offering the same items they had when the market had been organized around slaves and gum: guinée cloth, glassware, iron, powder, arms, and liquor (*eau de vie*). In short, what the French had to do, now that the slave trade had been outlawed, was to expand the already existing secondary trade in goods other than slaves. To do this, they would need to continue drawing traders from different parts of the region to their coastal establishments. An attempt at military conquest would be fruitless in that alliances were the key to trade. The British had accepted this fact; speaking of Bolama Island, Durand wrote, “The English were wise enough to renounce any idea of usurpation, they became masters of the island by a written and voluntary convention.”¹⁵⁵ In the case of Senegal and Goree, the French needed to work through the *habitants*. Pelletan wrote:

We must convince ourselves that we will need the assistance of the *habitants* of Senegal and Goree, who are the natural and necessary agents of the national commerce with the Moor and Black merchants of the interior country. They speak the different dialects of the country, they serve as interpreters, they know the navigation of the river perfectly, they are captains and pilots of the boats that go trade there. Most of them know how to read, write, calculate; finally, they have such a great influence on the commerce of the country, that we are convinced that it will not be possible to go without their guidance (*ministère*).¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 106.

¹⁵⁵ “Les Anglais furent assez sages pour renoncer à toute idée d'usurpation; ils achetèrent; ils devinrent maîtres de l'île par une convention écrite et volontaire.” Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, 128.

¹⁵⁶ “Il faut bien se persuader que l'on aura besoin du concours des habitants du Sénégal et de Gorée, qui sont les agens naturels et nécessaires du commerce national, avec les marchands Maures et Nègres de l'intérieur des terres.

The expansion of French commerce would be less a conquest than an intensification of commercial relations with Senegambian residents.

These three authors' focus on cooperation, treaties, and relationships reveals that while the French had ambitions to expand their commercial presence in the colony in terms of agriculture and trade in other products, their vision of French expansion was limited in terms of territorial conquest. At first glance, the authors of this period might seem ambitious in their plans for expansion. Indeed, they laid claim to a large region for France through arguments of historical precedent. However, what they were really looking for was the chance to exploit the agricultural and commercial possibilities of the region, and to do so in a way that pushed out British competition. Expanding territorially beyond a few posts was neither a desirable nor a thinkable possibility as it would involve clashes with African states and possibly the British, the commitment of many troops, and exposure to disease. However, French commercial influence could be extended through alliance and contact.

If the expansion of French commercial influence was the main focus of the texts discussed here, the authors also identified a civilizing influence French people would bring to Africans through contact. Durand, Pelletan, and Golberry saw civilization as a process that would progress gradually as inhabitants of Senegambia began encountering the French more directly. The two major realms of contact with the French, that is, the two conduits of civilization, were agriculture and trade, areas that overlaid the commercial goals of the authors

Ils parlent les différens idiômes du pays, ils servent d'interprètes, ils connaissent parfaitement la navigation de la rivière; ils sont capitaines et pilotes des navires qui vont y traiter. La plupart savent lire, écrire, calculer; enfin, ils ont une si grande influence sur le commerce du pays, que nous sommes convaincus qu'il n'est pas possible de se passer de leur ministère." Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 97-98.

exactly. Instead of using “civilization” as an end goal of or an overreaching justification for imperial development, as occurred later in the century, the authors described it as a side effect of contact. “Civilization” meant, to some extent, acting in a way that was understandable to the French and participating in economic activities that the French judged proper for Senegal. “Civilization” did not mean assimilation or becoming French. Instead, “civilization” consisted of picking up several traits – a taste for agriculture, honesty in commerce – that would make interactions with the French work smoothly and which Africans ostensibly lacked.¹⁵⁷

Contact with European agricultural practices would teach Senegambians to properly manage the land, a notion of “civilization” closely linked with that of “improvement.”¹⁵⁸ Durand echoed this sense of the term “civilization” in his description of the region around the Sierra Leone river. There, proper management was barely necessary, as the region was so rich in natural products to begin with: “It is not for nothing that the position of Sierra Leone was chosen by the English and by us, to form solid establishments, and that they first attempted here the large project of the civilization of the Africans. . . There, Nature multiplied with profusion products, not only the necessary ones, but also those that are simply useful or even agreeable to man. The most complete civilization would add almost nothing to riches of this kind.”¹⁵⁹ Agricultural

¹⁵⁷ Senegambians cultivated crops and engaged in commerce, of course, but when these pursuits did not fit into the French vision of crops and goods being diverted to support the trade of the French colony, on French terms, African methods of agriculture and trade were then defined as less than civilized.

¹⁵⁸ Richard Drayton has argued that British empire and natural sciences were shaped by the idea he calls “Nature's Government”; that is, the notion that the deployment of European knowledge about the natural world would allow a better form of rule. He writes, “By the late eighteenth century we see the rise of an imperialism of ‘improvement’ which promised that people and things might be administered, in the cosmopolitan interest, by those who understood nature’s laws.” Richard Harry Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the 'Improvement' of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), xv.

¹⁵⁹ “Ce n’est pas sans raison que la position de Serre-Lionne a été choisie par les Anglais et par nous, pour y former des établissemens solides, et que les premiers y ont tenté le grand projet de la civilisation des Africains. . . La Nature y a multiplié avec profusion les productions, non-seulement nécessaires, mais simplement utiles ou même agréables

products and other goods appeared naturally there, and thus could be extracted easily, without much effort. In contrast, for the areas surrounding the colony of Senegal, Pelletan argued that the abolition of the slave trade would in itself promote the spread of civilizing agriculture. While this project, he thought, might not work in all of Africa, it would in Senegal, he hoped: “In a very few years, without great advances, without large efforts, just through stopping, with the greatest severity, all trade in blacks, this happy change will occur on its own.”¹⁶⁰

This gradual, almost natural civilization could also come about through the form of contact that was trade relations. The inhabitants of the interior would welcome this civilization process, Durand argued, portraying the inhabitants of Senegambia as simple people, practically blank slates. Durand noted that on a voyage by land to Galam undertaken by his agent Rubalt, the voyager was treated well by the natives of the countries he passed through. Beginning his account of the voyage, Durand wrote, “We will see that the blacks, greedy, sometimes demanding, nevertheless welcomed my voyager with affection, even with the gentlest care, the most generous hospitality, that they showed themselves in their natural bounty, in the simplicity of the first ages, that they exhibited to him the desire, the need to instruct themselves, and the efforts of a rough people toward civilization. . .”¹⁶¹ They wanted the French to establish themselves among them, Durand continued, for this purpose of civilization. Durand recounted

à homme. La civilisation la plus complète n’ajouterait presque rien aux richesses en ce genre.” Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, 172.

¹⁶⁰ “En très-peu d’années, sans de grosses avances, sans de grands efforts, en empêchant simplement, avec la plus grande sévérité, tout traite de nègres, cet heureux changement s’opérera de lui-même.” Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 70.

¹⁶¹ “On verra que les nègres, avides, exigeants quelquefois, ont cependant accueilli mon voyageur avec affection, même avec les soins de la plus douce, de la plus généreuse hospitalité; qu’ils se sont montrés dans leur bonté naturelle, dans la simplicité des premiers âges; qu’ils ont déployé à ses yeux le désir, le besoin de s’instruire, et les efforts d’un peuple grossier vers la civilization; qu’ils demandent avec instance que nous nous établissions chez eux....” Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, 271.

another story, of a visit with a tribe of Moors who were in contact with the French through the gum trade. Despite the fact that the Moors were often portrayed as warlike and greedy, Durand described a successful meeting with them, writing, “I cited this adventure to put it in opposition with the naturally hard-hearted, barbaric, and cruel character of the other Moors. . . . it is the proof that our relations with Africans make them better, communicative, honest and sensitive [*sensibles*].”¹⁶² Trade partnerships brought about civilization, in the sense that they made Africans into better trade partners for the French.

The most striking evidence of the civilizing effects of contact with the French was the contrast between the character of coastal Africans and interior Africans. Pelletan scorned previous commentators for making generalizations about the residents of Senegambia:

“*Philosophe* observers, who traveled in Africa, are in general mistaken about the character and temperament of the inhabitants. They portray the blacks as indolent, lazy, incapable of consistent, sustained work.”¹⁶³ Pelletan instead insisted that the residents of the coast were hard workers, noting that the *laptots*—slaves who served on boat crews and supported the river trade—were strong, and could do work white men were incapable of doing.¹⁶⁴ The Africans of the interior, on the other hand, just spent their days sitting outside of huts, and their agriculture was in a “deplorable state” because they were not cultivating the land to its potential.¹⁶⁵ It was, Pelletan

¹⁶² “J’ai cité cette aventure pour la mettre en opposition avec le caractère naturellement dur, barbare et cruel des autres Maures. C’est une ombre au tableau que j’ai déjà tracé de leurs mœurs sauvages; c’est une preuve que nos rapports avec les Africains les rendent meilleurs, communicatifs, honnêtes et sensibles.” Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal*, 269.

¹⁶³ “Les observateurs philosophes, qui ont parcouru l’Afrique, se sont en général trompés sur le caractère comme sur le tempérament de ses habitants. Il nous peignent les nègres, indolents, parasites, incapables d’un travail suivi et soutenu.” Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 60.

¹⁶⁴ Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 61-62.

¹⁶⁵ Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 63-64.

argued, the contact with the French that made these coastal inhabitants into hard workers. If people who had been drawn to the coast went back to the interior, where they came from, they would return to their laziness, Pelletan stated.¹⁶⁶

These works show how a particular notion of “civilization” served to describe sought-after relationships of alliance. Through contact with French agents and French systems of agriculture and trade, Africans would start to “speak the language” of the French colonial system.

Conclusion

The works of Golberry, Pelletan, and Durand, along with other publications in the same period by authors like Geoffroy de Villeneuve, signal important changes in French attitudes toward West Africa between the mid-eighteenth century and 1814. They provided a program for French experiments in new colonial venues for exploitation and production. France’s West African establishments would no longer be a slave factory for the New World; they would serve as a site of production in their own right, these authors predicted. In some ways, the colony would not change; it would still be a center of trade, and if the interior seemed to offer new commercial opportunities, both military conquest and settler expansion on a large scale would continue to be rejected. Still, there was a sense that the French Revolution, revolt in the West Indies, and the abolition of the slave trade paved the way for new opportunities for the colony, including agricultural improvement and an intensification of trade in other goods. The works on Senegambia that appeared in the early 1800s built on projects proposed by Physiocrats and

¹⁶⁶ Pelletan, *Mémoire sur la colonie française du Sénégal*, 66-67.

others decades before, while providing new observations and expanded justifications for French imperial development, all with the stamp of mercantile expertise and first-hand experience.

These projects, published in 1800-1802, would be put off by another British occupation, as we have seen. However, when Britain returned Senegal and Gorée to France in the treaties of 1814-15, with the abolition of the slave trade a condition of the return, the logic of colonial expansion through trade and agriculture had been elaborated, first in the proposals of the Physiocrats and later by the refinements offered by the authors of travel accounts. The French return to Senegal in 1817 recalled the repossessions of 1763 and 1779 in that it signaled that Choiseul's dreams of an empire that included a West African outpost had not died, and that France had a continued interest in the region. Now that the slave trade was outlawed, Saint-Domingue was lost, and France had been shaken by the French Revolution and the Bonaparte era, there were new pressures to remake Senegal. The next chapter traces experiments in creating a settler colony and founding agricultural settlements between 1814 and 1830. These experiments would draw on the works of authors like the Physiocrats, Golberry, and Durand. The authors of the 1800s had provided not only outlines for imperial projects, but also a body of knowledge that the next wave of administrators, scientists, and potential settlers could draw on in imagining Senegal's role in the French empire.

Chapter II

Replanting the Empire: Experiments with the Plantation Model in Senegal, 1814-1830

When the French returned to their possessions on the west coast of Africa in 1817 as a result of the treaties ending the Napoleonic Wars, the abolition of the slave trade—a condition of the return of the African territories—meant that the French would lose this source of revenue. The empire as a whole had changed as well in the preceding decades; France's presence in the western hemisphere was much diminished after the Louisiana Purchase and the revolution in Saint-Domingue, which ended in that colony's independence as Haiti. France had to look for a new direction for Senegal in this uncertain moment for the French empire. One possibility was reinventing the colony as a commercial one based primarily on trade in gum, which had been a secondary export during the time of the slave trade.¹ Initially, however, the government put their support behind plantation schemes meant to replace the slave plantations of the West Indies. These schemes grew out of the information that was accumulating about Senegal and proposals for agricultural development that appeared in travel accounts and other texts.

In this chapter, I examine agricultural projects carried out by French private individuals and colonial administrators between 1817 and 1830 in Senegal. These projects can be divided into three phases: the colonization plan of the Société coloniale philanthropique (1814-1818), the attempts of Governor Schmaltz to start plantations (1817-1820), and, perhaps the project that got the farthest in execution, the plantation schemes begun by Governor Roger (1822-circa

¹ James L. A. Webb, Jr., "The Trade in Gum Arabic: Prelude to French Conquest in Senegal," *The Journal of African History* 26, no. 2/3 (1985): 149–168; Martin A. Klein, "Slaves, Gum, and Peanuts: Adaptation to the End of the Slave Trade in Senegal, 1817-48," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd series, 66, no. 4 (October 1, 2009): 895–914.

1830). These projects aimed to fundamentally change the nature of the French presence in West Africa. Taken together, these projects represent a short-lived agricultural colonial logic that borrowed from Old Regime models.

The failures of these three moments of agricultural experimentation in Senegal were significant for the way they defined the limitations of the colonial project and the manner in which they determined how French administrators and officials viewed the colony's future. These projects were all relatively brief, small-scale colonial experiments; some barely made it out of planning stages. Yet rather than looking at them as insignificant episodes in the larger history of the French presence in Senegal, the uncertainty of the nature of that presence in 1817 suggests that the projects and their failure were important factors in defining a specific colonial logic and determining its feasibility as an organizing principle, or its lack thereof. In other words, the failures helped to eliminate one possible model of colonization. Colonial doctrine allowed experimentation in the early nineteenth century, but the metropolitan colonial administration limited this experimentation to prevent administrators and settlers from expanding outside a small region or carrying out ambitious projects that threatened to cause conflict in the region and endanger the colony. The failure of the agricultural projects led to a turning away from a settler model of colonization, a rejection of private settlement colonies that the government could not control, and a dismissal of the notion that agriculture could be promoted in Senegal. As commerce, particularly the gum trade, became the *raison d'être* of the French colony in Senegal, Senegal again became a colony of trade by 1830, as it had been in the eighteenth century. Senegal's return to the status of a trading colony should not be viewed as a step backward to a less developed or less modern type of colony, however. Instead, the experimentation and

reversals of 1817-1830 reveal the nonlinear fashion in which the colonial future of Senegal was mapped out on the ground. The continuing limitations of French domination would be evident well into the century.

The short-lived nature of the Senegalese agricultural projects have led many historians to gloss over this period as an insignificant moment in the history of French imperialism in Senegal, one marked by failure and paternalistic idealism that came to nothing. However, taken on their own terms, the projects tell a story about the evolution of the plans the French government was willing to support, revealing a growing understanding of the possibilities of French action in Senegal at the time. A reading of the three projects shows the government taking an increasing role in directing the agricultural development of Senegal. Though the scale of the experiments that were implemented grew, the government became more concerned with directing the projects in less directly intrusive ways. This evolution showed an awareness of the limitations on French power in the region and a realization that the projects risked conflict with the Senegalese or the British and threatened to place unwanted responsibilities in the hands of the government.

The failure of all three projects played an important role in circumscribing the types of projects that the French believed were possibilities in Senegal. Initially, if with some hesitation, the government was willing to support a private colonization scheme and entertain the idea of French settlers in Senegal, but the failure of the colonization plan of the Société coloniale philanthropique doomed similar proposals. The second project, led by Governor Schmaltz, failed because of conflict in the region. I discuss this failed project only briefly, as its importance was in setting the scene for an expanded plantation project under Governor Roger. The government blamed Schmaltz's failure on his belligerent approach. Setting himself apart from this failure,

Roger promoted a version of the plantation project that emphasized persuasion and influence and a greater reliance on practical scientific experimentation and knowledge. Roger's plantations failed as well, but this experimental moment influenced both rhetorical shifts in the perception of Senegal's role in a new French empire and new directions in colonial policy. The failures marked the end of efforts to set up plantations in Senegal and solidified Senegal's role as a colony of trade.

The importance of trial, failure, and the reshaping of expectations for Senegal in this period shows that there was no continuous colonial logic at work in the early nineteenth century, and warns us of the dangers of writing about this period using the colonies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as our model of empire. Historian Georges Hardy, a colonial official himself, in an early, finely researched work on the plantation projects, emphasized Roger's affinities with later French imperialists, seeing him as a colonial hero who saw Senegal's future potential as a French colony when others did not.² Though few historians today would write about French colonialism in such a triumphalist tone, it is nevertheless tempting to pick out examples of the kind of colonization we know would become the norm a century or so later and make connections.

As a look at the practices that developed between 1814 and 1830 shows, however, the plantation projects can be better understood as a product of the end of the Old Regime empire and a response to criticisms of the old system. The Caribbean colonies of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and the former colony of Saint-Domingue were obvious reference points, whether as something to recreate (in terms of their plantations) or something to efface (in terms of the

² Georges Hardy, *La mise en valeur du Sénégal de 1817 à 1854* (Paris: E. Larose, 1921).

memory of Saint-Domingue and its reliance on the slave trade).³ Baron Roger, like many abolitionist commentators of the previous century, had the Old Regime colonies in mind when he proposed replanting the empire in Africa; in 1822, he published an article that suggested Senegal would be a new Saint-Domingue.⁴ However, the plantation projects of the early nineteenth century reflected the belief that Senegal would be defined not just as a copy of Saint-Domingue or a foil to it, but as its own colony with its own system. This system drew from eighteenth-century proposals that criticized the Old Regime colonies and proposed African agriculture based on free labor. At the same time, the new colony would have to be developed through experimentation and expertise. Officials referenced colonial models in other parts of the world, just as they looked to other colonies to exchange seeds and plants for agricultural experiments. The prominence of trial and exchange in this period suggests the early nineteenth century was a time when the role of Senegal in the broader French empire was being worked out.

The French colonial projects of the early nineteenth century also reveal the supposed relationship between civility, agriculture, and civilization in the early nineteenth century. The Société coloniale philanthropique presented its potential settlers as moral and hard-working, the perfect candidates to responsibly farm the land. Agriculture could also be a civilizing force, as

³ Christopher L. Miller has argued that the colony of Senegal was constructed in a way to allow the French to efface the memory of Haiti and its loss in Christopher L. Miller, "Forget Haiti: Baron Roger and the New Africa," *Yale French Studies* 107 (2005): 39–69. The eighteenth-century influence on nineteenth-century imperialism is also identified by François Manchuelle, who examines how Roger's novel *Kélédor* promoted Enlightenment-era ideas about the "regeneration" of Africa, François Manchuelle, "The 'Regeneration of Africa': An Important and Ambiguous Concept in 18th and 19th Century French Thinking About Africa," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 36, no. 144 (1996): 559–588. Both these authors base their analyses largely on Roger's *Kélédor* and do not treat the plantation projects in detail.

⁴ Roger, "Extraits d'un ouvrage inédit sur le Sénégal écrit sur les lieux au commencement de 1821," *Journal des Voyages* (1822), cited in Confidential report to Minister on Roger's term, 24 March 1832, Archives nationales d'outre-mer (hereafter ANOM), Série géographique Sénégal et dépendances (hereafter SEN) I 15e.

Roger argued. The government's model plantation and the agricultural settlements run by the colony's residents would spread European values far into the Senegambian region, Roger predicted. Yet the metropolitan administration pulled its support from Roger's plantation scheme when it failed to be as productive as the government had hoped, showing that colonial goals of "civilizing" had strict limits in the 1820s.

The Société coloniale philanthropique (1814-1818)

The treaty of May 30, 1814 stipulated that Britain would turn over to France two former French possessions: Senegal and Gorée. This was a kind of homecoming for the French. While they had traded the possessions back and forth with the British throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they considered them to be historically and, in some ways, culturally French. In 1817, the population of Saint Louis was estimated at 15,000 and the population of Gorée at 4000.⁵ The two settlements had grown into urban areas populated by *habitants*, free blacks, and slaves who participated in the economy that continued to grow around the river trade.⁶

As the French readied for the return to Senegal beginning in 1814, however, several factors had altered the possible future course of the colony. As discussed in Chapter I, the late eighteenth century and the first years of the nineteenth century saw the publication of abolitionist

⁵ M. Parson, *Premier rapport de M. Parson, chef de la délégation envoyée au Cap Verd par la Société coloniale philanthropique à l'effet de reconnoître les lieux les plus propres à la fondation de colonies agricoles*, 2nd ed. (Paris: au bureau de la Société coloniale philanthropique, 1817), f.n. 1-2, ii-iii.

⁶ James Searing, "The Seven Years' War in West Africa: The End of Company Rule and the Emergence of the *Habitants*," in *The Seven Years' War: Global Views*, ed. Mark H. Danley and Patrick J. Speelman (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 271-279.

proposals, travel accounts, and descriptive texts written by *savants* and merchants who had been to the west coast of Africa. Reports of the fertile and healthy nature of parts of the West African coast, like those of Geoffrey de Villeneuve or Durand, and the more general amassing of information, made the West African coast seem more attractive. After the independence of Haiti and the end of the slave trade, a condition of the 1815 treaty, the proposals in some of these texts – that is, the notion that Caribbean plantations run by slave labor could be replaced by agricultural free labor in Africa – took on a more immediate importance. The disappearance of trade company monopolies left open the possibility for the government to play a more active role in shaping the direction of the colony.

The upheaval of the French Revolution, Napoleonic period, and Restauration created a changing political situation in which many residents of France lost positions or political favor, not to mention livelihoods – a situation that would have made emigration attractive. A notorious example of emigration to a colony in North America was the Scioto Company's disastrously fraudulent scheme of 1789-1790.⁷ While the aristocrats who fled France during the Revolution are probably the most well known émigrés, some Bonapartists also left France after the fall of Napoleon to found colonies.⁸ Proposals for French emigration to West Africa in the 1810s can thus be fit into the literature on the emigrations set off by the French Revolutions and other Atlantic Revolutions.⁹

⁷ Suzanne Desan, "Transatlantic Spaces of Revolution: The French Revolution, Scioto manie, and American Lands," *Journal of Early Modern History* 12, no. 6 (2008): 467–505.

⁸ The period after Napoleon's Hundred Days were marked by a number of Bonapartist migrations to Texas (Champ d'Asile), Alabama (Vine and Olive Colony), and South America. See Kent Gardien, "Take Pity on Our Glory: Men of Champ d'Asile," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (January 1984): 241–268.

⁹ For an examination of the parallels between migrations set off by the revolutions of the turn of the nineteenth century, see Maya Jasanoff, "Revolutionary Exiles: The American Loyalist and French Émigré Diasporas," in *The*

Against the backdrop of these push and pull factors, a private society with plans for a settlement of Europeans on the West African coast formed in 1814. The Société coloniale philanthropique drew on older projects to propose a plan tailored to the post-Bonapartist moment in France. Its proposals emphasized the moral nature of its settlers but it touted the benefits the Société would provide to the pursuit of scientific knowledge. It chose as their site for settlement Cap Vert, the peninsula off which Gorée sat (and the current site of Dakar). A treaty made between the damel (king) of Kajoor and the French in 1786 had secured French rights to the land, though the damel's and the inhabitants' recognition of the treaty was in question.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the members of the Société were confident they could set up a successful settlement. However, their project met opposition from the Minister of the Navy when it became clear the settlement could easily overstep its geographical boundaries. The resistance highlights the uncertainty of the French position in Senegal and the sensitivity of relations with the British and Senegalese leaders. The Société sent one exploratory group in June 1816 and one group of settlers in March 1817, but the failure of the Société to set up a permanent colony led to the abandonment of the settler colony model and of Cap Vert as a site of development.

The small group of men who made up the Société coloniale philanthropique in its early days first began petitioning the Minister of the Navy for support in 1814. Rogéry, an ex-infantry officer and the chief correspondent in the early days of the Société, made a presentation to the

Age of Revolutions in Global Context, C. 1760-1840, ed. David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 37–58.

¹⁰ Other sources date the treaty to 1787. In this treaty, the damel of Kajoor apparently ceded the peninsula to the French, in particular the governor Chevalier de Boufflers, but the French did not act to take possession of the peninsula. Previous treaties with the damel had also ceded land to the French, including one in 1765, but again, France did not set up posts there. The 1786 or 1787 treaty could not be found in the archives as of 1884. Claude Faure, *Histoire de la presqu'île du cap vert et des origines de Dakar* (Paris: E. Larose, 1914), 1-12.

minister on September 30, 1814 proposing a colony that would serve as an outlet for military men and employees who were out of work as a result of the political changes in France. The Société had also zeroed in on Cap Vert as the ideal site of settlement, thanks to reports of its healthiness and fertility. Rogéry proposed that he and a partner, Estruc (a doctor and surgeon), be granted funds to go to Cap Vert to assess the land and pick a suitable site for a settlement, a proposition the minister agreed to on November 25, 1814. The Société then proposed that the number of “commissaires” representing the Société on the exploratory voyage to Cap Vert be expanded to eight, and that twenty workers be added. The minister approved these changes, ruling that the travelers would be given rations and that a number of items would be transferred from the stores of the Navy, including weapons and tools for the workers.¹¹ Napoleon’s Hundred Days return of March 20, 1815 put the mission on hold, but after the restoration of the monarchy, the Société again appealed to the government to support a mission to found a colony in Africa. In a letter dated April 15, 1815, the leaders of the Société (at this time, Sévigny, Rogéry, and Dumouza) renewed their request for support for eight explorers and twenty workers.¹²

The Société based its proposal on arguments similar to those made in the travel accounts and texts that had appeared in the previous quarter century, with a stronger emphasis on French settlement, as a report from the colonial office summing up the Société’s arguments and probably

¹¹ This summary is found in *Rapport, Ministère de la Marine, Direction des Colonies, Administration Generale, Etablissement d’une colonie au Cap-Verd*, undated, ANOM SEN XV 2a. The report probably dates from sometime in 1815 after March, as its purpose appears to be to sum up the history and arguments of the Société and convince the new Minister to renew support for the project of the Société. A letter from governor Trigant de Beaumont to the Minister states that he had received word of the decision to send Rogéry and Estruc by a depeche of 10 December 1814, and a dispatch of 16 January 1815 mentioned six others would be joining them for the exploratory voyage. Trigant de Beaumont to Minister of the Navy, 9 February 1815, ANOM SEN XV 2a.

¹² Sévigny, Rogéry, and Dumouza to Decrès, Minister of the Navy and Colonies, 15 April 1815, ANOM SEN XV 2a.

dating from 1815 shows. First, the organizers emphasized agriculture and made prominent references to the Caribbean. The Société proposed Senegal as a replacement for Saint-Domingue, since slaves would no longer be exported there. Second, the text also took up the matter of exporting dangerous Frenchmen. After Napoleon's brief return to France March 20, the report said, it had become important to find an outlet for the aimlessness of Frenchmen excluded by the changing regimes. Finally, there was the matter of civilization—the “philanthropic” element of the Société’s project. According to the report on the Société’s proposal, there were six villages on Cap Vert comprising 3000-4000 residents, some of whom had taken up French manners.¹³ These people could form the core (*noyau*) of a new society that could absorb the residents of Saint-Louis and Gorée who, as a result of the abolition of the slave trade, would be forced to make the shift from commerce to agriculture.

The choice of site and agricultural plans built on the base of knowledge produced by travelers and writers from the last quarter century and earlier. In a side note commenting on the agricultural fertility of the region, the colonial office report cites Watt, Adanson, Dumanet, Wadstrom, Mungo Park, and Brue.¹⁴ The letters and memoirs of the Société also cited writers on Africa, like Durand.¹⁵ The Société presented the knowledge that French writers had compiled in recent years as key to the success of the colony. Rogéry wrote: “We have the example of the Portuguese who established themselves in Africa, wherever they wanted to, and they know it

¹³ Some residents of the mainland would have had contact with French on nearby Gorée. The small island relied on the mainland for food and other supplies.

¹⁴ Rapport, Bureau d’administration, direction des colonies, Minister of the Navy, Etablissement d’une colonie au Cap Vert, [between March 1815 and November 1815?], ANOM SEN XV 2a.

¹⁵ Rogéry, Moyens d’exécution pour l’établissement de la colonie du Cap vert. A Monsieur Portal, Maître des Requêtes, directeur des colonies, 26 October 1815, ANOM SEN XV 3.

much less than we do.”¹⁶ The implication was that if the Portuguese had been able to found establishments without a knowledge of Africa, the French should be able to do it as well. Knowledge had a moral component as well. Rogéry noted that since there were double editions of texts in a number of libraries in the capital and departments, a library for the colony could be formed, since: “Instruction is the fundamental base of all well organized societies. You may tell me, sir, that the other colonies were founded without it; but I would have the honor to have you observe that the administrators and writers who have written on the subject all complain of the lack of morality of colonists in general.”¹⁷ Settlers, Rogéry argued, had to be educated and morally sound, qualities that went hand in hand.

The Société coloniale philanthropique, especially in its early stages, included men in line with these ideals of education. Sévigny sought the support of a number of respectable learned figures, including the mathematician Servois, though this man seems not to have lent his support to the project; perhaps when he rallied to the Restoration he rejected the project as a Bonapartist pursuit. Sévigny did secure the support of members of the Institut de France, including Bosc and Landolphe, a former captain who knew the coast of Africa.¹⁸ The occupations of the explorers slated to travel to Cap Vert suggested the foundation of the colony was to be based not only on colonial and military experience, but also on scientific expertise. The mission recalled the much larger army of scientists, artists, and other observers who accompanied Napoleon to Egypt,

¹⁶ “Nous avons l’exemple des Portugais qui se sont établis en Afrique, partout où ils ont voulu; et ils la connaissaient bien moins que nous.” Rogéry, *Moyens d’exécution pour l’établissement de la colonie du Cap vert*, to Monsieur Portal, Maître des Requêtes, directeur des colonies, 26 October 1815, ANOM SEN XV 3.

¹⁷ “L’instruction, est la base fondamentale de toutes les sociétés bien organisées. Vous me direz peut-être, Monsieur, que les autres colonies se sont formées sans cela; mais j’aurai l’honneur de vous observer, que les administrateurs et les écrivains, qui ont écrit sur cet objet; se plaignent tous du défaut de moralité des colons en général.” Rogéry to Portal, 5 January 1816, ANOM SEN XV 3.

¹⁸ P. Filsjean, “Un Port-Tarascon sous la restauration,” *Annales Franc-Comtoises* 11 (1899): 342–343.

founded the l'Institut de l'Egypte in Cairo, and produced the multi-volume *Description de l'Égypte* (1809-1829) based on their voyage.¹⁹ The exploratory commission destined for Cap Vert, after undergoing several personnel changes and shrinking to seven members, represented a range of occupations and areas of expertise: Parson (ex-engineer), Richefort (ex-naval officer), Ebérard (a *colon* from Martinique), Estruc (doctor and surgeon), Rogéry (ex-infantry officer), Kummer (naturalist and engineer), and Corrèard (listed as an ex-surveyor or an engineer-geographer).²⁰ The twenty workers for the original exploration also represented a range of skills; there were two joiners, two locksmiths, a cooper, a wheelwright, a sawyer, eight carpenters, three masons, a gardener, and a farmer.²¹

The Société assured the government that their technical and scientific skills would multiply existing knowledge about the colony. In a letter to Portal, Rogéry wrote that Estruc was doing research in the fields of disease and hygiene. Rogéry was making preparations in the field of agriculture; he had visited MM. Thouin, the directors of the Jardin des Plantes,²² and he was also hoping to meet with people who had been to America and India and who could inform him about colonial crops that could be introduced into West Africa. In the realm of topography and engineering, Corrèard, a student of the école des arts et métiers de Châlons with training in mechanics and hydraulics, was putting together a map of Senegambia with information given to him by Geoffroy de Villeneuve.²³ In a letter of January 1816, the Société revealed that they had

¹⁹ Estruc had been part of the squadron sent to Egypt, according to a letter from Rogéry. Rogéry to Portal, 5 January 1816, ANOM SEN XV 3.

²⁰ Parson, *Premier rapport de M. Parson*, 2nd edition (Paris: au bureau de la Société coloniale philanthropique, 1817), iii. Corrèard is listed as an ex-surveyor in the Parson report; other sources call him an engineer-geographer.

²¹ Minute, 18 May 1816, ANOM SEN XV 3.

²² This seems to refer to botanist André Thouin and his brother, landscape artist Gabriel Thouin.

²³ Rogéry to Portal, 5 January 1816, ANOM SEN XV 3.

been forced to sell mathematical, chemistry, and marine instruments initially procured for the mission as a result of the political upheaval of Napoleon's return. The Société asked for replacement instruments, enclosing a list of the instruments needed “for the two engineers, the chemist-naturalist, and the sailor, who are charged with the making of a map.”²⁴

In this spirit of scientific exploration, one of the early elements of the mission proposed by the Société was a voyage to explore the Niger. In a letter of November 2, 1815, Rogéry requested that in addition to the administrators and workers of the exploratory mission, the Minister choose trade agents (*facteurs*), builders, and sailors, along with a commission of geographers and naturalists, to carry out a voyage on the Niger.²⁵ The proposed exploration of the Niger placed the French mission as the inheritor of British missions to find the source of the river, including the well-known voyages of Mungo Park. In a letter of October 26, 1815, Rogéry suggested the French could, starting from the position at Cap Vert, found a colony at St. Joseph (a former French post in Galam) and then move on to explore the Niger.²⁶ A few months later, Rogéry lent more urgency to this element of the project, citing British competition. He wrote the French needed to discover the source of the Niger, since if the English government did not, the African Society would, seeing as how they had already made three voyages and had a great deal of influence.²⁷ The French colonial office was well aware of British efforts; in discussing the project of the Société, the office cited several British precedents in the broader region, including

²⁴ “aux deux ingenieurs au chimiste naturaliste, et au marin chargés de la levée d’une Carte” Parson to Minister of the Navy and Colonies, 3 January 1816, ANOM SEN XV 3.

²⁵ Rogéry to Dubouchage (Minister of the Navy and Colonies), 2 November 1815, ANOM SEN XV 3.

²⁶ Rogéry, Moyens d’exécution pour l’établissement de la colonie du Cap vert. A Monsieur Portal, Maître des Requêtes, directeur des colonies, 26 October 1815, ANOM SEN XV 3.

²⁷ Rogéry to Portal, 5 January 1816, ANOM SEN XV 3.

an attempt to found a colony under Willis and Parker in 1794 and the preparatory voyages of Watt, Winterbottom, Houghton, and Mungo Park. While it seemed that a colonization plan to be led by Brown and Houssman was not carried out, the fact that preparations were made revealed British ambitions.²⁸

This plan to explore the Niger disappeared from later correspondence, a sign of a scaling down of ambitions based on worries about the colony. Two main concerns, that too extensive of a project would threaten the British and spark an unwanted conflict, and that it could jeopardize relations with the locals, were raised from the beginning. These objections are indicative of the real limitations on a French colony in the region. As early as February 1815, Comte Trigant de Beaumont, who had been appointed governor of Senegal (though he would not travel there to take this position—Schmaltz replaced him on the voyage to take back the colony from the British in June 1816) warned that the voyagers might make a bad first impression with the inhabitants of Cap Vert, one that would be difficult to replace. The problem was that the treaty situation was uncertain; from the information he could gather, it did not seem sure that the damel of Kajoor would recognize the 1786 treaty giving French rights to the land on Cap Vert. This concern was restated in the instructions the king gave to Governor Schmaltz, who along with the representatives of the Société, traveled with the first group of ships that was sent to take possession of Saint-Louis and Gorée from the British in June 1816.²⁹ The situation had been

²⁸ Rapport, Bureau d'administration, direction des colonies, Minister of the Navy, Etablissement d'une colonie au Cap Verd, [between March 1815 and November 1815?] ANOM SEN XV 2a.

²⁹ "Mémoire du roi pour servir d'Instructions au sieur Schmaltz, colonel d'infanterie, commandant et administrateur pour S. M. au Sénégal et dépendances," in *Instructions générales données de 1763 à 1870 aux gouverneurs et ordonnateurs des établissements français en Afrique occidentale*, ed. Christian Schefer (Paris: E. Champion, 1927), 255–256.

further complicated in that the Lebu inhabitants of Cap-Vert had revolted against the damel in 1795 and formed their own state. For fear of angering local Africans, the Société was not to start work on its settlement until the transfer of power was official. Schmaltz was told to monitor their relations with the natives to try to avoid violence, and to forbid the group from crossing the boundaries set by the treaty in order to travel into the interior of Africa.³⁰ The French garrison was small in comparison to the armies that the nearby Senegambian populations could raise, and victory would be far from certain. If the settlers caused an incident, the colonial administration would be forced to use resources and possibly troops to settle the disturbance, not a desirable outcome in a colony that was just reestablishing itself and that lacked the absolute assurance of metropolitan financial support.

As for the Franco-British rivalry on the West African coast, commentators worried a French mission that looked too ambitious would spark worry that the French were encroaching into zones the British claimed for trade. Both the French and the British, of course, wanted to control lucrative parts of the coast. Their rivalry though, far from prompting an out and out “scramble” for complete coastal control, instead forced the French to limit their plans. Trigant de Beaumont voiced his concern about the publicity surrounding the voyage, writing that while at this point the mission was not a secret, “Too much noise can inspire envy. It is better to act slowly, without noise, and to bring ourselves to our goal by an indirect path.”³¹ A report from the colonial office summarizing the plans of the Société also judged that it would be important for

³⁰ “Mémoire du roi pour servir d’Instructions au sieur Schmaltz, colonel d’infanterie, commandant et administrateur pour S. M. au Sénégal et dépendances,” in Schefer, *Instructions générales*, 255–256.

³¹ “Trop d’éclat pourrait blesser les yeux de l’envie. Il convient peut-être d’aller à pas lents, sans bruit, et de se rendre à son but par un chemin détourné.” Trigant de Beaumont to Minister of the Navy, 9 February 1815, ANOM SEN XV 2a.

France to proceed with colonization plans with caution, so as not to raise British fears that France was moving too quickly.³² The Napoleonic Wars had only recently ended, and the metropolitan government did not want more conflict. With the British as with the Senegalese, then, the French metropolitan administration had little interest in getting drawn into a diplomatic dispute or possibly even war.

Despite these misgivings, the initial mission to repossess Senegal went forward as planned, with a small contingent from the Société aboard. The voyage did not end well, however, as some of the explorers and workers were traveling on the *Medusa*, which famously ran aground off of the African coast in July 1816.³³ The officers on the *Medusa*, along with a number of lucky passengers, made their way to Saint-Louis, where they met up with the other ships making the voyage, which had arrived safely. However, others were forced to escape the wreck on lifeboats, and rather than starve, they decided to land north of Senegal on what is now the Mauritanian coast and make their way to the colony overland through desert. The most unfortunate of the group, including many sailors, soldiers, and workers, attempted to reach shore on a raft constructed out of wood salvaged from the grounded *Medusa*, towed behind another ship. However, the ship's officers made a decision to cut the rope towing the raft, leaving most of the approximately 150 passengers to drown, be killed in violence that erupted on the raft, or starve or die of thirst. Only 15 survivors were found when rescuers located the raft, and their

³² Rapport, Bureau d'administration, direction des colonies, Minister of the Navy, Etablissement d'une colonie au Cap Verd, [likely between March 1815 and November 1815?], ANOM SEN XV 2a.

³³ Jonathan Miles, *The Wreck of the Medusa: The Most Famous Sea Disaster of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Grove Press, 2007).

stories of death and cannibalism, depicted in the well known painting by Géricault, helped make the shipwreck into a symbol of the dangers of appointing incompetent aristocrats to high posts.

The shipwreck and its aftermath were setbacks to the Société in several ways, and though plans went ahead to send more settlers, the chaos surrounding the French retaking of the colony helped establish doubts about the feasibility of the Cap Vert colony. The first accounts of the shipwreck appeared in September 1816, to the dismay of Sévigny, who was still in France. Sévigny apparently believed the letters recounting the events of the wreck had been fabricated in Paris as a plot to turn people toward a rival colonization scheme on the Ile de Morphil on the Senegal River.³⁴ Indeed, the news about the Société's prospects was not positive. An article that appeared on September 23, 1816 in the *Journal des débats* reported that all the agricultural instruments of the Société coloniale had been lost in the shipwreck, meaning that agricultural trials would be set back a year, presumably until the next planting season if the tools could be replaced.³⁵

More worrisome than the loss of tools was the suggestion that the site would be found unsuitable for colonization. The chaos after the shipwreck also did not allow the full contingent of explorers and workers to fulfill their mission of finding a site and exploring the feasibility of a colony. For example, Correárd had left Senegal in December 1816, and Kummer had followed Major Peddie on a British exploratory mission into the interior around that time.³⁶ A September 1816 *Journal des débats* article stated that the delegates who were at Dakar had examined Cap

³⁴ Filsjean, "Un Port-Tarascon sous la restauration," 344–5.

³⁵ *Journal des débats*, 23 September 1816, 3.

³⁶ Miles, *The Wreck of the Medusa*, 143–144; Bruce L. Mouser, ed., *The Forgotten Peddie/Campbell Expedition into Fuuta Jaloo, West Africa, 1815–17: A Record of Elaborate Planning and Grand Misfortune and Misunderstanding* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Madison African Studies Program, 2007).

Vert, but the article writer's description of the land was ambivalent: "this peninsula is not one of extreme fertility; however, it offers all the resources necessary for an agricultural colony: workable fields, healthy waters, temperate air, good pastures. . ." The "prince africain" who claimed the land seemed ready to cede it, but the article noted he only had an "uncertain authority" over it.³⁷

These still-preliminary reports of an acceptable but not overwhelming fertility and the repeated reminders of the uncertain treaty situation were one thing, but more concrete evidence of the unsuitable nature of the peninsula for French settlement came when a temporary colony of French refugees from the *Medusa* formed on Cap Vert in the aftermath of the wreck. The ad hoc settlement was founded when the British refused to immediately turn over control of Saint-Louis and Gorée to Schmaltz, stating they had not yet received orders from Sierra Leone (from which Saint-Louis and Gorée were administered) and the metropole. Thus, many of the French colonists settled temporarily on Cap Vert as they awaited the British withdrawal. Their shelter was inadequate, consisting of tents, and the onset of the rainy season worsened the health of the travelers. Schmaltz, who found lodging in the colony during this interim period, visited the camp and later referred to the refugee settlement as a "deadly experiment" that had proved the unsuitability of Cap Vert as a site for colonization.³⁸

³⁷ "cette peninsule n'est pas d'une fertilité extrême; mais elle offre cependant toutes les ressources nécessaires à une colonie agricole; des champs labourables; des eaux salubres, un air tempéré, de bons pâturages. . ." *Journal des débats*, 23 September 1816, 3.

³⁸ "funeste expérience" Summary of letter from Schmaltz, 7 April 1817 in "Extrait de la correspondance de Mr. Schmaltz, commandant pour le Roi et administrateur général du Sénégal et dépendances, parvenue au bureau le 4 juin 1817," ANOM SEN I 1c.

Even as news of these setbacks began to reach France, however, the Société published reports promoting Cap Vert.³⁹ Two reports on Cap Vert written by a member of the Société, M. Parson, appeared, the first in October 1816, the second, published along with a revised edition of the first, in 1817. The reports attempted to refute the unflattering press by emphasizing the fertility of Cap Vert, the kindness of the inhabitants, and the possibility of growing European crops there.⁴⁰ Parson wrote that he and Richard, the gardener from the government's expedition (not part of the Société), had made a survey of the peninsula in late July 1816, and found that the soil in some areas could produce cotton, indigo, pineapple, and tamarind. Parson compared the richness of the soil to that of the banks of the Garonne and described a plain growing with millet as resembling Normandy, easing his readers' fears with the mention of familiar French areas. With the addition of plows, more advanced methods of sowing, and the labor of "affranchis noirs," or freed blacks, the settlers could not fail to succeed, Parson promised.⁴¹ By the time the second report was published, Parson had in fact died in December 1816 in Gorée.⁴² However, the publication of the two reports together, with accompanying footnotes written by Sévigny, helped to emphasize that the exploratory mission had been a success. In reality, Parson died, in the judgment of one commentator, from "a moral affliction," having not received any word from his Société contacts in the metropole.⁴³ The glowing reports belied a chaotic beginning to the organizers' proposed explorations.

³⁹ The first reports of the wreck of the *Medusa* appeared in French newspapers in early September 1816. Miles, *The Wreck of the Medusa*, 135.

⁴⁰ Parson, *Premier rapport*; Parson, *Second rapport de M. Parson* (Paris: Société coloniale philanthropique, 1817).

⁴¹ Parson, *Premier rapport*, 10-14.

⁴² Faure, *Histoire de presqu'île du Cap Vert et des origines de Dakar*, 28.

⁴³ Faure, *Histoire de presqu'île du Cap Vert et des origines de Dakar*, 28.

But back in France, the Société was making explicit efforts to gain financial support and recruits. In September 1816, the Société had published an “Instruction abrégée” promoting its projects and was also hanging posters around Paris calling on capitalists, colonists, and workers to become shareholders in the Société. The Société was publically promoting three voyages scheduled to depart for Cap Vert in October or November 1816, late December 1816, and February or March 1817.⁴⁴ In proposals and correspondence dating from 1815 and the first months of 1816, as we have seen, the Société had emphasized the scientific nature of its exploratory mission, while also noting that their settlement would give discontented Frenchmen a place to exercise their energies for the good of France. As the Société members refocused their energies on attracting settlers and justifying the settlement aspects of their project, their rhetoric shifted to explanations of how their settlers would guarantee the success of the colony.

The Société imagined a large-scale, permanent colony that set itself off from past failures like Kourou by the quality of its settlers, guaranteed by the private nature of the settlement scheme. The Société noted that colonies that were founded by governments were populated by convicts, prostitutes, and lazy people without any education, capital, or will to contribute to the colony.⁴⁵ The authors of the report compared this population to the willing settlers who had founded Pennsylvania, a “Colonie libre” that had thrived. A private colonization company, they argued, could produce in twenty years results that would take centuries in a colony started by a

⁴⁴ Note, 30 September 1816, SEN XV 2a. (As we will see below, only one voyage would actually depart, in March 1817; another would be banned from leaving.)

⁴⁵ L.-A.-G. Bosc and P.-H.-J. Sévigny, *Mémoire au conseil d'état pour la Société-Coloniale-Philanthropique, de la Sénégambie; exposant les avantages politiques et commerciaux qui peuvent résulter pour la France de la fondation de cette nouvelle colonie, ainsi que les faits relatifs à l'établissement de la Société-Coloniale* (Paris: Imprimerie de J.-M. Eberhard, 1817), 15–17, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

government.⁴⁶ The company could carefully choose settlers for their moral character, which would be guaranteed by their standing in society, property ownership, or values regarding work, as identified by the Société:

The population is essentially moral and industrious. These are men who belong to the non-labouring and enlightened classes of society, artists, or workers chosen from the immense number of those who presented themselves, all of whom have the moral guarantee that comes from possession of property, or from the values needed to make these lands bear fruit, once we have procured peaceful enjoyment from them.⁴⁷

This type of settler would be less prone to the degenerative effects of the climate, and the mix of intelligent men and hard workers would provide all the elements necessary to found a settlement.

The type of settlers best fit for the colony, if the colony was to have settlers, was indeed a question that weighed on the minds of administrators. Another model available to French administrators was that of the British settlement of Sierra Leone, settled by free blacks from London and Nova Scotians, or black Loyalists. The frigate captain Vénancourt proposed that blacks currently living in Rochefort, in southwest France, be sent to the colony, so as to not produce racial mixing in Rochefort. Since the black men were workers or farmers, and their wives were industrious, Vénancourt proposed they be sent to Cap Vert.⁴⁸ The Minister of the Navy forwarded the request to Schmaltz, the governor of Senegal, who was still in Rochefort waiting to depart. The Minister declined the project after Schmaltz responded, “it results from

⁴⁶ Bosc and Sévigny, *Mémoire au conseil d'état*, 15–17.

⁴⁷ “La population qui doit la former est essentiellement morale et industrielle. Ce sont des hommes qui appartiennent aux classes aisées ou éclairées de la société, ou des artistes, ou des ouvriers choisis parmi un nombre immense qui s’est présenté, qui tous présentent la garantie morale résultant de la possession d’une propriété acquise, ou de celle de valeurs propres à faire fructifier ces propriétés, lorsqu’on leur en aura procuré la jouissance paisible.” Extrait d’un mémoire pour la Société coloniale philanthropique présenté à Monsieur Portal, conseiller d’Etat, chargé de la direction supérieure de l’administration des colonies, 25 December 1816, ANOM SEN XV 3.

⁴⁸ Extrait d’une lettre de M. Venancourt capitaine de frégate, au Ministre de la Marine, en date du 15 mai 1816, 15 May 1816, ANOM SEN XV 2a.

the information that I gathered that these individuals, who for the most part are depleted as much physically as morally by debauchery or poverty, would be at the very least a burden and could be dangerous to the colony in its first moments.”⁴⁹

The Société worked on a joint-stock company model to attract shareholders. For different levels of subscription, investors were promised returns of land and other support. It seems that the promises may have varied from person to person. Société members in 1817 remembered that the founders had promised to “actionnaires capitalistes” 500 arpents of land, an estate (*habitation*) on the Société's account, and a black worker, for one year.⁵⁰ Another source said these “actionnaires” would get 600 arpents of land, an estate, two blacks, fifteen farming implements, and food for a year.⁵¹ “Souscripteurs libres,” or free subscribers at the rate of 5-600 f., would receive food for ten days and 50 arpents of land.⁵² Indentured subscribers (*engagés*) were engaged for 3 years, and would receive 200 f. and 4 hectares of land per year. The subscription was of 100 f. to be paid at 5% at the end of three years. At the end of those 3 years, the indentured subscribers would get 50 arpents of land and the advantages of the Société. These

⁴⁹ “il résulte des informations que j’ai prises que ces individus, pour la plus part usés tant au phisque qu’au moral par la débauche ou la misère, seraient au moins [?] à charge et pourraient être dangereux à la colonie dans les premiers momens. [sic]” Schmaltz to Minister of the Navy, 10 June 1816; Minister of the Navy to M. de Venancourt, 25 June 1816, ANOM SEN XV 2a.

⁵⁰ Reponses faites par les passagers du Brick l’Argus aux questions contenues dans la dépêche ministérielle du 29 Aout 1817, 5 September 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3. An arpent was a pre-metric French unit of area; while the term varied slightly according to the location it was being used, it normally equalled a bit over 4/5 of an acre.

⁵¹ Rapport fait d’après les déclarations du Sieur Lévêque (Guislain-Alexis) de Valenciennes, arrivé au port de Lorient sur la Gabaree du Roi La Bretonne, débarqué en ce port le 7 mars 1818, et renvoyé à la police le même jour, 15 March 1818, ANOM SEN XV 4.

⁵² Reponses faites par les passagers du Brick l’Argus aux questions contenues dans la dépêche ministérielle du 29 Aout 1817, 5 September 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3.

subscribers had only paid 5 f.⁵³ Another source noted that workers were promised to receive 2 hectares of land, 300 f. per year, and food for the duration of their engagement.⁵⁴

The Société was ultimately able to attract a number of subscribers, of which 177 would leave for the colony in 1817. The people who wanted to settle the colony came from a variety of backgrounds, and we can surmise, for a variety of reasons. For one woman, who wrote to the Minister of the Navy and Colonies asking for a concession of land, the loss of her family's goods and the hardships of the revolution inspired her to see hope in West Africa. The Comtesse de Toustain du Manoir wrote that her husband had been a member of the Société coloniale philanthropique and they would have been in Cap Vert already if it had not been for Napoleon's return in March 1815. In a letter the countess argued that her husband's goods were sold for the nation during the revolution, and her own were burned and destroyed. To grant further justification to her request, she attached a note outlining the hardships her family had gone through due to the revolution. She noted her husband was being imprisoned by revolutionaries and moved around from place to place and outlined the death of the young Toustain du Manoir, at only 19 years old, a victim of the returning Napoleon.⁵⁵

Many others who were drawn to the Société's project, however, were not widowed countesses in financial distress, but were instead from a range of other professions. A note from the ministry that listed the colonists who would depart on the mission that left France in March

⁵³ Reponses faites par les passagers du Brick l'Argus aux questions contenues dans la dépêche ministérielle du 29 Aout 1817, 5 September 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3.

⁵⁴ Rapport fait d'après les déclarations du Sieur Lévêque (Guislain-Alexis) de Valenciennes, arrivé au port de Lorient sur la Gabaree du Roi La Bretonne, débarqué en ce port le 7 mars 1818, et renvoyé à la police le même jour, 15 March 1818, ANOM SEN XV 4.

⁵⁵ Note of Bureau d'administration, directeur des colonies, Ministry of the Navy, 11 September 1816, ANOM SEN XV 5. A letter from the Comtesse, also preserved in the archives in ANOM FM SEN XV 5, is undated, sometime between March 1815 and September 1816.

1817 classes the colonists into 148 men, 19 women, and 10 children under 16 years of age. The men were further classed by broad professional categories. Sixty were in the category “without mechanical or industrial professions,” including teachers, men of letters, merchants, military servicemen, and domestic servants. There were five people in trades related to food – bakers, cooks, butchers, and café owners. Sixty men were classed as belonging to the skilled trades: cabinet makers, joiners, blacksmiths, gunsmiths, boisseliers, quarriers, locksmiths, goldsmiths, tanners, marble workers, saddlers, wheelwrights, carpenters, upholsterers, hatters, shoemakers, tailors, booksellers, weavers, tinsmiths, masons, and coopers. Seven men were gardeners and cultivators (*jardiniers et cultivateurs*); nine were surveyors, *mécaniciens*, and architects. The remaining men included five distillers (*distillateurs*), chemists and pharmacists, one officer of the merchant marine, and one surgeon.⁵⁶ The emphasis on skilled labor again highlighted the Société’s claim that they were recruiting hard-working settlers with expertise that would be useful for a new settlement. The inclusion of immigrants familiar with agriculture and with building design and construction suggest that the organizers foresaw a self-sufficient colony of productive individuals.

In the face of the aftermath of the wreck of the *Medusa* and the increased recruiting of the Société, the Ministry of the Navy began to worry about the goals of the Société. The Ministry’s fear, in short, was that the Société was planning to send settlers to a region that had not been shown to be hospitable. If the settlers’ colony began to struggle or ran into conflict with the inhabitants of Cap Vert, it would be the metropolitan government who would find themselves

⁵⁶ “sans profession mécanique ou industrielle. . .” Untitled note “177 passagers ont été embarqués sur le navire la Belle Alexandrine. . .”, Marine, Direction des Colonies, Bureau d’administration, March 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

charged with providing financial or military assistance, an investment that threatened to be a loss in the recently established colony. In September, the posters, publications, and other activities were brought to the attention of the Minister of the Navy and Colonies in a note written by a member of the administration. The writer said that while some of the names associated with the Société were respectable (Thouin and Bosc, as members of the Institut de France, and the former ship captain Landolphe), the Société was overstepping its bounds.⁵⁷ Though the Société was making claims that the mission had government support, the note reminded the minister that while the government had ruled on May 16 to lend support to eight explorers and twenty workers, authorization had not been given to the Société itself. The note proposed the minister write to Schmaltz and get information on the initial voyage so a decision could be made on the Société's new push for subscribers.⁵⁸ With the news that the Société was prematurely recruiting colonists through exaggerated claims about the official support of the government, the Minister attempted to dissuade the voyagers by withdrawing this authority. On November 17, 1816 a note was published in the official journal, the *Moniteur*, stating the Société's claims that it had the official backing of the government were false.⁵⁹

This did not dissuade the Société, who sent two reports to the minister in late 1816, the first dated November 29, asking for money, supplies, and a royal charter of concession and voicing their desire to send a mission to Senegal on January 15. In the Ministry of the Navy,

⁵⁷ These names appear to refer to two botanists, André Thouin and Louis Augustin Guillaume Bosc, both members of the learned society the Institut de France. Bosc is listed as an author on one of the Société's publications, cited previously in this chapter. Jean-François Landolphe was a naval captain on the West African coast in the late 1700s, largely in Benin, and participated in fighting with the English in the Caribbean.

⁵⁸ Note, Bureau d'administration, Direction des Colonies, 30 September 1816, ANOM SEN XV 2a.

⁵⁹ Note inserted in the *Moniteur*, 17 November 1816, ANOM SEN XV 2a.

however, doubts persisted about the most basic aspects of the mission. In an internal report reviewing the two documents from the Société, an unidentified writer spelled out some of the questions that needed to be asked – among them, was a private company the best way to create the kind of establishment that France wanted? Could such a company manage the precarious dealings with native chiefs and with England? Would the company be able to gather the men, knowledge, and resources necessary to the success of the colony, seeing as how failure would have terrible consequences and damage perceptions of the government's authority? Caution was necessary; the decision of January 3 written on the bottom of the internal report reiterated that the Société was unauthorized but that the questions should be considered.⁶⁰ The questions reveal the Ministry's awareness that the Société's colonization scheme, though private, was nonetheless closely tied to the official French presence in West Africa. The settlers' actions would present a particular face of French colonization to both African neighbors and the British. Too many people acting in their own interest or getting into conflict with neighboring states or the British would require the French government to intervene.

The nearly 200 passengers planning to travel to Senegal were already preparing to leave on the ship the *Belle Alexandrine*, set to depart from Le Havre.⁶¹ But the Ministry of the Navy made several attempts to stop the mission because of ongoing concerns. On December 31, 1816, a decision was made not to issue passports for Senegal, which prompted Sévigny to pay an angry

⁶⁰ Rapport. Sur deux mémoires presentes à son excellence au nom de la Société dite coloniale africaine philanthropique, a l'effet d'obtenir des encouragemens pour des expéditions qu'on énonce être destinés à porter des colons sur la Côte d'Afrique, 3 January 1817, ANOM SEN XV 2a.

⁶¹ For an account of the *Belle Alexandrine* mission, see Chapter III in Claude Faure, *Histoire de presqu'île du Cap Vert et des origines de Dakar* (Paris: É. Larose, 1914), 30–49.

visit to the Ministry.⁶² The Minister wrote on January 7 to the commissaire générale at Le Havre, Chabanon, ordering that the Belle Alexandrine was not to be allowed to leave for Senegal until the colony had been turned over to the French. On January 10, 1817, Chabanon responded that he would follow these orders.⁶³ However, it appears that the members of the Société were a convincing group. On January 12, Chabanon wrote to the Minister telling him that because of some confusion in his orders, there was no reason the ship should not be allowed to leave. The minister's orders had referred to *Senegal*, Chabanon wrote, whereas the Société had obtained the assent of the government to travel to an area outside of the Franco-British claim negotiations, meaning Cap Vert. Chabanon cited the right of independent French citizens to negotiate with Africans for land, a right he traced back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when the Normans founded colonies on the African coast without the support of the king.⁶⁴ These notions may have come from the Société, since Chabanon reported that a delegation headed by Nazarieux, one of the Société's leaders, had visited as soon as they had heard of the order.⁶⁵

The Ministry of the Navy finally assented to letting the ship leave in January 1817. In a January 16 letter the Minister wrote to Chabanon that the latest news from Senegal seemed to indicate that the British were finally ready to turn the colony over to the French, with the implication that this would mean better conditions for the colonists to establish themselves (the French did not officially take possession of Saint-Louis until January 25, 1817, and the official turnover of Gorée occurred on February 15, 1817). The Minister therefore gave Chabanon

⁶² Note, 14 January 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

⁶³ Chabanon to Minister of the Navy, 10 January 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

⁶⁴ Chabanon to Minister of the Navy, 12 January 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

⁶⁵ Chabanon to Minister of the Navy, 13 January 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

authority to stamp the passports of the travelers, though he was also ordered to tell the travelers they had no special privileges and would only find protection in French establishments.⁶⁶

However, less than two weeks later, the Navy let Chabanon know they had come up with another plan to try to discourage the mission. Portal, writing to Chabanon, said that since the November 1816 note discrediting the Société in the *Moniteur* had not done enough to dissuade the settlers, the government was intervening again. Portal asked Chabanon to inform the settlers that the Société directing the scheme was not an officially incorporated company (*société anonyme*) and that since “the named society never had a legal existence, they [the travelers] have contracted with individuals without character and without title.” The letter went on to declare all acts of the society null. Portal asked Chabanon to get back to him about the effect of this announcement. In the postscript, he wrote that if the 200 still insisted on going, he would not oppose it as long as their passports were acceptable.⁶⁷ In the end, the government could not dissuade the passengers or stop the voyage, and after various delays, including contrary winds and a dispute with the boat’s owner, the *Belle Alexandrine* set off on March 17, 1817 with 177 passengers.⁶⁸

Meanwhile, the government was using the justification that the Société was not authorized in order to stop further missions, despite the protests of the Société. The Société

⁶⁶ [Minister of the Navy] to commissaire général de la marine au Havre, 16 January 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

⁶⁷ “que la dite société n’ayant jamais eu aucune existence légale, ils n’ont contracté qu’avec des individus sans caractère et sans titre...” Portal to Commissaire général de la marine au Havre, 28 January 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

⁶⁸ Untitled note “177 passagers ont été embarqués sur le navire la Belle Alexandrine. . .” Marine, Direction des Colonies, Bureau d’administration, March 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b. Chabanon informed the minister that changes in the passenger list between a version of 1 February and the final embarkment list were due to some passengers being arrested by the police (the reasons are unspecified) and others deciding, upon reflection, not to depart. See Chabanon to Minister of the Navy, 19 March 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b. The delays are mentioned in Chabanon to Minister of the Navy and Colonies, 14 March 1817; Chabanon to Minister of the Navy and Colonies, 18 March 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

argued that the king's interests would not be challenged by their plan. They insisted the survival of the colonists who had gone on the Belle Alexandrine depended on the arrival of new colonists and provisions.⁶⁹ The Société petitioned the minister, arguing he had a "sacred duty" (*"devoir sacré"*) to support them. Sévigny insisted that the Société's interest in the success of the colony was proven by their own investment – they had given their own money, and two of the commission's leaders, Scellier and Brichambeau, had even sent three of their sons to the colony and thus had a stake in it.⁷⁰

An internal report from the Bureau of Commerce to the Minister of the Interior lent its support to this ruling that the Société should not be granted a provisional authorization as an anonymous society, criticizing not only the Société's lack of going through the proper channels, but its methods in general, making promises of land it did not hold.⁷¹ The Société had also made untenable promises of black servants, the Bureau of Commerce argued. The Société had promised 500 shareholders that each of them would receive a black domestic servant, and the servants would be fed by workshops of blacks. From what the Bureau had heard of the Société's plan, a mission of subscribers would capture already enslaved Africans and "free" them to serve the settlement as indentured servants for a term of nine years. The Bureau pointed out the irony of this plan and the dangers it presented:

We protest against slavery, and then we content ourselves with keeping those we deliver from it for nine years. We will arm ourselves to search for slaves to deliver, and a class of

⁶⁹ Mémoire à S Exe Mr. le Ministre Secrétaire d'Etat de la Marine et des Colonies, Pour la Société-Coloniale-Philanthropique, signed Sévigny, Bosc, de Nazarieux, Brichambeau, Scellier, Landolphe, Servois, 15 April 1817, ANOM SEN XV 4,

⁷⁰ Extrait d'un mémoire adressé à son Excellence, pour la société coloniale philanthropique, par Mr. Sévigny, daté de Paris le 6 avril 1817; Excerpt of Sévigny to M. le chevalier du Bouchage, 30 April 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

⁷¹ Extrait d'un rapport de la 3e Division, bureau du commerce au Ministère de l'intérieur fait au Ministre secrétaire d'Etat de ce Département le 29 avril 1817, concernant la Société coloniale philanthropique, 29 April 1817, ANOM SEN XV 2a.

subscribers at 100 f. per share will furnish the funds for these arms to use against the *barbaresques*; but where has permission been granted to move against these *barbaresques*, and what right does a society of private individuals have to declare war against peoples with whom its government is not engaged in hostilities?⁷²

The term *barbaresques* often referred to inhabitants of the Maghreb, suggesting the Société planned to move outside the bounds of the peninsula, a potentially conflict-producing act.

In early May, the Société asked the Minister to allow 50 settlers who had arrived in Nantes to go to Cap Vert, on a mission also meant to bring provisions.⁷³ On May 16, it was decided that no more emigrants would be allowed to go to Africa until news of the initial voyage came back.⁷⁴ The Minister of the Navy passed this decision on to the Société in a May 22 letter that stated that the new immigrants should not be allowed to go, and that the Société was not to act as an association until its status had been decided upon.⁷⁵ This decision ended the Société's capabilities in France.

The government's misgivings in early 1817 were confirmed by a series of negative reports from Governor Schmaltz, summaries of which reached the Conseil des ministres.⁷⁶ In January 1817 a letter arrived from Schmaltz, warning that Cap Vert was not a fertile place for the

⁷² "On proteste contre l'Esclavage et l'on se contentera de retenir pendant neuf ans ceux qu'on délivrera. On armera pour aller à la recherche de ces esclaves à délivrer[?]; Une classe de souscripteurs à 100. f par action fournira les fonds de ces armements dirigés contre les barbaresques; mais où est la permission donnée de courir sur les barbaresques; et de quel droit une association de particuliers annonce t'elle une guerre contre des peuples avec qui son Gouvernement n'est pas en hostilités?" Extrait d'un rapport de la 3e Division, bureau du commerce au Ministère de l'intérieur fait au Ministre secrétaire d'Etat de ce Département le 29 avril 1817, concernant la Société coloniale philanthropique, 29 April 1817, ANOM SEN XV 2a.

⁷³ Société (Sévigny et al.) to Minister of the Navy, 8 May 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

⁷⁴ This is referenced in Note pour le Conseil des Ministres, June 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

⁷⁵ Minister of the Navy to Sévigny, 22 May 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

⁷⁶ Note pour le Conseil des Ministres, June 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

settlement.⁷⁷ Schmaltz wrote another letter in January that arrived in March, again warning that the mission would fail and criticizing Parson's report.⁷⁸ In a letter written April 7, 1817, as the colony awaited the arrival of the *Belle Alexandrine*, Schmaltz explicitly enumerated the dangers the mission would face. Schmaltz wrote that since the expedition was heading straight for Cap Vert without stopping at Saint-Louis, "consequently there is no chance to communicate with the leaders of this mass of unfortunates being sacrificed."⁷⁹ Schmaltz reiterated the problems with the region, stating that there was no water eight months of the year and barely enough food for the current inhabitants. He warned that the colonists would have trouble finding shelter, as there were only four stone houses on the mainland, and wood was so scarce that people who lived on the peninsula were refusing to sell any to Gorée. The inhabitants of Cap Vert, emboldened after winning independence from the rule of the damel of the kingdom of Kajoor, had become "insolent and excessively demanding." The *habitants* of Saint Louis evinced no direct opposition to the project (Schmaltz reported that they merely pitied the foolhardy settlers-to-be), but the governor could not say the same for the response of the Goréens.⁸⁰ While the document does not specify the doubts of the *habitants* of Gorée, the island's residents likely opposed a disruption of

⁷⁷ Summary of letter from Schmaltz of 28 November 1816 in "Extrait de la correspondance de Mr. le colonel Schmaltz, commandant pour le Roi et administrateur du Sénégal et dépendances, parvenue au bureau le 5 janvier 1817," ANOM SEN I 1c.

⁷⁸ Summary of letter from Schmaltz of 2 January 1817 in "Extrait de la correspondance de Mr. Schmaltz, Commandant pour le Roi, et Administrateur au Sénégal et dépendances, parvenue au Bureau le 5 mars 1817," ANOM SEN I 1c. Schmaltz also criticized the claims of Cap Vert's fertility advanced by Vénancourt, the captain of the *Echo*, one of the ships traveling with the *Medusa*.

⁷⁹ "En conséquence il ne peut guere espérer de communiquer avec les chefs de cette foule d'infortunés qu'on sacrifie." Summary of letter from Schmaltz of 7 April 1817 in "Extrait de la correspondance de Mr. Schmaltz, commandant pour le Roi et administrateur général du Sénégal et dépendances, parvenue au bureau le 4 juin 1817," ANOM SEN I 1c.

⁸⁰ "insolens et exigeants à l'excès." Summary of letter from Schmaltz of 7 April 1817 in "Extrait de la correspondance de Mr. Schmaltz, commandant pour le Roi et administrateur général du Sénégal et dépendances, parvenue au bureau le 4 juin 1817," ANOM SEN I 1c.

their role in the trade between Gorée and the mainland. This letter did not arrive in France until the beginning of June, but it added to already existing doubts.

Meanwhile, the settlers had reached Cap Vert. A printed notice from the Société that was distributed to the families of the Belle Alexandrine colonists reported that the settlers had arrived in view of Gorée between April 10-12. The group had had a two hour meeting with the governor in which boundaries were established – the Société would recognize his authority, but since they had signed statements that said they were going at their own risk, they would also govern the colony internally. The tract reassured the families that all was well: “The colonists were well received by the blacks, not one shot was fired and the best understanding exists between them and the colony.”⁸¹ Yet an anonymous letter from Senegal told the story of their arrival in a different manner: “The leader of the country, as perfidious as the rest of the other blacks, gave them a warm welcome, and as soon as he finds their presence dangerous, he will perhaps have them executed.”⁸² The anonymous writer argued the banks of the Senegal, where there were already forts, would be a much better place to settle, “The banks of the river offer excellent land, but in the end we need lessons. How terrible this one will be!”⁸³ Could a French or *habitant* agent have written this letter and forwarded it to the Minister out of a personal interest in

⁸¹ “Les Colons ont été bien reçus par les Noirs; pas un coup de fusil n’a été tiré et la meilleure intelligence existoit entr’eux et la Colonie.” Société coloniale philanthropique, *Rapport sur la Nouvelle colonie sénégalienne*, n.d. [circa April-May 1817?], ANOM SEN XV 2a. A note in pencil at the bottom of the first page states that the notice was distributed to the colonist’s families.

⁸² “Le chef de ce pays, aussi perfide que le reste des autres noirs, leur a fait bon accueil, et lorsqu’il trouvera leur présence dangereuse, il les fera peut-être exterminer.” Extrait d’une lettre du Senegal, 10 April 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b. Another copy of this excerpt exists in the same folder, but it is dated 10 August 1817. However, since it appears to be an attachment sent with a letter that was received by the Minister of the Navy and Colonies on June 12, the August date seems to be incorrect.

⁸³ “Les bords du fleuve offrent des terres excellentes; mais enfin il faut des leçons. Que celle-ci sera terrible!” Extrait d’une lettre du Senegal, 10 April 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

development farther north, on the Senegal River? It is difficult to say, but it is clear that opposition to the colony existed both in France and apparently among some in the new French establishments.

Upon their arrival, the colonists quickly began suffering from illness and hunger, being ill-prepared to set up a colony. Captain Roussin, a military official stationed in the colony, sent back a report composed in July that said that the group was on Belair, but were not in very good condition. Roussin remarked that the Société had no mission, no authority, and no recognized character:

Without a doubt, without aid from the government, the colonists of Cap Belair would be dead of hunger of the effects of the bad season. At the end of three months, they still had no hut capable of lodging them, not a corner of land cultivated; the only drinkable water is more than one mile away, they only have provisions for six weeks, and the rains are about to start.⁸⁴

Passengers who arrived in Lorient from the colony in September reported the same hardships; they had no shelter there, and were forced to make crude tents. They reported that the land they settled was sandy, the climate unhealthy, and the point where they had settled consisted of only 50 arpents of land, though the amount of land promised to subscribers far surpassed this. They did, however, live in good relations with the natives, who were sad to see them go. This friendship was not enough to save the colony; the settlers returning to France reported in late summer 1817 that only eight of their party remained at Cap Bernard, possessing only a month of

⁸⁴ “Il est hors de doute que, sans les secours du Gouvernement, les colons du Cap Belair seraient morts de faim, ou des effets de la mauvaise saison: au bout de trois mois de séjour, ils n’avaient pas seulement encore une hute capable de les loger, pas un coin de terre cultivé; la seule eau qu’ils pussent boire, était à plus d’1 mille d’eux; il ne leur restait de vivres que pour 6 semaines, et les pluies allaient commencer.” Extrait du Rapport adressé à S. E., de l’Isle d’aix le 18 juillet 1817, par M. Alb. Roussin, Capitaine de Vaissau, ANOM SEN XV 3.

provisions, a little wood, and a dozen farming implements.⁸⁵ Another traveler, Leveque, reported that when he left Gorée in June, there were only six workers left on Cap Vert. They had built a stone house and were trying to grow millet, but three died during the *hivernage* and the other three were sent to Goree, when one died.⁸⁶ The last “débris” of the expedition, including arms and tools, were sold at public auction in September and October 1817.⁸⁷ Schmaltz had sent many of the surviving settlers back to France. For those who wanted to stay, Schmaltz allowed this as well, and was planning to send those who wanted to stay to a new colony on the “Ile de Tot” (probably the Ile de Todde, an island on the Senegal river), according to one of the Société settlers.⁸⁸ By the beginning of 1818, then, only about eight months after the arrival of the Belle Alexandrine, most of the settlers had either died of illness, gone back to France, or if they had skills useful to the colony, were now working in Saint-Louis.⁸⁹

The number of voices criticizing the mission and its founders grew. Chabanon, the commissaire general at le Havre who had corresponded earlier with the Minister and sided with the Société when the minister was trying to keep the Belle Alexandrine from leaving, now had a more negative view of the mission. Chabanon forwarded a letter from Stein, a botanist and settler with the Société who had been recommended to him by one of his friends, in which Stein

⁸⁵ Reponses faites par les passagers du Brick l'Argus aux questions contenues dans la dépêche ministérielle du 29 Aout 1817, 5 September 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3. This was forwarded to the Minister by the Commissaire général, with a letter dated 9 September 1817.

⁸⁶ Rapport fait d'après les déclarations du Sieur Lévêque (Guislain-Alexis) de Valenciennes, arrivé au port de Lorient sur la Gabaree du Roi La Bretonne, débarqué en ce port le 7 mars 1818, et renvoyé à la police le même jour, 15 March 1818, ANOM SEN XV 4. This report was compiled and forwarded to the Minister on his orders; see Commissaire général ordonnateur to Minister of the Navy and Colonies, 17 March 1818, ANOM SEN XV 4. Not everyone returned completely jaded; Leveque stated while he was being questioned that he was planning to return to Senegal and conduct commerce with Galam after he had obtained some support in France.

⁸⁷ Sévigny to Clermont-Tonnerre (Minister of the Navy), 15 July 1824; Note “Réclamation de fonds déposés dans la Caisse Royale du Sénégal,” [1824?], ANOM SEN XV 4.

⁸⁸ Stein to Chabanon, 13 July 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

⁸⁹ Faure, *Histoire de presqu'île du Cap Vert et des origines de Dakar*, 43–47.

reported that the leaders had broken their promises by not finding adequate land and sustenance for the settlers and neglecting to ensure the payment of the workers engaged with the Société.⁹⁰ Chabanon now opined that the voyage consisted of “a rather considerable number of schemers, lost children, and dupes.”⁹¹

Consequences and Legacies of the Société coloniale philanthropique

The Société lived on in negative terms in published works about Senegal. One of the former members of the Société, Alexandre Corréard, with a coauthor, J. B. Henry Savigny, published an account of the wreck of the *Medusa* that effaced Corréard’s own affiliation with the Société. Instead, the account linked the Société with the bad decisions that led to the tragic shipwreck. A note published at the beginning of the 1818 republication of Savigny and Corréard’s narrative states that a M. Sévigny was preparing to publish an account of the shipwreck written by another eyewitness, Richefort. This Sévigny (not to be confused with Corréard’s coauthor Savigny, a footnote warns) was the director of the “Société Colonial-Philanthropique de la Sénégalie,” an organization that, the authors illustrated with a quoted notice from the *Journal des débats*, had no official support.⁹² Richefort, they argued, was not a trustworthy figure; he had in fact played a key role in the wreck.⁹³ Savigny and Corréard wrote that when Richefort set off on the *Medusa*, he was a sailor who had just completed a stay in an

⁹⁰ Stein to Chabanon, 13 July 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

⁹¹ “un nombre assez considérable d’intrigants, d’enfants perdus, et de dupes.” Chabanon to Portal, 2 October 1817, ANOM SEN XV 3b.

⁹² Alexander Corréard and J. B. Henry Savigny, *Naufrage de la frégate la Méduse*, 2nd edition, (Paris: Eymery, 1818), v-vi.

⁹³ Richefort, a ex-naval captain, was also on the list of explorers listed as Société members in Parson, *Premier Rapport*, iii.

English jail and was now masquerading as an experienced military officer. Richefort was able to convince the captain, Chaumereys, to listen to his bad advice, despite the pleas of the doctor Estruc and Corréard.⁹⁴ Both Estruc and Corréard were members of the initial exploratory force sent by the Société.⁹⁵ However, their link to the association is effaced in the account.

Corréard's connections between Sévigny, the incompetent and dishonest sailor Richefort, and the unsanctioned Société both reveal the splintering of the Société and suggest Corréard's personal interest in creating a narrative demonizing the organization. The criticism of Sévigny and Richefort by Corréard suggests the Société's earlier organizing members had had a falling out by 1818. M. Parson's report, cited earlier, hinted at these tensions even as it promoted the Société. Parson accused Kummer of betraying his adoptive country, France, by joining the British exploratory mission led by Peddie, taking with him several of the workers (*engagés*).⁹⁶ A footnote to this accusation, seemingly written by Sévigny, takes a softer tone, suggesting that as long as Kummer was motivated by a desire to carry out a mission of reconnaissance, he could be forgiven.⁹⁷ In any case, the Société's exploratory members were no longer functioning as a cohesive group, and Corréard's accusations reflected this break. In addition, Corréard had a major stake in promoting his account of the tale, as it would not only establish his book as the trustworthy account, but also could help him gain compensation or a government position.⁹⁸

Charlotte Dard, another survivor of the wreck and the daughter of the Picard mentioned by Savigny and Corréard, also had a negative view of the Société. A footnote in her account of

⁹⁴ Corréard and Savigny, *Naufrage de la frégate la Meduse*, 35-37, 40.

⁹⁵ Corréard is listed as a Société member, engineer, and geographer in various documents in ANOM SEN XV 3.

⁹⁶ Parson, *Premier rapport*, v.

⁹⁷ Parson, *Premier rapport*, v-vi.

⁹⁸ Miles, *The Wreck of the Medusa*, 147, 153.

the shipwreck and her life in Senegal, *La chaumière africaine*, published in 1824, specifies:

“This society that so poorly represented the term ‘philanthropic’ was composed of about 60 individuals from all nations, among whom were Hebrards, Correards, Richeforts, etc. They had obtained free passage from the government and the authorization to cultivate the peninsula of Cap Vert, but this new colony met an end similar to that of Champ d’Asile.”⁹⁹ The comparison to Champ-d’Asile, a short-lived colony founded by former members of the Bonapartist army in Texas, drew readers’ attention to the failure of the settlement. Rather than engaging in philanthropy, the Société members were more interested in fame and fortune, Dard implied. Dard and her family had escaped from the wreck on a vessel that carried them to shore, where they began to make their way across the desert south to the colony. Rogéry, Dard wrote with scorn, one of the Société members, had secretly left the caravan of travelers: “He wanted perhaps to explore the ancient country of the Numides and Getules, and give one more slave to the emperor of Morocco. What else would he need to gain celebrity?” Dard reported that the “intrepid traveller” was soon captured by the Moors and taken to Saint-Louis, where the governor was forced to pay a ransom to free him.¹⁰⁰ The hero of Dard's book is her father, Picard, an honest man who wanted to found a farm and support his family. Dard's portrayal of the Société as fame-seekers and bad philanthropists provided a foil for the honest character of Picard.

⁹⁹ “Cette Société qui s’était donné si mal à propos de l’épithète de philanthropique, se composait d’une soixantaine d’individus de toutes nations, parmi lesquels figuraient les Hébrard, les Corréard, les Richefort, etc. Ils avaient obtenu du gouvernement leur passage gratis et l’autorisation d’aller cultiver la presqu’île du Cap-Vert; mais cette nouvelle colonie finit à peu près comme celle du Champ-d’Asile.” Charlotte Dard, *La chaumière africaine, ou histoire d’une famille française jetée sur la côte occidentale de l’Afrique à la suite du naufrage de la frégate “La Méduse,”* ed. Doris Y. Kadish (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2005), 16.

¹⁰⁰ “Il voulait peut-être explorer l’ancien pays des Numides et des Gétules, et donner un esclave de plus à l’empereur de Maroc. Que fallait-il davantage pour acquérir de la célébrité?” “intrépide voyageur” Dard, *La chaumière africaine*, 60.

The Société itself blamed the collapse of its project not on any intrinsic problems with the plan or the organization, but rather on external opposition. First, it claimed the government had gotten in the way of its project. The Société refused to reimburse the chevalier Desageux, a 65-year-old “victim of the revolution” and prospective settler who had bought three shares in the Société but who, with 80 other travelers who had gathered at Nantes, had been forbidden by the government to depart. The Société's leaders justified their refusal to reimburse Desageux by attributing his losses solely to the opposition of the minister.¹⁰¹ Speculators were also to blame, the Société claimed later. In an 1824 letter, Sévigny claimed that influential, private speculators had opposed the plan and caused the failure of the mission. The problem had not been the natives or the climate, he decided, but the opposition of French men. Over 5000 people had subscribed to the Société, with membership coming to 5400 with the workers included, and the total mission had cost 200,000 francs, according to Sévigny.¹⁰² Even this support had not been enough to overcome the opposition of the government and speculators.

This story of the Société coloniale philanthropique and its fall is also the story of the rejection of one model of colonialism, that of bringing French settlers to Senegal. The navy could not support them, the health risks were too great, and the idea of protecting them—where they might overstep their boundaries by moving farther into the interior or causing conflict with Senegalese leaders—was unattractive. While some proposals to send French settlers to Senegal continued to emerge, the idea was not taken up again.¹⁰³ Cap Vert was also abandoned as a site of

¹⁰¹ Le Chevalier Desageux to the Minister of the Marine and Colonies, 3 July 1817, ANOM SEN XV 4 and additional correspondence in same folder.

¹⁰² Sévigny to Clermont-Tonnerre (Minister of the Navy), 15 July 1824, ANOM SEN XV 4.

¹⁰³ For example, a captain named Smid, stationed in Cambrai for the winter, spent his spare time researching Senegal and writing a report on sending white settlers, which he sent to the Minister of the Navy and Colonies. The proposal

possible colonization, for the time being. It had not proved to be the fertile, welcoming place described by Geoffrey de Villeneuve and other authors. Finally, the Minister of the Navy realized a private colonial project was too risky, as it could extend itself too far and require the colonial government to take over costs and, perhaps, defense. Future agricultural schemes would be directed by government agents with strict state oversight.

Though the Société had done its best to promote its settlers as moral and its mission as the well-planned project only a private group could develop, the failure of the Cap Vert settlement led the administration to rule out the possibility of a settler colony. The promise of civilization in the following years would not come directly from large numbers of French settlers, but rather from French influence working on Senegambians. Here, then, we see a local experiment changing the government's vision of the colony. The failure of the project led to a reshaping of priorities and a reworking of the definition of what a West African colony should look like. Yet there were continuities as well; the idea of agricultural experimentation in Senegal did not die. The episode thus reveals how a local failure reframed the practice of colonial rule in Senegal.

Governor Schmaltz's Agricultural Projects and Early Exploratory Missions (1817-1820)

Governor Schmaltz was quite critical of the attempts to start plantations on Cap Vert, as we have seen. However, he soon engaged in planning his own agricultural experiments.

Founding plantations in the colony likely appealed to him because he considered himself

was not accepted. Smid, "Projet d'augmenter la population blanche du Sénégal en y envoyant, outre les enfants trouvés des deux sexes, les familles indigentes et autres, qui auraient obtenu du gouvernement la faveur d'être admises dans notre établissement" 29 January 1822, ANOM SEN XIV 1.

somewhat of an expert on colonies and their uses for the metropole. Before becoming governor, Schmaltz had traveled on private commercial voyages to various colonies, served in the French navy in Batavia, and had spent time as a British prisoner of war in India.¹⁰⁴ It appears that he took it upon himself to carry out trials that were not in his official orders. In a letter to the head of the administration of colonies in the Ministry of the Navy, he wrote that he had planted indigo at Saint-Louis during the rainy season then processed it using supplies salvaged from the *Medusa*. Schmaltz had seen indigo manufactured in Ile de France, Java, and Bengal, he wrote, and wanted to carry out an initial trial himself.¹⁰⁵

Schmaltz chose the kingdom of Waalo as the site for agricultural development, as the *brak* (king) was willing to sign a treaty with the French with the understanding the French would provide protection from the *Trarza Moors*, who were threatening the kingdom with attacks from the northern banks of the Senegal. Schmaltz began construction of a fort at Dagana that was meant to protect the plantations. While Schmaltz spoke of the plantations' progress in positive terms, conflicting reports began to reach the minister. The Baron de Mackau, an official sent to report on the colony, thought that cotton could be grown in Senegal, but had doubts that other colonial crops could, despite Schmaltz's optimism that coffee and indigo could thrive. Mackau also emphasized the slow start agriculture was making, pointing to resistance from Senegalese as the cause. The Ile de Todde was the only place where cotton had been planted, he reported, and this had barely been planted on time, since it had taken the French two days to negotiate with the inhabitants and to convince them cede their fields for an indemnity. Many people were unwilling

¹⁰⁴ Léonce Jore, "La vie diverse et volontaire du colonel Julien Désiré Schmaltz," *Revue d'histoire des colonies* XL, no. 193 (1953): 265–312.

¹⁰⁵ Schmaltz to Portal, 4 November 1817, ANOM SEN I 3b.

to start plantations, as the language of the rules governing the plantations was unclear and some feared the French government could ask them for an undetermined amount of money in order to make customs payments owed to the *brak*.¹⁰⁶ Reports such as these did not bolster the Minister of the Navy's confidence in Schmaltz or in the plantation project. By the time Schmaltz was recalled to France and replaced by Louis Lecoupé in 1820, unrest in the region and the continual efforts on the part of the metropolitan government to cut the budget and shrink the size of agricultural trials had led to the end of Schmaltz's attempt to found plantations. French treaties with Waalo and their presence in that region led to a coalition of neighboring groups, including the Trarza Moors, coming together against the French. The treaty negotiated between the leader of the Trarza Amar Ould Moctar and Governor Lecoupé effectively recognized Trarza sovereignty over Waalo and established that the French agricultural lands were merely a lease.¹⁰⁷ However, the government was not entirely convinced agriculture was doomed in Senegal, and it sent a mission to explore the issue further.

Around 1820, the government formed a *Commission d'exploration* consisting of an engineer of mines, a geographer, and a botanist. The existence of the commission marked a new emphasis on scientific expertise that could be based on observation in the region itself. Much of the information that was published in France about Senegal in the first decade of the 1800s came from company agents, not scientists.¹⁰⁸ The *Commission d'exploration* marks a shift to state-

¹⁰⁶ Rapport de M. de Mackau sur les Etablissements du Sénégal, 16 March 1820, ANOM Dépôt des fortifications coloniales (DFC) 83, no. 147.

¹⁰⁷ Boubacar Barry, *The Kingdom of Waalo: Senegal Before the Conquest* (New York: African Diaspora Press, 2010), 175-176.

¹⁰⁸ See Chapter I. The naturalist Michel Adanson had made a famous voyage to Senegal in the 1750s, and there had been earlier voyages, like one organized by the Académie des sciences and the Compagnie du Sénégal that passed through Gorée in the 1680s. See Nicholas Dew, "Scientific Travel in the Atlantic World: The French Expedition to Gorée and the Antilles, 1681-1683," *British Journal for the History of Science* 43, no. 1 (March 2010): 1-17.

sponsored scientific exploration. The French administration also wrote to scientific experts in France to judge the merits of proposals to explore Africa. The authority of scientific expertise had been established during the Enlightenment era, and it was established, some have argued, in whole or in part through colonial scientific endeavors.¹⁰⁹ From the beginning of the French presence in Senegal in the nineteenth century, the administration looked to scientific expertise to confirm the future possibilities for the colony.

Grandin, the mining expert, arrived first and was sent into the interior to Bambuk, whose gold mines were and would remain an object of European ambitions.¹¹⁰ The geographer, Bodin, was charged with making maps of the region. The commission also included an *agriculteur-botaniste*, but the man originally chosen to fill this role, Morénas, had in fact been fired and sent back to France—his claims that the French administration in Senegal was still engaging in the now illegal slave trade did not sit well with his superiors.¹¹¹ He was replaced by another botanist, Sauvigny.

The botanical aspect of the mission related most directly to agriculture in Senegal. Sauvigny's mission consisted in part of the botanical practice of collecting or describing specimens, both botanical and zoological, to catalog the flora and fauna of Senegambia. Sauvigny collected several birds and living quadrupeds; he asked for funds to feed and keep the animals and to build cages large and sturdy enough to transport them.¹¹² He reported back to the

¹⁰⁹ James E. McClellan III and François Regourd, *The Colonial Machine: French Science and Overseas Expansion in the Old Regime* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2012).

¹¹⁰ Phillip Curtin, "The Lure of Bambuk Gold," *Journal of African History* 14, no. 4 (1973): 623-631.

¹¹¹ This personnel change is described in Note on Depeche ministerielle no. 13, 5 July 1820, ANS 1 G 4. See Joseph-Elzéar Morénas, *Pétition contre la traite des noirs, qui se fait au Sénégal, présentée à la Chambre des députés le 14 juin 1820* (Paris: Corréard, 1820) and *Seconde pétition contre la traite des noirs, présentée à la Chambre des députés le 19 mars 1821 et à celle des Pairs le 26* (Paris: Jeunehomme-Crémière, 1821).

¹¹² Sauvigny to Commandant et administrateur pour le roi du Sénégal, 15 May 1821, ANS 1 G 4.

minister that the *eau de vie* he had taken with him—a product commonly used as a customs payment or trade good—had proved useful for preserving specimens.¹¹³ However, Sauvigny did not just describe specimens; he also reported on the agricultural promise of the land. The information collected by Sauvigny helped add to the existing knowledge about agricultural potential, in preparation for a renewal of plantation trials.

The land that had been chosen for the plantation trials by Schmaltz lay along the Senegal River. The inhabitants of Waalo practiced a type of agriculture that relied greatly on the seasonal patterns of the river. During the rainy season, the river flooded its banks, flooding the surrounding plain. In the dry season, farmers would plant crops in the rich soil left by the receding waters. *Waalo* was in fact the name for these floodplains. Though Schmaltz's project was put on hold, the French had decided the area around Dagana was superior to Cap Vert for agricultural colonization. France founded a “model plantation” there meant to provide a testing ground for various plants and a model for what could be accomplished in the region. It was this area that Sauvigny was ordered to explore in November 1820.¹¹⁴

Sauvigny set off on the river from Saint-Louis, observing the river along the way, then spent three days at the *habitation royale*, the model agricultural establishment run by Roger, the future governor. Sauvigny reported back specifically on the topic of colonization of the agricultural variety. He judged that cotton plantations would succeed, though the river was too flooded for him to examine the most fertile land. Still, he noted, cotton that had been planted 20 days ago was already high. Sauvigny recommended further exploration and the trial of longer

¹¹³ Sauvigny to Commandant et administrateur pour le roi du Sénégal, 21 May 1821, ANS 1 G 4.

¹¹⁴ Sauvigny, Note sur la rivière du Sénégal, remise à Monsieur Lecoupé, Capitaine de Vaisseau, Commandant et Administrateur pour le Roi, du Sénégal et dépendances. 15 February 1821, ANS 1 G 4.

grain cotton from Georgia and Cayenne. However, in Sauvigny's opinion, indigo and sugar were poor options for Senegal because of their complicated processing methods and the equipment they needed. Sauvigny also discussed physical aspects of the site and its suitability for French development. While land would need to be cleared to allow planting, some native trees could be left, and foreign trees could be planted to serve as sources for food and medicine and as construction wood, which was rare. The higher lands around the river were too dry to grow crops, he noted, but buildings necessary for the establishment would be assured a sanitary placement there, an important consideration at a time when illness was near certain.¹¹⁵

Sauvigny also observed the agricultural methods practiced by the people living around Dagana and suggested the French could take advantage of this local knowledge. Sauvigny described the agricultural tool used by the locals, the *hiller*, a kind of iron scythe. Sauvigny recommended that even though the Africans used it with ease, imported European tools would be needed to work the land more efficiently. However, his observations showed that these tools could not be used in the European manner. After the rainy season, he wrote, the ground should only be worked in the spots where the seeds would be planted, since plowing the whole field would break the ground's protective crust and release the moisture from the soil. The inhabitants, Sauvigny notes, were careful to keep the soil's crust intact, based on their experience with the land.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Sauvigny, Note sur la rivière du Senegal, remise à Monsieur Lecoupé, Capitaine de Vaisseau, Commandant et Administrateur pour le Roi, du Sénégal et dépendances, 15 February 1821, ANS 1 G 4. Sauvigny himself fell ill, which delayed his report until February even though the mission took place in November; in February the governor said that he should go to Gorée to recuperate. Governor to Sauvigny, 25 February 1821, ANS 3 B 10.

¹¹⁶ Sauvigny, Note sur la rivière du Sénégal, remise à Monsieur Lecoupé, Capitaine de Vaisseau, Commandant et Administrateur pour le Roi, du Sénégal et dépendances, 15 February 1821, ANS 1 G 4.

Sauvigny's reports reveal the extent to which his mission was aimed at assessing possible colonial experiments. He was on a government commission, after all, and his natural science observations were therefore largely directed at clarifying the possibilities for agricultural colonization. At the same time, Sauvigny was reluctant to promote an immediate large-scale plantation project, probably recalling past colonial failures like that of Kourou in South America. Colonial officials had to be cognizant of public opinion in France, he argued. He wrote,

as resources grow with time, we could, at a certain epoch, carry out some trials without their lack of success causing great harm, whereas on the contrary it would be very fatal to not reach our goal from the beginning of the exploitation, because then those who were the most disposed toward establishing plantations, will first hesitate and soon withdraw, taking with them unfortunate ideas about the proposed country, which they will rush to recite any chance they get.¹¹⁷

Sauvigny thought the government should carefully vet individuals chosen to found plantations and verify that colonists possessed a sum of money sufficient enough to start a successful establishment. While this would help guarantee the success of the mission, there was also the matter of obtaining land. Sauvigny gave his opinion that the current system of renting land from the Brak or king of Waalo for a yearly fee would leave planters “at the mercy of the natives” and called on the government to negotiate with the king to work out a way to buy the land outright.¹¹⁸

After exploring the site of the proposed colonization experiment, Sauvigny proposed other voyages, making explicit the link between discoveries useful to science and those useful to

¹¹⁷ “les resfources devenant plus grandes avec le temps, on pourrait, à une certaine epoque, faire quelques esfais sans qu’il resultat grand dommage de leur non-réusfite, tandis qu’au contraire il serait très fatal de ne pas parvenir au but dès le commencement de l’exploitation, car alors ceux-là meme qui étaient les plus disposés à établir des cultures, hésitent d’abord et se retirent bientôt emportant de fâcheuses idees sur le pays proposé et s’empresfant de les débiter en toutes occasions.” Sauvigny, Note sur la rivière du Sénégal, remise à Monsieur Lecoupé, Capitaine de Vaisseau, Commandant et Administrateur pour le Roi, du Sénégal et dépendances, 15 February 1821, ANS 1 G 4.

¹¹⁸ “à la merci des naturels” Sauvigny, Note sur la rivière du Sénégal, remise à Monsieur Lecoupé, Capitaine de Vaisseau, Commandant et Administrateur pour le Roi, du Sénégal et dépendances, 15 February 1821, ANS 1 G 4.

the colony. One proposed trip would take place south from Saint-Louis, along the Atlantic coast. Promoting another proposed voyage, this one to Galam on the Upper Senegal, Sauvigny argued,

It would certainly be in the interest of the colony, and in that of science, in the first case because we could establish amicable relations, and perhaps commercial relations, with the inhabitants of the interior on whom we have no data, and in the second case because we know absolutely nothing about the physical history of the land to be traversed.¹¹⁹

The mission, Sauvigny wrote, could confirm the rumored existence of gum forests along his route, a discovery that would have great implications for the gum trade in the colony.¹²⁰

While Sauvigny emphasized the connections between exploration and colonization, to conclude that science and empire formed a powerful dominating discourse would overlook the cracks and limitations in the alliance. Both the administration and Sauvigny promoted a cautious imperialism of limited scope. As noted above, Sauvigny was not simply giving a glowing picture of colonial possibilities in order to secure government support; he instead presented a recommendation for careful and well-managed colonization. The administration relied on exploration to map out its future colonization efforts, but rather than using science as an instrument of or justification for domination, officials instead used exploration in limited ways to assess the feasibility of projects. In fact, the colonial administration rejected Sauvigny's additional projects as impractical and overambitious. The governor did not approve of Sauvigny plan to explore Galam because there were no planned upriver trips going past Dagana with which Sauvigny could travel,¹²¹ and he vetoed the coastal voyage because the financial situation

¹¹⁹ "ce serait certainement dans l'intérêt de la colonie comme dans celui des sciences; dans le premier cas parce que l'on pourrait établir des relations amicales et peut-être commerciales avec les habitants de l'intérieur sur lesquels nous n'avons aucunes données, et dans le second cas parce que nous ne connaissons absolument rien de l'histoire physique du pays a parcourir. . ." Sauvigny to Commandant, 25 January 1821, ANS 1 G 4.

¹²⁰ Sauvigny to Commandant, 25 January 1821, ANS 1 G 4.

¹²¹ Governor to Sauvigny, 3 February 1821, ANS 3 B 10.

of the colony would not allow members of the commission to explore on their own.¹²² The limits of the colonial experiment, and the colonial budget, circumscribed the reach of both science and empire.

In 1822, however, Sauvigny received approval to travel south from Saint-Louis to the French post of Albréda, passing through the kingdoms of Kajoor, Bawol, Siin, Saluum, and la Barre. Sauvigny again proposed the voyage as one of botanical exploration. He also, at the minister's request, made observations on the soil, waterways, customs, and commerce. Sauvigny noted areas that would be good for plantations, gave a report of his meeting with the king of Saluum about the possibility of establishing French trade in the region, and made observations about the importance of British commerce in the region. The *habitants* of Gorée wanted a fort there to protect their commerce from the competition of the British and from the demands for high customs payments from local chiefs, Sauvigny reported.¹²³ Scientific exploration did not make colonial expansion inevitable. However, Sauvigny's voyages did confirm possible directions for the newly reformed colony, in both senses of the word “directions”: they suggested regions where the French could successfully expand their influence, and they traced possible economic activities and judged their feasibility. Sauvigny's range of activities, from botanical collecting to negotiation with chiefs, blurs the line between scientific exploration and imperial diplomacy and policy setting, while also showing the limits of both practices in Senegal right after the French return.

¹²² Governor to Sauvigny, 25 February 1821, ANS 3 B 10.

¹²³ Sauvigny to Commandant and Administrator of Senegal, 9 September 1822, ANS 1 G 4.

The Plantation Project of Governor Roger (1822-circa 1830)

Sauvigny's observations proved that if Schmaltz's particular methods had failed, agriculture still had promise in the region. This situation created an opportunity for Jacques-François Roger (Baron Roger) to forward his own colonization plan as an alternative, emphasizing persuasion, backed by scientific experimentation, over force. While many of the governors in this period were naval officers, Roger worked as a lawyer in France before traveling to Senegal. After lobbying for a colonial appointment throughout the 1810s without success, Roger was named director of Koïlel, the royal model plantation in Senegal, in June 1819. Roger arrived in Senegal in July, but he did not take his post immediately; instead he became interim prosecutor for the king in Saint-Louis. Eventually, he ascended to his post at Koïlel, where his role was to provide a model of agricultural production that would inspire similar establishments among private planters.¹²⁴ After a period at Koïlel, Roger returned to France, where he met with officials and promoted his plan for Senegal effectively enough that he was appointed governor, a position he held from 1822-1827. Roger's agricultural trial would be on a larger scale than those attempted before. It would rely on new forms of Senegalese labor, and therefore recalled the proposals of abolitionists of the previous century, which suggested that plantations in Africa would solve the problem of the slave trade. While Roger kept his faith in the agricultural promise of Senegal, even when the plantations' failure began to become obvious in the later 1820s, his shift of thinking of Africans as consumers rather than producers signaled a larger shift in colonial logics, from an agricultural model to a commercial one. In 1822, however, when Roger accepted

¹²⁴ Hardy, *La mise en valeur du Sénégal*, 117; Confidential report to Minister on Roger's term, 24 March 1832, ANOM SEN I 15e.

the governorship of Senegal, an agricultural model for the colony seemed to hold the most promise.

Roger's return to Senegal as governor in 1822 can be viewed as a victory for his vision of plantation agriculture. Roger's appointment was promoted by Anne-Marie Javouhey, the founder of the Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Cluny, the female missionary order that staffed the hospital and ran girls' schools in Senegal and other colonies.¹²⁵ Roger had acted as a lawyer for the Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Cluny, and when he had first departed France to run Koïlèl, he received permission to take along André Boissard, a relative of Javouhey.¹²⁶ While professional and familial connections were likely important factors in Javouhey's support, her respect for Roger was also probably closely tied to his abolitionist leanings and ideas about colonial plantation agriculture. Javouhey was also an abolitionist and would travel to French Guiana in 1828 to found a plantation colony, Mana.

Beyond personal connections, however, Roger's proposal appeared favorable because of its departure from Governor Schmaltz's colonization methods. Schmaltz had, in the eyes of the Minister of the Navy and Colonies, failed in his project to found plantations because he relied on force and started wars with local leaders. In instructions to Schmaltz's successor, Lecoupé, the minister criticized Schmaltz's expedition up the river to fire on the villages of Fuuta Tooro:

"What a way to promote colonization—seeing that it is impossible to imagine its existence

¹²⁵ Hardy, *La mise en valeur du Sénégal*, 118. Chapter V of this dissertation discusses the Soeurs de Saint-Joseph and other missionaries in Senegal in this period.

¹²⁶ Geneviève Lecuir-Nemo, *Anne-Marie Javouhey : Fondatrice de la Congrégation des Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Cluny, 1779-1851* (Paris: Karthala, 2001), 87–88.

without the full assent of the natives!”¹²⁷ The plan Roger presented to the minister seemed to present a quite different approach. A confidential report written after Roger’s term as governor recalled, “Roger only wanted to act upon the natives with persuasion and by example.” Also appealing was the fact that Roger did not ask for a large amount of money, as Schmaltz had done.¹²⁸

Roger’s proposal was also attractive because he argued that he understood, through personal observation, the reasons for the failures of agricultural colonialism to that point. His experience at the royal plantation imbued his arguments with trustworthiness. Roger argued that the lack of success of Schmaltz's projects had been due to outside voices prejudicing Africans of the interior against the plantation project. In a letter to an unidentified friend written in 1820, before he was appointed governor, Roger explained: “Here is the truth: one sees among the natives a certain discontentment, or rather a vague disquietude at seeing us found agricultural establishments in the African interior; this disquietude is not natural to them, since these people barely look ahead to the future. It was suggested to them, and to my mind, the suggestion came from two different sides.”¹²⁹ The first of these negative influences, Roger explained, was the population of “*mulatres*” and free blacks in Saint-Louis. These groups did not favor colonization, and Roger suspected they were turning their commercial and kin relations of the

¹²⁷ “Quel moyen de promouvoir une colonisation dont il est impossible de concevoir l’existence sans le concours le plus entier des indigènes!” Instructions to Lecoupé, 30 June 1820, in Schefer, *Instructions générales données de 1763 à 1870 aux gouverneurs et ordonnateurs des établissements français en Afrique occidentale*, 323.

¹²⁸ “Mr. Roger ne voulait agir sur les indigènes que par la persuasion et l’exemple.” Confidential report to Minister on Roger’s term, 24 March 1832, ANOM SEN I 15e.

¹²⁹ “Voici la vérité: on remarque parmi les indigènes un certain mécontentement, ou plutôt une inquiétude vague de nous voir former des établissements de culture dans l’intérieur de l’Afrique; cette inquiétude ne leur est pas naturelle, car ces peuples ne voient guère dans l’avenir: elle leur a été suggérée; et d’après ma manière de penser, elle leur a été soufflée de deux côtés différents.” Copy of letter from Roger to unknown recipient, 19 March 1820, ANOM SEN XIII 19a.

interior against the projects. Their opposition came from a fear of losing power, Roger wrote. The *mulatres* of Senegal had grown rich off commerce at a time when there were few whites who were trying to compete. Now, Roger wrote, “whites are everywhere, they meddle in everything, their merchandise fills the stores.” The *mulatres*, seeing that even more whites would arrive if the plantations turned out to be successful, resisted the project. Roger also argued that the English were somehow behind fighting in the region, suggesting that their mission to find the source of the Niger was really meant to disrupt the French presence.¹³⁰ Roger’s assessment reveals his paternalist attitudes toward Africans, but it also hints at France’s strategic concerns and vulnerability in the region. The *habitants* of Saint-Louis were worried the new model would threaten their privileged position in the river trade. The plantations indeed threatened to signal a drastic shift of power away from the *habitants*. Roger’s fears about the English highlight the continuing rivalry in the region and the sensitivity of either side to the actions of the other.

Even as he acknowledged the obstacles, Roger saw hope for plantations in Senegal. Roger wrote that while people thought he was crazy for believing in an agricultural future for Senegal, he was optimistic plantations could succeed if the difficulties he identified could be surmounted. While he acknowledged that the royal plantation existed more on paper than it did in real life, Roger thought he had nonetheless generated a momentum that should not be left to die out. He wrote to a friend, “If you could see my trials! I’ve brought to maturity, here, without rain or shelter, all the plants grown in the vegetable gardens of Europe. What a treasure we are

¹³⁰ “Les blancs abondent; ils se mêlent de tout; leurs marchandises incombrent les magasins.” Copy of letter from Roger to unknown recipient, 19 March 1820, ANOM SEN XIII 19a.

about to lose!”¹³¹ Roger’s investment was important to him, and this enthusiasm must have influenced the Minister of the Navy in appointing him to governor.

Roger’s mission as governor, as it was dictated to him by the Minister of the Navy, was above all to promote agricultural establishments in Senegal. His instructions stated that “Colonization is the main goal of your mission; all your other functions should, in some ways, be seen only as a means to arrive at this end.”¹³² The meaning of “colonization” in this period was specifically agricultural. Roger’s project was to produce “denrées coloniales,” or colonial crops, on plantations. At first, efforts focused on cotton; French observers of the early 1820s confirmed earlier accounts of a native variety growing in Senegal, often remarking upon the fact that it was not being used to its potential and was seemingly growing wild. One French agent noted, “I see cotton plants everywhere, most having grown without being cultivated or cared for, I have the same favorable opinion, for the same reasons, about the success of indigo.”¹³³ Demand for cotton in France was growing; France had 500 spinning mills by 1815, and the mechanization of weaving expanded in the early 1820s. However, French cotton demand grew at a slower rate than that of rapidly-industrializing Britain.¹³⁴ If experiments in Senegal were an attempt to meet France’s cotton needs at a low cost, they failed. When by 1825 and 1826 it was determined that

¹³¹ “Si vous pouviez voir mes essais! J’ai fait mûrir, ici, sans pluie et sans abri, toutes les plantes potagères d’Europe. Quel trésor nous sommes sur le point de perdre!” Copy of letter from Roger to unknown recipient, 19 March 1820, ANOM SEN XIII 19a.

¹³² “Coloniser est en effet le grand but de votre mission, le reste de vos fonctions, tout importantes qu’elles sont, peut, en quelque sorte, n’être considéré que comme moyens d’arriver à cette fin essentielle.” Instructions to Roger, 9 January 1822, in Schefer, *Instructions générales*, vol. 1, 339–340.

¹³³ “je rencontrais partout des cotonniers dont la plupart étaient venus sans culture et sans soins: je dus concevoir la même opinion et par les mêmes raisons pour la réussite de l’indigo.” Hesse to Minister of the Navy, 15 February 1824, ANOM SEN XIII 19c.

¹³⁴ Richard Roberts, *Two Worlds of Cotton: Colonialism and the Regional Economy in the French Soudan, 1800-1946* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 48-50.

cotton grown in Senegal could not compete with other cotton imported into France, the crop was abandoned in favor of indigo.¹³⁵ Increasingly, in the nineteenth century, France became dependant on the United States for a large portion of its cotton imports.¹³⁶

While the most immediate model at hand for the plantation project was that of the French Caribbean colonies, Roger's plan borrowed from other models as well. The plantation project was based on the Dutch colonization system, which relied on local elites to provide land.¹³⁷ If this was one reference French officials looked toward in their plans for Senegal, Egypt was another. Roger wrote in one letter to the Minister of the Navy that he was convinced Egypt was the best reference point for founding agriculture in Senegal, since Egypt was Senegal's only match in climate, geography, and vegetation. Before he had been granted the governorship, Roger recalled, he had become convinced of this connection through his readings on the Nile valley and through news he received about successes in cotton cultivation in Egypt. This prompted questions in his mind: on the type of plantations in Egypt, the species of cotton, the price of labor and the amount of work one person could do, and what irrigation and machines planters used.¹³⁸ Though Senegal's promoters promised the colony could be a new Saint-Domingue, then, administrators looked elsewhere to complete the vision of a colony that, while looking backward to the wealthy colonies of the Old Regime, promised to remake not only France's presence on the African coast but also the imperial system in the aftermath of the abolition of the slave trade.

¹³⁵ Notes from M. Dégoutin to Governor Jubelin, 15 March 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

¹³⁶ Roberts, *Two Worlds of Cotton*, 50.

¹³⁷ Michael David Marcson, *European-African Interaction in the Precolonial Period, Saint Louis, Senegal, 1758-1854* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1976), 151.

¹³⁸ Roger to Minister of the Navy, 1 November 1824, ANOM SEN XIII 19c.

Trials of different varieties of cotton, indigo, and other plants were a necessary part of the plantation experiments. Samples of cotton seeds were imported from Egypt, Dacca and the American South. As for indigo, planters tried growing the indigenous variety, as well as varieties sent from Bengal and the Cape Verde islands. While the *denrées coloniales* were the main focus of the French plan to found plantations in Senegal, officials tried to introduce a wide variety of other plants from elsewhere in the empire. Much of this experimentation was carried out at the experimental garden and plantation Richard-Toll, run by and named after the gardener Richard. At Richard-Toll, there were attempts to grow orange and lemon trees, bananas,¹³⁹ a variety of seeds that had been sent from Guiana, coffee plants,¹⁴⁰ poplar trees, nopales from Guadeloupe that were being grown to raise cochenille, olive trees, and other species.¹⁴¹ Exchange went in the other direction as well; the Musée d'histoire naturelle in France asked for plants from Senegal to fill in gaps in their collections.

The foundation of experimental gardens in colonies and the collection of specimens for metropolitan institutions were not new developments.¹⁴² In Senegal, botanical experiments took on a special significance as the colony had to this point been seen as a trading post rather than a land with agricultural potential. Thus, officials in Senegal focused on botanical experiments that aimed to discover Senegal's fitness for several varieties of plants and to create a productive colony. Thus many experiments focused on the colonial crops of cotton and indigo. Experts who sent cotton seeds to Senegal included instructions about how they were grown in the area of their

¹³⁹ Hesse to Minister of the Navy, 15 February 1824, ANOM SEN XIII 19c.

¹⁴⁰ Richard to Roger, 5 January 1825, ANOM SEN XIII 19c.

¹⁴¹ Copy of letter from Roger to Minister of the Navy, 15 March 1825, ANOM SEN XIII 19c.

¹⁴² For a discussion of experimental gardens in Saint-Domingue, see McClellan, *Colonialism and Science*.

provenance. Experiences in Senegal were shared with others as well, as in the case of a report on indigo written by Plagne, a chemist and indigo planter. The Minister of the Navy and Colonies had the report copied for distribution both back in Senegal and, as a note from the papers of the Minister of the Navy suggests, in other colonies as well.¹⁴³ Cultivation methods were also open for experimentation; in a 1828 report, an indigo planter reported on the different methods planters had tested, including sowing indigo in the same way the Senegalese sowed millet, by waiting until the season after the Senegal River had flooded to plant in the recently inundated land.¹⁴⁴ Two model indigo factories were founded—one that would experiment with making dye with fresh leaves, the other with dry.¹⁴⁵

Roger's vision for Senegal in its new context had little need for bookish naturalists building collections. He believed that Senegal could be an important site for experimentation with a focus on useful agricultural production and advancement. When the minister sent Roger a work entitled *Plantes usuelles des brasiiliens*, Roger dutifully ordered a panel made up of a surgeon, the head gardener, and the plantation inspector to review it, but he had already drawn his own conclusions. He wrote that the work on Brazilian plants was “almost worthless from an agricultural and industrial point of view.”¹⁴⁶ He complained that the author described the plants by referencing how they were used in popular recipes, rather than submitting them to tests by chemists and doctors. Roger said popular information could be very important, but French botanists were woefully unequipped and unwilling to go after it properly:

¹⁴³ Note, 24 May 1825, ANOM SEN I 9b.

¹⁴⁴ Notes from M. Dégoutin to Governor Jubelin, 15 March 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

¹⁴⁵ Roger to Minister of the Navy, 28 November 1826, ANOM SEN I 11a.

¹⁴⁶ “presque nul sur le point de vue agricole et industriel.” Roger to Minister of the Navy, 19 July 1826, ANOM SEN I 11a.

But where can we find men who have the kind of spirit, devotion, simplicity, humility and courage necessary to carry out missions that are more unforgiving and difficult than one could imagine? Who wants to, or would know how to, descend to the level of the natives, live with them, understand what they say, define what they want to do? It will never be a man from our schools. It is much easier to get some paper and put a few samples of plants on it, have the plants drawn, use some books and a pair of scissors to put together descriptions from a mix of bad Latin, and then have it printed and engraved, and thus easily earn the title of botanist!¹⁴⁷

Roger instead thought that scientific experimentation was a more useful solution, and hoped that these kinds of experiments would be conducted on Senegalese plants. He did not place much hope in French botanists to do the work: “The sciences also have their prejudices and their mistaken directions. The encouragement given to collectors of plants in France is not desirable. In botany, form takes too much precedence over function, and it has not reached the level of our other sciences.”¹⁴⁸

Roger’s emphasis on practical knowledge is also reflected in his recommendations of books to be sent to the newly approved library at Saint-Louis. He selected books on irrigation, rural agriculture, applied chemistry in agriculture, practical beekeeping, and an account of a voyage to Surinam.¹⁴⁹ Roger’s plan relied on scientifically-tested, well-planned agriculture. For Roger, this would provide the starting point from which plantations would spread in the colony.

¹⁴⁷ “Mais où trouver des hommes qui aient le genre d’esprit, de dévouement, de simplicité, d’abnégation et de courage, nécessaire pour remplir ces sortes de missions ingrates et plus pénibles qu’on ne pourrait le croire? Qui voudra, qui saura descendre à la portée des indigènes, vivre avec eux, comprendre ce qu’ils diront, définir ce qu’ils voudront faire? Ce ne sera jamais un homme sortant de nos écoles. Il est bien plus commode de placer dans du papier quelques échantillons de plantes, de les faire dessiner, d’en faire à coups de livres et de ciseaux des descriptions mêlées de mauvais latin, de se faire ensuite imprimer et graver, et de s’acquiescer doucement le titre de botaniste!” Roger to Minister of the Navy, 19 July 1826, ANOM SEN I 11a.

¹⁴⁸ “Les sciences ont aussi leurs préjugés et leurs fausses routes. L’impulsion donnée en France aux collecteurs de plantes, n’est pas telle qu’on pourrait la désirer. Dans la botanique, la forme emporte trop le fond; elle n’est pas encore à la hauteur des autres sciences.” Roger to Minister of the Navy, 19 July 1826, ANOM SEN I 11a.

¹⁴⁹ Roger to Minister of the Navy, 20 July 1826, ANOM SEN I 11a.

However, no matter how much scientific planning went into the colony, it could only go so far without the necessary staff. Roger emphasized the need for a staff that would provide practical knowledge applicable to the specific conditions of Senegal. Roger had a deep respect for Richard, but he does not seem to have generally held gardeners in the highest regard. Roger complained about the gardeners who came from France to work on projects in Senegal: “None to this point have understood anything of the agricultural system, the combination of dikes and irrigation, that must be introduced in this new colony to make all parts of it cultivable and richly productive.” Roger wrote to the minister that an engineer would be more useful for the colonization plan than a gardener.¹⁵⁰ Shortages of staff with this type of specialized knowledge was a problem at Richard-Toll. Richard wrote that one of the norias, or waterwheels, was falling into disrepair, leaving only one in working order. The engineers of the colony had no officer, he complained, so it would not be repaired, and there were no workers to construct anything out of the bricks on the property.¹⁵¹ The need for specialized staff was tied to the need for specialized equipment; at Richard’s insistence, Roger campaigned for a large machine for raising water.¹⁵² For Richard and Roger, shortages and delays stood in the way of the technologically advanced colony that could be.

The project’s long-term success counted not just on the development of Richard’s model plantation, but on encouraging planters to found and run their own plantations. Roger’s vision

¹⁵⁰ “Aucun, jusqu’à présent n’a rien compris au système agricole, à la combinaison des digues et des irrigations qu’il importe d’introduire dans notre nouvelle colonie pour la rendre partout cultivable et richement productive.” Roger to Minister of the Navy, 1 November 1824, ANOM SEN XIII 19c.

¹⁵¹ Copy of letter from Richard to Roger, 5 January 1825, ANOM SEN XIII 19c.

¹⁵² Copy of letter from Richard to Commandant Hugon, 5 January 1825, ANOM SEN XIII 19c; Roger [to Minister of the Navy?], 23 February 1825, ANOM SEN XIII 19c.

was that planters in Senegal, drawn from the French and *habitant* classes of the colony, would run large, technically advanced plantations. Senegalese would make up the labor force. To encourage potential planters to take up agriculture, the French government in Senegal used a number of tactics. One of these was monetary prizes. In the growing year of April 1823 to March 1824, for example, bonuses were set to be awarded to the top nine plantations, given that they produced a certain base number of plants in good condition. Higher-ranking plantations would receive larger bonuses. Bonuses would also be awarded for each hectare of indigo grown. Another monetary prize would go to the best-kept plantation that had most distinguished itself by the introduction of new plants, new machines, or other improvements.¹⁵³ In practice, this strategy was not completely successful; Roger admitted that in the 1825-1826 season, only two fifths of the budgeted amount had been given out.¹⁵⁴ Another way good work would be rewarded was through gold medals awarded to the agriculturalists with successful harvests or to those who had succeeded in introducing new techniques. The award was presented at a public meeting of the Société d'agriculture in Senegal, along with other awards for the establishment with the most cattle and the one with the best indigo.¹⁵⁵

Roger understood that prizes would only go so far to promote plantations, and he sought the support of metropolitan officials in publicizing the project to gain support. He remarked to the Minister that not enough articles were appearing in French newspapers about colonization, reminding him that the foundation of a colony was one of the central projects with which he

¹⁵³ Règlement sur les primes, les encouragemens et les secours qui seront accordés aux cultures en 1823, 24 April 1823, ANOM SEN XIII 19a.

¹⁵⁴ Roger to Minister of the Navy, 6 August 1826, ANOM SEN I 11a.

¹⁵⁵ Governor to Minister of the Navy, 7 February 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 21b.

should be concerned.¹⁵⁶ The Minister of the Navy did produce several articles meant for insertion in publications such as the *Annales maritimes et coloniales* and the official publication, the *Moniteur*. One note, written for publication in 1826, argued that capitalists were the only element still lacking in the colonization project in Senegal.¹⁵⁷ The involvement of French capitalists was a preoccupation of Governor Roger.¹⁵⁸ He planned to promote capitalist investment in agricultural exploitation even after his governorship. In the letter where he asked the Minister to choose his replacement, he wrote, “the destiny of the banks of the Senegal now lies on the banks of the Seine, where I am called.”¹⁵⁹

The existing documents suggest that those who founded plantations were largely a mix of French and *habitants*. In 1826, there were 42 plantations. Those who founded plantations had various motivations. At the beginning of Roger’s term as governor, he had had to make several compromises with the *habitants* of Saint-Louis in order to get their support, and some *habitants* paid him back by agreeing to run plantations.¹⁶⁰ Gerbidon suggested that most of those who took concessions either wanted to take advantage of the money from the government or were military men who wanted to get out of the service.¹⁶¹ Apart from the individual planters, the Maison du Roi also continued to fund the royal plantation, Koïlel, and the Compagnie de Galam, the

¹⁵⁶ Roger to Minister of the Navy, 2 December 1824, ANOM SEN XIII 19c.

¹⁵⁷ Note for the *Moniteur*, decision of 5 June 1826 (for 20 June 1826 publication), ANOM SEN XIII 21a; Note for the *Moniteur*, for 9 September 1827, ANOM SEN 21a; and Report for *Annales maritimes et coloniales* (extrait d’un Rapport du comité consultatif des arts et manufactures en date de 24 mars 1827 concernant divers substances végétales provenant du Sénégal), ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

¹⁵⁸ See for example Roger to Minister of the Navy, 17 July 1826, ANOM SEN I 11a.

¹⁵⁹ “les destinées des rives du Sénégal sont et m’appellent maintenant sur les bords de la Seine.” Roger to Minister of the Navy, 28 November 1826, ANOM SEN I 11a.

¹⁶⁰ Marcson, *European-African Interaction in the Precolonial Period*, 127–136.

¹⁶¹ Copy of letter from Gerbidon to Director of Colonies, 29 August 1827, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

commercial association with a monopoly on trade in the upper Senegal, also ran a cotton plantation.¹⁶²

The labor force for the plantations was to be drawn from the population of Senegambia. This had been an argument of eighteenth-century abolitionists, that plantations in Africa would remove the need for sending people from Africa to the West Indies to work as slaves. The French plantation project relied on a number of different kinds of workers.¹⁶³ First, planters could hire free people living around the plantations and in the neighboring regions. Some of this group had worked for the French and British in the past in exchange for goods, so administrators judged this group would provide reliable workers. Slaves were another class of workers planters could tap for plantation labor. Planters could hire captives from their owners at Saint-Louis on a monthly basis. The French practice of “renting” slaves to work in the colonial trade had been established during the Old Regime,¹⁶⁴ and slave labor on the plantations was a continuation of this labor arrangement. Roger had orders to encourage slave owners in Gorée to bring their slaves to Saint-Louis to draw them away from the British establishments closer to Gorée. Recalling Schmaltz’s troubles finding workers, the Minister of the Navy also proposed the use of indentured labor in his initial instructions to Governor Roger. These *engagés à temps*, as they

¹⁶² The Compagnie was not necessarily deeply invested in their plantation. When Roger sent a request from Besuchet for cotton gins in the name of the Compagnie, a reader in the office of the Minister of the Navy wrote a note in the margin noting that the Compagnie had simply taken on a plantation on the side, near land that was already cultivated, but that their main concern was the trade with the Haute Fleuve, on which they had a monopoly. Report of Minister of the Navy and Colonies, 20 December 1824, ANOM SEN XIII 19c.

¹⁶³ The Minister of the Navy's orders to Roger specify the way plantation labor should be obtained. The instructions largely follow the instructions that had been given to Schmaltz in regards to plantation labor, but they note Schmaltz's difficulties finding workers and suggest the use of more indentured workers. Instructions to Roger, 9 January 1822, in Schefer, *Instructions générales*, vol. 1.

¹⁶⁴ James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: The Senegal River Valley, 1700-1860*, African studies series 77 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 101-105.

came to be called, would be granted their liberty after fourteen years.¹⁶⁵ This system exemplifies the relationship of the new plantation system with older models of colonization. While abolitionist promoters of African plantations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had emphasized the break between the old system and the new one, the continuation of unfree labor highlights continuity in the way planters and administrators conceived of plantations.

At first it appears that drawing free labor to the plantations was a success. In 1825, Roger wrote that Richard-Toll was not short of workers since so many were coming from neighboring regions.¹⁶⁶ There were problems with the system, however, as Dégoutin, an indigo grower for the government, noted in his 1828 report on indigo plantations. Dégoutin wrote that the labor force of the indigo plantations of Senegal was made up of both slaves and free workers from the interior. However, planters were giving up on slaves because their free compatriots were inciting them to flee. Free workers were proving to be unreliable as well; on the indigo plantations, the free workers only wanted to work long enough to obtain a few goods, including a gun, then return to their homes. Dégoutin complained that eight or nine months was the maximum time a worker would usually stay. Dégoutin also complained about the cost of labor. Workers were still paid 10 francs a month, but food was an additional cost. A cook was needed for every 10 men, and the payment of these female cooks in food was also the responsibility of the planter.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Instructions to Roger, 9 January 1822, in Schefer, *Instructions générales*, 339–340. For more on this labor system, see François Zuccarelli, “Le régime des engagés à temps au Sénégal (1817-1848),” *Cahiers d’études africaines* 2, no. 7 (1962): 420–461.

¹⁶⁶ Copy of letter from Roger to Minister of the Navy, 15 March 1825, ANOM SEN XIII 19c.

¹⁶⁷ Notes remises à Monsieur Jubelin Gouverneur du Sénégal et Dépendances, par M. Dégoutin, Indigotier, 15 March 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

Roger's reports on the plantations' progress continued to be positive until the end of his term as governor. In the letter in which he asked to return to France, Roger wrote that the project was moving forward on its own accord, "I have done enough to provoke it, in setting up the conditions for it, in putting it in such a solid state, that it might now be more difficult to destroy it than to improve it. Even the government, if it wanted to abandon the project, no longer could. It is set in motion, it is certain that it will progress forward."¹⁶⁸ But others began to report that the project was failing. The interim governor that replaced Roger, Gerbidon, summed up the "scandalous chronicle of colonization" he had uncovered after he began hearing so many arguments against colonization that he started to doubt what he had read in Roger's reports. On the plantations he visited, he saw no evidence of agriculture, and even Richard and another veteran agriculturist involved in the plantation scheme, Perrottet, seemed to lack confidence in the project.¹⁶⁹ The number of plantations was decreasing dramatically: in 1826 there were 42 plantations, but by 1827 there were only 26 (some of which were abandoned or up for sale), and by 1829 there were five.¹⁷⁰

In May of 1828, Governor Jubelin sent the Minister of the Navy and Intendant of the Maison du Roi letters recommending the royal plantation of Koïlél be closed. In response to anticipated protests that such a move would demoralize colonists, Jubelin wrote: "The

¹⁶⁸ "j'ai fait assez en le provoquant, en disposant les choses pour l'attendre, en les constituant dans un tel état de solidité, qu'il serait peut être à présent plus difficile de les détruire que de les améliorer. Le Gouvernement lui-même, voulût il abandonner, ne le pourrait plus. Il est engagé; il faut absolument qu'il marche en avant." Roger to Minister of the Navy, 28 November 1826, ANOM SEN I 11a.

¹⁶⁹ "chronique scandaleuse de la colonisation." Copy of letter from Gerbidon to Director of Colonies, 29 August 1827, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

¹⁷⁰ Governor to Minister of the Navy, 22 September 1826, ANOM SEN I 11a; Gerbidon to Minister of the Navy, 25 August 1827, ANOM SEN I 12c; Excerpt of letter from Governor Brou to Minister of the Navy, 26 August 1829, ANOM SEN XIII 20b.

government cannot give the signal of defection. But the existence of the royal plantation, so dilapidated, so out-of-date, produces an effect worse than that of its abandonment, which in any case everyone has expected for a long time.”¹⁷¹ Jubelin noted that even if the king continued to put significant amounts of money into the establishment, the success of agricultural colonization was not certain. As for the more noble goal of the royal plantation—that of being an example—Jubelin argued there were enough private plantations to fill that role. While not faulting the founders of the plantation, since it was undertaken in good faith and in a land that was not known, Jubelin made it clear he did not think the project was worth continuing.¹⁷² In June 1828, an order from Jubelin ended the practice of giving monetary subsidies for cotton and indigo, except for exportation subsidies.¹⁷³ In August, the Maison du Roi decided it would no longer keep up the royal plantation of Koïlél and advised the Minister of the Navy that it was abandoning the land.¹⁷⁴ The end of the royal plantation, where Roger had gotten his start shortly after his arrival in the colony in 1819, and the site from which agriculture in Senegal had been projected to spread, represented the end of the French plantation scheme in the colony.

The failure of Roger’s plantation project can be attributed to a number of causes. First, the plantations were not making money. Cotton had been abandoned in the mid-1820s because planters could not compete with cotton from other places. As for indigo, there were infrastructural problems that kept planters from producing the dye cheaply, including the lack of

¹⁷¹ “Le Gouvernement ne peut donner le signal de la défection. Mais l’existence de l’habitation Royale, si délabrée, si arriérée, produit un effet plus mauvais, que celui qui pourra résulter de son abandon auquel chacun s’attend depuis longtemps” Jubelin to Minister of the Navy, 31 May 1828, ANOM SEN XV 6.

¹⁷² Letter from Jubelin to M. le Baron de la Bouillerie, pair de France, ministre d’état, intendant général de la Maison du Roi, ANOM SEN XIII 20a, 31 May 1828.

¹⁷³ Order from Jubelin, 11 June 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

¹⁷⁴ Intendant of the Maison du Roi to Minister of the Navy, 30 August 1828, ANOM SEN XV 6. The letter dates the decision to abandon the plantation to 11 August.

processing facilities and good roads.¹⁷⁵ Dégoutin, an indigo planter, reported to Governor Jubelin that indigo grown in Senegal could not compete on the same level as that grown in Bengal. Dégoutin argued the soil was bad, the climate was too hot and dry, transport was difficult, the materials needed to construct indigo factories were too expensive and of bad quality, and workers' wages were too high.¹⁷⁶ These problems would have especially discouraged those French or *habitants* who had not really wanted to take a concession in the first place.

The final blow was hastened by climate. The year 1826 was very dry, so the harvest was not very good.¹⁷⁷ Then in 1827, the annual flooding of the Senegal was greater than usual. This destroyed nearly all of the indigo in Waalo.¹⁷⁸ It appears that some planters remained optimistic that the flooding was a temporary problem.¹⁷⁹ However, there was some degree of discouragement, since the crops were destroyed and since the planter's other source of income, the cash bonuses from the government, were awarded on the basis of production.¹⁸⁰ A report from Governor Jubelin about the effect of the flooding on the royal plantation said, "Everything must be recreated at Koïlel, if we seriously want to continue this enterprise."¹⁸¹ This failure surely did not help the reputation of the agricultural possibilities in Senegal.

¹⁷⁵ Report from Brunet to Governor on agricultural census for 1827, 10 May 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

¹⁷⁶ Notes from M. Dégoutin to Governor Jubelin, 15 March 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

¹⁷⁷ Jubelin to M. le Baron de la Bouillierie, pair de France, ministre d'état, intendant général de la Maison du Roi, 31 May 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

¹⁷⁸ Report from Brunet to Governor on agricultural census for 1827, 10 May 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a; Brunet to governor, 1 February 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

¹⁷⁹ Report from Brunet to Governor on agricultural census for 1827, 10 May 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a; Jubelin to M. le Baron de la Bouillierie, pair de France, ministre d'état, intendant général de la Maison du Roi, 31 May 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

¹⁸⁰ Report from Brunet to Governor on agricultural census for 1827, 10 May 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

¹⁸¹ "tout est à créer à Koïlel, si l'on veut sérieusement continuer l'entreprise." Jubelin to M. le Baron de la Bouillierie, pair de France, ministre d'état, intendant général de la Maison du Roi, 31 May 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

There was also resistance from Senegalese. On the whole, the population had not embraced the new agricultural policies to the degree some commentators expected. The problems with retaining labor seemed to signal a lack of dedication to the work. Gerbidon criticized the inhabitants of Waalo for not taking to agriculture. One of the justifications for the plantation project had been to bring peace to Waalo and free its inhabitants from the despotic rule of the Trarza Moors. The interim governor was upset that after bringing peace to Waalo, the French did not get more thanks: “There are no small problems they do not torment us with, and they never miss an occasion to let us know that they are only impatiently tolerating our presence here.”¹⁸² Senegalese had also obstructed French experiments with indigo. The best soil for indigo, the soil with the least salt, was a small area near the river that was already cultivated by Senegalese for food production. Senegalese farmers had thus left inferior land for the indigo planters.¹⁸³ The impatience of Senegalese inhabitants with the French plantation experiments turned to direct action at least once. In 1827, when excessive flooding threatened, indigo planters built dikes to protect their plants. However, a group of the inhabitants of Waalo, under the orders of their leader, opened the dikes out of concern that the structures would stop the rising river from fertilizing the land where they would plant crops after the flooding receded.¹⁸⁴ These problems, along with the still-present opposition of many of the *habitants* to a change in the river economy, reveal that Roger’s method of “persuasion” had not succeeded.

¹⁸² “Il n’y a point de tracasseries, de petites vexations dont ils ne nous tourmentent et ils ne laissent guère échapper l’occasion de témoigner qu’ils supportent avec impatience notre présence dans leur pays.” Gerbidon to Minister of the Navy, 25 August 1827, ANOM SEN I 12c.

¹⁸³ Notes from M. Dégoutin to Governor Jubelin, 15 March 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

¹⁸⁴ Report from Brunet to Governor on agricultural census for 1827, 10 May 1828, ANOM SEN XIII 20a.

While the government could point to many reasons for the failure of agriculture in Senegal, then, metropolitan officials placed some of the blame on Roger's ideological shift from seeing the colony as a center for African producers to seeing it as one of African consumers. Roger's view of Africans as consumers is indeed apparent in several of his letters. In one, Roger wrote that the 500,000 people living in the areas surrounding the colonial possessions should be counted as part of the colony's population, because even if not directly under colonial control, they were or would become "*consumers* of the products of the soil and of the factories of France."¹⁸⁵ The plantations played a role in Roger's vision, but in this letter he focused on their indirect influence rather than their immediate agricultural output. Roger remarked that the temporary workers, "upon returning to their country, will spread, little by little, not only the general taste for European products, but also something of our manners, our needs, our agricultural industry, our civilization."¹⁸⁶

A 1832 note from the naval ministry placed some of the blame for the plantation projects' failure on this shift in focus on Roger's part. While the report listed a number of reasons for the failure of the project, including climate and the noncooperation of local people, the shift in Roger's vision for the colony is presented as a surprising and sudden about face from his original plan of growing colonial crops first and foremost. The note criticized Roger for beginning to view the production of crops as an "accessory object" to his new goal of creating African consumers and spreading French influence and "civilization" through merchandise. Roger's loss

¹⁸⁵ "des *consumateurs* pour les produits du sol et des manufactures de France." Roger to Minister of the Navy, 22 September 1826, ANOM SEN I 11a.

¹⁸⁶ "Chacun d'eux, en retournant dans son pays, y répand peu à peu, non seulement le goût déjà général des produits d'Europe, mais aussi quelque chose de nos habitudes, de nos besoins, de notre industrie agricole, de notre civilisation." Roger to Minister of the Navy, 22 September 1826, ANOM FM SEN I 11.

of focus, in the eyes of the government, had led him astray from the purpose of his mission, to grow colonial crops. The government thus framed the failure of the project in terms of Roger's idealism and the shift away from production. In the face of environmental factors and Roger's ideological shift, the writer judged, the plantation project was absolutely finished. The last lines note, somewhat ominously, that the failure of the project had led Senegalese to believe that Europeans were impotent, and by extension, that they were superior—leading to hostile attitudes and actions that the French would only be able to put down by force.¹⁸⁷

The irony of this criticism is that in Senegal, a commercial logic was already replacing the agricultural logic that had previously ordered colonial policy, and this commercial logic looked much like what Roger had predicted. The next several decades would see France leave agricultural colonialism behind and turn to commerce in other goods. It was the failure of the agricultural logic that inaugurated this change. The shift to a commercial logic came in part out of governmental policy, which abandoned the idea of subsidizing and encouraging agriculture to turn its attention towards regulating the river trade. The commercial logic also grew out of continuing European national rivalries in the region, as imported merchandise became an important part of French administrators' plans to draw trade away from the British. Civilization would remain a process that existed on the fringe of imperial goals, as administrators and merchants focused above all on tapping into existing trade networks, but "civilization" would also come to be loosely used as a judgment of commercial compatibility with the French. More exploratory missions, like that of Sauvigny, would be sent out, but their focus would be on identifying existing productions and trade networks.. The commercial logic that Roger had

¹⁸⁷ "objet accessoire" Report by staff member in Naval Ministry, 24 March 1832, ANOM FM SEN I 15e.

hinted at as his mind wandered from the focus on agricultural colonialism would become the dominant organizing force in the colony and its relations with neighboring kingdoms.

The legacy of the Société coloniale philanthropique also shaped the way in which the colonial logic of agriculture gave way to that of commerce. Its failure led French administrators and other colonial commentators to turn away from a settler model of colonization, reject private settlement colonies the government could not control, and focus imperial development on the Senegal River region, far from the failed Cap Vert colony. While the story of French imperial schemes in Senegal from 1817-1830 might reasonably be cast as one of failure, the period is significant to the development of the colony. The experimentation and reversals attest to the non-linearity of French development in the region, and the continuing limitations of French domination would be evident as France attempted to create a commercial colony out of Senegal.

Chapter III

Commerce as the Measure of Men: A Commercial Logic for Senegal, circa 1823-1854

When the plantation projects of the 1820s failed, the metropolitan government and the colonial administration turned toward a model of colonization based on commerce. This commercial logic shaped the direction of the colony between the 1830s and the 1850s. Beginning in the 1850s, the demands of French merchants for protection and increasing French territorial control – based on their argument that the way that trade was carried out in the colony had led to commercial failure – would lead to a shift in the colony toward militarization, territorial expansion, and increasing infrastructural and administrative development. But for the three decades that coincided with the liberal July Monarchy, Second Republic, and the beginning of the Second Empire, Senegal was above all a colony of trade. The French administration focused on making the colony lucrative by attempting to tap more efficiently into the gum trade, promoting free trade practices with occasional regulation, and seeking opportunities to benefit commercially from other resources, such as gold and caravan trade goods, in sections of West Africa outside of the small sphere of colonial control. Plantation agriculture had proved too difficult; the problems of obtaining good land and labor allowing plantations to operate at a profit had proved that importing such a colonial strategy was unworkable.

The new commercial vision for the colony hearkened back to an older tradition. Whereas the proponents of Senegalese plantations had tried to import and adapt the seventeenth and eighteenth century West Indies plantation model to a new century and a new location on West African shores, the commercial logic drew on another seventeenth- and eighteenth-century

tradition of trade patterns in West Africa itself. Senegal had produced gum along with slaves during the period of company rule. The new commercial logic aimed to expand the export trade in gum and look for other products to replace slaves. The geographic outline of the colony and its sphere of activity closely mirrored the outline of the colony during company rule. At the same time, the larger shift from company rule to government administration, increasing demand for tropical products in Europe, and new dynamics in the relationship between Senegalese and French merchants and traders would lead the colony away from older traditions and initiate changes in the way commerce in the colony was conceived by the 1850s.

This chapter explores changes in the way various commentators conceived of Senegal's commercial future from the 1820s, and especially after 1830, to the 1850s. The state-sponsored voyage of explorer Grout de Beaufort in the 1820s reveals just how connected commercial concerns were with scientific exploration. Grout de Beaufort and the administrators and scientists he corresponded with noted that the residents of Senegambia were commercially-minded and that the best way to earn their trust was through trade. Seeing West Africans as commercial beings would allow Grout de Beaufort to complete his own commercial aims, his correspondents urged.

Not all commerce was deemed to be equal by French commentators, however, and thus neither were all commercial actors. The French company agent Duranton classed trade practices in the late 1820s as acceptable – signing and following treaties, and allowing productive freedom – or unacceptable – demands for gifts, breaking treaties, and pillage that harmed subject peoples. While it was clear the French were trading within a Senegambian context that required African formalities and tribute payments based on local political situations, these judgments allowed

French commentators to classify Senegambian ethnic and political groups based on the degree to which they had been corrupted by greed, dividing the inhabitants of Senegambia into possible commercial allies and greedy and backward tyrants to be avoided. In other words, commercial civility was used as a “measure of men.”¹ At the same time, Duranton suggested that greed was not natural to the inhabitants of Senegambia and had emerged through contact with Europeans.

As French stakes in the gum trade and, later, the peanut trade grew, explorers and writers such as Raffanel, Carrère, and Holle carried the categories of inappropriate and appropriate commerce further to suggest a colonial policy that relied more frequently on force. These authors demeaned their West African trading partners as irrational economic beings. Senegambian chiefs’ demands for tribute payments, once seen as a normal if not ideal part of the practice of trade with the colony of Senegal’s neighbors, began to be depicted by voyagers to the interior as outsized demands that went against the normal, free flow of commerce. Commentators linked the restriction on free exchange with political tyranny, particularly in the case of the Moors, leading to justification for military intervention by the 1850s. Governor Faidherbe would indeed suppress customs payments and rely on force to secure the “free” flow of commerce. While Faidherbe’s policy of military pacification is often attributed to his experience in Algeria, his close relationship with Senegalese merchants, and, by apologists, to his forward thinking in terms of the future of the colony, this chapter emphasizes the construction of a logic of commerce in Senegal that prefigured and justified Faidherbe’s interventions.

¹ The term is borrowed from Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance*, Cornell Studies in Comparative History (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

The commercial moment in Senegal must be seen as a coalescence of the political and economic circumstances and ideas in the wake of the failure of the plantation projects of the 1820s, rather than a moment that only serves to lead up to or contrast with later colonialism. On one hand, it is tempting to look back on the period from the vantage point of the historian and see commercial exploitation as a step in a linear path toward the development of French West Africa. Trade in gum appears, to some historians, as a “prelude” to French conquest, a means by which French merchants gained the necessary power to have their interests recognized by Faidherbe and translated into colonial expansion.² This period also saw several exploratory missions, and scholars have traced links between exploration and colonial expansion.³ On the other hand, other historians have ignored this period as being outside the scope of colonial history, as it is a time when the colony was not particularly large or important. Indeed, to observers at the time, Senegal’s colonial future was not at all clear. In an 1831 letter, the Minister of the Navy wrote to the Governor that Senegal, no longer a colony, was once more a “simple comptoir.”⁴ This administrator’s reclassification of Senegal as *comptoir* reveals a belief that the colony was taking a step back, not moving toward the fully developed colony that could be imagined at the time. Many historians of colonial Senegal have seemed to agree that this was a period in which

² James Webb, “The Trade in Gum Arabic: Prelude to French Conquest in Senegal,” *Journal of African History* 26 no. 2/3 (1985), 149-168. Margaret O. McLane, calls the gum trade a “prelude to the prelude” of expansion along the river in the 1950s in “Commercial Rivalries and French Policy on the Senegal River, 1831-1858,” *African Economic History* 15 (1986): 39.

³ For example, see William H. Schneider, “Geographical reform and municipal imperialism in France, 1870-80,” in *Imperialism and the Natural World*, ed. John MacDonald MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 90-117.

⁴ Minister of the Navy to Governor of Senegal, 15 April 1831, in Christian Schefer, *Instructions générales*, II, 7, quoted in Margaret O. McLane, “Commercial Rivalries and French Policy on the Senegal River, 1831-1858,” *African Economic History* 15 (1986): 39.

Senegal was a “*simple comptoir*.” The period has received little attention from historians of empire, who often begin studies of colonial Senegal in the late nineteenth century.

Rather than deciding whether the commercial moment I have identified between the 1820s (and particularly after 1830) and the 1850s was more colonial or less colonial than preceding and successive periods, or whether it even should be classed as a moment of colonialism, I study the way in which a particular colonial logic developed and manifested itself in the context of the economic and political situation. Between 1830 and the 1850s, much of government policy was aimed not at territorial expansion, but at creating policies to stimulate trade and regulate competition between gum traders, fund exploratory missions to examine new trading possibilities, and manage the political situation to allow French commerce to succeed by ensuring its safe operation and drawing caravans away from the British. Thus the attention of the colony was drawn to the exterior, not to expand territorially, but to secure trading partners. Just as the new gum orientation of the colony was focused on tapping into West African trade routes and practices, the expeditions were mainly sent to negotiate with leaders to allow the French to set up small trading posts to trade with neighboring areas, or even to just pass through.

The notions of “informal empire” and “imperialism of free trade” are useful to describe the French presence in Senegal in this period, to a degree. Senegal was a “formal” colony, but it did seek to extend its economic, or “informal,” power. In 1953, John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson argued influentially that in the nineteenth century, Britain’s free trade ideas did not make it completely indifferent to empire, but instead led the country to retain its colonies and

develop India, building an “informal empire” based on an “imperialism of free trade.”⁵ Gallagher and Robinson suggested continuities between formal and informal imperialism and showed how political and economic interests coincided in this nineteenth-century moment of imperialism before imperialism became a popular policy. Gallagher and Robinson also emphasized the non-chronological nature of empire, in that “imperialistic” modes of intervention occurred in a staggered way in different places, and that failures occurred alongside successes. Still, the middle years of the nineteenth century “were the decisive stage in the history of British expansion overseas, in that the combination of commercial penetration and political influence allowed the United Kingdom to command those economies which could be made to best fit into her own.”⁶ In the French case as well, in Senegal and other areas where the French had colonies, the years 1830-1860 (and beyond) represented a time of informal empire that progressed in varied ways and in fits and starts. While France, even under the liberal July Monarchy, did not have the same liberal, free trade tradition as Britain, the turn from company rule to colonial government, the gradual disappearance of monopoly companies in Senegal, and a policy that allowed French merchants a fairly free reign reveals some parallels in the ways that French administrative decisions and economic exploitation progressed. In sum, without casting the development of empire in a linear way, the notion of an imperialism of free trade highlights continuities between the economic exploitation and political intervention of the nineteenth century and later formal imperialism.

⁵ John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, “The Imperialism of Free Trade,” *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 6, no. 1 (1953): 1-15.

⁶ Gallagher and Robinson, “The Imperialism of Free Trade,” 11.

Gum and *Coutumes*: The Workings of Trade in Senegal after the French Repossession

The main product embraced by the French to exploit in Senegal in the early nineteenth century was gum arabic. During the plantation experiment of the 1820s but especially after the plantations' failure, gum became the focus of French hopes for the colony. Gum arabic was used in European industry to make products such as paint, paper, glue, ink, food, cosmetics, and textiles. Gum arabic comes from two species of the acacia tree, producing either red and white gum. The dry wind from the desert, the harmattan, caused the tree bark to split and ooze out gum, which could then be harvested by slave labor from the forests to the north and south of the Senegal river. The largest gum forests were located in land controlled by the groups the French referred to as "*Maures*," or Moors. The French, as well as the inhabitants of the region themselves, distinguished between the lighter skinned Moors, who controlled the right bank of the river (now Mauritania), and the "blacks" living to the south of the river. The pastoralist Moors were comprised of three main groups, listed from the lower river to the upper river: the Trarzas, Braknas, and Dowich. The Moors had an effective monopoly on the gum trade, as they brought the product to river markets where traders from Saint-Louis, Senegalese or French, could buy it at fixed times during the year.

Gum was not a new product; it had been important to French-Senegalese trade during the era of the Atlantic slave trade. James Webb suggests the value of gum surpassed the value of slaves exported from the Senegal River Valley in the late seventeenth century, until slave exports rose in importance in the early 1700s. Again, in the 1780s, even though the slave trade from the Senegambia region was at a high point, the value of gum in Europe again made gum the most

valuable export.⁷ Eighteenth-century writers saw the promise of the product. Michel Adanson, the naturalist who published well-known observations on Senegal in 1759 after visiting the colony, wrote that gum was a valuable and still largely untapped trade good for the European market. In 1773, in a report to the Academy of Sciences, he argued that gum was the branch of commerce “that is without question the most lucrative that is carried out in Africa and perhaps in the world, that by its quantity, the moderateness of its price and the ease of transport, is preferable to the gold trade or the trade in *Nègres*.”⁸ Adanson referred to white gum, or “Uérék,” as “the gum tree par excellence, the gum tree of Senegal” and noted it produced a gum superior to that of the red gum trees.⁹ In 1802, writing in the window before Napoleon reinstated slavery, the explorer and commercial agent Silvester Meinrad Xavier Golberry wrote of gum’s importance, “Since the abolition of slavery in our colonies, and of the slave trade by the French in Africa, the gum known in commerce under the name of the gum of Senegal is one of the principal objects, and even the most precious commodity that Senegal can offer to France.”¹⁰ In fifteen years after Golberry’s book appeared, the British would reoccupy the colony, slavery would be reinstated in France’s West Indian colonies, and the abolition of the slave trade would

⁷ James Webb, “The Trade in Gum Arabic,” 151-152.

⁸ “L’intérêt qu’ils avoient de reconnoître cette branche du commerce qui est sans contredit le plus lucratif qui se fasse en Afrique et peut être dans le monde, qui par sa quantité, par la [modicité?] de son prix et par la facilité de son transport, est préférable à la traite de l’or et à celle des Nègres, les avoient engagé plusieurs fois dans le projet de faire avec les Maures un voyage dans les forêts où l’on [sait?] qu’ils recueillent cette gomme.” Michel Adanson, “Sur le Gommier Blanc Appelé Uérék au Sénégal; sur la Maniere dont on en Fait la Récolte de sa Gomme et de Celle des Acacia et sur un Autre Arbre du Même Genre” (1773), AD 287, Adanson Papers, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation Archives, Carnegie Mellon University.

⁹ “le gommier par excellence, le gommier du Sénégal. . .” Adanson, “Sur le Gommier Blanc.”

¹⁰ “Depuis l’abolition de l’esclavage dans nos colonies, et de la traite des Noirs par les Français en Afrique, la gomme connue dans le commerce sous le nom de gomme du Sénégal, est un des objets principaux, et même la denrée la plus précieuse que le Sénégal puisse offrir qu commerce de la France.” Silvester Meinrad Xavier Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique : fait pendant les années 1785, 1786 et 1787, dans les contrées occidentales de ce continent, comprises entre le cap Blanc de Barbarie. . . et le cap de Palmes. . .*, vol. 1 (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1802), 195.

be delayed longer than Golberry had imagined. However, after the French return to Senegal in 1817 and the legal abolition of the slave trade, gum again seemed a possible solution for the colony. While plantations captured the administration's main attention in the 1820s, as discussed in Chapter II, gum was there to fill the gap after the failure of the plantation projects.¹¹

The gum trade did not necessitate territorial conquest, but instead led to the establishment of markets at various points along the river, with Saint-Louis, at the river's mouth, as the commercial center. The actual trade was carried out at designated markets, or *escales*, along the Senegal River, with the main three being the escale du Coq, the escale du Désert, and the escale des Darmankours. The main product of exchange for gum was the *guinée*, or a cotton cloth from India dyed with indigo. This name came from the fact that the cloth was a common trade good along the Guinea Coast. This specific cloth was sought after by Africans specifically; as one historian of cloth has written, "far from being dramatic new trendsetters that offered long-overdue variety to a dreary local market, imported textiles were for the most part preselected to conform to established tastes and cultural values."¹² Golberry wrote that attempts to reproduce *guinées* in France had failed because the Moors were not fooled; the same fate had befallen the Royal African Company when they tried to sell imitations made by English weavers in other parts of the West African coast.¹³ The cloth became a "unit of account" that did not die out as

¹¹ Martin Klein, "Slaves, Gum, and Peanuts: Adaptation to the End of the Slave Trade in Senegal, 1817-48," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 66, no. 4 (October 2009): 895-914.

¹² Colleen E. Kriger, *Cloth in West African History*, The African Archeology Series (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2006), 38-9.

¹³ Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 250; Kriger, *Cloth in West African History*, 39. By the 1840s, Rouen-made *guinées* were being sold in Bambuk and Buré, but the Moors still insisted on *guinées* made in India. Richard Roberts, "Guinée Cloth: Linked Transformations within France's Empire in the Nineteenth Century," *Cahiers d'Études africaines* 128, XXXII, no. 4 (1992): 611.

trade in slaves turned to trade in products, but rather stayed an object of demand into the mid-twentieth century.¹⁴

The trade of the upper river was carried out in a different fashion. First, the trade there was controlled for much of the period of the gum trade's height by a monopoly company, usually known as the *Compagnie de Galam*. The limited navigability of the upper river meant the trade at Bakel, the French fort, was limited seasonally, as boats could only navigate the upper part of the river when waters were high. The longevity of this privileged company reveals the limits on free trade in the colony.¹⁵

Traders were divided into *traitants*, largely Senegalese, and the *négociants*, or French agents. The *négociants* were the more powerful group in that they had more capital and owned or worked for import-export companies that imported guinéés and other goods directly. This group might be agents of French commercial houses or have operations centered at Saint-Louis.¹⁶ The *traitants* were African or métis traders who owned boats and had some degree of capital, though there was a broad range of traders who fell into the category of *traitants*. The gum trade employed a number of other people, including *laptots*, or sailors, who might be free workers, slaves, or *engagés à temps* working under a kind of indentured servitude that existed from 1823 to 1848.¹⁷

¹⁴ Roberts, "Guinée Cloth," 597-627.

¹⁵ For a detailed analysis, see Eugène Saulnier, *Une compagnie à privilège au XIXe siècle : La Compagnie de Galam au Sénégal* (Paris: Émile Larose, 1921).

¹⁶ James L. A. Webb, Jr., *Desert Frontier: Ecological and Economic Change Along the Western Sahel, 1600-1850* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 116.

¹⁷ Webb, *Desert Frontier*, 116-117; François Zuccarelli, "Le régime des engagés à temps au Sénégal (1817-1848)," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 2, no. 7 (1962): 420-461.

The trade rested on the payment of “*coutumes*,” which might be translated as “duties” or “gifts” or “tribute payments.” These were payments, often on an annual basis, to Senegambian leaders, including Moors as well as Wolofs and other groups south of the river, in exchange for various rights of trade, residency, or passage. The Moors, for example, required customs payments from those wishing to trade at the *escales*; they also levied taxes on the volume of gum traded. The system had developed under French company rule and was continued under British rule after the Seven Years’ War.¹⁸ Golberry obtained one of the British registers of *coutumes*, a detailed document that included

the motives, enumeration, and order of *coutumes* to pay annually to the chiefs of the african nations, the times when the *coutumes* should be delivered, notes relative to the respective importance of chiefs and nations, instructions on the rules that must be followed to deliver the *coutumes*, and political observations on commerce in this part of Africa.¹⁹

This document reveals the lists of goods given to various chiefs, interpreters, and wives. For example, the *coutumes* paid annually to Hilly-Koury, leader of the Trarza Moors, to facilitate trade, consisted of 33 pieces of guinée, 21 muskets (*fusils de traite*), 600 flints (*pierres à fusil*), two ells of scarlet cloth, 3 pieces of Silesian cloth, two ounces of cloves, 12 pounds of loaf sugar [*sucré terré*], and 15 ancrees of powder. In return, he would present the governor with 7 oxen.²⁰ The document goes on to specify customs for other important figures, including the main interpreter of the king, six other interpreters, various princes, and valets. Another *coutume* was to be paid to Hamet-Moktar in exchange for the right to construct and maintain the fort at Podor.²¹

¹⁸ Golberry, *Fragmens d’un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 266.

¹⁹ Golberry, *Fragmens d’un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 267-8.

²⁰ Golberry, *Fragmens d’un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 269-270.

²¹ Golberry, *Fragmens d’un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 272.

The document also noted the number of times the cannon should be fired to salute the various kings and princes when they visited Saint-Louis, and the types of provisions that would be provided to them each day of their visit.²²

The history of *coutumes* revealed the rootedness of the custom in earlier trade patterns. In the early 1840s in Boulebane in the upper river kingdom of Bundu, the king presented a group of French travelers with a gift of three gold rings of 40-50 grams after they had presented their own gifts to the king. This customary gift, given to foreigners, was called “*le souper*,” or “supper.” According to Anne Raffenel, this *coutume* began “in the time of the first commercial relations established between the Europeans and natives of this part of West Africa.”²³ Since trade was carried out in places where there were not many provisions, African traders required European traders to bring food to the sites of exchange: “Later, circumstances no longer being the same, that is to say, food resources having become less precarious, the old custom transformed without dying out, and it was not longer meals en nature that became the obligation, but the gift [*le don*] (the word fee [*redevance*] would be more correct) of a certain quantity of merchandise.”²⁴ In return, the gift of welcome (the rings, in this case) would be given by the chief. Raffenel noted this *coutume* was common among both the blacks and the Moors.

²² Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 276-277.

²³ “. . . au temps des premières relations commerciales qui s'établirent entre les Européens et les indigènes de cette partie de l'Afrique occidentale. . .” Anne Raffenel, *Voyage dans l'Afrique occidentale : comprenant l'exploration du Sénégal depuis Saint-Louis jusqu'à la Falémé au delà de Bakel, de la Falémé depuis son embouchure jusqu'à Sansandig... exécuté en 1843 et 1844 par une commission...* (Paris: A. Bertrand, 1846), 155.

²⁴ “Plus tard, ces circonstances n'étant plus les mêmes, c'est-à-dire, les ressources d'alimentation étant devenues moins précaires, l'usage ancien se transforma sans s'éteindre, et ce ne furent plus alors des repas en nature qui devinrent d'obligation, mais le don (le mot redevance serait plus juste) d'une certaine quantité de marchandises.” Raffenel, *Voyage*, 156.

Coutumes seemed necessary to the carrying out of trade and politics in the colony to Golberry, writing before the French reoccupation of Senegal. Golberry saw *coutumes* as necessary to the workings of political negotiation as well as commerce. The residents of Senegambia, particularly the Moors, were savages in Golberry's view, but *coutumes* were a valid form of negotiation. For example, Golberry identified a tribe of Moors who habitually pillaged shipwrecks, taking captured people as slaves and claiming salvaged goods. Golberry judged this practice to be barbarous: "Strange and cruel blindness of barbarity, which believes that the pillage and enslavement of unhappy victims of shipwrecks is a natural right!"²⁵ The British had given payments to the king of these "thieves" in the form of annual presents and two guinées for each captured shipwrecked slave the Moors turned over to the colonial government, and Golberry believed the French should follow suit with a gift of 20 guinées a year:

It should not appear humiliating to treat the leader of the chiefs with a kind of distinction; the administration of Senegal should even maintain consistent relations with this savage horde, and conclude a treaty with the chief, which would have for its object the safety of all those who the misfortunes of the ocean let fall into their hands, such a treaty would be in accordance with the duties of humanity.²⁶

Negotiation would get the French farther than force when it came to shipwrecks, Golberry implied.

Golberry's willingness to negotiate with the Moors and set up yearly *coutumes* did not mean he saw them as equals in the civilities of trade. He described the gum markets as a realm of

²⁵ "Etrange et cruel aveuglement de la barbarie, qui croit de droit naturel le pillage et l'esclavage des tristes victimes des naufrages!" Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 208.

²⁶ "Il ne doit pas paraître humiliant de traiter ce chef de voleurs avec une sorte de distinction; l'administration du Sénégal devra même entretenir avec cette horde sauvage, des relations suivies, et conclure avec son chef un traité, qui aura pour objet le salut de tous ceux que les malheurs de la mer feraient tomber dans ses mains; un semblable traité serait conforme aux devoirs de l'humanité." Golberry, *Fragmens d'un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 208-209.

chaos:

The employees, along with the merchants, are ceaselessly pressed against and surrounded by a multitude of rough and treacherous Moors; one must be unmoved by their abuse, their insults, their threats; one must suffer menacing raised knives, revolting gestures, outrageous words; one must tolerate the perpetual importunities of kings and princes, the insatiable greed of their wives, and the tiresome persecution of all these savages.²⁷

Coutumes and negotiation could temper the excesses of the Moors, Golberry seems to suggest.

The savagery of the Moors was something to be tolerated, not to be fought with military means.

Coutumes were part of the system of negotiation that could keep barbarousness in check.

Nearly half a century later, the meaning of *coutumes* had not changed very much.

Raffenel wrote in a footnote:

The word *coutumes* seems so extraordinary to those who are not familiar with things in Senegal, that it is necessary at each moment to explain its meaning. One usually understands, by this expression, annual fees paid by us to Arab and black chiefs who are required to facilitate or protect our commerce. I underline the word “required,” because most of the time, this protection and aid are fictions. *Coutume* also signifies a rent payment (*une rente*), the leasing (*loyer*) of a ceded terrain. One also designates with this word the kind of civil list that we pay to certain chiefs to buy their neutrality, that is to say to stop them from harming us. It is very rare that one attains the goal that one wishes in paying these tributes.”²⁸

²⁷ “Les préposés, ainsi que les marchands, sont sans cesse pressés et environnés d’une multitude de ces Maures grossiers et perfides; il faut être impassible au milieu de leurs injures, de leurs insultes, de leurs menaces; il faut souffrir des poignards levés et menaçans, des gestes révoltans [sic], des paroles outrageantes; il faut supporter les perpétuelles importunités des rois et des princes, l’insatiable avidité de leurs femmes, et les persécutions fatigantes de tous ces sauvages.” Golberry, *Fragmens d’un voyage en Afrique*, vol. 1, 238-239.

²⁸ “Le mot coutumes paraît si extraordinaire à ceux qui ne sont pas familiers avec les choses du Sénégal, qu’il faudrait à chaque instant en expliquer le sens. On entend généralement, par cette expression, des redevances annuelles payées par nous aux chefs arabes et aux chefs nègres qui sont censés faciliter ou protéger notre commerce. Je souligne le mot censé, parce que, la plupart du temps, cette protection et ces facilités sont des fictions. Coutume signifie aussi une rente, le loyer d’un terrain cédé. On désigne encore par ce mot l’espèce de liste civile que nous payons à certains chefs pour acheter leur neutralité, c’est-à-dire pour les empêcher de nous nuire. Il est bien rare qu’on atteigne le but qu’on se propose en acquittant ces tributs.” Raffenel, *Nouveau voyage dans les pays des nègres : suivi d’études sur la colonie du Sénégal et de documents historiques, géographiques et scientifiques* (Paris: Impr. de N. Chaix et cie, 1856), f.n. 1, 24.

Raffenel's judgment on the effectiveness of these payments contrasts with Golberry's; this shift will be discussed below. In any case, this definition reveals that the nature of trade in the colony between the late 1700s and the middle of the nineteenth century was not greatly altered.

Trade grew in the years after the French repossession of the colony in 1817. Between that date and 1837, the value of trade in the colony grew from 2 million to 12 million francs. The four or five French *négociants* active in the colony in 1818 grew to 30 by 1837, the number of *habitants* active in the gum trade increased from 40 to 150, and the number of river boats involved in trade doubled.²⁹ Yet this growth was followed by changes that led to increasing French commercial power and new approaches toward trade. The rest of this chapter traces the development of changes in the conception of commerce through a number of commentators' analyses of the role of *coutumes*, negotiation, and force in Senegalese trade.

Exploratory Missions: The Search for the Past and Future of French Commerce in Senegal

In the 1820s, the administration supported several missions outside of the small colony to explore opportunities for commerce, including verifying opportunities for trade and mining and finding ways to tap into the trade routes of the region. The missions established a number of narratives about French commerce in the region. First, they reinforced the idea that the language of commerce was a *lingua franca* in West Africa. West Africans were commercial people whose friendliness could be best gained by forming commercial ties. They also fleshed out the notion that the French were missed as commercial partners. Thus a focus on finding the ruins of former French forts was a part of these voyages. If the French rebuilt these forts in the interior, or found

²⁹ Webb, *Desert Frontier*, 116.

new and more useful sites for new establishments, they could once again recapture portions of the interior trade. However, certain political barriers stood in the way of making commercial allies and reinstating French influence. Certain groups, through greed and fanaticism, were limiting the commercial growth of various regions surrounding the colony. Thus, third, the voyages identified groups who, through political and commercial tyranny, were oppressing other groups who wanted to be free economic actors. This narrative rested on threads of revolutionary language; the French should choose to support oppressed people, the argument went. The divisions of the residents of the colony and especially the surrounding areas into good commercial actors (producers, those willing to trade with the French) and bad commercial actors (greedy actors, kings who required gifts and broke economic agreements, pillagers) set up the possibility for an alliance system. Conquest was not the immediate answer, but creating commercial ties and intervening if necessary to overthrow the tyrants who moved to put restrictions on commerce would spread French influence outside of the colony and ensure economic success.

In 1823 and 1824, a young naval officer, Henri-Ernest Grout de Beaufort, carried out one of these commercial voyages, though his original proposal emphasized the themes of scientific and geographic discovery above all. Grout de Beaufort wrote to the minister asking for support for a voyage to the Niger River. Citing previous explorers and geographers, Grout de Beaufort proposed that if the river ended in a lake in the interior of Africa, as some commentators thought would be the case, his party would break into four groups that would head toward separate

destinations: the Cape of Good Hope, the Gulf of Guinea, l'île de Bourbon and Egypt.³⁰ The Minister's office took the plan seriously enough to send it along for commentary by Leschenault la Tour, the naturalist of the king, who recommended it be sent to Jomard, a member of the Institut.³¹ Jomard suggested that Beaufort should scale his voyage down, but also expressed the belief that it could bring important new geographic knowledge to France.³²

Yet the scientific goals of the voyage existed alongside immediate commercial goals for the colony, a purpose Grout de Beaufort outlined from the start. It was clear from other travel accounts, he wrote, that trade was being drawn away from the French by the British establishment on the Gambia. One outcome of this British trade, Grout de Beaufort complained, was that a large number of arms were being introduced into the Senegal River region, and especially into Fuuta Tooro. His exploratory mission could capture that trade, he argued. Grout de Beaufort's idea was to send ahead marabouts from Saint-Louis to set up posts in seven or eight locations of the government's choosing. These *résidences* would pave the way for the voyager, offering him stopping points and a place to drop off journals. The *résidences* would also serve to extend commercial relations. The explorer planned to bring the same merchandise as Mungo Park had on his voyages, but with the addition of more French-manufactured objects, including strong liquors and luxury arms for the chiefs. These French goods were meant to assist in drawing trade away from the British.³³

³⁰ Beaufort to Director of Colonies, 6 August 1824 [?], ANS 1 G 7. The date of 6 August 1824 is written on the letter, but it seems to date from earlier, as the 1823 letters from Leschenault de la Tour and Jomard seem to respond to information contained in this letter.

³¹ Leschenault de la Tour to Director of Colonies, 27 March 1823, ANS 1 G 7.

³² M. Jomard, Notes sur un plan de voyage en Afrique, 26 April 1823, ANS 1 G 7.

³³ Beaufort to Director of Colonies, 6 August 1824 [?], ANS 1 G 7.

Commerce thus was a real goal of the voyage, but commercial trappings had a second advantage of serving as a cloak for scientific exploration. Grout de Beaufort noted that in the travel accounts he had read, it was clear that West Africans distrusted scientists: “I recognized that these powerful motives on our part to travel for the growth of science to complete the outline of philosophic education, appeared to them only as frivolous pretexts destined to cover selfish aims: investigation (Mungo Park's first voyage), espionnage. On the contrary, a diplomatic or commercial character is sacred there (de Chastelleux, Rubault.)”³⁴ By citing Mungo Park and the other travelers, Grout de Beaufort established his credibility as an informed traveler and emphasized their findings regarding the centrality of commerce to West African life.

It was necessary, then, to look like a merchant; from his readings he had learned “that when one has crossed beyond the circle of the colony's influence the best recommendations are those of commerce.”³⁵ Jomard agreed that Grout de Beaufort should be careful: “Avoiding making observations with instruments in public is one of the first rules of prudence that we should counsel to our voyagers.”³⁶ Jomard did not specify why – was his fear that the instruments

³⁴ “J’ai reconnu que ces motifs puissants, chez nous de voyager pour l’accroissement des sciences par ce que c’est achever l’ébauche de l’éducation philosophique ne leurs ont paru que des pretexts frivoles destinés à couvrir des vus individieuses, l’investigation (Mungo-Park 1er voyage), l’espionnage. Qu’au contraire un caractere diplomatique au meme commercial y est sacré (de chasellux, Rubault).” Beaufort to Director of Colonies, 6 August 1824 [?], ANS 1 G 7.

³⁵ “J’ai reconnu que ces motifs puissants, chez nous de voyager pour l’accroissement des sciences parce que c’est achever l’ébauche de l’éducation philosophique ne leurs ont paru que des pretexts frivoles destinés à couvrir des vus individieuses, l’investigation (Mungo-Park 1er voyage), l’espionnage. Qu’au contraire un caractère diplomatique ou même commercial y est sacré (de Chastellux, Rubault).” ... “Que quand il aura franchi le cercle ou s’exerce l’influence du gouvernement de la Colonie les meilleures recommandations sont celles du commerce.” Beaufort to Director of Colonies, 6 August 1824 [?], ANS 1 G 7. Sauvigny, on the other hand, had felt it best to travel as a “médecin-naturaliste.” He wrote that this would allow him to avoid exciting jealousy among local people, and allow him to travel only with a guide and a domestique. Sauvigny to Commandant et administrateur du Sénégal, 22 May 1822, ANS 1 G 4.

³⁶ “Eviter de faire en public des observations a l’aide des Instrumens, est une des premieres règles de prudence que l’on doit conseiller a nos voyageurs.” M. Jomard, Notes sur un plan de voyage en Afrique, 26 April 1823, ANS 1 G 7.

would provoke fear or distrust among Africans, or that they would lay explorers open to theft? In any case, scientific observations, it seemed, should be done on the sly. The governor, Roger, agreed that masquerading as a merchant would be best. The voyager should travel “with a marabout and a black domestic. . . He would have three or four donkeys, for carrying himself and for his baggage and some merchandise. He would neglect nothing to give himself the appearance of a merchant.”³⁷

In the end the government approved a scaled down version of the voyage, a measure Jomard had recommended, and directed Grout de Beaufort's exploration according to the projects administrators had in mind. The Minister of the Navy placed limits on Grout de Beaufort's activities, stating:

You and your traveling companions should follow exactly the indications [of the Governor of Senegal], particularly in matters of commercial and neighborly relations to form or to maintain with peoples neighboring Senegal. It is important in this respect that you do not permit yourself to substitute your personal ideas for those of Mr. Roger. . . Do not forget that the principal goal of your voyage, which is of high importance, should be the agricultural and commercial prosperity of the colony of Senegal, and that purely scientific discoveries or observations should only be a secondary object.³⁸

³⁷ “avec un marabout et un domestique noir ... Il aurait trois ou quatre ânes; tant pour le porter lui-même que pour son bagage et pour quelques marchandises... Il ne négligerait rien pour se donner les apparences d'un marchand...” Quoted in Georges Hardy, “Un épisode de l’exploration du Soudan. L’affaire Duranton (1828-1838),” *Annuaire et mémoires du Comité d’études historiques et scientifiques de l’A.O.F.* (1917), 415.

³⁸ “Vous et vos compagnons de voyage devrez suivre exactement les indications de cet administrateur, particulièrement en ce qui à trait aux relations de commerce et de bon voisinage à former ou à entretenir avec les peuples voisins du Sénégal. Il importe a cet égard que vous ne vous permettiez jamais de substituer vos idées personnelles aux vues de Mr. Roger. . . N’oubliez pas que le but principal de votre voyage, but d’une haute importance doit être la prospérité agricole et commerciale de la Colonie du Sénégal, et que les Découvertes ou observations purement Scientifiques ne doivent être qu’un objet Secondaire.” Copy of letter, Minister of the Navy and colonies to M. Grant de Beaufort, 4 September 1823, ANS 1 G 7.

For Grout de Beaufort then, despite his initial grand plans of far flung exploration and geographical knowledge gathering, it was the commercial elements of his plan that the minister and governor ultimately accepted.

Roger's instructions to Beaufort, written after the explorer arrived in Senegal in December 1823, again reinforced the limited and commercial nature of the voyage.³⁹ Roger proposed the voyage be divided into three parts. First, Beaufort would travel from Saint-Louis to Barakonnda, on the Gambia River. Then he would travel to Sainsanding near the Falémé. The third branch of the voyage was to go through Bambuk, famed for its gold fields, which Roger told Beaufort was the "principal object of your mission." Beaufort was to meet back up with the Senegal River above the cataract of Gowina, and travel along the river to Bakel. A longer voyage to Segou or Timbuktu could be proposed later.⁴⁰ By limiting the voyage, Roger was being practical and also underlining the fact that commercial gains, like those that could be found in Bambuk, were of a higher priority than the long-distance and more uncertain travel to farther unknown lands.

The theme of appearance and motives again overlapped in complicated ways in Roger's instructions to Grout de Beaufort. For various audiences, the travelers had to disguise themselves in different ways. For the first part of the voyage, Beaufort would have to travel with his small group to try to convince those he met that he was a merchant. Commerce was a pure motive that local groups understood and respected. However, at Barakonnda, Roger instructed Beaufort to

³⁹ Claude Faure, "Le voyage d'exploration de Grout de Beaufort au Sénégal en 1824 et 1825," *Bulletin de la section de géographie, Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* 34 (1919): 162.

⁴⁰ Roger's instructions to Beaufort, 7 January 1824, ANS 3 B 11, quoted in Faure, "Le voyage d'exploration de Grout de Beaufort," 164.

change the appearance of his voyage to appear scientific, “so as not to excite the malice of the English traders. However, while making astronomical observations and carrying out research in natural history, you should make note of the importance of trade the English carry out at this point and its surroundings.”⁴¹ Roger instructed Beaufort to find out what kind of customs or presents they gave to surrounding chiefs, the type and quantity of goods and where they came from, the location of where the goods came from, (Jolof, Bundu, and Bambuk were possibilities), the location of English agents, whether they were government or commercial agents, and other questions about the region and its trade.⁴² When the voyage returned to Falémé, Roger ordered, they were again to take on the appearance of merchants. Roger counseled Grout de Beaufort to set up a resident at Sainsanding or another post, leaving some merchandise there, to try to draw commerce to the new post.⁴³ Beaufort’s mission was not one of discovery clothed in the language of scientific disinterest; this was a mission of trade and politics.

Seeking France’s mercantile history in Senegal was a focus of Beaufort’s voyage, suggesting a desire on the part of the administration to remake the commercial past. Roger instructed the voyagers to find the site of Saint-Pierre, a former French settlement in the seventeenth century. Roger asked Beaufort to describe the fort's remains and ascertain if the natives wanted a new fort there. He also noted that there had been stories of Portuguese forts in

⁴¹ “afin de ne pas exciter la malveillance des traitants anglais. Cependant, tandis que vous ferez des observations astronomiques et des recherches d'histoire naturelle, vous devrez vous rendre compte de l'importance du commerce que les Anglais font sur ce point et dans le environs.” Roger's instructions to Beaufort, 7 January 1824, ANS 3 B 11, quoted in Faure, “Le voyage d'exploration de Grout de Beaufort,” 166.

⁴² Roger's instructions to Beaufort, 7 January 1824, ANS 3 B 11, quoted in Faure, “Le voyage d'exploration de Grout de Beaufort,” 166.

⁴³ Roger's instructions to Beaufort, 7 January 1824, ANS 3 B 11, quoted in Faure, “Le voyage d'exploration de Grout de Beaufort,” 167.

the region too; he invited Beaufort to try to find them, if they existed.⁴⁴ Beaufort was able to carry out these requests, though he found a situation that had changed since the seventeenth century he was to look back to. When Beaufort set off from Bakel for a new mission in summer of 1824, he found Saint-Pierre on the right bank of the river 200 meters from the Faleme, across from Kaynoura (Kainoura). The fort was reduced to ruins, however; its walls were no longer standing and its location could only be identified by the bits of broken vases, shaped stones, and lime made from shells. The population had also changed around the fort. Beaufort wrote, “Since its abandonment the population has been replaced; the former inhabitants were chased to the south and with them, the memories that link them to it.”⁴⁵ Nonetheless, Beaufort claimed that people in Bundu wanted the French to set up an establishment there, and counseled that a post be set up on the Falémé. Roger wrote to Beaufort at Bakel, where he had returned, to urge caution and more exploration before building a post, but Beaufort had already left and installed a resident at Sainsanding, a move approved later in the year with the understanding that the Société de Galam, the monopoly company who controlled trade in the upper river, would appoint the resident and deal with the expenses.⁴⁶

Commerce was, then, the grounds on which French voyagers could make friendly relations and earn the trust of people neighboring the colony of Senegal. But the commercial spirit of the people of West Africa could also turn to greed when not regulated. The lure of riches

⁴⁴ Roger's instructions to Beaufort, 7 January 1824, ANS 3 B 11, quoted in Faure, “Le voyage d'exploration de Grout de Beaufort,” 169.

⁴⁵ “Depuis son abandon la population s'est renouvelée; les anciens habitants ont été chassés vers le Sud et avec eux les souvenirs qui s'y rattachaient. Aussi est-ce inutilement que j'ai consulté les traditions.” Quoted in Faure, “Le voyage d'exploration de Grout de Beaufort,” 187.

⁴⁶ Faure, “Le voyage d'exploration de Grout de Beaufort,” 188-189.

was a danger to Senegambians, Governor Roger argued in his instructions to Grout de Beaufort, and thus Europeans had to be careful not to awaken their greed: "I have always been convinced that the less one has in way of an entourage and the appearance of richness, the more of a chance of success one gives himself."⁴⁷ When Beaufort and his traveling partner, the ensign Montesquieu, left Saint-Louis in February 1824, they were accompanied by two marabouts, two "ouvriers d'art," and three other Africans.⁴⁸ Even this, it appears was too much. The mission dealt with desertion, as several of the accompanying group left secretly, taking amber, coral, and weapons with them, and met kings asking for too high of a price to guarantee passage.⁴⁹ When the mission returned to Bakel in mid-1824, Roger wrote to the travelers again, stressing the need for a small group on future voyages. He wrote to the minister complaining that Grout de Beaufort did not agree with his tenet, "the more merchandise one brings, the more one has to give away."⁵⁰ Grout de Beaufort set out again from Bakel, but he did not make the trip to Timbuktu that he had imagined, as he fell ill and died in 1825 at Bakel. This would not be the last time commercial goals inspired an exploratory mission to the interior.

At the same time that Grout de Beaufort was setting out, another French exploration set out with similar commercial goals in mind. Ferdinand Duranton, born in Saint-Domingue, went to Senegal and was charged with Dagana under Governor Schmaltz. Duranton fell out of favor after Schmaltz was recalled, however, and ended up in the employ of the Société de Bakel. It was

⁴⁷ "J'ai toujours été convaincu que moins on aura de suite et d'apparence de richesse, plus on se donnera de chances de succès." Roger's instructions to Beaufort, 7 January 1824, ANS 3 B 11, quoted in Faure, "Le voyage d'exploration de Grout de Beaufort," 171.

⁴⁸ Roger's instructions to Beaufort, 7 January 1824, ANS 3 B 11, quoted in Faure, "Le voyage d'exploration de Grout de Beaufort," 172.

⁴⁹ Faure, "Le voyage d'exploration de Grout de Beaufort," 180-182.

⁵⁰ "plus on y portera de marchandises, plus il en faudra donner..." Roger to Minister of the Navy, quoted in Faure, "Le voyage d'exploration de Grout de Beaufort," 185.

in this capacity that he traveled to Bambuk, before Grout de Beaufort. Roger it seems favored Duranton, but had pressure from the metropole to send Grout de Beaufort on the official voyage.⁵¹ Meanwhile, Duranton left Bakel on January 3, 1824, with two *laptots*, a marabout who had knowledge of Khasso, and a guide that Awa Demba, the king of Khasso, had sent for them.⁵² With his voyage to Khasso, Bundu, and Bambuk, Duranton not only made observations about the upper Senegal, but also proposals for his employers and the governor about policy in the upper river.

Like Grout de Beaufort, Duranton was looking for the former fort of Saint-Pierre, and while he did not find the ruins, he also traced connections with France's commercial past. The fort was near the village of Kaïnoura, Duranton thought: "The ignorance I was in of it during my passage stopped me from verifying this fact and from carefully researching the ruins that must have been left by this very beneficial establishment, created in the good days of the former company of Senegal, which we have greatly neglected to rebuild until today."⁵³ Duranton too found people who had memories of the French. At Keignou, describing the welcome he received, he wrote,

once they knew that a white man, come to find a place suitable for an establishment in their country, had arrived, children, women, men, old people, all ran up giving the liveliest signs of joy. The old folks recalled the French with pleasure and eagerly demanded news of people from Senegal that they had known the best, it was in the end a veritable celebration.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Claude Faure, "Le premier séjour de Duranton au Sénégal (1819-1826)," *Revue de l'histoire des colonies françaises*, 9, no. 2 (1921), 193, 202.

⁵² Rapport de Mr Duranton, A messieurs les membres de la Société de Galam, Baquel, 2 April 1824, ANS 1 G 8.

⁵³ "l'ignorance ou j'en étois lors de mon passage m'empêcha de vérifier ce fait et de rechercher soigneusement les ruines qu'a du laisser cet établissement si avantageux, crée dans les beaux jours de l'ancienne compagnie du Sénégal et qu'on a mis jusqu'aujourd'hui tant de négligence à relever." Rapport de Mr Duranton, A messieurs les membres de la Société de Galam, Baquel, 2 April 1824, ANS 1 G 8.

⁵⁴ "... lorsqu'ils surent que le blanc venu pour visiter un lieu propre à un établissement dans leur pays étoit arriver, enfants, femmes, hommes, vieillards, tous accoururent en donnant les signes de la joie la plus vives les vieillards de

Europeans used to have two establishments at Keignou, Duranton reported, one on an island, which was entirely washed away, and another in the village. Duranton, as part of his mission, visited the island of Keignou, which he judged unsuitable for a post, but he inquired into other possible locations to set up a commercial establishment.

Duranton identified the main problem in relations between the colony and kingdoms of the interior as greed. The Senegambians the French dealt with had not always been this way, he argued. Of the inhabitants of Keignou, he wrote of their warm welcome, “It was this cordiality, this frankness, that charmed and captivated our predecessors; they were not, surely, like today, greedy, insolent, and seeing Europeans only as tributaries.”⁵⁵ Duranton blamed assumptions that Europeans were tributaries on contact with other Europeans. The English explorer Gray, for example, had given away anything freely, a fact which could “justify in a way the greed of these people, who do not know or at least pretend to not know the difference there might be between one white man and another.”⁵⁶ The overwhelming demands French voyagers faced from local kings came out of this tradition, Duranton argued. Duranton thus disapproved of displays of wealth and generosity on the part of the French. However, he noted, French agents also needed to be sure not to show their poverty: “It is even sound policy, I believe, if we lack the means to act suitably, to stay closed up in our trading posts rather than to go show far and wide our

rappelloient avec plaisir les Francais, demandoient avec empressement des nouvelles de ceux du Senegal qu'ils avoient le mieux connu, c'etoit enfin une fete veritable.” Rapport de Mr Duranton, A messieurs les membres de la Société de Galam, Baquel, 2 April 1824, ANS 1 G 8.

⁵⁵ “C'etoit cette cordialite, cette franchise qui avoient seduit, captive nos predecesseurs, ils n'etoient pas, sans doute, comme aujourd'hui, avides, insolentes et ne regardants plus l'Europeen que comme un vif tributaire.” Rapport de Mr Duranton, A messieurs les membres de la Société de Galam, Baquel, 2 April 1824, ANS 1 G 8.

⁵⁶ “Les noms de MM. Gray et du Docteur [?], qui jettoient tout avec profusion et que l'on vous [cite?] a tout propos, justifient en quelque sorte l'avidite de ces gens la, ils ne connaissent point ou du moins font semblant de ne pas connoître la difference qu'il peut y avoir d'un blanc a un autre.” Rapport de Mr Duranton, A messieurs les membres de la Société de Galam, Baquel, 2 April 1824, ANS 1 G 8.

poverty and the difference there is between us and our adversaries we must fight against.”⁵⁷ Here then was a conflicting response to the question of how much wealth to show. If the French displayed too much wealth, it would spark greed. Trade would not go on in the way the French imagined, as an exchange of goods, but it would instead be marred by demands for presents and extra payments. On the other hand, if neighboring kingdoms felt the French were too poor, they would take their goods to the English. Striking the right balance, and determining which payments were reasonable and which were excessive, would be an important element of French commercial policy.

Duranton argued that greed had crystallized in the institution of *coutumes*, a practice that left the French without real possession of the colony. He summed up his thoughts in a report to Governor Roger:

Everywhere in Europe, people count Senegambia as one of the possessions that France commands as a sovereign [*souverainement*]; they are unaware that once a boat from the colony has passed the pointe du Nord, it is no longer safe from the persecution [*vexations*] of the natives. In France, one imagines that the enormous tribute payments that are paid to the kings of these countries are sure guarantees of the safety of commerce and of the inhabitants; they do not know that these same *coutumes* are often, on the contrary, used only to pay the armies that ravage the territory of our establishments, but this is, however, the sad truth.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ “Il est meme de la saine politique, je crois, si les moyens d’agir convenablement nous manquent, de nous tenir renfermes dans nos comptoirs plutot que d’aller montrer au loin notre penurie et la difference qu’il y a de nous aux adversaires contres lesquels nous voulons lutter.” Duranton, 2 April 1824, ANS 1 G 8.

⁵⁸ “L’on compte partout en Europe la Sénégambie au nombre des possessions où la France commande souverainement; l’on ignore qu’une fois qu’un bâtiment de la colonie a dépassé la pointe du Nord, il n’est plus en sûreté contre les vexations des indigènes. L’on s’imagine en France que les coutumes énormes qui sont payées aux rois de ces pays sont des garanties certaines de la sûreté du commerce et de celle des habitants; l’on ne sait pas que ces mêmes coutumes ne sont souvent, au contraire, employées qu’à solder des armées qui ravagent le territoire de nos établissements, mais telle est cependant la triste vérité.” Duranton to Roger, “Examen de la situation présente du Gouvernement français au Sénégal. . .,” quoted in Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 239.

Instead of being binding treaties, Duranton argued, *coutumes* had only served to exacerbate Africans' greed:

It would even seem that the princes we pay the most onerous *coutumes* to are in the habit of viewing us as their vassals, because it is from them that we receive the worst treatment. . . The habit of receiving from us has made them consider us like tributaries, whose goods and whose life the sovereigns [*suzerains*] are free to dispose of.⁵⁹

The places where Europeans did not pay large customs, like Bawol, Saluum, Jolof, Bambuk,

Khasso, and Kaarta, were places where, Duranton judged, Europeans were treated well.

Meanwhile, in Galam, Bundu, and Fuuta, Europeans did not receive this same treatment.⁶⁰

Duranton's commentary suggests the image of the "noble savage," implying that before European contact West Africans had lived as uncorrupted, primitive beings free from the evils of civilization. Yet in their primitive state, Duranton suggested, West Africans were also easily corruptible, as they could not withstand the pull of greed once they had had contact with Europeans who offered them wealth.

Coutumes, for Duranton, were a corrupting force, but he also viewed them as the main leverage the French had in Senegambia. By presenting *coutumes* as agreed-upon terms of treaty agreements, rather than tribute payments, he emphasized their contractual rather than their hereditary nature. In his report to Roger, Duranton set out to more explicitly divide the different parts of Senegambia into good and bad trading partners, stating, "I will try to make known the means that we would have to quell those who bring harm to our commerce and to put us in

⁵⁹ "Il semblerait même que les princes auxquels nous payons les coutumes les plus onéreuses soient dans l'usage de nous regarder comme leurs vassaux, car ce sont d'eux que nous recevons les plus mauvais traitements. . . L'habitude de recevoir de nous nous aurait donc fait considérer comme des tributaires, des biens et de la vie desquels les suzerains sont libres de disposer." Duranton to Roger, "Examen de la situation présente du Gouvernement français au Sénégal. . .," quoted in Faure, "Le premier séjour de Duranton," 241.

⁶⁰ "Duranton to Roger, "Examen de la situation présente du Gouvernement français au Sénégal. . .," quoted in Faure, "Le premier séjour de Duranton," 241.

relation with those who to this point have only had minor relations with us or at least relations of little importance.”⁶¹ The careful use of *coutumes* to make allies and put pressure on enemies was at the center of Duranton’s strategy. Force would therefore not be necessary. Duranton wrote:

Without speaking of our military means, without even using them, the greed of the natives is a sure guarantee for us of a prompt and inexpensive success; there is not a king on the river who does not have powerful and feared competitors, and it is often only the influence he obtains from *coutumes* and arms that he gets from the European to which he owes his victories and the good harmony he keeps with his rivals. However, strong from our weakness, most of these princes overtly violate the treaties, whereas in taking away our *coutumes* to give them to their competitors or by pronouncing ourselves for the latter, we will overthrow them from a fragile throne whose most powerful supports are the gifts that we furnish.⁶²

Upholding treaties and reforming the *coutume* system would be enough to establish French commercial interests more firmly, as long as the administration was willing to withdraw payments from incooperative leaders and give them to cooperative ones. By acting firmly, “It would be easy to command as masters even there where we serve as slaves.”⁶³

In some cases, *coutumes* would help draw a certain group to the French. The Bambaras of Kaarta, for one, loved war and lived off pillage, Duranton judged, calling them “the largest

⁶¹ “. . . j'essayerai de faire connaître les moyens que nous aurions de réduire celles qui portent préjudice à notre commerce et de nous mettre en rapport avec celles qui n'ont jusqu'à présent entretenu avec nous que peu de relations ou du moins des relations peu importantes.” Duranton to Roger, “Examen de la situation présente du Gouvernement français au Sénégal. . .,” quoted in Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 243.

⁶² “. . . il serait facile de commander en maîtres là même où nous servons en esclaves. Sans parler de nos moyens militaires, sans même en faire usage, l'avidité des naturels nous est un sûr garant d'une réussite prompte et peu dispendieuse; il n'est pas de roi sur les bords du fleuve qui n'ait des compétiteurs puissants et redoutés et ce n'est souvent qu'à l'influence que lui donnent les coutumes et les munitions qu'il tire des Européens qu'il doit ou ses victoires ou la bonne harmonie qu'il entretient avec ses rivaux. Cependant, forts de notre faiblesse, la plupart de ces princes violent overttement les traités, tandis qu'en leur retirant nos coutumes pour les donner à leurs compétiteurs ou en nous pronançant pour ces derniers, nous les renversions d'un trône fragile dont les plus puissants soutiens sont les dons que nous fournissons.” Duranton to Roger, “Examen de la situation présente du Gouvernement français au Sénégal. . .,” quoted in Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 240.

⁶³ “. . . il serait facile de commander en maîtres là même où nous servons en esclaves.” Duranton to Roger, “Examen de la situation présente du Gouvernement français au Sénégal. . .,” quoted in Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 240.

obstacle to peace.” In their case, Duranton thought, a tribute payment would inspire them to send caravans to the French.⁶⁴ The Bambaras were in conflict with Awa Demba of Khasso, a dispute that was lending instability to Bambuk, a land of resources that could be exploited by the French.⁶⁵ To keep caravans going to French posts, and avoiding the Gambia to avoid wars around French establishments, the French needed peace, Duranton argued. He recommended the French pay Awa Demba a “*faible*” custom in exchange for yearly oaths that he would not go to war, that he would bring caravans to French establishments, and that he would protect French establishing themselves there, as well as voyagers.⁶⁶ Duranton was closely allied with Awa Demba and would marry the daughter of Awa Demba, Sadioba, so we might surmise that his favoring of Awa Demba was not entirely disinterested.⁶⁷ In any case, however, he saw *coutumes* as having their place, as long as they were distributed to leaders who would uphold treaties and uphold commercial promises.

However, Duranton argued, the French administration should take away payments to others who were not following the rules of commerce. The group in question, not coincidentally, was also the enemy of Duranton’s ally Awa Demba. Duranton deemed the Bacqueris (Bakiris), or the royal family of the Serracolets, to be the biggest obstacle to French commerce in the

⁶⁴ Duranton to Roger, “Examen de la situation présente du Gouvernement français au Sénégal. . .,” quoted in Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 243-244.

⁶⁵ Duranton to Roger, “Examen de la situation présente du Gouvernement français au Sénégal. . .,” quoted in Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 244.

⁶⁶ Duranton to Roger, “Examen de la situation présente du Gouvernement français au Sénégal. . .,” quoted in Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 244-245.

⁶⁷ Yves Saint-Martin, *Le Sénégal sous le second empire*, 268.

east.⁶⁸ Duranton echoed the language used throughout his account, that *coutumes* had augmented the greed of Senegambians:

Spoiled by our weakness and made demanding by the concessions that we endlessly gave them, these cunning brokers see us now as their vassals and view the *coutumes* that we pay them as a tribute due from their birth and as something we cannot free ourself from. They have forgotten that they were only initially given to them in exchange for promises that they no longer hold to and for commercial advantages that they themselves destroy each day; in effect, instead of favoring our trade, they restrain and hinder us. . .⁶⁹

French merchants had signed a treaty with Samba Yacine, the Bakiri leader of Kamera, that would allow for free passage in exchange for a large customs payment and the construction of a fort. However, Duranton summarized, Samba Yacine had broken the treaties by impeding the voyages of French travelers including Montesquieu and Beaufort, stopping caravans from going to French establishments, and paying the Bambaras to disrupt French establishments in the region.⁷⁰ Duranton suggested the only thing to do was to bring the Bakiri chiefs upon a steam boat anchored at Makana, the capital. There, they would announce that the government had had enough, that it was

finally tired of the humiliation [*vexations*] they afflict upon trade through deception in the matter of treaties, discontent that the customs that we pay them to protect trade and make it flourish are being on the contrary used by them to fund the armies that destroy its prosperity; indignant at their conduct and at the attacks they have directed on several occasions against the agents of the Government.

⁶⁸ Duranton to Roger, "Examen de la situation présente du Gouvernement français au Sénégal. . .," quoted in Faure, "Le premier séjour de Duranton," 245.

⁶⁹ "Gâtés par notre faiblesse et devenus exigeants par les concessions que nous leur faisons sans cesse, ces rusés courtiers nous envisagent maintenant comme leurs vassaux et regardent les coutumes que nous leur payons comme un tribut dû à leur naissance et dont nous ne pourrions nous affranchir; ils ont oublié qu'elles ne leur ont été primitivement données qu'en échange de promesses qu'ils ne tiennent plus et d'avantages commerciaux qu'eux-mêmes détruisent chaque jour: en effet, au lieu de favoriser notre commerce, ils le restreignent et l'entravent...": Duranton to Roger, "Examen de la situation présente du Gouvernement français au Sénégal. . .," quoted in Faure, "Le premier séjour de Duranton," 245.

⁷⁰ Faure, "Le premier séjour de Duranton," 245-248.

In consequence, the French government should announce that it had “made the resolution to take revenge for these outrages and to end war that is ruining commerce and of which they [the Bakiris] are the only causes.”⁷¹ The Gouvernement should demand the turning over of Samba Yacine, the suppression of customs, and the tearing down of fortifications larger than basic enclosures. In turn, the government would protect the Bakiris; the threat of force would also be held out against villages who refused to agree. The Bakiris, deprived of customs, would lose the support of the Bambaras.⁷²

Duranton also suggested the use of a gift and negotiation rather than outright force in Fuuta Tooro, which was, Duranton wrote, “of all of Senegambia, the most irreconcilable enemy of the colony of Senegal.” The Tukulors (Toucouleurs) who lived there had a character marked by “treachery and avidity.” Their government changed frequently, so that treaties with one government did not mean much of anything.⁷³ This political situation would not lend itself well to Duranton’s vision of treaties between stable economic partners. In addition, Duranton remarked, they were fanatic Muslims. However, the Jallonkes (Dollianqués), or former rulers of Fuuta before they were overthrown by the Tukulors, were in exile in the east, and as Duranton wrote, “they are waiting with impatience for a second revolution to come give them the rights

⁷¹ “. . . que le Gouvernement, las enfin des vexations qu'ils font éprouver au commerce en se jouant des traités; mécontent de ce que les coutumes qu'on leur payait pour protéger et faire fleurir le commerce ne fussent au contraire employées par eux qu'à soudoyer des armées qui détruisent sa prospérité; indigné de leur conduite et des attentats auxquels ils se sont portés à diverses reprises contre des agents du Gouvernement, avait pris la résolution de se venger de ces outrages et de faire cesser une guerre qui ruine le commerce et dont ils sont seuls les moteurs. . .” Quoted in Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 248-249.

⁷² Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 249.

⁷³ “Le pays de Fouta est, de toute la Sénégambie, l'ennemi le plus irréconciliable de la colonie du Sénégal.” “la perfidie et l'avidité” Quoted in Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 251-2.

that the first took away from them.”⁷⁴ The key would be getting the support of this exiled group, who would, Duranton argued, rally their allies in exchange for 100 guinées: “It is in aiding the remains of an ancient and powerful family to recover the throne of their ancestors that we can humiliate the pride of the Toucouleurs, strike a terrible blow to Islam and dictate to the monarch who owes us his crown treaties advantageous to European commerce.”⁷⁵ Duranton suggested that force could be an option in this area: “If the government judges it fit to show it, it could, when the waters rise, have all the villages on the banks of the river destroyed. . .”⁷⁶ But, Duranton suggested, by giving support and a gift to the Jallonkes, the leader of Bakel could act “without appearing to meddle in anything.”⁷⁷

Duranton’s life after his 1824 voyage was marked by occasionally poor relations with the colonial administration as he attempted to carry out on the spot some of the notions he had expressed to the trading company of Bakel and the French administration in 1824. However, his legacy would make him a hero to future proponents of commercial development. His 1824 voyage finished, he proposed another voyage, perhaps as far as Timbuktu, in 1826. He eventually was chosen to serve as head of a new mission to Bambuk in 1828.⁷⁸ Yet Duranton fell out of favor with the administration when he was accused of providing cannons to enemies of France, and therefore aiding Britain, in the upper Senegal River region. Duranton was arrested in 1837

⁷⁴ “ils attendent avec impatience qu’une seconde révolution vienne leur rendre les droits que la première leur avait enlevés.” Quoted in Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 252.

⁷⁵ “C’est en aidant ces restes d’une ancienne et puissante famille à recouvrer le trône de leurs aïeux que nous pourrions abaisser l’orgueil des Toucouleurs, porter un coup terrible au mahométisme et dicter au monarque qui nous devrait sa couronne des traités avantageux au commerce européen.” Quoted in Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 252.

⁷⁶ “Si le Gouvernement jugeait à propos de se montrer, il pourrait, à la hausse des eaux, faire détruire tous les villages qui sont sur le bord du fleuve. . .” Quoted in Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 253.

⁷⁷ “. . . sans paraître s’en mêler en rien . . .” Quoted in Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 253.

⁷⁸ Faure, “Le premier séjour de Duranton,” 262.

and brought to Saint-Louis, but his name was cleared and he was able to return to Bakel, where he died in 1839.⁷⁹

Two later writers who will be discussed below, Carrère and Holle, remembered Duranton as a man ahead of his time, a promoter of free trade and imperial expansion. They blamed the accusations on Duranton on an engineer who had personal reasons to accuse him.⁸⁰ They stated:

This intelligent and educated man has, without any doubt, been poorly appreciated. His plans were large; he wanted the French, who were preponderant and strongly established in upper Senegambia, place itself on the route of the caravans that traverse the country from the west to the east, he wanted to open up a route towards the gold mines of Bambuk, so abundant and so little known. But, impardonable crime in that epoch, he spoke of free trade [*liberté de commerce*]!!! He had, from that moment, to fight against a privileged company, long in possession of a monopoly that it did not want to give up at any price. . . In this fight he succumbed. . . He had to perish in effect, because he came before his time. . . His son, who is very intelligent, instructed by the best sources, is perhaps destined to operate a revolution in the upper Senegambia.⁸¹

The son to which they referred was the son of Duranton and the daughter of Awa Demba, a young man who, Carrère and Holle reported, was at the Saint Cyr military academy in France.⁸²

Duranton was not only the father of a vision for Senegal's commercial development, but might be the literal father of a new leadership for Senegal.⁸³

⁷⁹ Hardy, "Un épisode de l'exploration du Soudan," 413-436.

⁸⁰ Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1855), 154.

⁸¹ "Cet homme intelligent et énergique a, sans nul doute, été mal apprécié. Ses vues étaient larges; il voulait que les Français, prépondérants et fortement établis dans la haute Sénégambie, allassent se placer sur le parcours des caravanes qui traversent le pays de l'ouest à l'est; il voulait nous frayer une route vers les mines d'or du Bamouk, si abondantes et si peu connues. Mais, crime irrémissible à cette époque, il parlait de liberté de commerce!!! Il eut, dès lors, à lutter contre une compagnie privilégiée, en possession depuis longtemps d'un monopole dont elle ne voulait se dessaisir à aucun prix... Dans cette lutte il succomba... Il devait périr en effet, car il était venu avant le temps... Son fils, très-intelligent, instruit aux meilleures sources, est peut-être destiné à opérer une révolution dans la haute Sénégambie." Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 155.

⁸² Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 153.

⁸³ Duranton's son would not live to become the new leader Carrère and Holle imagined. After being denied the title of Prince of Khasso by the emperor, Almanzor Duranton committed suicide in Nice (Saint-Martin, *Le Sénégal sous le second empire*, 268). A later author, Jules Houdoy, in an 1881 publication, judged, "This young man conducted himself well, but his mind was poorly balanced as a result of the bizarre conditions of his existence." ["Ce jeune

George Hardy, colonial official and historian of Senegal, also judged the accusations as questionable, arguing that his real attack had been not against the French state, but “against the indigenous people who were the most rebellious against our influence and the most dangerous for peace and the economic development of the interior of Africa.” Hardy too judged that Duranton’s crime had been to commit “lese-privilege,” treason against the privilege of the monopoly company, by acting against its interests, but this made him a colonial hero with a vision rather than a traitor to France.⁸⁴ While it is true that Duranton’s vision set him apart from some administrators and agents of the period in its ambition and attitude toward monopoly, painting him as a colonial hero (or villain, for that matter) might cause us to overlook his proposals in regards to *coutumes* and his role in creating a logic of commercial exchange in the colony. By insisting that *coutumes* were contracts, by suggesting that they could be leveraged to obtain political and commercial goals, Duranton opened up a discussion about the terms of trade and suggested a framework for appropriate French and Senegambian commercial roles.

New Posts, *Palabres*, and the Quest to Revolutionize the Gum Trade in the Name of French Interests

The late 1830s and 1840s marked a turning point in colonial commerce in Senegal. Three related points illustrate this change. First, there was a crisis in the gum trade in the late 1830s.

homme avait une bonne conduite, mais sa tête était mal équilibrée par suite des conditions bizarres [sic] de son existence.”] The younger Duranton, Houdoy suggested, could not reconcile his princely heritage and the treatment he received, unfairly, as a result of his skin color. His suicide came after failing several times in marriage attempts. The elder Duranton also had a daughter named Mary. She died in the siege of Médine, the day before Governor Faidherbe’s arrival ended the siege. Jules Houdoy, *Le Soudan Français: Chemin de fer de Médine au Niger* (Lille: Imprimerie L. Danel, 1881), 7-8.

⁸⁴ “contre les peuples indigènes les plus rebelles à notre influence et les plus dangereux pour la paix et le développement économique de l’Afrique intérieure.” Hardy, “Un épisode de l’exploration du Soudan,” 429-430.

The gum trade and the value of the colony saw growth from 1817 through most of the 1830s.⁸⁵ But by the late 1830s, overcompetition among traders from the colony and the tight control the Moors kept on gum production had led to a decline in the amount of gum that a guinée could fetch on the market. In 1838 in particular, this growing crisis in prices, war in the Upper Senegal, and French-Trarza hostilities that led to the Moors taking their gum to the British, produced an economic crisis.⁸⁶

Second, the commercial balance of power in the Saint-Louis and Senegal River regions shifted from *habitant* traders (*traitants*) to French merchants. Between the French repossession of 1817 and the 1850s, *traitants* became more and more indebted to the large French firms and particularly merchants from Bordeaux.⁸⁷ *Traitants* relied on French companies to supply them with imported guinées, with the understanding that they would repay their sources at the end of the year's trade. However, *traitants* fell more and more into debt as they could not always repay their suppliers.⁸⁸ The importation of larger amounts of guinée in the 1830s served to bring about a drop in their price, which undercut Senegalese *traitants*. The *traitants* who worked for French firms were better protected, as they had a salary, but independent *traitants* saw their debts

⁸⁵ Webb, "The Trade in Gum Arabic," 155-156.

⁸⁶ Roberts, "Guinée Cloth," 609-610; Webb, "The Trade in Gum Arabic," 164.

⁸⁷ An important work on the *habitants* in this period and their loss of power is Marcson, *European-African Interaction in the Pre-Colonial Period*. See also Chapter 6 of James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: The Senegal River Valley, 1700-1860*, African studies series 77 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Margaret O. McLane sees the *habitant*-French merchant relationship as secondary in the development of French policy. She has studied competition between traders from Bordeaux and Marseilles, with the merchants of Bordeaux winning out by the 1850s. This inter-regional rivalry, she argues, was a major factor in propelling French imperial policy forward. McLane, "Commercial Rivalries and French Policy": 39-67.

⁸⁸ Webb, *Desert Frontier*, 124-126.

grow.⁸⁹ Blame went to overcompetition and a new, unequal relationship between the *traitants*.⁹⁰ Yet the metropolitan administration was loathe to intervene too much in the free trade system. In response to the governor's request that the *traitants* be protected, the Minister of the Navy wrote in 1839 that to intervene in the way trade had been carried out for the past 18 years, on the basis of competition, would amount to arbitrary rule and overstep the role of the government: "Instead of thus extending the sphere of intervention into private affairs, the authorities should apply themselves more and more to restrain itself and to gradually accustom all the classes of the population to comply to the needs of the common law as well as to find advantages."⁹¹ The administration attempted to fix the problem through limited regulation. In 1842, the colonial administration formed an organization that was the sole authorized buyer of gum and standardized the type of guinéés allowed in the trade.⁹² The *négociants* had augmented their power enough to now control the trade, however, and the reforms were shortlived.

Third, the colonial administration turned to a policy of *points d'appui*, or coastal stopping points, which led to new opportunities for French trading companies, even if expansion was limited. In 1838, a mission to explore the coast of Africa, the first since the Revolution, was organized in order to look for more trade opportunities farther down the West African coast. The ship the *Malouine* took Édouard Bouët, who would later become governor of the colony, and his

⁸⁹ Webb, *Desert Frontier*, 126-127.

⁹⁰ The argument about competition can be found in Roger Pasquier, "Les traitants des comptoirs du Sénégal au milieu du XIXe siècle," in *Enterprise et entrepreneurs en Afrique, XIXe et XXe siècles* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1983), I, 141-163.

⁹¹ "Au lieu d'y étendre ainsi la sphère de son intervention dans les affaires privées, l'autorité doit s'appliquer de plus en plus à la restreindre et accoutumer graduellement toutes les classes de la population à se plier aux nécessités du droit commun aussi bien qu'à en rechercher les avantages." Minister of the Navy to governor, 8 November 1839, in Christian Schefer, *Instructions*, t. 2, 89-90.

⁹² Roberts, "Guinée Cloth," 610-611.

crew to set up trading centers. Treaties were arranged with various kings, and while commerce was slow to take off in the new posts of Garroway, Grand Bassam, Assinie, and Gabon, (the seeds of the colonies of Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey, and Gabon) there was some clear desire for commercial expansion. One of the minds behind the voyage had been the Régis firm, an important French trading interest, and the Chamber of Commerce of Bordeaux sent instructions to the mission and picked the captain.⁹³ Édouard Bouët-Willaumez (the name change reflects his taking of a relative's name) promoted the new posts for their commercial value, stating in 1842, "It is necessary to create trading posts and to create them with urgency as long as the place is free. Politics primes commerce."⁹⁴ This expansion of the French presence in West Africa, meager as it was, suggested possibilities for expansion beyond the gum trade.

Closer to Saint-Louis as well, the changing situation in the gum markets led the French administration to begin to seek new areas of exploitation outside the *escales* and thus outside Moorish control. In 1839, a *Commission d'exploration* was organized to Lake Paniefoul (now known as the lac de Guiers) and the kingdom of Yolof (Jolof). In this case, the exploratory mission was framed as responding to a specific problem, that of finding new markets to obtain gum in exchange for French products. The governor presented the problem as one of competition; too many traders had entered into the gum trade. As a speaker in the meeting of the Conseil privé put it, "I believe it is very urgent to seek to open new outlets for our commerce,

⁹³ Bernard Schnapper, *La politique et le commerce française dans le golfe de Guinée de 1838 à 1871* (Paris, La Haye: Mouton & Co, 1961), 14-17. The mission did send reports to the Chambers of Commerce of the principal port cities, but there was not much excitement, showing the limits of new colonial endeavors as an attractive opportunity. See Schnapper, *La politique et le commerce française*, 21-26.

⁹⁴ "Il faut créer ces comptoirs et les créer de toute urgence tant que la place est libre. La politique prime le commerce." Quoted in Schnapper, *La politique et le commerce française*, 29.

because the commodities and the *traitants* are in such a state of exuberance that they can not for much longer be enclosed in this same radius of three markets that we call *escales*.”⁹⁵ The other problem with the three *escales* where French and Senegalese merchants and traders conducted the gum trade was that they were tightly controlled by the Moors living on the right bank of the river. Since the French were weak, proponents argued, the Moors could impose fees for permission to trade at the *escales*, which turned into required *coutumes*. One speaker said, “It is nevertheless evident to all that the country is progressing, but only the Moors are enriching themselves, at our expense.”⁹⁶

The make-up of the commission reflected its commercial goals. Its members included two named by the governor in council, a *négociant*, and a *traitant* chosen by the *comité de commerce*: Caille, Huard-Bessiniere, Pottin-Patterson, and Paul Holle. These four were charged with (1) exploring the forests of the lake Paniéfoul and the kingdom of Jolof and studying their gum production, (2) looking for other trade products, (3) designating the best location for an *escale*, (4) assuring the means and costs of transportation, (5) ascertaining the demands of various princes, meaning the *coutumes* that would be necessary to pay, and (6) calculating how much gum and other products could be traded.⁹⁷

The report the mission produced was full of observations on the area: the peoples living there, crops that could grow, physical features. The voyage ordered by the governor “with the

⁹⁵ “Je crois très urgent de chercher à ouvrir de nouveaux débouchés à notre commerce, car les marchandises et les traitants sont dans un tel état d'exubérance qu'ils ne peuvent être plus longtemps enclavés dans ce même rayon des trois marchés que nous appelons *escales*.” Conseil Privé, 20 September 1839, ANOM SEN III 5a.

⁹⁶ “Il est pourtant évident pour tous que le pays est en progrès, mais les Maures seuls s'enrichissent à nos dépens.” Conseil Privé, 20 September 1839, ANOM SEN III 5a.

⁹⁷ Conseil Privé, 20 September 1839, ANOM SEN III 5a.

goal of establishing commercial relations with the natives,” as the report described it, judged that the Lake Paniéfoul was surrounded by people who produced a variety of important trade goods. The village of Merinaghen (“Mérinaguenne”) was identified as a suitable place for a fort to protect the thriving commerce predicted in the report. The fort and commerce it protected would bring the population back to areas that had been abandoned because of conflict with the Moors. This would draw power away from both the Moors and the British in the Gambia, the report concluded, and provide an important outlet for French merchandise.⁹⁸

The findings of the commission and the resulting construction of the post of Merinaghen did not, however, lead to the outcome the French suspected. In a letter of June 2, 1843, Governor Bouët alerted the Minister of the Navy that no trade was going on there, and that he had decided to send Huard, Potin, and Anne Raffenel, along with an escort, to go try to convince the people of Yolof to come trade there.⁹⁹ The French had learned that it was not enough to simply set up a market; they would need to come up with other ways of protecting and facilitating trade.

The voyage that Bouët designated to save Merinaghen was actually a much larger voyage of exploration, one of two voyages carried out by Anne Raffenel, an officer in the colony. Raffenel published two books on his voyages, the first documenting a trip to Bambuk in 1843 and 1844, and the second an account of another trip in 1846 in which he made his way to Segou, but was captured and forced to return to the colony. Raffenel promoted a more forceful French commercial policy. Looking outside the bounds of the Moors and the river gum trade, Raffenel attempted to come to agreements with other leaders and draw caravans to French establishments.

⁹⁸ “à l’effet d’établir des relations commerciales avec les indigènes,” Voyage d’Exploration au lac Paniefoul et dans le Yoloff, 16 Octobre 1839, ANOM SEN III 5a.

⁹⁹ Bouet to Minister of the Navy, 2 June 1843, ANS 2 B 22.

Again, it is worth making the point that French traders were working within Senegambian terms of trade in this period. However, drawing on previous arguments by Duranton, Raffenet questioned the system of gifts, *coutumes*, and negotiations to a greater degree. Seeing that this form of commerce had not seemed to help the French position over the years, Raffenet judged these trade policies as being based on inappropriate motivations such as childish greed, and thus not worthy of French acceptance.

Raffenel's first voyage, ordered by Governor Bouët in August 1843, was meant "to study the means of multiplying our political and commercial relations, to carefully examine the mines of Bambouk and the methods the natives use to exploit them, and finally to determine the astronomic position of various places and to establish the map of the Falémé."¹⁰⁰ The mission consisted of Huard-Bessinières, a naval pharmacist, Jamin, a ship's ensign, Raffenet, officer of the commisariat, Peyre-Ferry, a surgeon, and a *habitant* named Pottin-Patterson. Raffenet and the other travelers set off with a yole (boat), along with five *laptots* who were "engagés" of the government (indentured servants), and two black domestic servants. They also brought with them three young Senegalese, Edmond le Juge, Ferdinand Girardot, and Honoré Lamotte, who had been sent to France for education and who were, at the time that Raffenet wrote an account of the voyage, at Châlons-sur-Saône at the Ecole des arts et métiers. The idea was that these Senegalese could later carry out similar missions.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ "Cette exploration avait pour but d'étudier les moyens de multiplier nos relations politiques et commerciales, d'examiner avec soin les mines du Bambouk et les procédés d'exploitation des indigènes, enfin de déterminer la position astronomique de divers lieux et d'établir la carte de la Falémé." Raffenet, *Voyage*, 2.

¹⁰¹ Raffenet, *Voyage*, 2, and f.n. 2.

Early on in his account, Raffenet establishes his ideas about force and negotiation. As Raffenet wrote about passing villages along the river, he recounted a recent example of villagers placing beams in the river to block the path of the *traitants*, which led some to run aground.

Raffenel wrote:

certainly, the punishment inflicted on the governor on one of the villages where these acts of robbery were committed was well merited, and we must acknowledge, a charge of spahis has an effect more sure than the interminable negotiations that tradition has unfortunately established for handling business. The *nègres* strangely abuse these means, and our indulgence for them, sometimes pushed to excess, often makes them doubt the efficiency of our means of repression.¹⁰²

Raffenel set up a contrast between force and negotiation, strength and weakness, to reveal the problems with talks and alliances. Tradition here was not the golden age of Euro-African trade Duranton wrote about, but rather the long buildup of political and commercial practices that had put France in a place of weakness.

Some alliances could be trusted, however, and presents to close friends were not out of bounds. In Kounguel, the party met with Samba Coumba Diama, an ally whose sons had been educated by the French, evidenced by the fact that among their gris-gris they wore the silver medals they had received at Saint-Louis.¹⁰³ When they left the “good inhabitants of Kounguel,” they were sure to offer presents: “We offered presents to the tounka [chief or king] and the

¹⁰² “certes, le châtement infligé par le gouverneur à l'un des villages où ces actes de brigandage se sont commis était bien mérité, et, il faut en convenir, une charge de spahis est d'un effet plus sûr que les interminables pourparlers que l'usage a fâcheusement consacrés pour traiter les affaires. Les nègres abusent étrangement de ces moyens, et notre indulgence pour eux, poussée quelquefois à l'excès, leur fait souvent douter de l'efficacité de nos moyens de répression.” Raffenet, *Voyage*, 54.

¹⁰³ Raffenet, *Voyage*, 97-98.

principal inhabitants to pay them back for their warm welcome and to keep them in the same friendly disposition. . .”¹⁰⁴

The possibility of an alliance with the almamy of Bundu also looked like it could grow into a trusting relationship. The minister of the almamy of Bundu had insisted that the almamy was supportive of the French travelers’ mission to set up commercial relations.¹⁰⁵ Raffenel felt there was a concerted effort to draw the French to Bundu. Writing about the city of Sénou-Débou, Raffenel wrote, “Evidently the almamy had an ulterior motive in having this model city built: he wanted to show the whites that the beaux-arts were not at all unknown to his people, and he succeeded, because one finds there Roman and pointed arches and even figurines whose execution, while grotesque, is none the less original for it.”¹⁰⁶ Raffenel’s analysis probably overestimates Bundu’s preoccupation with affairs of whites and of the colony, but it reveals the author’s attitude that an alliance was possible.

Yet even with this supposed openness, Raffenel still found himself recounting a long runaround in his encounter with the almamy of Bundu that reflected improper commercial negotiations. Once in Senoudebou, an envoy of the almamy came to them to tell them they would be allowed to visit the almamy the next day in Boulébané, the capital, to present the gifts they had brought. However, a fever struck the mission, as well as the almamy. While they were treated with hospitality by the son of the almamy, Boubakar, they needed to put off their voyage

¹⁰⁴ “Nous offrons des présents au tounka et aux principaux habitants pour les récompenser de leur bon accueil et les entretenir dans les mêmes dispositions amicales...” Raffenel, *Voyage*, 99.

¹⁰⁵ Raffenel, *Voyage*, 85-6, 124.

¹⁰⁶ “Evidemment l’almamy a eu une arrière-pensée en faisant construire cette cité modèle: il a voulu montrer aux blancs que les beaux-arts n’étaient point inconnus à son peuple, et il a réussi; car on y trouve le plein cintre et l’ogive et même des figurines d’une exécution qui, pour être grotesque, n’en est pas moins originale.” Raffenel, *Voyage*, 124-5.

several days because they were sick. Despite the delays, Raffenet took the opportunity to survey Senoudebou, suggesting it would be a good position for a comptoir and a post close to the capital.¹⁰⁷

When they finally got to Boulebane, they were greeted by a crowd that the minister ultimately had to disperse. The minister of the almamy, named Sapatto, announced that the almamy was sick and would have to put off the visit again.¹⁰⁸ The next day, however, the almamy sent a message through his minister that he would see them. The members of the mission prepared themselves to go, an important task, since as Raffenet wrote, “It is indispensable that this presentation have a solemn character, because it is necessary above all to strike the eyes of the *nègres* and impose on them through ceremonies and spectacles. We put ourselves therefore in uniform and got the *laptots* dressed as elegantly as possible.”¹⁰⁹

The almamy, surrounded by his chief marabout (or *tamsir*), other marabouts, and captives, received the travelers, who were seated on mats. Raffenet’s account of the negotiations makes for a lengthy quotation, but reveals both the importance of Senegambian customs in determining proper trade agreements as well as the colony’s commission’s attitudes about the silliness of the practice. Raffenet wrote,

After several minutes of meditation, M. Huard, used to interviews like this, opened the seance with a monotone delivery of courtesies full of oriental figures that the *nègres* use, at the imitation of the Moors, in official relations. In Senegal, they designate the word *palabre* (from the Spanish *palabra*, word), with much appropriateness, by the way, these kinds of official assemblies. The preludes

¹⁰⁷ Raffenet, *Voyage*, 127-132.

¹⁰⁸ Raffenet, *Voyage*, 138.

¹⁰⁹ “A midi, la réponse que le ministre nous transmet est affirmative, et nous nous préparons : il est indispensable que cette présentation ait un caractère de solennité, car il faut, avant tout, frapper les yeux des *nègres* et leur imposer par des cérémonies et des spectacles. Nous nous mettons donc en uniforme et nous faisons costumer nos *laptots* avec le plus de recherche possible.” Raffenet, *Voyage*, 139.

having finished, M. Huard then succinctly exposed the goal of our visit, then, after the custom followed in these sorts of communications, he closed his discourse with the phrase, "I said." A silence, one more complete and more solemn than that which had preceded the words of M. Huard, set in and lasted five minutes. The minister, who had consulted with the almamy in advance, broke it finally, and after having returned our formulas, pompously ornamented with local color that our orator had only imperfectly imitated, he responded, in the name of his master, with vague and muddled words out of which we distinguished nevertheless very clearly that he wanted nothing better than to trade with the whites, but that, before entering into a closer relationship, he would be reassured to see us witness our good intentions by offering several presents."¹¹⁰

This was the custom in the country, but, Raffenet recorded, the travelers had decided to change the order of events and "by this voluntary infraction of ordinary habits, to hold in suspense the greed of the almamy and bring him perhaps by the lure of a larger remuneration to more advantageous concessions."¹¹¹

The French commission had three goals that they hoped to obtain in the negotiations with the almamy and lay out in a treaty. First, they aimed to convince the almamy to allow the French to establish a trading post there. Second, they wanted the almamy to agree to direct caravans of his subjects, coming from Bambuk, Segou, and elsewhere, to French trading posts. Finally, they

¹¹⁰ "Après plusieurs minutes de recueillement, M. Huard, habitué à de semblables entrevues, ouvre la séance par le débit monotone des formules de politesse chargées de figures orientales que les nègres emploient, à l'imitation des Maures, dans leurs relations officielles. On désigne au Sénégal, et avec beaucoup d'à-propos du reste, par le mot *palabre* (de l'espagnol *palabra*, parole), ces sortes d'assemblées officielles. Les préludes terminés, M. Huard expose alors succinctement le but de notre visite, puis, selon l'usage suivi dans ces sortes de communications, il clôt son discours par le mot *j'ai dit*. Un silence, mais plus complet et plus solennel encore que celui qui avait précédé les paroles de M. Huard, se fit alors et dura cinq minutes. Le ministre, qui s'était, à l'avance, concerté avec l'almamy, le rompit enfin, et, après nous avoir retourné nos formules, pompeusement ornées d'une couleur locale que notre orateur n'avait qu'imparfaitement imitée, il nous répond, au nom de son maître, par des paroles vagues et embarrassées au milieu desquelles nous distinguons pourtant très-clairement qu'il ne demande pas mieux que de traiter avec les blancs; mais que, avant de s'engager dans des relations plus intimes, il serait bien aise de nous voir témoigner de nos bonnes intentions par l'offre de quelques présents." Raffenet, *Voyage*, 140-141.

¹¹¹ ". . . par cette infraction volontaire aux habitudes ordinaires, tenir en suspens la convoitise de l'almamy et l'amener peut-être, par l'appât d'une plus large rémunération, à des concessions plus avantageuses." Raffenet, *Voyage*, 141.

wanted the king to direct caravans led by Sarakole or Mandinka merchants passing through his kingdom to French posts, and away from British ones. Raffenet wrote:

One understands immediately the importance of these conditions, the acceptance and above all the observance of which would be so useful for the development of our commerce. All three, but particularly the last two, will tend, moreover, to concentrate the objects of African industry on our establishment and avoid the competition of merchants in Gambia.¹¹²

The last, Raffenet admitted, would be the most difficult to obtain, as it required the almamy to force foreigners to go somewhere.

The travelers left Saada-Amady, the almamy, on the understanding that they would continue negotiations with the minister, Sapatto.¹¹³ When they met with Sapatto, the representatives of the colony again outlined their demands, with Sapatto listening carefully and nodding. His response, however, was far from desirable. After a few minutes of silence, “he began with phrases so convoluted that they would have done honor to the wildest of lawyers’ chicanery.”¹¹⁴ Sapatto responded, “Before continuing we want presents, presents! No presents, no deal, not even a response to your questions.”¹¹⁵

As Raffenet put it, they had been “foiled in our strategy by a savage.”¹¹⁶ They finally assented to having the presents brought, merchandise that arrived the afternoon of September 25. The gifts were mostly items from Saint-Louis, including guns (one and two shot, silex, which the

¹¹² “On comprend tout d'abord l'importance de ces conditions, dont l'acceptation et surtout l'observance seraient si utiles au développement de notre commerce. Toutes les trois, mais particulièrement les deux dernières, tendraient, en outre, à concentrer sur nos établissements les objets de l'industrie africaine et à éviter la concurrence des commerçants de la Gambie.” Raffenet, *Voyage*, 144.

¹¹³ Raffenet, *Voyage*, 141-142.

¹¹⁴ “il prélude par des phrases si merveilleusement entortillées, qu'elles eussent fait honneur au plus madré des avocats blanchis dans la chicane.” Raffenet, *Voyage*, 145-146.

¹¹⁵ “Avant de poursuivre, nous voulons les présents; les présents! pas de présents, pas d'arrangements, plus même de réponse à vos questions.” Raffenet, *Voyage*, 146.

¹¹⁶ “déjoués dans notre stratégie par un sauvage.” Raffenet, *Voyage*, 146.

blacks preferred), sabers, pistols, mousseline, glass beads, powder, and paper “for the savants of the country.” However, the commission continued their diplomatic game, deciding to say not all the gifts had arrived and to wait another day to offer the gifts “to produce more of an effect.”¹¹⁷ The commission imagined this would allow them to present the gifts with great ceremony, still trying to awe their interlocuteurs. But the next day, the almamy once again sent the message that he was sick, to the point that he would not be able to speak to the commission, ruining their plans of ceremony. The almamy’s illness had not however, as Raffenet put it, affected his memory, and he still asked for the presents. The commission feared the almamy was tricking them into handing over the presents without concluding negotiations, but they sent the presents anyway, partially because they were in a rush to go because the river level was dropping, which would make the upper river unnavigable. However, Raffenet wrote, “our presents had brought about a magical effect,” particularly a saddle that Bouet had chosen as a gift, and the party was called before the almamy.¹¹⁸ When they arrived, they found that the almamy seemed weak and coughing, a sign that he was not faking his illness, so the party agreed to return later when he had recovered.¹¹⁹ A fort at Senoudebou was finished in 1845; the negotiation had been a success.

This account of the commission’s encounter with the almamy of Bundu reveals Raffenet’s impatience with gifts and with endless negotiations. The focus on gifts seemed to reveal a greed that would not allow rational talk to progress unless that greed was assuaged. The importance of gifts also revealed an immaturity in the leaders of the region. On their second voyage, Raffenet and his traveling companions brought more gifts to the almamy, including a

¹¹⁷ Raffenet, *Voyage*, 146-7.

¹¹⁸ “Mais nos cadeaux avaient produit un effet magique. . .” Raffenet, *Voyage*, 153-155.

¹¹⁹ Raffenet, *Voyage*, 154-155.

gun, a saber with a decorative scabbard, silk in red, yellow, and green, four pieces of blue guinée cloth, a piece of indienne cloth, a music box that played the waltz of the queen of Prussia, and some trinkets.¹²⁰ Again, the almamy was eager to receive his gifts; Raffenet wrote, “My men hastened to satisfy his impatience, and when he had well contemplated the objects that composed my gift; he witnessed a joy so great at it, that forgetting his dignity, he set to jumping and clapping his hands.”¹²¹ This response, in Raffenet’s telling, becomes a childlike reaction to gifts that are not valuable for rational reasons, but for novelty and their effect on personal feelings of greed. It is this supposed “irrationality” that lies at the heart of Raffenet’s definition of unacceptable greed. Whereas the French might desire to draw caravans to their posts and away from the British, this kind of greed had the ultimate goals of economic growth. The inhabitants of Senegambia had, Raffenet suggested, perverted this laudable desire into an insatiable hunger for gifts. They did not have the ability, Raffenet implicitly suggested, to understand how to acquire wealth properly, and had thus turned trade into a caricature of its proper self.

Just as Raffenet portrayed the almamy as childlike when it came to gifts, he also argued the economic system as a whole was less advanced. The idea of tribute and gifts permeated government and economy in Bundu, Raffenet argued, and he would have extended this picture to other parts of Senegambia. The almamy, he reported, received tithes from the harvests of his lands, collected payments from passing caravans, and accepted gifts from the French and English governors. Africa was like feudal Europe, Raffenet wrote.¹²² The role of gifts and tribute, then,

¹²⁰ Raffenet, *Nouveau voyage*, 38, 41.

¹²¹ “Mes hommes s’empresèrent de satisfaire son impatience; et quant il eut bien contemplé les objets qui composaient mon cadeau; il en témoigna une joie si vive, qu’oubliant sa dignité, il se mit à sauter en faisant claquer ses doigts.” Raffenet, *Nouveau voyage*, 38.

¹²² Raffenet, *Voyage*, 148-149.

was keeping African economies and governments in a less advanced stage. Yet the system of gifts and presents, however silly or backward it seemed, was not entirely ridiculous if put in relative perspective. Raffanel wrote, “After all, no matter how bizzare this manner of dealing appears, it has its good side; one can at least, once one accedes to it, go openly towards one’s goal. Certainly, this formality of presents is just as good as the exchange of diplomatic protocols and slowness of parliamentary forms in Europe.”¹²³ Apart from this aside, however, Raffanel did not see gifts as very useful, and indeed tried to subvert the formality, as discussed above.

Other parts of Senegambia also presented evidence of France’s commercial and political weakness in the face of traditional forms of exchange and diplomacy, Raffanel recounted. In Fuuta Tooro for example, the almamy of that region had captured trading ships passing by on the river, claiming that he had not been paid *coutumes* for their passage. He later freed the vessels, but he kept the guinéés that had been on board as a payment for passage.¹²⁴ In the case of the Moors as well, the French had been left unable to act, since their reliance on the single product of gum had left them unable to anger the Moors. To give one example, the French had set up “reciprocal conditions of trade” with the Dowich Moors in 1819, when they established the fort at Bakel on the upper river.¹²⁵ Annual tribute payments were part of this agreement. However, acts of banditry were common in this area, Raffanel argued. The French had followed a *laissez-faire* policy, letting the Moors do what they wanted on the assumption that the treaties were there

¹²³ “Il paraît que cette coutume traditionnelle est toute-puissante au Bondou. Après tout, quelque bizarre que paraisse cette manière de traiter, elle a cependant son bon côté; on peut au moins, dès qu'on y a fait droit, aller franchement vers son but. Certes, cette formalité des cadeaux vaut bien l'échange des protocoles diplomatiques et les lenteurs des formes parlementaires de l'Europe.” Raffanel, *Voyage*, 147.

¹²⁴ Raffanel, *Voyage*, 224-227.

¹²⁵ Raffanel, *Voyage*, 219.

to keep them from breaking the rules of commerce. Yet Raffenel dismissed the notion that the treaties would regulate enough to keep the French from having to intervene; “it has been recognized for a long time that this protection, which we so dearly bought, is completely illusory.”¹²⁶ In the case of the Moors, despite the harm they exacted on traders from the colony, “it is however necessary to carefully avoid hurting them, and our role usually needs to be a role of conciliation and tolerance that necessity often obliges us to take all the way to weakness.”¹²⁷

As Raffenel described it, the colonial government found itself having to choose the lesser of two evils: violence in uncertain contexts or the endless *palabres* of negotiation. Writing of the possibility of drawing caravans to the French, Raffenel judged that

to employ violence in these circumstances would be to expose oneself to quarrels and reprisals, and this without certainty of success. Resorting to persuasion would be first to misunderstand the invincible stubbornness of the *nègre* in the execution of his projects, stubbornness that resists all logic and any effort at eloquence, especially since this last can only have African orators as interpreters; to use persuasive routes would be, moreover, to count too much on the intelligence of the *nègres*, a type of myth almost always inaccessible behind the thick walls that hide it.¹²⁸

Here was the real problem with negotiation: Africans were not, in Raffenel’s mind, advanced enough to carry it out. The problem, perhaps, was not with the form itself, but since Senegambians were not able to bring reason and intelligence to commercial negotiations, they

¹²⁶ “ . . . il est reconnu depuis longtemps que cette protection, si chèrement achetée par nous, est complètement illusoire.” Raffenel, *Voyage*, 231.

¹²⁷ “ . . . il faut pourtant éviter avec soin de les blesser, et notre rôle doit être le plus ordinairement un rôle de conciliation et de tolérance que la nécessité nous oblige parfois à pousser jusqu’à la faiblesse. . . .” Raffenel, *Voyage*, 248.

¹²⁸ “User de violence, dans cette conjoncture, serait s'exposer à des querelles et à des repêssailles, et cela sans certitude de réussir. Recourir à la persuasion serait méconnaître d'abord l'opiniâtreté invincible du nègre dans l'exécution de ses projets, opiniâtreté qui résiste à toute logique et à toute effort d'éloquence, surtout quand cette dernière ne peut avoir pour interprètes que des orateurs africains; employer les voies persuasives serait, en outre, trop compter sur l'intelligence des nègres, espèce de mythe presque toujours inabordable sous les épaisses parois qui la cachent.” Raffenel, *Voyage*, 145.

had no place in the colony or its nearby kingdoms. The almamy of Bundu was intelligent and therefore an exception, but he himself noted the same observations about the possibilities of directing other groups' caravans that passed through his kingdom: it would not be possible.

In his second book, published in 1856 about a voyage undertaken in 1846, Raffenet's tone was perhaps even more militaristic; force seems to be the solution to colonial questions. On his second voyage, he left Bakel with the *tamsir* of the almamy, who he knew from the previous voyage, 9 men, 12 laptots, and M. André, a "mulatre" who had been named commander of Sénou-Débou, forming a group of 22 men who were "well armed and well resolved to repulse any attack."¹²⁹ Raffenet ranted against half measures, suggesting the French needed to think about the ultimate effect of their actions. He asked:

is it not evident, to any just person, that if our punishments were more severe and above all more prompt, we would have to resort to them less often? Is it not still more evident that our influence, almost nothing today in Senegal, would become all-powerful with this modification to our habits, and that our commercial interests would find themselves better placed there?¹³⁰

In another meeting with the almamy of Bundu, Raffenet took a more forceful tone that emphasized the notion of action beyond *palabres* and talk. The almamy had a number of complaints about French activity in the region, of which Raffenet wrote, "I understood perfectly

¹²⁹ "Nous formions, ainsi réunis, un effectif de vingt-deux hommes, bien armés et bien résolus à repousser toute attaque." Raffenet, *Nouveau voyage*, 32-33. The personnel changed after leaving Boulébane, so that the mission consisted of 15 people. One of those was Leopold Panet, a "mulatre" from Senegal who, Raffenet suggested, had offered his services to the voyage on the condition that he gain a title of employé. Raffenet noted that Panet claimed to have voyaged widely and said he spoke all the languages of Africa. Raffenet gave Panet "the pompous title of chef de caravane" along with 1500 fr. Panet brought his personal servant along (Raffenel, *Nouveau voyage*, 59-60). Panet would travel on to Mogador, Morocco in 1846, a task for which he received the Légion d'honneur, and would lead a voyage into the Mauritanian desert from Senegal to try to reach Algeria. His published account of his travels appeared in 1850.

¹³⁰ "Et n'est-il pas évident, pour tout esprit juste, que si nos châtimens étaient plus sévères et surtout plus prompts, nous y aurions recours moins souvent? N'est-il pas encore plus évident que notre influence, à peu près nulle aujourd'hui sur le Sénégal, deviendrait toute-puissante par cette modification à nos habitudes, et que nos intérêts commerciaux s'en trouveraient mieux?" Raffenet, *Nouveau voyage*, 30.

the motive for them, and knew that they applied to small irregularities committed in the acquittement of customs payments that were allocated to him for the rent [*location*] of the terrain where is erected the blockhouse of Sénou-Débou.”¹³¹ The French had in fact taken a number of policy decisions the almamy objected to, namely French severity towards certain regional figures and leniency toward others:

Tired of this conversation that took an awkward turn for me, I cut him off by saying that the governor who had just arrived preferred action to talk, and that he would deal with conflicts from now on with cannonfire. The people surrounding the almamy asked me if the governor was a great warrior. I hastened to respond yes, and I added that the great warriors of my country did not like palabres.¹³²

Raffenel also reiterated his distrust of *coutumes* and gifts in his second publication.

Raffenel laid out his thoughts about gifts and tribute payments on a policy level: “If I ever become a figure in the government of Senegal, I will demand, as the most moral of reforms, the absolute suppression of official *coutumes* and the prohibition of voluntary gifts. If we have to battle twenty years to inaugurate this regime, we will still win out; because it is clear as day that the habit the blacks have contracted, that of seeing the whites as obliging bank tellers, is the principal cause of our political problems and of the debasement of the black race.”¹³³

¹³¹ “J'en connaissais parfaitement le motif, et savais qu'elles s'appliquaient à de petites irrégularités commises dans l'acquittement des coutumes qui lui sont allouées pour la location du terrain où s'élève le blockhaus de Sénou-Débou.” Raffenel, *Nouveau voyage*, 37.

¹³² “Lassé de cette conversation qui prenait une tournure embarrassante pour moi, je la rompis en disant que le gouverneur qui venait d'arriver préférait les actes aux paroles, et qu'il traiterait désormais les conflits à coups de canon. Les gens qui entouraient l'almamy me demandèrent si le gouverneur était un grand guerrier. Je m'empressai de répondre oui, et j'ajoutai que les grands guerriers de mon pays n'aimaient pas les palabres.” Raffenel, *Nouveau voyage*, 38.

¹³³ “Si jamais je deviens un personnage dans le gouvernement du Sénégal, je demanderai, comme la plus morale des réformes, la suppression absolue des coutumes officielles et la prohibition des dons volontaires. Dût-on se battre pendant vingt ans pour inaugurer ce régime, on y gagnerait encore; car il est clair comme le jour que l'habitude contractée par les nègres de voir dans les blancs des caissiers obligés, est la principale cause de nos embarras politiques et de la dégradation de la race noire.” Raffenel, *Nouveau voyage*, 75.

Peanuts, Commercial Liberty, and Political Liberty: New Justifications of Force in Commerce

By the late 1840s and the early years of the 1850s, the changes that had begun in the commercial crisis of the 1830s turned into a commercial revolution in the colony. The waning power of the *traitants* as a result of the gum crisis continued as the Revolution of 1848 in France reinstated free trade principles in the colony, removing some of the protections of 1842 to the benefit of French merchant companies. The abolition of slavery in the colony in 1848 served as a blow to the *habitant* elite as well.

Another major shift in the colonial economy occurred when gum, the colony's most important product in the decades after the French return to Senegal in 1817, began to be overshadowed by peanuts in the 1840s and 1850s. As peanuts grew to be the colony's most important export, the centers of commercial power in the colony shifted. The Senegal river trade and the Moors' central role in trade waned in importance as the areas of Kajoor and the southern Petite Côte and Saluum regions became peanut producers. Colonial attention, and expansion, shifted to ensure control of the peanut trade. The peanut was introduced from the New World in the sixteenth century, but was not produced as an export crop until the late 1820s, in the Gambia, to meet British and American demand.¹³⁴ Peanuts were a source of oil that the new industrial world in Europe demanded for soaps, candles, and other products. French interest in peanut production in Senegal and elsewhere can be traced back to the late 1820s. A boom in French interest and regulation of the exports of other goods like flax and sesame seeds led to more

¹³⁴ George E. Brooks, "Peanuts and Colonialism: Consequences of the Commercialization of Peanuts in West Africa, 1830-70," *Journal of African History* 16, no. 1 (1975): 31-37.

peanut exports in the 1840s.¹³⁵ By the 1850s, merchants were gaining political power as they forged closer relationships with the administration.¹³⁶ There is no doubt that French administrators and merchants saw in peanuts the future of the colony.

The growing pessimism about the ability of *coutumes* and negotiations to allow the free flow of commerce, as examined thus far in this chapter, seemed justified by the 1850s, as the lack of progress in the gum trade and caravan trade had evidenced. For example, as for the post of Mérinaghen, founded after the 1839 commission's voyage, the situation had not improved by 1851, suggesting that it was not enough to simply set up trading establishments and alliances and rely on trading partners to show up. Governor Protet, responding to the Minister of the Navy's request for information about the post, wrote that it was of strategic importance, as its proximity to Waalo meant it would be able to "always hold in check the turbulent population of this region."¹³⁷ However, its position between Waalo, Kajoor, Jolof, and Fuuta Tooro did not turn it into the commercial center that was predicted, especially because the lands around it in three of the kingdoms were sparsely populated and susceptible to pillage by Moors. Protet noted that the 230,000 f. that had been spent on the post had not been made up because of the weak state of commerce, suggesting however that the construction of a blockhaus would protect it from pillages and allow enough trade to make up some of the costs. It appeared that additional force and militarization was the answer to the pillages.

¹³⁵ Brooks, "Peanuts and Colonialism," 41.

¹³⁶ Leland Conley Barrows, "The Merchants and General Faidherbe: Aspects of French Expansion in Sénégal in the 1850s," *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer* 61, no. 223 (1974): 236-283.

¹³⁷ "toujours tenir en échec la turbulente population de ce pays." Protet to Minister of the Navy, 2 July 1851, ANS 2 B 30. Protet later identified another problem with the fort, its sanitary conditions. While the post was equipped with stables, he decided not to send newly received horses there because the first trial had been so disastrous. Protet to Minister of the Navy, 28 May 1852, ANS 2 B 30.

These ideas of security and liberty were elaborated in a text by Frédéric Carrère and Paul Holle published in 1855, *De la Sénégambie française*. Frédéric Carrère was an appointee to the appeals court in Senegal where he served for over 25 years; the book's front page gives his title as "Président de la cour impériale, chef du service judiciaire." Carrère arrived in Senegal around 1840, where he married a métis woman and later an African woman. His co-author, Paul Holle was a *habitant* and officer: "Habitant, commandant du fort du Médine, ancien commandant des postes de Bakel et de Sennoudebou." The son of a métis merchant and an African mother, Holle died at Médine in the battle with El Hajj Umar in December 1862.¹³⁸

By the 1850s, Carrère and Holle were able to describe the French mission as one of liberation. Free trade and other liberties went together. However, battling the demands of local leaders and regulating the customs payment system were of utmost importance. This argument did not come out of nowhere. These authors drew closely on the arguments of earlier authors, particularly Duranton, to argue for a forceful French policy. What was new was the new crop of peanuts promising to bring wealth to the colony. They wrote, "Distinguished men have considered, up until today, our establishment on the west coast of Africa as a small *comptoir* whose future was practically nonexistent."¹³⁹ Yet the shift to peanuts and freeing of laboring peoples would allow the colony to finally flourish. France would have to encourage this process, but the peanut crop different greatly from the experiments with cotton and indigo in the 1820s; Senegalese people were already growing it. Thus, the role of the government was not to

¹³⁸ Biographical information from Hilary Jones, *The Métis of Senegal*, f.n. 24, 218.

¹³⁹ "La France ne sait pas assez, selon nous, quelle est l'importance de sa colonie. Des hommes distingués ont considéré, jusqu'à ce jour, notre établissement de la côte occidentale d'Afrique comme un petit comptoir dont l'avenir était à peu près nul." Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 2.

encourage peanut growing, though Carrère and Holle did think it wise to pay a subsidy to leaders in order to encourage peanuts.¹⁴⁰ For the most part, however, the trade would flourish if the French could only remove the obstacles in the way of the willing cultivation of the crop and its free trade:

The metropole should, like a devoted mother, in the first place, come to the aid of her African daughter, but the sacrifices will not be futile: in making a great and beautiful colony of this country, where agriculture, practiced by the hand of the peoples of the river, will demand only a little protection, she [the metropole] will free first of all her industry, commerce, and navy from the tributes that we currently pay abroad.¹⁴¹

French agents, rather than bowing to the whims of those who demanded tributes, could trade openly if those to blame for these demands were removed. The peanut would allow French administrators and merchants the key to breaking out of the harmful commercial situations of the past – monopoly, pillage, endless negotiations, and broken treaties and ineffective *coutumes* – to initiate a truly free, secure trade from which French merchants and those they traded with could benefit.

Commerce would not only make the colony flourish in terms of wealth, it would bring civilization: “Why would France be the highest Catholic power if, by any means, la predication, war, commerce, she did not direct the men God put her in contact with to a moral and material improvement?”¹⁴² At least in Saint-Louis, the black residents could turn to the *habitants*, who in

¹⁴⁰ Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 382.

¹⁴¹ “La métropole devra, comme une mère dévouée, venir, dans les premiers temps, en aide à sa fille africaine; mais ses sacrifices ne seront pas stériles: en faisant de ce pays une grande et belle colonie, où la culture, pratiquée par la main des peuplades riveraines, ne demandera qu'un peu de protection, elle affranchit tout d'abord son industrie, son commerce et sa marine des tributs que nous payons en ce moment à l'étranger.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 391.

¹⁴² “Pourquoi la France serait-elle la première puissance catholique si, par tous les moyens, la prédication, la guerre, le commerce, elle ne conduisait les hommes, avec lesquels Dieu l'a mise en contact, à une amélioration morale et matérielle?” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 3.

the eyes of Carrère and Holle were an intermediary race that would lead the blacks toward progress.¹⁴³ Carrère and Holle emphasized the need to teach French, exercise more laws, and protect against the nefarious influence of Islam and particularly the marabouts, needing to spread obligatory and laic schools where students would learn French, and wearing French clothes.¹⁴⁴

Yet commerce would also have its own civilizing effects:

Our merchants, spread thus from Gandiol to Galam, would everywhere provide the spectacle of French customs, and the *habitants*, so exclusive to this day, shaped little by little in our manners, taking on the taste for products of our industry, would lose the spirit of isolation that the *ceddos* foment, there as elsewhere, to the aid of an influence that, to remain dominant, maintains a savage fanaticism.¹⁴⁵

In short, French habits would serve as a shield against the isolating presence of the pillaging slave soldiers, or *ceddos*, thus saving the people from the next step after isolation: a turn to fanatical Islam. Commerce would be an important means of spreading French ways.

Carrère and Holle offered several arguments as to why to this point, French administrators and agents had not run the colony in a way that encouraged commercial progress. Carrère and Holle complained that there were too many governors passing through, not allowing them to obtain the necessary experience in the country, and that the reliance on naval officials had also harmed the colony since “the principles of civil administration and organization are completely foreign to their education and to their normal practices.”¹⁴⁶ In addition, the French

¹⁴³ Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 16.

¹⁴⁴ Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 354-363.

¹⁴⁵ “Nos traitants, répandus ainsi de Gandiol au Galam, donneraient partout le spectacle des mœurs françaises, et les habitants, si exclusifs jusqu'à ce jour, façonnés peu à peu à nos usages, prenant goût aux produits de notre industrie, perdraient cet esprit d'isolement que les *Thiernos* fomentent, là comme ailleurs, au profit d'une influence qui, pour rester dominante, entretient un fanatisme sauvage.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 135-136.

¹⁴⁶ “les principes d'administration et d'organisation civiles sont complètement étrangers à leurs études, à leurs pratiques habituelles.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 341; see also 99-100.

had not intervened to forestall the ambitions of the *traitants*, the authors argued. At the time of the French repossession, wealth was concentrated in a few *habitant* families:

Brokers between the people of the interior and the European *négociants* established at the capital, in continual contact with the former, they had persuaded the former that the conduct of politics in the river belonged to the *traitants*, that the governor should, in this line of thinking, make decisions based on their moods. These errors were so well rooted in the minds of the chiefs along the river, reasoning by analogy based on the practice in their lands, that, *up until this year*, they addressed their business letters *to the governor and to the chefs of Senegal*.¹⁴⁷

The governors to this point had not made it clear that they were the sovereigns of the colony.

Carrère and Holle drew on a language of free trade and liberty to argue that the French role should be to free the inhabitants from the tyranny of their oppressors. This tyranny was tied to economic language. By getting rid of tyranny in the several forms in which it existed in various parts of Senegambia, trade would flow freely. In Kajoor and the surroundings of Saint-Louis, tyranny had taken the form of feudal kings. Carrère and Holle wrote that

the blacks of Saint-Louis are very proud of their identity [qualité] as Senegalese; the men of the mainland fervently aspire to a stay in Saint-Louis, because, with a little industry, they manage to obtain for themselves a rather substantial means of existence. In addition, once under the protection of French law, they escape the abuse of the chiefs, small and large, who have multiplied the feudal system, in vigor in all of Senegambia.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ “Courtiers entre les peuples de l’intérieur et les négociants européens établis au chef-lieu, en relations continuelles avec les premiers, ils avaient persuadé à ceux-ci que la conduite des choses politiques en rivière appartenait aux traitants; que le gouverneur devait, dans cet ordre d’idées, se déterminer par leurs inspirations. Ces erreurs étaient si bien enracinées dans l’esprit des chefs riverains, raisonnant par analogie avec ce qui se pratique chez eux, que, *jusqu’à cette année*, ils adressaient leurs lettres d’affaires *au gouverneur et aux chefs du Sénégal*.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 343-344.

¹⁴⁸ “Les noirs de Saint-Louis sont très fiers de leur qualité de Sénégalais; les hommes de la grand’terre aspirent avec ardeur vers le séjour de Saint-Louis, car, avec un peu d’industrie, ils parviennent facilement à s’y procurer d’assez larges moyens d’existence. De plus, une fois placés sous la protection de la loi française, ils échappent aux avanies des chefs, petits et grands, qu’a multipliés le système féodal, en vigueur dans toute la Sénégambie.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 11-12.

Those living in the colony, the authors insisted, were able to free themselves from the feudal system and find wealth freely trading in Saint-Louis.

In Waalo, on the other hand, war might be necessary to stop the pillages of the Moors that threatened the liberty of those populations. Indeed, there was a war in progress, with Faidherbe at the head. Carrère and Holle wrote, “It is necessary, if we want to transform the Senegambian people and develop here, to the advantage of French interests, our political and commercial action, that the left bank of the Senegal, definitely shielded from the oppression of the Moors, breathe, work and produce in safety.”¹⁴⁹ The Moors, so tied into the gum trade, were trying to stop the cultivation of peanuts.¹⁵⁰ By keeping the Moors from crossing the river, the French would allow commerce to flow freely.¹⁵¹ Making the Moors leave Waalo by force would have effects on other kingdoms as well. Carrère and Holle claimed that the kingdom of Jolof, also pillaged by the Trarzas, was already seeing the beginnings of peace and had sent a deputation pledging their loyalty to France.¹⁵² In Kajoor as well, the reverberations of the war would be felt: “We believe that after the current war, after by chasing the Moors from Walo we have thereby closed the route that leads them to pillage, the men of Kajoor, princes and people, will throw themselves into our arms, and that the country will give to our commercial markets crops of a very remarkable value.”¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ “Il faut, si nous voulons transformer les peuples sénégaubiens, et développer ici, au profit des idées et des intérêts français, notre action politique et commerciale, que la rive gauche du Sénégal, soustraite définitivement à l'oppression des Maures, respire, travaille et produise avec sécurité.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 3.

¹⁵⁰ Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 84.

¹⁵¹ Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 4.

¹⁵² Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 112, 120-22.

¹⁵³ “Nous croyons que à la suite de la présente guerre, lorsqu'en les chassant du Walo nous aurons fermé aux Maures la route qui les conduit au pillage, les hommes du Cayor, princes et peuple, se jetteront dans nos bras, et que ce pays

Carrère and Holle blamed Waalo's downfall on broken treaties, again emphasizing the link between economic problems, political collapse, and inappropriate adhesion to written agreements. However, in this case, it was the French who had reneged on their promises. A few decades earlier, Waalo had been full of industrious people. Yet the authors argued, "Cast our eyes on this unhappy country today, we will see there a desert populated by the rare inhabitant, dominated by this apathy of despair engendered by terror and uncertainty about the future. High weeds invade the formerly fertile fields. A country that could feed a million men, reduced to 20,000 inhabitants! Unhappy race, the plaything of the Trarza Moors and the chiefs who imposed them. As it is above all after the war of 1834 and our abandonment of 1835 that the most intolerable yoke has become a weight on them, one cannot stop bemoaning these evils and the indifference that made us, to this point, neglect our most evident political and commercial interests."¹⁵⁴

The treaties Carrère and Holle accused the French of breaking were, first of all, a 1819 treaty in which Walo placed itself under the sovereignty of France and an 1821 treaty regulating gum trading at the escales along the river. According to the authors, French neglect in the decade after this final treaty led the inhabitants of Waalo to seek protection elsewhere. In 1832, the princess of Waalo, Ndieumbeutt, married the prince of the Trarzas as the result of French

donnera à notre commerce un aliment d'une valeur très-rémarquable." Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 90.

¹⁵⁴ "Jetons aujourd'hui les yeux sur cette malheureuse contrée; nous y verrons un désert peuplé de rares habitants, dominés par cette apathie du désespoir qu'engendrent la terreur et l'incertitude du lendemain. Les hautes herbes envahissent les champs jadis fertiles. Un pays qui pourrait nourrir un million d'hommes, réduit à vingt mille habitants! malheureuse race, le jouet des Maures Trarzas et des chefs qu'ils lui ont imposés! Comme c'est surtout par suite de la guerre de 1834 et de notre abandon en 1835 que le joug le plus intolérable s'est appesanti sur elle, on ne peut s'empêcher de gémir et de ses maux et de l'indifférence qui nous a fait, jusqu'à ce jour, négliger nos plus évidents intérêts politiques et commerciaux." Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 94.

indifference. The reasoning of the inhabitants of Waalo, as depicted by Carrère and Holle, was that “Waalo . . . has fallen into a state of weakness and depletion that only a powerful protector can lift. The whites have abandoned us several times, besides, they are merchants whose views change from year to year, depending on their interests. Their leaders change so frequently, and the newest one so greatly endeavors to do the opposite of what the previous had started, that it is impossible for us to count on their assistance. The king of the Trarzas, on the other hand, whether through him or his family, will always be ready to aid us. . .”¹⁵⁵ Here too, we find a charge previously levied against Senegambians, now levied against the French themselves. Where Raffanel had pointed to the instability of leaders of Fuuta, could not the same be said about the French governors of Senegal? As for the marriage that would join Waalo to the Moors, the French administration, fearing Trarza domination, disapproved of the alliance, and a war between the French and Trarzas ensued, culminating in a 1835 treaty removing the Trarzas’ right to Waalo.¹⁵⁶ However, the French did not step in to forcefully uphold this treaty. The time was ripe for the French administration to make up for this abandonment of Waalo, the authors agreed.

If Waalo were freed, it would become the important site of agriculture that previous administrations had imagined it to be. Once the Moors were chased out, “Let Waalo become a place of refuge, and, in just a little time, we will see it, cultivated by active hands, become the

¹⁵⁵ “Le Walo, disaient-ils, est tombé dans un état de faiblesse et d'épuisement dont une protection puissante peut seule le relever. Les blancs nous ont abandonnés plusieurs fois; ce sont d'ailleurs des commerçants dont les vues se modifient d'année en année, au gré de leurs intérêts. Leurs chefs changent si fréquemment, celui qui vient s'attache si bien à faire le contraire de ce que l'autre a commencé, qu'il nous est impossible de compter sur leur assistance. Le roi des *Trarzas*, au contraire, par lui ou par sa famille, sera toujours à portée de nous secourir, et, d'ailleurs, il éloignera à tout jamais la branche *dgioss*, en perpétuant la puissance dans la branche *tedgiègue*.” Carrère and Holle, 280-281.

¹⁵⁶ Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 98-99; see also 246-285.

breadbasket of Saint-Louis and the center of a vast commercial activity.”¹⁵⁷ As for the inhabitants, once the Moors were gone, “they will solicit and accept with joy the domination of France.”¹⁵⁸ Carrère and Holle were sure the inhabitants of Waalo would even assist the French in overthrowing the Moors, since they “. . . burn with the desire to be freed from the yoke of the Moors. In our opinion, this desire for peace and independence shown by the black race is one of the most real causes, however poorly defined, in the spirit of this race, for the enthusiasm inspired in these recent times by Al Hajj Umar.”¹⁵⁹ The reference to the Muslim reformer, who at this time was gaining followers in a holy war across Senegambia, suggested that if only the French realized their desire for liberty, the blacks would throw their support to them, rather than to the leader of the jihad.

Carrère and Holle seemed to think Waalo was an especially fertile ground to create loyal, productive subjects. Here, they drew on earlier plans, such as that of Governor Roger. Roger’s failed plantation system was not his fault, but rather the greed of traders: “The error came from the seductive thought that agriculture would be carried out profitably by Senegalese hands.” Instead, Carrère and Holle wrote, those engaged in commerce were repulsed by the idea of working the earth.¹⁶⁰ Now, however, there was a new opportunity to make productive producers

¹⁵⁷ “Que le Walo devienne donc un lieu d’asile, et, sous peu d’années, nous le verrons, cultivé par des mains actives, devenir le grenier de Saint-Louis et le centre d’une vaste activité commerciale.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 371.

¹⁵⁸ “. . . ils sollicitent, ils acceptent avec joie la domination de la France.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 371.

¹⁵⁹ “. . . brûlent du désir d’être affranchis du joug des Maures. Selon nous, ce besoin de paix et d’indépendance qu’éprouve la race noire est une des causes les plus réelles, quoique mal définies dans l’esprit de cette race, de l’enthousiasme inspiré dans ces derniers temps par *Al Aguy Oumar*.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 379.

¹⁶⁰ “L’erreur vint de la pensée séduisante que la culture se ferait fructueusement par des mains sénégalaises.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 345.

out of the inhabitants of Waalo. They proposed that inhabitants be sent from Senegal to the Antilles temporarily, to return once they had learn French. The government of Senegal could provide straw houses in Waalo for the immigrants and provide seeds, farming instruments, and protection. The chiefs of the area would be named by the government. Waalo would become a province that was Christian and “vraiment française.”¹⁶¹

Freeing the kingdom of Waalo from the Moors would also act to transform the Moors:

If the Moors were confined to the right bank (and we will manage to keep them there, that is our firm hope); if Waalo, master of its destiny, helps us forbid them access to the left bank, the Trarzas, deprived of resources for pillage, will not hesitate to transform into cultivators, or decline. In the first case, their manners will become more gentle, they will become sensible to the well-being of a permanent settlement; in the second, they will soon disappear, decimated by our arms and by famine.¹⁶²

They elaborated, “The peoples of the right bank, pent up amongst themselves, will certainly be transformed; they will lose little by little this restive and vagabond temper that drives them to wander everywhere and to take advantage of the opportunities that vast solitude offers them for looting; besides, force will restrain them. . .”¹⁶³ The Moors’ transformation would be aided as well by the shift of the Senegalese economy towards peanut cultivation. The Moors, seeing that gum was becoming a secondary product and realizing that they did not have a hold on French commerce, would become “pliable and easy-going; the thousand relations that commerce

¹⁶¹ Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 375-377.

¹⁶² “Si les Maures s’étaient cantonnés sur la rive droite (et nous parviendrons à les y maintenir, c’est notre ferme espoir); si le Walo, maître de ses destinées, nous aidait à leur interdire l’accès de la rive gauche, les *Trarzas*, privés de la ressource du pillage, ne tarderaient pas à se transformer en cultivateurs, ou à déchoir. Dans le premier cas, leurs moeurs s’adouçissant, ils deviendraient sensibles au bien-être d’un établissement fixe; dans le second, ils disparaîtraient bientôt, décimés par nos armes et par la famine.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 105.

¹⁶³ “Les peuples de la rive droite, refoulés sur eux-mêmes, se transformeront à coup sûr; ils perdront peu à peu cette humeur inquiète et vagabonde qui les pousse à errer partout et à profiter des chances qu’offrent à leurs brigandages de vastes solitudes; la force les y contiendra d’ailleurs. . .” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 379.

produces and maintains will initiate the river populations into our principles and our customs.”¹⁶⁴

When the Moors realized the French were only concerned with their happiness, they would be much more friendly, Carrère and Holle wrote. Thus the twin pressures of armed force and commerce would work on the Moors.

Fuuta Tooro was another region where tyranny had triumphed over hard working people. Here, the tyranny was one of an invader race and Muslim fanaticism. Echoing the judgment of Duranton, Carrère and Holle reported that Fuuta had previously been peopled by the Jallonkes (Déliankés), a more intelligent “race” who had been dispossessed by the religious wars in the region.¹⁶⁵ Now the new rulers were making demands on the French:

The people of Fouta say boldly that the river belongs to them; the passage of Saldé is, according to them, a door they have the right to hold closed, as long as we have not paid tribute. Extremely demanding on this point, they attach more worth to the idea of imposing their supremacy than on the material profit that they draw from it.¹⁶⁶

Fuuta Tooro could bring wealth to the French through trade if its inhabitants began growing “pistaches,” or peanuts: “By interesting the chiefs of the villages and provinces in this new industry by means of gifts of little worth, and by perfecting our system of navigation, it is certain that Fouta will provide on its own more commercial goods than Kajoor and Waalo together.”¹⁶⁷ First, however, the problem of the fanatical and demanding leaders had to be solved.

¹⁶⁴ “souple et facile; les mille relations que fait naître le commerce et qu’il entretient initieraient les populations riveraines a nos principes et a nos moeurs.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 389.

¹⁶⁵ Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 124-5.

¹⁶⁶ “Les gens de Fouta disent hardiment que le fleuve leur appartient; le passage de Saldé est, selon eux, une porte qu’ils ont le droit de tenir fermée, tant que nous n’avons pas payé tribute. D’une exigence extrême sur ce point, ils attachent plus de prix à l’idée de nous imposer leur suprématie qu’au profit matériel qu’ils en retirent.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 132.

¹⁶⁷ “En intéressant, au moyen de cadeaux d’une faible importance, les chefs de village et de province à cette industrie nouvelle, en perfectionnant surtout notre système de batelage, il est certain que le Fouta fournira à lui seul plus de matières commerciales que le Cayor et le Walo réunis.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 134.

Carrère and Holle suggested the solution in Fuuta would be for the French to ally themselves with appropriate groups, particularly, the Deliankés, who would understand their real interest, and use force against the others. This had been a proposition of Duranton's, but here the language of oppression and liberation became more pronounced, as well as the need for direct force. The authors wrote, "It is necessary, according to us, if we want to make our influence prevail, to introduce ourselves between the different leaders, research their secret rivalries, and reawaken the remains of the old Delianke race."¹⁶⁸ Fuuta "needs to be disciplined," the authors wrote, a task Faidherbe was already doing by teaching lessons.¹⁶⁹ In Fuuta, "to bring this country to reasonable ideas," force and menace would be necessary because of the inhabitants' fanatical views. Thus attacks along the river were justified, as were creating rivalries between factions of the Todoro rulers "that will make them respect our trade and our navigation; it is even probable that certain parties will seek out our assistance. As we said above, under the Todoro race can still be found the debris of the former dominators of the country, these Déliankés of kind manners, that only wait for a signal to shake off the yoke of their oppressors."¹⁷⁰ After this, however, the region would come to peace; "Once it becomes habituated to the comfort that the trade of a new product invariably brings, it will play its part voluntarily in the sum of our

¹⁶⁸ "Il faut, selon nous, si nous voulons y faire prévaloir notre influence, nous introduire entre les différents chefs, rechercher leurs rivalités secrètes, et réveiller les débris de l'ancienne race Délianké." Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 135.

¹⁶⁹ Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 384.

¹⁷⁰ "pour ramener ce pays à des idées raisonnables" . . . "qui leur feraient respecter notre commerce et notre navigation; il est probable même que certains partis rechercheraient notre assistance. Nous l'avons dit plus haut, sous la race *torodo* se trouvent encore les débris des anciens dominateurs du pays, ces *Déliankés* aux moeurs douces, qui n'attend qu'un signal pour secouer le joug de leurs oppresseurs." Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 377.

transactions; and this a very considerable part, because, as we have said, working the land is a great honor there.”¹⁷¹

Meanwhile, in the upper Senegal river region, Carrère and Holle identified the source of tyranny in monopolies. Here, the region where the privileged gum companies had the longest history, protection was the only thing holding back development. In Bakel, the authors noted, monopoly companies had hindered progress: “If, in effect, monopoly has the virtue of being able to strongly establish [trade], it sets back progress, which only happens as a result of trials and sacrifices.”¹⁷² The authors argued that the French presence was desired by people of the upper river. As for Gajaaga and Khasso, they accepted French suzerainty, said Carrère and Holle. When the people of the upper river compared themselves to people living in Saint-Louis, the authors wrote, “they understand all the superiority of the white race; what enchants them above all is the security of persons and properties that French law invariably guarantees to those who demand its protection. Thus they solicit from us our presence and the development of business.”¹⁷³ Médine could be an important center for the French, Carrère and Holle judged. Whereas in company times it was a “floating comptoir,” the authors noted that under the regime of free trade, *traitants* from the colony had set up trading establishments there. However, “the lack of protection” made them fear incursions, including al Hajj Umar.¹⁷⁴ It would be urgent to develop the fort at Médine,

¹⁷¹ “Quand une fois il aurait pris l'habitude de ce bien-être qu'amèneraient infailliblement les échanges d'un produit nouveau, il apporterait volontiers, dans la somme de nos transactions, sa part, et une part très-considérable; car, nous l'avons dit, le travail de la terre est là en grand honneur.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 384.

¹⁷² “Si, en effet, le privilège a la vertu d'établir fortement, il repousse le progrès, qui ne se réalise qu'à la suite d'essais et de sacrifices.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 147.

¹⁷³ “ils comprennent toute la supériorité de la race blanche; ce qui les enchante surtout, c'est la sécurité des personnes et des propriétés que la loi française garantit invariablement à ceux qui lui demandent protection. Aussi sollicitent-ils notre présence et le développement des affaires.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 378.

¹⁷⁴ “le défaut de protection” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 156.

the authors noted. It would provide a possible route for commerce, and, they suggested, a “voie ferrée” could be built. “Fifty *lieues* of fertile country, watered by the Senegal, would open to our activity.”¹⁷⁵ Here too, the authors praised Faidherbe for having made the first steps, carrying out a six-week campaign, building a fort at Médine, and putting Paul Holle in charge.¹⁷⁶

This was only one of the promising developments the authors touted. Though the French had only had a minimal hold over many regions of Senegambia, this put them in contact with many places through commerce:

We have therefore in our hands a vaste territory, natural tributary to our commerce; the developments that these transactions could take appear incalculable. All that is necessary is some sacrifices on the part of the government and a little enterprising spirit for the French name to penetrate in these vast regions and there spread the influence that is due it.¹⁷⁷

One of the steps the authors suggested was that navigation be improved, as it took 45 days to get to Bakel, too long to make cargo other than gum worth trading.¹⁷⁸ The authors did not envision a full-scale military invasion; it was the French name, not French troops, that would “penetrate” deeper into Senegambia:

Far from our minds is the the thought that it is necessary to conquer, weapons in hand, the part of Senegambia bathed by the Senegal River: material conquest is useless, but moral force and action should fall into the most skillful and enlightened hands; what is necessary, in short, is initators to lead the people who surround us to better destinies and protect them against their oppressors and against their own tendencies.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ “Cinquante lieues d'un pays fertile, arrosé par le Sénégal, s'ouvriraient à notre activité.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 157.

¹⁷⁶ Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 158.

¹⁷⁷ “Nous avons donc sous la main un vaste territoire, tributaire naturel de notre commerce; les développements que peuvent y prendre nos transactions paraissent incalculables. Il suffrait, de la part du gouvernement, de quelques sacrifices, et chez nos commerçants d'un peu d'esprit d'entreprise, pour que le nom français pénétrât dans ces vastes régions et y rayonnât de l'influence qui lui est due.” Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 366.

¹⁷⁸ Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 366-367.

¹⁷⁹ “Loin de nous la pensée qu'il faut conquérir les armes à la main la partie de la Sénégambie que baigne le Sénégal: la conquête matérielle est inutile, mais la force et l'action morales doivent passer aux mains des plus

While Carrère and Holle claimed not to be promoting material conquest, their praise of Faidherbe's military action and suggestion of the value of force took them closer to the notion of outright conquest than the other writers examined here. Their approval of these methods might be attributable to the fact that they were simply more thinkable. The French military force in the colony had grown since the 1820s; the *tirailleurs sénégalais* would be created in 1857, two years after Carrère and Holle's book was published. The colony possessed more steamboats and guns than it had in the 1820s. In addition, the shift in power from the *habitant traitants* to French merchants and the introduction of the peanut, providing an alternative to the Moor-controlled gum trade, gave French actors more power to wield.

But another change was at work. A shift had occurred within the commercial logic that governed colonial policy and practice from roughly 1830 to the 1850s. The system of *coutumes* and negotiations that held commerce together on Senegambian terms, indeed, the whole narrative of Euro-African commerce, had been reframed by experience and by the words of colonial authors. The tradition of French trade in the period of company rule, as Grout de Beaufort and Duranton had tried to uncover, was no longer a point of reference as a golden age. Instead, it was the beginning of the inappropriate forms of commerce that had marred trade in Senegambia. Commerce may have been a *lingua franca* in Grout de Beaufort's time, if one that had to be carefully negotiated to avoid sparking the greed of Africans. To later writers, though, the language of commerce, as it existed in the current state of the colony, was untranslatable between

habiles et des plus éclairés; il faut, enfin, qu'initiateurs des peuples qui nous environnent à des destinées meilleurs, nous les protégeons contre leurs oppresseurs et contre leurs propres tendances." Carrère and Holle, *De la Sénégambie française*, 369.

the two parties; the greed and ingrained habits of the Moors and blacks, whether they emerged through the mistakes of European traders or an innate inability to understand the basics of proper exchange, were impediments to what trade should look like.

Coutumes and *palabres* were no longer seen as necessary if annoying facts of commercial life, as Golberry had suggested in 1802. Duranton had seen *coutumes* as a potentially corrupting force, but also a form of leverage that could be used to punish bad commercial partners who had broken their treaties and to reward good commercial partners. Duranton's writing was influential, but even his vision of the place of *coutumes* in colonial policy was soon left behind. To Raffenet, *coutumes* and *palabres* were evidence of the backwardness of African commerce with the colony; he suggested all *coutumes* be done away with. Carrère and Holle went farther, working the ideas of what we might call "regime change" into their project for the commercial future of Senegal. While the notion that economic oppression meant political oppression had emerged before, including in the writings of Duranton, Carrère and Holle stated the position more strongly and consistently, suggesting that whole regimes and ethnicities needed to be overthrown to allow proper, freely flowing commerce to occur outside of the threats of pillage and demanding kings in several parts of the Senegambian region.

Of course, there is a certain continuity in the writings examined here as well, one that reflects the continued reliance of the small number of French colonial agents and merchants on Senegambian terms of encounter. It is also important to note that the official borders of the colony barely changed between the late 1820s and the early 1850s. The Minister of the Navy's 1831 observation that Senegal was not a colony but a "simple comptoir," or trading post, still held largely true twenty years later. But the authors examined here built a narrative that justified

and perhaps even required the use of force and a more expansionary and invasive policy toward areas implicated in French commerce. The military and infrastructural expansion of the 1850s and 1860s, the topic of the final chapter, was the product of the direct input of merchants and Faidherbe's former colonial experience. But the narrative of commerce in Senegal that emerged in the previous decades had already provided the basis for these developments. One cannot speak of a "failure" of the commercial moment in the same way we can point to the failure of the plantation schemes of the 1820s. Gum became less important, to be sure, but if anything Senegalese colonial commerce was about to expand greatly as a result of peanuts. Still, the notion that French traders could tap into markets by following the trade patterns of Senegambia had been disproved. The failure of patterns of trade to benefit merchants in the way that they hoped – the failure of West Africans to act the way French agents wanted – meant a new commercial regime needed to be formed. Governor Faidherbe, through the use of force and the suppression of *coutumes*, articulated this shift.

Chapter IV

Conquest, Administration, and Infrastructure: An Expansionary Colonial Logic in the Era of Faidherbe, 1850-1870

With some exceptions, the physical colony of Senegal in the early 1850s did not look very different than it had in 1830. The commercial logic that directed colonial policy during that period had led to the formation of a cohort of French merchants who were eager to expand and maintain their hold on trade in the colony. Yet the colony still consisted of a collection of trading posts in the late 1840s and early 1850s. By the mid 1860s, however, Senegal shifted from a colony of trading posts to a colony with territorial control over the area around Saint-Louis, Cap Vert, the Petit Cote, Waalo, Kajoor, and the Casamance region. In this chapter, I argue that the growth and elaboration of the French colony of Senegal between 1850 and 1870 represented a new colonial logic, one that was military, territorial, and infrastructural. By justifying expansion through arguments of security and commercial law and order, the French administration acquiesced to the wishes of the merchants while marrying free trade with an interventionist, if uncertain, colonial state.

Much of the focus of historians of empire working on this period has been on Louis Léon César Faidherbe, the military commander who served as governor of Senegal from 1854-1861 and 1863-1865. A graduate of the Ecole polytechnique who served in Algeria during the 1840s and early 1850s, Faidherbe combined the intellectual, republican legacy of his schooling with the militaristic attitudes of the Algerian army and General Bugeaud.

Many accounts have focused on his leadership and forward looking vision, viewing him as the founder of the modern colony of Senegal. For these scholars, Faidherbe represents a new type of imperialism. In the age of colonial triumphalism, one imperial historian summarized the view of Faidherbe as the initiator of an entirely new kind of colony. Prosper Cultru, whose thesis on Senegal came out in 1910, emphasized that when Faidherbe arrived, “the country was in the rather humble state in which it had vegetated since the eighteenth century,” as the French had a few posts and no political authority.¹ Cultru described Faidherbe as “the governor who, for the first time since the the French appeared on the coast of West Africa, made the warlike and brutal peoples living there the superior force of an intelligent and civilized people.”²

More modern scholars of Africa and the French empire have agreed with this argument, if not its triumphalist embrace of France’s colonial project. Martin Klein, for example, writes, “The scramble for Africa has often been treated as a phenomenon which suddenly manifested itself about 1880, but the expansive impulse was fully developed in Faidherbe’s Senegal.”³ Barnett Singer and John W. Langdon agree, “Our view is that Faidherbe *did* give great impetus to French expansion in Senegal and then West Africa as a whole, and we hold that to some degree, future great imperial figures in areas like the Sudan, Tonkin, Madagascar, and Morocco were his progeny, especially Gallieni and Lyautey.”⁴ Faidherbe indeed became a legend, as the figure of

¹ “le pays était toujours en l’état, assez humble, où il végétait depuis le XVIIIe siècle, . . .” Prosper Cultru, *Les origines de l’Afrique occidentale : histoire du XVe siècle à 1870* (Paris: C. Larose, 1910), 352-353.

² “le Gouverneur qui, pour la première fois depuis que les Français avaient paru sur les côtes d’Afrique occidentale, a fait sentir aux peuplades belliqueuses et brutales qui les habitaient la force supérieure d’un peuple intelligent et civilisé.” Cultru, *Les origines de l’Afrique occidentale*, 353.

³ Martin A. Klein, *Islam and Imperialism in Senegal: Sine-Saloum, 1847-1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 61.

⁴ Barnett Singer and John W. Langdon, *Cultured Force: Makers and Defenders of the French Colonial Empire* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 92.

the colonial hero embodied in Faidherbe and others, such as Gallieni and Lyautey, became an important cultural symbol in France in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵ This interpretation of Faidherbe fits with an emphasis on his adoption of Algerian models for Senegal. Roger Pasquier, for example, has argued that Faidherbe's aggressive stance was borrowed from Algeria and Bugeaud.⁶

Others have portrayed Faidherbe as the outgrowth or culmination of forces within Senegal, rather than a figure importing a new and foreign colonial model or beginning an entirely new stage. Georges Hardy writes of Faidherbe, "A historical figure, to appear as a great man, does not need to be presented as a magician; more often, on the contrary, it most often happens that if he leaves behind a lasting body of work, it is from having known how to assemble previous results in his actions and from learning from his predecessors."⁷ Leland Barrows has argued in an important dissertation and several articles that Faidherbe's policies came out of previous trends in Senegal, particularly the growth of power of French merchants. By emphasizing Faidherbe's alliance with the merchants, Barrows suggests that his was a governorship shaped by concerns about commerce in Senegal.⁸

⁵ Edward Berenson, *Heroes of Empire: Five Charismatic Men and the Conquest of Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

⁶ Roger Pasquier, "L'influence de l'expérience algérienne sur la politique de la France au Sénégal," in *Mélanges offerts à H. Deschamps* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1974), 263-284.

⁷ "Un personnage historique, pour apparaître comme un grand homme, n'a pas besoin d'être présenté comme un magicien; il arrive le plus souvent, au contraire, que, s'il laisse une oeuvre marquante, c'est pour avoir su rassembler les résultats antérieurs à son action et s'être mis à l'école de ses prédécesseurs." Georges Hardy, *La mise en valeur du Sénégal de 1817 à 1854* (Paris: E. Larose, 1921), 361.

⁸ Leland C. Barrows, *General Faidherbe, the Maurel and Prom Company, and French Expansion in Senegal* (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1974); Leland C. Barrows, "The Merchants and General Faidherbe: Aspects of French Expansion in Senegal in the 1850s," *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer* 61, no. 223 (1974): 236-283; Leland C. Barrows, "Faidherbe and Senegal: A Critical Discussion," *African Studies Review* 19, no. 1 (1976): 95-117.

Looking at Faidherbe as a precursor importing outside models ignores the ways that policy in Senegal during his tenure grew out of the perceived failure of the existing commercial regime in the colony. Colonialism did not begin with Faidherbe. However, a stronger state was seen as necessary for the security of commerce. Along with the military conquests of this state came the need for administration, transportation, and improved knowledge about the lands now under French control. I argue that the period of 1850-1870 was one of transition, but locating the beginning of true colonialism here is not only to ignore the period's link with previous eras but also to overlook differences between the experiments of Faidherbe and other administrators on one hand and the more elaborated colonial state and military machine of the later nineteenth century on the other. A more fruitful line of inquiry is to question how the particular policies and practices of French agents came to be possible, and how they came to be justified.

This chapter first explains the immediate negotiations behind and reasons for the shift to a more militarized policy that led to the expansion of Senegal. At a time when the colony seemed neglected, new interest from a metropolitan commission on the colonies and a push from French merchants within Senegal provided the impetus for a more interventionist colonial administration. Important to this push was the narrative of unprotected commerce and the need for security from pillage. These elements were cited as an explanation for the failure of the commercial regime in Senegal as it had existed through the 1840s. In the narrative of neglect, economic liberalism shared what might appear an uneasy relationship with demands for a more active state.

The chapter then traces the way the narrative of threatened commerce and misbehaving Senegambians was used to structure accounts of military conquest. By arguing there was a

continuity between the immediate need to punish wrongdoers and earlier commercial misbehavior, military leaders and administrators could depict the conquest as a solution to a longer term problem, not a sudden change in policy or a violent and arbitrary action. The outcome of French campaigns of the late 1850s and early 1860s was territorial annexations, the abolition of tribute payments, and the implementation of a per capita tax. These changes marked a new kind of colonial logic based on conquest and territory, a logic reliant on the notion that it had fixed previous commercial failures.

With conquest came new lands and people to be administered. The remainder of the chapter examines administrative structures and infrastructural projects that grew out of the new needs of the colony. New attempts at mapping, creating governmental structures, and planning a railroad from Saint-Louis to Dakar all speak to the shift in the scale of the colony. These aspects of the colonial state seem in some ways to prefigure the modern fusion of technology and colonialism most associated with the late nineteenth century and beyond. I emphasize the experimental and hesitant nature of these developments in this period. Trials with indirect rule and a railroad project that did not get off the ground reveal the uncertainty within the new expansionary model.

A Colony Left Behind and the Commission of 1850-1851

In August 1850, a commission was formed to discuss French establishments on the coasts of Africa along with France's island possessions and to make recommendations for their future. This *commission des comptoirs* included men with connections to Senegal, like the Marseillaise

merchant Victor Régis, the former governor Bouët-Willaumez, and his brother Auguste Bouët.⁹ By the late 1840s, it seemed to some that the colony had been abandoned and its future was uncertain. Senegal was in fact in a difficult place commercially in the late 1840s. A bad year of gum trading in 1847 had not helped commerce. The debts of the *traitants*, a concern that had led to the 1842 reforms, had not ameliorated, and remained at 1,100,000 fr. after 1846 and 1,181,000 after 1847.¹⁰

The notion that Senegal had been abandoned and concerns for the colony's future were elaborated in an 1850 text by the Baron Rodolphe Darricau entitled *Will Senegal be a Colony or a Simple Trading Post?*¹¹ A captain active on the West African coast in the 1840s, Rodolphe Darricau would go on to become the governor of Réunion. In the short text, Darricau worried that the colonial commission would leave Senegal behind, in that it would focus on agricultural legislation for the other colonies, legislation not applicable to the colony. Darricau asked of the commission, "Will it accord Senegal enough attention to deal with it especially, and, if only by way of amendment or by additional articles, will it give it the share that, in my opinion, should return to it; or indeed (as the rumors have said) will it decide on the question and deem the colony outside of the legislation, reducing it to the state of a simple trading post!"¹² By arguing that Senegal should be within the same legal regime as France's other colonies, Darricau attempted to emphasize its potential in the French empire.

⁹ Klein, *Islam and Imperialism in Senegal*, 40.

¹⁰ Roger Pasquier, "A propos de l'émancipation des esclaves au Sénégal en 1848," *Revue française d'outre-mer* 54 (1967), 192.

¹¹ R. Darricau, *Le Sénégal sera-t-il une colonie ou un simple comptoir ?* (Paris: F. Didot frères, 1850).

¹² "Accordera-t-elle au Sénégal une attention assez grande pour s'en occuper spécialement; et, ne fût-ce que par voie d'amendement ou par articles additionnels, lui fera-t-elle la part qui, à mon sens, devrait lui revenir; ou bien (ainsi que les bruits en ont couru), tranchera-t-elle la question en mettant la colonie à part de la législation, en la réduisant à l'état de simple comptoir!" Darricau, *Le Sénégal*, 4.

To that point, Darricau argued, the lack of attention given to the colony had limited its progress. He noted that education made strides in the colony, but complained that the secondary school was run by non-commissioned officers and that the colony did not even have enough books to distribute them as prizes for the fathers' primary school students in 1850. Saint-Louis did not have a lithographic press, whereas all of the English colonies and Protestant missions could print their own books, Darricau observed. If Senegal had made progress under these conditions, Darricau asked, where would it be if it had not been neglected?¹³ Darricau argued that the government of Senegal was also lacking, as it was carried out through dispatches and orders; in addition, the mayor of Saint-Louis's bad relations with other authorities in the colony led to governmental conflict.¹⁴ Now that the slaves had been freed, Darricau argued, military rule was inappropriate. Instead, the colony needed a strong municipal government, police, law, and an educational system, like other colonies, if the commission chose to grant Senegal the status of a true colony.

In the end, the commission agreed with Darricau that Senegal had not taken full advantage of its resources, but that it was not without hope. The commission recommended that all the overseas establishments it studied be kept. In Senegal, it recommended, the fort at Podor should be rebuilt, new forts built in Fuuta Tooro, and privileged companies, like the *Compagnie de Galam*, should be abolished.¹⁵ While Senegal had been struggling commercially since the repossession, the colony had a bright future, seeing as it was:

¹³ Darricau, *Le Sénégal*, 5.

¹⁴ Darricau, *Le Sénégal*, 6

¹⁵ Leland Barrows, "Faidherbe and Senegal: A Critical Discussion," 97; Hardy, *La mise en valeur du Sénégal*, 336-342.

surrounded by varied and numerous populations, possessing a commerce that is exclusively its own [gum], and dominating an immense waterway that assured for it communications all the way to the heart of Africa, having all the elements of a rich and fecund development. But this can obviously only happen under one condition, which is that we remain masters of the situation there: that is to say that our position there must be everywhere sufficiently strong and respected, and above all no other influence must become predominant enough to impede navigation on the river and dictate conditions there.”¹⁶

The commission did not call for large scale territorial expansion outside of the new forts, but it did put forward goals that would seem to require military force. As Chapter III showed, justifications of force were developing throughout the previous decades, and arguments for force would continue to appear through the first half of the 1850s in the writings of figures such as Anne Raffenel and Frédéric Carrère and Paul Holle. It would take the influence of French merchants in Senegal and the arrival of Faidherbe to see these ideas put into practice in the later 1850s.

Narratives of Military Conquest

Strong support for the guarantee of French domination of trade in the region came from the demands of merchants. Merchants petitioned the government in 1851 and again in 1854. Their goals were to be recognized as the sole masters of the river, be have the right of passage anywhere, to be able to obtain lands for forts, agricultural establishments, and branches of Saint-

¹⁶ “. . .entouré de populations variées et nombreuses, en possession d’un commerce qui lui est exclusivement propre, et dominant un immense cours d’eau qui lui assure des communications jusqu’au coeur de l’Afrique, n’ait en lui tous les éléments d’un riche et fécond développement. Mais ce ne peut être évidemment qu’à une condition, c’est que nous y resterons toujours les maîtres de la situation : c’est-à-dire que notre position y sera toujours, sur tous les points, suffisamment forte et respectée, et surtout qu’aucune autre influence ne deviendra assez prépondérante pour entraver la navigation du fleuve et y dicter des conditions.” Quoted in Hardy, *La mise en valeur du Sénégal*, 341-342.

Louis trading houses, and “that we be respected and feared by the fifteen river states and that, in consequence, our traders carry out trade with them on equal footing without paying them any tribute.”¹⁷ A December 1856 article on the *Moniteur*, the official weekly newspaper of Senegal, stated, “A demand so general, so formal, and which was in agreement with what the honor of our flag has demanded for a long time, was welcomed by the Minister; this is why we have been at war in Senegal for two years.”¹⁸ The paper judged, “We see that this goal is quite modest, reasonable, and completely in agreement with humanity and justice.”¹⁹ The government approved funds in December 1852 that would maintain and reinforce the French posts at Richard-Toll, Dagana, Bakel, and Sénoudébou, and rebuild the fort at Podor, and in 1853 funds were allotted for a project to construct a fort at Médine.²⁰ When Governor Protet did not sufficiently assent to the demands of the merchants in 1853, he was replaced by Faidherbe in 1854.²¹

The policy of force and expansion developed into a war that lasted from 1854 to 1858 between the French and the Trarza Moors along the Senegal River. In February 1859, the Minister of Algeria and Colonies, the newly-created ministry that replaced the Ministry of the Navy as the ministry overseeing Senegal in 1858, approved the creation of new forts. Faidherbe, to carry out this policy, decided to send troops into Sine. While the new Minister of Colonies

¹⁷ “que nous soyons respectés et craints des quinze états riverains et que, par suite, nos traitants fassent avec eux du commerce sur le pied de l’égalité sans leur payer aucun tribut.” *Moniteur*, no. 36, 2 December 1856, 3.

¹⁸ “Une demande aussi générale, aussi formelle, qui concordait du reste avec ce qu’exigeait depuis longtemps l’honneur de notre drapeau, fut accueillie par le ministre; voilà pourquoi l’on a fait depuis deux ans la guerre au Sénégal.” “Situation politique de la colonie du Sénégal.” *Moniteur*, no. 36, 2 December 1856, 3.

¹⁹ “On voit que ce but est bien modeste, bien raisonnable, en tout point d’accord avec l’humanité et la justice.” “Situation politique de la colonie du Sénégal.” *Moniteur*, no. 36, 2 December 1856, 3.

²⁰ A. S. Kanya-Forstner, *The Conquest of the Western Sudan: A Study in French Military Imperialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 27-28.

²¹ Barrows, “The Merchants and General Faidherbe,” 243-244.

Chasseloup-Laubat scolded Faïdherbe's additional conquests, he did not demand a withdrawal.²² Military action in Casamance and Kajoor would also mark the late 1850s and 1860s.

The narrative of the military conflicts followed a formula that drew on criticisms of obstructed commerce and egregious tribute payments that writers and merchants had voiced in the previous two decades. First, accounts of campaigns established a time of earlier repression and bad behavior. Then the conflict was described in terms of punishment for pillage. Finally, the narrative emphasized the end of war as a time of newfound peace and prosperity. By emphasizing the longer history of the need for force, military intervention was legitimized.

A clear connection to the past made the new policy of force seem a logical conclusion to an untenable situation rather than a hasty overreaction. A December 1856 article in the *Moniteur* sought to explain why, as people in France were asking, a war had emerged in a region where just three years ago there had seemed to be peace. The article emphasized the hardships of the situation before the war:

We were established in Senegal not as masters and as dominators, but as merchants, occupying only a few spots of land for which we paid rent to native chiefs, terrains perfectly bounded and limited, for most of the posts along the river, to several hundred square meters; outside of these narrow limits, we were not permitted to build a single hut. We only had the right to trade along the river at certain points, at certain times, and after paying to their chiefs, major and minor, tributes fixed by treaties that they constantly violated.²³

²² Kanya-Forstner, *The Conquest of the Western Sudan*, 31-33.

²³ "Nous étions établis au Sénégal non pas comme maîtres, comme dominateurs, mais comme commerçants, n'occupant que quelques coins de terre dont on payait les loyers aux chefs indigènes, terrains parfaitement limités et se réduisant, pour la plupart des postes du fleuve, à quelques centaines de mètres carrés; en dehors de ces étroites limites, il ne nous était pas permis de construire une case. Nous n'avions le droit de commercer avec les états du fleuve que sur certains points, à certains époques, et en payant à leurs chefs, grands et petits, des tributs fixés par des traités continuellement violés par eux." "Situation politique de la colonie du Sénégal." *Moniteur*, no. 36, 2 December 1856, 3.

As chiefs “made continuous efforts to establish new tributes or raise the old ones,” traders also struggled with the sinking value of goods in France.²⁴

Another *Moniteur* article that appeared in 1858, at the end of the Franco-Trarza war, also attempted to reframe the period before the war as one of conflict rather than one of peace.

Among those who did not know much about Senegal, the article stated,

Many people believe perhaps that what is happening today is without any relation with the past, that we previously lived in peace with the people of the river, because the idea had not yet come to us to go to war; that for the last four years we have been at war as the result of a simple caprice; that this war should last for more or less time depending on the more or less bellicose mood of the moment, and that finally, the policy of Senegal is not connected to any central plan.²⁵

However, the article insisted, the war was not an improvised or even a new policy. Instead, it was part of a larger plan dating back to 1844. The article quoted a letter written to the Minister November 6, 1844 by Governor Edouard Bouet that criticized the policy of the colonial government to that point. As Bouet wrote, the policy “seems to have had in view the commercial interests of the moment, rather than those of the future, and above all rather than that of the progress of African civilization.”²⁶ Bouet recommended the French forbid pillaging, put Waalo under direct French sovereignty and allow agricultural and pastoral refugees to settle there, work

²⁴ “faisait des efforts continuels pour établir de nouveaux tributs ou augmenter les anciens” *Moniteur*, no. 36, 2 December 1856, 3.

²⁵ “Bien des gens croient peut-être que ce qui se fait aujourd’hui est sans relation avec le passé; que nous avons autrefois vécu en paix avec les riverains, parce que l’idée ne nous était pas venue de faire la guerre; que depuis quatre ans on a fait la guerre; par suite d’un simple caprice; que cette guerre doit durer plus ou moins longtemps, suivant l’humeur plus ou moins belliqueuse de moment, et qu’enfin, la politique sénégalaise ne se rattache à aucun plan d’ensemble.” *Moniteur*, no. 116, 15 June 1858, 3.

²⁶ “. . . semble avoir eu en vue les intérêts commerciaux du moment, plutôt que ceux de l’avenir, plutôt surtout que les progrès de la civilisation africaine.” *Moniteur*, no. 116, 15 June 1858, 3.

to diminish the strength of Fuuta Tooro, and “progressively reduce and abolish at the earliest moment possible the *coutumes* of the state, whether to the Moors or the black chiefs.”²⁷

The 1858 article also included the petition of commercial agents to the governor dated February 11, 1854. In the letter, French merchants reiterated their demands from a December 8, 1851 petition. These demands included the abolition of the *escales*, the creation of fortified posts in Waalo and Fuuta, land concessions around the establishment for merchants or cultivators, a year-round gum trade, a centralized *coutume* that would be paid to the Moors by the colonial government as intermediary, protection of the people of Waalo and other areas on the left bank from the Moors, two steam-powered tugboats for Galam and for the sandbar at the mouth of the Senegal, and a study of how to make the river navigable year round. The Minister of the Navy had approved this plan by a dispatch of December 8, 1854, despite protests from the the *habitants*.²⁸ Like the reference to Bouet’s letter, the summary of the merchants’ demands was focused on putting the war with the Trarzas in broader perspective.

Two months later, another article completed the arc of the narrative. If the previous articles had served to establish the untenable situation of the colony, particularly in terms of commerce, as it had existed, and then to establish military intervention as a long-planned punishment, this article portrayed the aftermath of the war as one of commercial relief. The article stated, “Since the conclusion of the peace, a remarkable improvement has already occurred in the movement of commerce; two months has sufficed to bring back to life the activity that

²⁷ “réduire progressivement et supprimer le plus tôt possible les coutumes de l’Etat, tant aux Maures qu’aux chefs noirs.” *Moniteur*, no. 116, 15 June 1858, 4.

²⁸ *Moniteur*, no. 116, 15 June 1858, 4. The *habitants* who had done well in the river trade did not welcome the encroachment of French merchants into their territory, which would doubtless occur as a result of the proposed changes.

reigned previously in Senegal, of which the *traitants* speak with pleasure and which, from now on, they will not be left to look back on with regret.”²⁹ The punishment had succeeded; commerce could now proceed normally.

In 1864, in a description of the Sereers, the commandant of Gorée Pinet Laprade (who would serve as governor briefly in 1863 and again from 1865-1869) laid out a similar master narrative of military intervention in lands neighboring the colony, particularly the regions along the coast where he had led campaigns in the previous five years. Pinet Laprade wrote in 1864 that:

up until 1857, commerce, abandoned to itself, sent several traders to the coast, where they suffered humiliations, violent acts, and abuses of all kinds from native chiefs. To hold them completely at mercy, the chiefs forbid them to construct anything other than sorry straw huts, in which they were exposed to the rigors of the climate and the danger of fire.³⁰

In contrast, the new policy had moved to curb these abuses:

In 1859, a new regime was inaugurated; the indifference of the administration was succeeded by the greatest concern: to assure our nationals the security due to them, bring an end to the pillaging that desolated the lands neighboring Gorée and the incessant wars the diverse countries waged with the unique goal of pillage. in a word, to combine the political and military action of the government with the efforts of our merchants; this is the goal that we propose, which has been followed with perserverence to this day.³¹

²⁹ “ Depuis la conclusion de la paix, une amélioration remarquable s’est déjà produite dans le mouvement commercial, deux mois ont suffi pour faire renaître l’activité qui régnait autrefois au Sénégal, dont les traitants parlaient avec plaisir et qui, désormais, ne leur laissera plus aucun souvenir de regret.” “Situation du commerce du Sénégal au 1er aout 1858,” *Moniteur*, no. 125, 17 August 1858, 1.

³⁰ “. . . jusqu’en 1857, le commerce abandonné a lui meme, expédiait quelques traitants sur la cote, ou ils subissaient de la part des chefs indigenes, des humiliations, des violences, et des exactions de toute nature; pour les tenir complètement a merci, ces chefs leur interdisaient tout autre construction que de mauvaises cases en paille, ou ils étaient exposes aux rigueurs du climat et aux dangers des incendies.” “Notice sur les Serères par le Colonel du Génie Pinet-Laprade, Commandant supérieur de Gorée,” 1864, p. 31, ANS 1 G 33.

³¹ “En 1859, fut inauguré un regime nouveau; a l’indifference de l’Administration, succede la sollicitude la plus grande: assurer a nos nationaux la securite qui leur était due, faire cesser les brigandages, qui desolaient les contrées voisines de Gorée, et les guerres incessantes que les divers pays se faisaient, dans l’unique but du pillage; en un mot, associer l’action politique et militaire du gouvernement aux efforts de notre commerce, tel est le but que l’on se

Pinet Laprade contrasted the chaos of a commerce ignored by the state with the benevolent intervention of the administration.

These narratives were echoed in accounts of individual campaigns. The progression of disorder and pillage, punishment, and respect and relief appears in an account by Lieutenant Flize, published in the *Moniteur*, on Dimar, a region in the Fuuta. The twelve villages of Dimar, the article stated, were populated by fanatic Muslims and had been “the terror of the *laptots* of Senegal.” The inhabitants of Dimar took advantage of a place called Cacho, where the river ran narrowly between high banks, to attack passing vessels that did not see fit to give in to their demands for payment. This violent past was fresh in the minds of the inhabitants of the colony: “The people of Saint-Louis speak today only with a sentiment of grief and resentment about the numerous losses that the people of Dimar previously made them experience, in men and in goods.”³² In this case, the supposed abuse was directed not just towards the French, but towards the African traders and sailors living in the French colony. While then-Governor Baudin had struck an initial blow by destroying the village of Fanaye in 1849, the people of Dimar needed more punishment when Podor was possessed in 1854, Flize wrote. When the French took Dialmath in May 1854, it was “a new and terrible lesson.” The aftermath was portrayed as a relief, as the population now treated the French with respect. Flize wrote,

It goes without saying that for the past four years, we have not paid any *coutume* in any form during our war with the Trarza. Dimar, without declaring itself overtly on our side, has shown itself to be nonetheless very submissive, and the step that the principal chiefs

proposa, et qui a été poursuivi avec persévérance jusqu’à ce jour.” “Notice sur les Serères par le Colonel du Génie Pinet-Laprade, Commandant supérieur de Gorée,” 1864, p. 32, ANS 1 G 33.

³² “Les gens de Saint-Louis ne parlent, encore aujourd’hui, qu’avec un sentiment de chagrin et de dépit, des nombreuses pertes que les gens du Dimar leur ont autrefois fait essuyer en hommes et en biens.” *Moniteur*, 4 May 1858, 2.

have just taken, in asking to place themselves, like Gaé and Bokol, under our authority, is an unequivocal proof of their intentions for the future.”³³

The author cautioned that not everyone in Dimar would support the request of the leaders, but that these others at least showed an attitude of subservience.

In an account of the expedition in the lower Casamance, then batallion chief of engineers Pinet Laprade wrote to the governor, “The goal of these operations was to put an end to the pillages and abuses committed for several years by the villages of Caronne and Tionk on our nationals and our allies.”³⁴ The inhabitants of these villages, engaging in piracy, had encouraged others to develop “the taste for pillage. . . and soon banditry would have been the order of the day among peoples formerly gentle and tranquil, if a powerful action had not come to put an end to these tendencies in proving that it could strike the guilty all the way to their deepest refuges.”³⁵ The next year, Pinet Laprade described his voyage to the upper Casamance in similar terms. He emphasized the hardships of the past: “We had in this country ten years of insults and violent action, without conquering the influence of which our commerce could not seriously develop.”³⁶ The theme of punishment again emerges: “All these attacks could not stay

³³ “Inutile de dire que, depuis quatre ans, on ne paye plus au Dimar aucune coutume, sous quelque forme que ce soit, depuis notre guerre avec les Trarza. Le Dimar, sans s’être déclaré ouvertement pour nous, s’est montré cependant très-soumis, et la démarche que viennent de faire les principaux chefs, en demandant à se placer, comme Gaé et Bokol, sous notre autorité, est une preuve non équivoque de leurs intentions pour l’avenir. *Moniteur*, 4 May 1858, 2-3.

³⁴ “Le but de ces operations etait de mettre en terme aux pillages et aux exactions commis depuis quelques annees par les villages de Caronne et de Tionk sur nos nationaux et nos alliés.” Pinet Laprade to Governor, Rapport sur l’Expédition de la Basse Casamance, Gorée, 16 March 1860, p. 13, ANS 13 G 300.

³⁵ “. . . le goût du pillage . . . et bientôt le brigandage aurait été à l’ordre du jour chez des peuplades naguère douces et tranquilles, si une action puissante n’était venue mettre un terme a ces tendances en prouvant qu’elle pouvait frapper les coupables jusque dans leur retraites les plus reculées.” Pinet Laprade to Governor, Rapport sur l’Expédition de la Basse Casamance, Gorée, 16 March 1860, p. 13, ANS 13 G 300.

³⁶ “Nous avons a venger dans ce pays dix annees d’outrages et de violences, à conquerir l’influence sans laquelle notre commerce ne pouvait se developper serieusement!” Pinet Laprade to governor, Expédition de la Haute Casamance, Gorée, 20 February 1861, p. 17, ANS 13 G 300.

unpunished for long without running the risk of seeing our influence in the upper Casamance entirely ruined.”³⁷ A surprise attack sealed the victory for the campaign, and the French victory led to a peace of February 14. The agreement guaranteed French sovereignty over the country, immediate reimbursement of pillages committed since 1856, payment of 5000 fr. as a “contribution de guerre,” and the delivery of four hostages, the sons of the leaders, to the French post at Sedhiou as a guarantee of the terms of the treaty.³⁸ Pinet Laprade’s message to the soldiers on the occasion of the end of the mission celebrated the victory: “Three days were sufficient for you to get revenge for ten years of insults and acts of violence. The arrogant peoples who dared provoke us into combat are today trembling at our feet, they beg for peace and the protection of France. Our commerce, hardly interrupted, will take a new growth with all the guarantees of security that we wished to obtain.”³⁹

On the Petit Côte as well, Pinet-Laprade pursued a campaign he described in terms of punishment for bad behavior and proving to the unruly Sereers that he could penetrate into their forests, from which they felt they could pillage without being touched.⁴⁰ The country had been, he argued, subject to the pillages of *ceddos*, which “rendered any commercial growth impossible from the moment the slave trade was abolished.”⁴¹ The moment of punishment began in 1859,

³⁷ “Tous ces attentats ne pouvait rester plus longtemps impunis sous peine de voir notre influence entierement ruinee dans la haute Casamance.” Pinet Laprade to governor, Expédition de la Haute Casamance, Gorée, 20 February 1861, p. 17, ANS 13 G 300.

³⁸ Pinet Laprade to governor, Expédition de la Haute Casamance, Gorée, 20 February 1861, p. 20, ANS 13 G 300.

³⁹ “L’expédition de la haute Casamance est terminee. Trois journees vous ont suffi pour venger dix annees d’outrages et de violences. Les peuplades arrogantes qui ont ose vous provoquer au combat, sont aujourd’hui tremblantes a nos pieds: elles sollicitent la paix et la protection de la France. Notre commerce a peine interrompu va prendre un nouvel essor avec toutes les garanties de securite que nous voulions obtenir.” Ordre du Jour, 14 February 1861, ANS 13 G 300.

⁴⁰ “Notice sur les Serères par le Colonel du Génie Pinet-Laprade, Commandant supérieur de Gorée,” 1864, p. 29-31, ANS 1 G 33.

⁴¹ “rendaient tout essor commercial impossible, depuis que la traite des noirs etaient defendue.” “Notice sur les Serères par le Colonel du Génie Pinet-Laprade, Commandant supérieur de Gorée,” 1864, p. 25, ANS 1 G 33.

with military action under Faidherbe. Of the intervention, Pinet Laprade wrote, “We will not linger long on the means employed to change this situation, but we attest that their principles were justice and perserverance.”⁴² Pinet Laprade highlighted the construction of guard towers in Rufisque, Portudal, and Joal as well as later attacks against Sereers who refused French rule. The relief and order that followed the punishment was evident, Pinet Laprade concluded. After the French victories, he stated, the villages of the coast from Cap Vert to Saluum and their dependencies

were purged of the ceddos who infested them, and annexed on their request to the territory of the colony. Thanks to the security that resulted from this for the populations, agriculture has developed, the commercial movement of the post of Rufisque has tripled in importance in six years, the number of caboteurs who frequent the coast down to Saloum has become four times larger, and serious trials of colonization by growing cotton, entreprised this year, under subvention of the government. . . give great hopes.”⁴³

The cotton establishments, including the plantation of the Spiritan missionaries of Saint-Joseph, were held out, along with the other evidence of commercial growth, as examples of the region’s newfound order and security.

The military campaigns of the late 1850s and early 1860s brought about several major changes in Senegambia, as far as the colony was concerned. An examination of the treaties made with the Moors reveals the main elements in this larger shift. First, the *escales* were abolished,

⁴² “Nous ne nous etendrons pas longuement sur les moyens employés pour changer cette situation; mais nous attestons qu’ils ont eu pour principes la justice et la persévérance.” “Notice sur les Serères par le Colonel du Génie Pinet-Laprade, Commandant supérieur de Gorée,” 1864, p. 25, ANS 1 G 33.

⁴³ “. . . ont été purgés des tiedos qui les infestaient, et annexés sur leur demande au territoire de la Colonie. Grace a la securite qui en est resultee pour les populations, l’agriculture s’est developpee, et le mouvement commercial du comptoir de Rufisque a triple d’importance en 6 annees, le nombre des caboteurs qui requentent la cote jusqu’au Saloum, est devenu quatre fois plus grand, et des efsais serieux de colonisation par la culture du coton, entrepris cette annee meme, dans subvention du gouvernement. . .donnent de belles esperances.” “Notice sur les Serères par le Colonel du Génie Pinet-Laprade, Commandant supérieur de Gorée,” 1864, p. 32, ANS 1 G 33.

shifting the control of the location and process of commerce in the hands of the French. The treaty reflected continuing tension, as the French wanted be able to buy gum during the entire year at their own posts of Saint-Louis, Dagana, Podor, Saldé (a proposed post), Matam, Bakel, and Médine, while the Trarza king only wanted to bring gum to Dagana. The treaty simply specified that each leader would take “the necessary measures to have his wishes executed by his respective subjects and administrators.”⁴⁴ But the French could not have thought this was an agreement on equal terms. The Trarza king had tried to forbid trade with the French as part of his strategy “to defend his former possessions and his former prerogatives,” but gum continued to come to Podor and Bakel. “This is understandable,” judged the anonymous author of an 1858 article in the *Moniteur*:

A leader of nomads, no matter how feared his authority is, could not succeed where the most absolute potentate might have failed, disposing of all the means of repression that an organized and regularly administered state offers: to stop people dying of hunger and who have nothing to go sell, to provide for their needs, a rich product that nature offers them without work.⁴⁵

In the aftermath of a war that seemed to have destroyed the Trarzas, the French agents who prepared this treaty must have doubted the weakened Trarza king’s ability to try to restrict trade to one location.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ “execute his will by his” “les mesures nécessaires pour faire exécuter leur volonté par leurs sujets et administrés respectifs.” “Traité de paix conclu, le 20 mai 1858, entre le Gouverneur du Sénégal et le Roi des Maures Trarza.” *Moniteur*, no. 114, 1 June 1858, 2.

⁴⁵ “pour défendre ses anciennes possessions et ses anciennes prérogatives.” “Et cela se conçoit. Un chef de nomades, quelque redoutée que soit son autorité, ne pouvait réussir où aurait peut-être échoué le potentat le plus absolu, disposant de tous les moyens de répression qu’offre un état organisé et régulièrement administré: empêcher des gens qui meurent de faim et qui manquent de tout d’aller vendre, pour se procurer ce dont ils ont besoin, un produit riche que la nature leur offre sans travail.” *Moniteur*, 11 May 1858, 1.

⁴⁶ On March 23, 1858, the *Moniteur* reported that the Trarzas had barely any working rifles and were only capable of “isolated assassinations” and thefts that could be easily guarded against (p. 1).

Second, *coutumes* – including tribute and gifts of any kind – were abolished. However, the French recognized the principle of government revenue based on trade. Since the king, Mommhamad el-Habib, would have unspecified problems collecting this tax (impôt), the treaty stated that the French government would take care of the collection (perception) “as proof of its benevolence towards its ally.”⁴⁷ Traders at Dagana would pay a tax of one piece of guinée cloth for 500 kilograms of gum traded, a sum calculated as 3% of the profit, that would go to the king. The tax would be collected by the commandant of Dagana, who would then pass on the cloth to the king. Traders at Saint-Louis would owe one guinée for 1000 kilograms of gum.⁴⁸ While this system resembled the tribute payments of the past, the fees were standardized, reframed in the language of taxes, and set up to be collected through the intermediary of the French. The treaty between Faidherbe and Eliman Abdoul-Boly, chef du Dimar, also emphasized there would be no tributes of gifts given in trading in Dimar.⁴⁹ When the administrative units of Dakar, Diander, and the Sereers were created as “*cercles*” in 1862, a tax regime was instituted, but any additional gifts and fees were prohibited.⁵⁰

Third, a number of new territories came under French sovereignty, or at least were bound in new ways to the French. The treaty of peace between the French and Trarzas made explicit reference to French sovereignty. The first article read, “The king of the Trarzas recognizes, in his name and that of his successors, that the territories of Oualo, Gaé, Bokol, Toubé, Dialakar,

⁴⁷ “. . . comme preuve de bienveillance envers son allié. . .” “Traité de paix conclu, le 20 mai 1858, entre le Gouverneur du Sénégal et le Roi des Maures Trarza.” *Moniteur*, no. 114, 1 June 1858, 2.

⁴⁸ “Traité de paix conclu, le 20 mai 1858, entre le Gouverneur du Sénégal et le Roi des Maures Trarza.” *Moniteur*, no. 114, 1 June 1858, 2.

⁴⁹ “Traité de paix avec Eliman Abdoul-Boly, chef du Dimar.” *Moniteur*, no. 118, 29 June 1858, 1.

⁵⁰ Arrêté, 24 May 1862, ANS SC 11 D 3.

Gandiole, Thionq, Djios, and Ndiago belong to France, and that all those who inhabit them or will inhabit them later are subject (*soumis*) to the French government, and, in consequence, cannot be liable to any kind of tributes (*redevances*) or any dependence whatsoever towards other chiefs, other than that which they give to the governor of Senegal.”⁵¹ A footnote noted that Gandiole had not actually been made a French territory yet, as an offer to buy the land still needed to be presented to the damel of Kajoor. In any case, the annexation of these areas meant the colony grew.

The king of the Trarzas was also held to recognize the Governor of Senegal as “the protector” of the states of Dimar, Jolof, Ndiambour, and Kajoor. The treaty allowed that some of these states were tributaries of Trarza, however. The treaty specified for the tributary states for which the French were protectors, “it is by the intermediary of the governor that the tributes will be received and delivered to the king of Trarza, and it is by him that the difficulties that could arise between the king of the Trarzas and these states will be removed.”⁵² This clause of the treaty made France an arbitrator and tax collector of sorts between states, even states it had no sovereignty over.

The governing duties of the French colony would only grow as more areas came under French control. While protecting commerce remained an underlying goal, experiments with

⁵¹ “Le roi des Trarza reconnaît, en son nom et au nom de ses successeurs, que les territoires du Oualo, de Gaé, de Bokol, du Toubé, de Dialakar, de Gandiole, de Thionq, de Djios et de Ndiago appartiennent à la France, et que tous ceux qui les habitent ou les habiteront plus tard sont soumis au Gouvernement Français, et, par suite, ne peuvent être astreints à aucune espèce de redevances ni de dépendance quelconque envers d’autres chefs, que ceux que leur donnera le Gouverneur du Sénégal.” “Traité de paix conclu, le 20 mai 1858, entre le Gouverneur du Sénégal et le Roi des Maures Trarza.” *Moniteur*, no. 114, 1 June 1858, 1.

⁵² “. . . c’est par l’intermédiaire du Gouverneur que les tributs seront perçus et livrés au roi des Trarza, et c’est par lui que seront levées les difficultés qui pourraient s’élever entre le roi des Trarza et ces États.” “Traité de paix conclu, le 20 mai 1858, entre le Gouverneur du Sénégal et le Roi des Maures Trarza.” *Moniteur*, no. 114, 1 June 1858, 1.

government would shape the colonial logic of the late 1850s and early 1860s. A small, ineffective, and laissez-faire colonial administration, as the administration of the 1830s and 40s appeared from the vantage point of the 1850s, had failed; territorial expansion and the elaboration of administrative techniques would rise to take its place.

Administration

New French conquests required new administrative techniques. Even before the expansion beginning in the late 1850s, the colonial government created an office reflecting the relations that had developed between the colony and its neighbors, largely through trade. In 1842, an Office of Exterior Affairs (bureau d'affaires extérieures) was definitively created by an order of September 28.⁵³ The idea came from Governor Bouet, who proposed the office would be in charge of matters of peace and war with neighboring peoples, *coutume* payments, matters relating to hostages,⁵⁴ and other issues of policy relating to the colony's neighbors. The commanders of the river posts would report to this new office.⁵⁵ As the colony began to conquer more territory in the late 1850s, the department began to be called Affaires indigènes, or Native Affairs.⁵⁶

Collecting information on the newly added territories and their neighbors became more important. This seemed particularly true for the coastal areas and surroundings of Gorée, since

⁵³ Note [Arrêté of Conseil Privé], undated [1890 or later], ANS 13 G 30.

⁵⁴ Hostages (*otages*) here refers to people from other states sent to Saint-Louis for a period. These were often the sons of chiefs who wanted to maintain ties with the French or who were forced to send them as a result of treaties. Under Faidherbe, the école des otages would attempt to educate these sons of leaders in order to spread French values and ensure their loyalty.

⁵⁵ Saint-Martin, *Le Sénégal sous le second empire*, 140.

⁵⁶ Saint-Martin, *Le Sénégal sous le second empire*, 295.

the administration's attention had largely been focused on the Senegal River to that point.⁵⁷ In 1859, Pinet Laprade suggested the creation of a Bureau des affaires indigènes, or native affairs for Gorée: "In taking the commandement of Gorée et dépendances, I was struck by the few positive pieces of information that we possess on all our establishments on the coast, and, as a result, of the impossibility we often have to rapidly and confidently resolve the difficulties that present themselves."⁵⁸ Pinet Laprade's proposal would collect and file the existing documents, and complete more information to deal with political and commercial relations of the peoples of the coast.

The desire for more information also manifested itself in the creation of a map commission on June 16, 1857. Between 1857 and 1860, the Commission de la carte de la Sénégalie worked to create a map of various sections of Senegambia. At the fifth meeting of the commission, on August 28, 1860, the members present were Faidherbe, the president; the frigate captain Brossard de Corbigny, who was in charge of hydrography; the chief captain of engineers Fulerand, in charge of topography; staff captain of naval infantry Flize, the director of Native Affairs; and finally second lieutenant of naval infantry De Serre, who was assistant of native affairs.⁵⁹ Cartographic expertise and familiarity with "native affairs" came together on this committee.

⁵⁷ *Gorée et dépendances*, consisting of Gorée and the coastal possessions, was in fact administered as a separate colony between 1854 and 1859. This was a move that had been suggested by the colonial commission in 1851, but Governor Protet resisted the split through the early 1850s. Hardy, *La mise en valeur du Sénégal*, 341, 348. In 1859, Gorée was recombined with Senegal, but retained its own commandant.

⁵⁸ "En prenant le Commandement de Gorée et dépendances j'ai été frappé du peu de renseignements positifs que nous possédons sur tous nos établissements de la côte, et, par suite de l'impossibilité où l'on se trouve souvent de résoudre rapidement, avec assurance, les difficultés qui se présentent." Pinet Laprade, *Projet d'organisation d'un bureau des affaires indigènes à Gorée*, 15 April 1859, ANS 13 G 300.

⁵⁹ *Feuille officielle*, no. 35, 28 August 1860.

Faidherbe, at the October 1859 meeting of the commission, had recommended that the commanders of French posts study their surrounding areas. He also gave specific missions to a number of agents. Mage, enseigne de vaisseau, was sent to explore the oasis of Tagant, Pascal, lieutenant of naval infantry, attaché of native affairs, received the mission to explore Bambuk, and M. Vincent, staff captain and aide de camp to the governor, was to voyage in the western Sahara and find the oasis of Adrar. M. Lambert, lieutenant of naval infantry, set out toward the source of the Rio Nunez and to explore the Fuuta Jallon. M. Baur, accountant for the mines of Bambuk, and M. Parmentier, surgeon at the post of Kéniéba, went up the Falémé to study the resources of the upper river country. Ship's lieutenant Bourel was to try to meet up with the voyages of Vincent and Mage. Meanwhile, Alioune, native second lieutenant in the spahis, was ordered to get information on the Moors of the upper river. The governor had also ordered a mission on the lower Senegal to assess the navigability of the river. Finally, he sent Parchappe, the commander of a steam-powered aviso, to explore the Casamance river.⁶⁰

As reports from the voyages came back, they were filed, creating an archive of knowledge that added to and revised reports from earlier voyages. Mage's survey of his route was left with the archives of the commission, and his report was filed with the Office of Native Affairs, as was Vincent's report.⁶¹ In sum, the commission had produced a first attempt at a detailed map of the Senegal and Gambia rivers, and was continuing studies for a hydrographic map.⁶² The committee's work was not just academic: "All the noble efforts attempted in the goal of increasing the sum of knowledge acquired about this interesting part of Africa and opening

⁶⁰ *Feuille officielle*, no. 35, 28 August 1860, 83-85.

⁶¹ *Feuille officielle*, no. 35, 28 August 1860, 83-84.

⁶² *Feuille officielle*, no. 35, 28 August 1860, 85.

new routes for commerce, this powerful lever of civilization, will produce, we cannot doubt, the best effects in a future that is not far off.”⁶³

However, Faidherbe felt that the commission’s work was done, having created many useful documents and a map that “suffices for our needs of the moment.” In addition, Brossard and Vincent were set to return to France, taking their knowledge of hydrography and geodesy with them. Faidherbe thus dissolved the commission, noting that other issues would draw the administration away from exploration.⁶⁴ The commission’s existence nonetheless reveals the importance of compiling geographical knowledge to the expanding colony.

While map-making and exploration drew French agents far from the center of the colony, closer to Saint-Louis, the newly annexed lands required administration. The number of people under French rule was growing. This was evident as early as 1856, when “Waalo was declared French country (*pays français*), because this was the best and simplest solution to adopt for this small state at the gates of Saint-Louis.” At Dagana, the French “definitively seized this fine village of 2,000-5,000 *habitants*.” Along the entire river, the number of French subjects grew to 20-40,000 subjects, the article claimed.⁶⁵

At the same time, French administrators continued to envision alliances that could lead to the spread of French influence or domination without outright annexation. In 1856, the French colonial administration had “a real influence on 2 million men,” an article in the *Moniteur*

⁶³ “Tous ces nobles efforts tentés dans le but d’augmenter la somme des connaissances acquises sur cette intéressante partie de l’Afrique et d’ouvrir des voies nouvelles au commerce, ce puissant levier de la civilisation, produiront, n’en doutons pas, les meilleurs effets dans un avenir qui n’est pas éloigné.” *Feuille officielle*, no. 35, 28 August 1860, 85.

⁶⁴ *Feuille officielle*, no. 35, 28 August 1860, 85.

⁶⁵ “Le Oualo a été déclaré pays français, parce que c’était la solution la meilleure et la plus facile à adopter pour ce petit état qui est aux portes de Saint-Louis.” “nous sommes définitivement emparés de ce beau village de 2,000 à 5,000 habitants.” *Moniteur*, no. 36, 2 December 1856, 3.

claimed.⁶⁶ As long as leaders acquiesced to French wishes, however, they could continue to remain sovereign. In the final stage of the Trarza war, an account in the *Moniteur* claimed, “Thus, the confusion of our enemies is complete, and the populations that have the good sense to put themselves on our side are masters of the country.”⁶⁷ A later article echoed the belief that friendly leaders would continue to serve as neighbors, while also suggesting many inhabitants would seek direct French protection as a result of the chaos brought about by al-Hajji. Speaking of the religious fervor in the upper river, inspired by al-Hajj Umar, the anonymous author of the article reassured readers that when the river level rose, French reinforcements would push back the religious movement: “The final result of all this will be the formation of considerable towns around our posts, the rest of the country will definitively stay in the hands of those who will know how to dominate it and who will end up living in peace beside us. What is necessary, is a little patience.”⁶⁸

Waalo, the kingdom on the lower river that was the site of the agricultural experiments of the 1820s and that served as a constant rhetorical example of the harmful effects of the Moors’ pillages, was annexed in 1856, requiring the notion of “influence” to be converted into actual administrative practice. Waalo was divided into administrative units named *cercles*. *Cercles* would come to mean something different in French West Africa beginning in the 1890s; that is, an administrative unit under the control of a European agent who oversaw a number of cantons. In the 1850s, however, each *cercle* was ruled by a chief from Waalo chosen by the French. Waalo

⁶⁶ “une véritable influence sur 2,000,000 d’hommes.” *Moniteur*, no. 36, 2 December 1856, 3.

⁶⁷ *Moniteur*, 23 March 1858, 1.

⁶⁸ “Le résultat final de tout cela, ce sera la formation de villes considérables sous nos postes, le reste du pays demeurant définitivement entre les mains de ceux qui sauront le dominer et qui finiront par vivre en paix à coté de nous. Ce qu’il faut, c’est un peu de patience.” *Moniteur*, no. 109, 27 April 1858, 6.

was divided into four *cercles* after French annexation, with the “capitals” of Dagana, Richard-Toll, Mérinaghen, and Lampsar, in June 1858.⁶⁹

The initial organization of the *cercles* had to be revised a few months later, revealing the colonial government’s balance between choosing friendly leaders and accomodating interests. The inhabitants of the villages had returned after the war. But now there was another family the French had to accomodate. The young Sidia, of the former ruling family of Tédiek, required a position. However, the French did not want to alienate those who had supported the French, such as Fara Penda. Fara-Penda’s cercle, the cercle of Mérinaghen, would be split as a compromise. Sidia would be chief of the newly-formed cercle of Nder, though the governor would name a “tuteur” for him, who would rule in his name.⁷⁰ The rest of the cercle, which would continue to be called the cercle of Mérinaghen, would be under Ioro-Diao, the son of Para-Penda. As Ioro-Diao was at the school Faidherbe had founded for otages, or the sons of chiefs the French wanted to make sure were loyal and in whom French values might be inculcated, his father would rule for him.⁷¹

This was a system of indirect rule, far from the direct rule and policies of assimilation associated with later French colonialism. Faidherbe published a constitution for Waalo in 1859, in Wolof. It emphasized the autonomy of the inhabitants in regard to most aspects of life:

Oualo, conquered and managed by us, had need for a written law at the very least cursory, in the absence of its ancient institutions repealed by us, as incompatible with the new life

⁶⁹ *Moniteur*, no. 116, 15 June 1858, 4.

⁷⁰ The system of “tutelle,” or wardship, paired children with guardians who were meant to be a respectable example and sometimes provide the children with an apprenticeship. Faidherbe reformed the system in 1857 to attempt to deal with the problem of slave children. However, the system did not guarantee against abuses. See Hilary Jones, *The Métis of Senegal: Urban Life and Politics in French West Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 59-60.

⁷¹ *Moniteur*, no. 126, 24 August 1858, 3.

conditions we are imposing on it. . . . It is not at all concerned with the internal life of the inhabitants, it leaves them with the complete liberty to observe their customs, it gives them only general policy dispositions and it limits itself to arming the public authorities necessary to repress crime, offences or any other abuses, under the superior supervision of an official designated by the governor, as commandant of Oualo.⁷²

A commandant would deal with some aspects of policing, but the constitution emphasized a certain degree of retained authority in customary matters.

On a higher level of administration, the colony soon added additional officers who would report to the governor. A decree of 28 December 1861 divided the colony into seven arrondissements with the capitals of Saint-Louis, Richard-Toll, Dagana, Podor, Bakel, Gorée, and Sedhiou.⁷³ One reason for this division was, “it is urgent to take advantage of the state of peace in which the colony finds itself today to regularize our governmental action in the territories under the authority of France and to thereby work fruitfully toward the well-being of the populations, and at the same time toward the prompt development of the natural riches of the country.”⁷⁴ There was also the practical concern of bureaucracy, in that “the large area of our possession requires the use of numerous intermediaries between the higher authority of the colony and the natives placed under our laws.”⁷⁵ Finally, it was necessary “to maintain the unity of command, the fusion of interests, the spirit of order, speed, and enterprise indispensable to the

⁷² Quoted in Boubacar Barry, *The Kingdom of Waalo: Senegal Before the Conquest* (New York: Diasporic Africa Press, 2012), 235.

⁷³ “Arrêté qui divise le Sénégal et ses dépendances et sept arrondissements,” 28 December 1861, *Feuille officielle*, 7 January 1862, no. 106, 270-1. The role of the commanders was further regulated in “Arrêté réglant les attributions des commandants d’arrondissements,” 22 January 1862, reproduced in the *Feuille officielle*, no. 109, 28 January 1862, Supplément, 284-286.

⁷⁴ “il est urgent de profiter de l’état de paix dans lequel se trouve aujourd’hui la colonie, pour régulariser notre action gouvernementale dans les territoires soumis à l’autorité de la France et pour travailler ainsi avec fruit au bien-être des populations, en même temps qu’au prompt développement des richesses naturelles du pays”

⁷⁵ “la vaste étendue de nos possessions exige l’emploi d’intermédiaires nombreux entre l’autorité supérieure de la colonie et les indigènes placés sous nos lois.” “Arrêté qui divise le Sénégal et ses dépendances et sept arrondissements,” 28 December 1861, *Feuille officielle*, no. 106, 7 January 1862, 270.

realization of any progress, to establish territorial divisions attributing a clearly defined field of action to each.”⁷⁶

The decree spelled out the geographical boundaries of the *arrondissements*, often by reference to posts, villages, or the kingdoms France had annexed, rather than attempting to trace exact boundaries. The *arrondissement* of Saint-Louis had one boundary that was described as “a line leaving this point [Ndiago] and passing by Maka, Ndiol, and Mérinaghen.”⁷⁷ More common were references to states. The *arrondissement* of Richard-Toll included all of Waalo, and that of Dagana included the villages of Dagana and all of Dimar. The post of Gorée, on the other hand, included more scattered posts: the peninsula of Cap-Vert, Diander, and the French posts at Dakar, Rufisque, Mbidjem, Joal, Portudal, and in Saluum.⁷⁸

Each *arrondissement* would have a commandant named by the governor, and the commanders of the secondary posts would report to them. As soon as possible, the *arrondissements* were to be divided into *cercles*, which would be placed under local chiefs chosen by the governor. A later decree would specify the role of the *chefs de cercle*. Village chiefs would also be named by the governor, and they were to “exercise the functions that have been handed down to them according to the customs of the diverse locations” until further notice.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ “pour maintenir l’unité de commandement, la fusion des intérêts, l’esprit d’ordre, de suite et d’entreprises indispensables à la réalisation de tout progrès, d’établir des divisions territoriales attribuant à chacun un champ d’actions nettement défini.” “Arrêté qui divise le Sénégal et ses dépendances et sept arrondissements,” 28 December 1861, *Feuille officielle*, no. 106, 7 January 1862, 270.

⁷⁷ “une ligne partant de ce point en passant par Maka, Ndiol et Mérinaghen” “Arrêté qui divise le Sénégal et ses dépendances et sept arrondissements,” 28 December 1861, *Feuille officielle*, 7 January 1862, no. 106, 270.

⁷⁸ “Arrêté qui divise le Sénégal et ses dépendances et sept arrondissements,” 28 December 1861, *Feuille officielle*, 7 January 1862, no. 106, 270-1.

⁷⁹ “exercer les fonctions qui leur sont dévolues par les coutumes des diverses localités” “Arrêté qui divise le Sénégal et ses dépendances et sept arrondissements,” 28 December 1861, *Feuille officielle*, 7 January 1862, no. 106, 270-1.

The *commandant d'arrondissement* not only had the task of sitting at the head of the internal power structure of the arrondissement, he was charged with external affairs as well. The *commandant d'arrondissement* was to

be constantly up to date, in order to inform the governor of what is happening in the neighboring lands, the dispositions of the chiefs and the populations, divisions that might exist between the influential families, tribes, or villages, their admitted or hidden projects, the amount of their purchases in weapons and munitions for war, the relations that exist between them and the villages that are under us, in a word, all that could contribute to strengthen the peace and prevent hostilities.⁸⁰

The role of the commandant as regards neighboring states or peoples is a reminder that the colony was still not in control of much territory.

As another part of the process of creating an administrative structure for the growing colony, on January 20, 1862, two new bodies, a *conseil de conciliation* and a *commission consultative*, were created for each *arrondissement*. The *conseil de conciliation* was meant to create a kind of link between commerce and the administration in the capital of each arrondissement, except Saint-Louis and Gorée. The *conseils* were founded “considering that, in the interest of commerce and to favor its progress, it is urgent, in waiting for a regularized justice to be instituted, to connect our commandants with notable persons with whose cooperation disputes that may arise between French traders and foreign merchants will be amicably

⁸⁰ “Le commandant d’arrondissement doit s’efforcer d’être constamment au courant, pour en informer le Gouverneur, de ce qui se passe dans les pays voisins, des dispositions des chefs et des populations, des divisions qui peuvent exister entre les familles influentes, les tribus, les villages; de leurs projets avoués ou cachés, de l’importance de leurs achats en armes et munitions de guerre, des relations qui existent entre eux et les villages qui nous sont soumis, en un mot, de tout ce qui peut contribuer à affermir la paix et à prévenir des hostilités.” “Arrêté réglant les attributions des commandats d’arrondissements,” 22 January 1862, *Feuille officielle*, no. 109, 28 January 1862, Supplément, 286.

regulated.”⁸¹ The *conseil* was to consist of the commandant, two notables and two additional substitute members designated by the central colonial administration yearly. The *conseil* would meet publically in case of an issue, and it would decide on the basis of majority rule.⁸² In the letter sent to the commandants asking them to put these conseils into practice, Governor Jauréguiberry wrote that it was the commandant’s job to make sure things work “so that the new measures are sanctioned by their utility.”⁸³ The language that hinted at the fact that the measures had no other authority than this. The councils did in fact rely on a kind of cooperation that revealed the administration’s continuing weakness outside its central posts. The governor wrote to the commandants:

Doubtless, in the line of thought I am following and until the institution of a regularized justice system, you will have at your disposal, for the sanction of your opinions, only a moral influence; but however incomplete, this means is not without value; aided by the members of the *conseil*, you will attempt to persuade those who appear before you that it is important to good order that your opinion be accepted and followed with deference; you will, if needed, signal to me any resistance that, coming from a whim or unwillingness, would tend toward weakening the respect due our authority.⁸⁴

⁸¹ “considérant que, dans l’intérêt du commerce et pour en favoriser les progrès, il est urgent, en attendant l’institution d’une justice régulière, d’adjoindre aux commandants des personnes notables avec le concours desquelles seront réglées, à l’amiable, les contestations qui pourront s’élever entre les commerçants français et les marchands étrangers...” “Arrêté portant institution dans les arrondissements, autres que Saint-Louis et Gorée, d’un conseil de conciliation,” *Feuille officielle*, no. 109, 28 January 1862, 281-282.

⁸² “Arrêté portant institution dans les arrondissements, autres que Saint-Louis et Gorée, d’un conseil de conciliation,” *Feuille officielle*, no. 109, 28 January 1862, 281-282.

⁸³ “pour que les nouvelles dispositions se sanctionnent par leur utilité.” “Lettre circulaire adressée aux commandants des arrondissements de l’intérieur, pour la mise à exécution de l’arrêté du 20 janvier courant, qui institue des conseils de conciliation,” 25 January 1862, *Feuille officielle*, no. 109, Supplément, 28 January 1862, 286.

⁸⁴ “Sans doute, dans l’ordre d’idées que je traite et jusqu’à l’institution d’une justice régularisée, vous ne disposerez, pour la sanction de vos avis, que d’une influence morale; mais, quoiqu’incomplet, ce moyen n’est pas sans valeur: aidé a MM. les membres du conseil, vous vous attacherez à persuader à ceux qui auront comparu devant vous qu’il importe au bon ordre que vos avis soient acceptés et suivis avec déférence; vous auriez, au besoin, à me signaler des résistances qui, procédant du caprice ou d’un mauvais vouloir, tendraient à affaiblir le respect dû à l’autorité.” “Lettre circulaire adressée aux commandants des arrondissements de l’intérieur, pour la mise à exécution de l’arrêté du 20 janvier courant, qui institue des conseils de conciliation,” 25 January 1862, *Feuille officielle*, no. 109, Supplément, 28 January 1862, 286-287.

If the *conseil de conciliation* was meant to regulate commercial disputes, though it lacked the force of a judicial apparatus behind it, the *commission consultative* was a body meant to ensure the expression of different interests within the *arrondissement*, though it similarly lacked the real force of legislative action or the ability to intervene politically. This *commission consultative* would meet twice a year to “express its opinion and the wishes of the European and native populations as concerns: agriculture, commerce, plantations, the raising of livestock, public instruction, the service of militias, the police, works of public utility such as bridges, roads, etc. that are judged necessary.”⁸⁵

The diversity of members reflects the various interests within each region. The *cercle* of Saint-Louis would consist of the head of the administrative service, the director of civil engineering (*ponts et chaussées*), the mayor of Saint-Louis,⁸⁶ the *tamsir*,⁸⁷ the captain of the port, two notables chosen by the *conseil d’administration* (one among the “*propriétaires*” or owners and another from the *traitants*), two *négociants*, one *marchand*, and two *chefs de village* from the “*banlieue*,” or regions surrounding the urban center. In Gorée, the *commission* would be made up of the commander of the *arrondissement*, the sub-director of civil engineering, a delegate of the head of the administrative service, the mayor of Gorée, the captain of the port, two notables, two

⁸⁵ “exprimer son avis et les vœux des populations européennes et indigènes en ce qui concerne: L’agriculture, le commerce, les plantations, l’élève des bestiaux, l’instruction publique, le service des milices, la police, les travaux d’utilité publique, tels que ponts, chaussées, etc, jugés nécessaires.” “Arrêté instituant, dans chaque arrondissement, une commission consultative appelée à donner son avis sur l’agriculture et le commerce,” 20 January 1862, *Feuille officielle*, no. 109, 28 January 1862, 282.

⁸⁶ The mayors of Saint-Louis and Gorée were municipal leaders of the *habitant* class. See François Zuccarelli, “Les maires de Saint-Louis et Gorée de 1816 à 1872,” *Bulletin IFAN* B 35, no. 3, 551-573.

⁸⁷ “*Tamsir*” in Fulbe meant “one learned in the law.” Klein, *Islam and Imperialism in Senegal*, Note g, 212. In the context of the commission, the *tamsir* referred to the figure having “moral leadership of the Saint-Louis Muslim community.” A petition to authorize the title appeared in 1843; and with Faïdherbe’s institution of Muslim tribunals the position became more firmly established in the personage of Ndiaye Hann. Mamadou Diouf, “Islam, the ‘Originaires,’ and the Making of Public Space in a Colonial City: Saint Louis of Senegal,” in *Tolerance, Democracy, and Sufis in Senegal*, ed. Mamadou Diouf (Columbia University Press, 2013), 190-191.

négociants, one *marchand*, and two *chefs de village* from the *arrondissement*. In the other five *arrondissements*, the commissions would consist of the commander of the *arrondissement*, the civil engineer, the imperial judge or justice of the peace, a delegate from the administrative service, a surgeon, the troops' officer, two notables chosen from among the *négociants* or *traitants* in the *arrondissement*, and two *chefs de village*. While various interests were represented, the governor would decide who would fill some of the chosen positions based on lists provided by the *arrondissement*. The commission was strictly consultative, as its name implied; the order creating the commissions explicitly noted, "It is formally forbidden for the *commissions consultatives* to concern themselves with political questions."⁸⁸

In 1863, however, the *commissions consultatives* were abolished and the number of *arrondissements* was returned to three: Saint-Louis, Gorée, and Bakel. The *arrondissements* of Gorée and Bakel were to be placed under *commandants supérieurs*. The next layer of government would be the *cercle*, each under a commandant named by the governor. Within each *cercle* would be various *chefs de postes*. Each layer reported immediately to the one above it. The central administration would include a director of Political Affairs (*affaires politiques*), and there would be an office of Political Affairs in each *arrondissement*. The heads of these offices would also serve as the commandants of the most important *cercle* within each *arrondissement*. This helped streamline the administration, as commandants de *cercle* were explicitly not to write directly to the governor except in emergency. The *commandants supérieurs* would on the other

⁸⁸ "Il est formellement interdit aux commissions consultatives de s'occuper de questions politiques." "Il est formellement interdit aux commissions consultatives de s'occuper de questions politiques." "Arrêté instituant, dans chaque arrondissement, une commission consultative appelée à donner son avis sur l'agriculture et le commerce," 20 January 1862, *Feuille officielle*, no. 109, 28 January 1862, 282.

hand communicate directly with the governor.⁸⁹ Each capital of a *cercle* would have a *conseil de conciliation*. However, the *commissions consultatives* were abolished, except for those at Saint-Louis, Gorée, and Bakel, that is, the remaining *arrondissements*.⁹⁰ These changes are consistent with a growing colony and resulting administrative needs. By reducing the number of people who reported directly to the governor, communication could be streamlined.

The decree that formed the *cercles* in Cap-Vert, Diander, and the Sereer-Nones' lands in May 1862 reveals the importance of the positions of *chef de cercle* and *chef de village*. Both positions had strong ties to the colony in that they were ultimately chosen by the governor and that they represented a new regime: that of the personal tax.⁹¹ Leaders had collected taxes or tributes before, but these payments were now centralized and standardized by the colony. The May 1862 decree created the *cercle* of Dakar, the *cercle* of Diander or of the North, and the *cercle* of the South or of the Sereers. Article 2 read:

Each *cercle* is commanded by a chief or Alcaty, responsible for executing the laws of the country and the orders of the governor in all the villages placed under his administration, for making justice reign, maintaining good order, stopping banditry and theft on the roads and in the villages by any means, encouraging agriculture, the raising of livestock, and commerce. They should apply all their careful attention to augmenting each year the population of their *cercle* and the products of the land.⁹²

⁸⁹ Arrêté portant rétablissement de l'ancienne division politique de la colonie, 16 July 1863, *Feuille officiel*, no. 186, 21 July 1863, 549-550.

⁹⁰ "Décision portant création d'un conseil de conciliation dans chaque chef-lieu de cercle," 20 July 1863 and "Décision portant suppression des commission consultatives autres que celles des chefs-lieux d'arrondissement," 20 July 1863, in *Feuille officiel*, no. 186, 21 July 1863, 550.

⁹¹ Arrêté, 24 May 1862, ANS SC 11 D 3. The document was also printed in the *Feuille officielle*, no. 182, 10 June 1862, 347-348.

⁹² "Chaque cercle est commandé par son chef ou Alcaty, chargé de faire exécuter dans tous les villages placés sous son administration, des lois du pays et les ordres du Gouverneur, de faire régner la justice, de maintenir le bon ordre, d'empêcher par tous les moyens le brigandage et le vol sur les routes et dans les villages, d'encourager la culture, l'élevage des bestiaux et le Commerce. Ils doivent appliquer tous leurs soins à augmenter chaque année la population de leur cercle et les produits du sol." Arrêté, 24 May 1862, ANS SC 11 D 3.

Under each chef de cercle were the chefs de village, who would be suggested by the chef de cercle and the commander of the arrondissement, then officially named by the governor.

Revenue was to come from taxes collected by the chefs. The chef de cercle would receive an annual revenue of a twentieth of the personal taxes he was to collect, a hundredth of the livestock that passed through the territory, and a fortieth of the produce of the land. The revenue of each chef de village amounted to a fortieth of production as well, meaning that each cultivator had to give up a twentieth of the harvest for these taxes. No additional gifts or taxes were permitted.⁹³

Cantons were introduced as an colony-wide administrative structure in the early 1860s. The chef de canton collected taxes for the French from each unit.⁹⁴

The personal tax had been ordered earlier, by an imperial decree of 4 August 1860. The decree stated that a personal tax would be paid by each French or foreign person, male or female, who was not indigent, with the exception of several classes, such as officers, gendarmes, certain customs workers, sailors, and firefighters. The governor would set the personal tax at the value of a certain number of days of work, the decree stated. He also had the freedom to order how the tax would be paid and enforced.⁹⁵ The goal of the tax was to raise money for the colony.

Yet the tax had another purpose as well: it was an important symbol of French authority. Writing of the newly annexed lands of the Sereers in the vicinity of Gorée, Pinet Laprade explained what he saw as the true importance of the tax:

In compensation for all the benefits we have brought, and as a sign of submission to our authority, the populations newly annexed to the colony are subject to a per capita tax of 1.f50 for the *arrondissement* of Gorée. This tax, along with the price of land use for the

⁹³ Arrêté, 24 May 1862, ANS SC 11 D 3.

⁹⁴ Klein, *Islam and Imperialism*, 61.

⁹⁵ “Promulgation du décret impérial du 4 août 1860, portant établissement, au Sénégal, de l’impôt personnel et de l’impôt de l’enregistrement et du timbre” *Feuille officielle*, no. 89, 10 September 1861, 213.

palm forests, will provide a revenue of 35,000 f. this year. This sum, insignificant in itself, acquires a great importance if we take into account the humiliating situation we were in in 1858; finally, it consecrates a principle without which any social organization is impossible: that of taxes.⁹⁶

Indeed, a major shift in the conception of the colony had occurred. The French, rather than paying tribute to local leaders, were now collecting taxes themselves.

The new administrative units and tax regime were not adopted without problems, however. The question of boundaries and what actually comprised the land a village controlled created problems in terms of the collection of taxes, particularly the *dîme*, or tax on production from the land. For example, the Commandant of Dagana, Martin, had to intervene when there was difficulty over the border between the villages of Ndombo and Richard Toll in 1865. Martin went to Ndombo and reinstated a boundary made earlier by artillery captain Dard, a measure accepted by the disputing parties. However, Fara Diao (or Ndiao), the chief of Ndombo, had another complaint: while his village proper was in the cercle of Dagana, the land cultivated by the people of his village was outside the borders of the cercle, in Taouey. Despite Taouey falling outside the borders of the cercle, the village of Ndombo's residents still cultivated *gros mil* (probably sorghum)⁹⁷ on *lougans* (fields) on the banks at Taouey. Thus it was not the leader of Ndombo who received the *dîme*, but Modi Ngoné (of Richard Toll) and Latir Mboye. Martin

⁹⁶ "En compensation de tous ces bienfaits, et comme signe de soumission à notre autorité, les populations nouvellement annexées à la Colonie sont soumises à un droit de Capitation de 1.f50, pour l'arrondissement de Gorée. Ce droit joint au prix d'affermage des forêts de palmiers, donnera cette année un revenu de 35 mille francs. Cette somme, insignifiante en elle même, acquiert une grande importance, si l'on tient compte de la situation humiliante dans laquelle nous étions en 1858; enfin, elle consacre un principe sans lequel toute organisation sociale est impossible, celui de l'impôt." will have important future for colony. "Notice sur les Serères par le Colonel du Génie Pinet-Laprade, Commandant supérieur de Gorée," 1864, p. 33, ANS 1 G 33.

⁹⁷ *Gros mil* referred to sorghum, while *petit mil* referred to millet. However, French commentators at times confused the grains, as mil was used to mean maize in earlier centuries. James L. A. Webb, *Desert Frontier: Ecological and Economic Change Along the Western Sahel, 1600-1850* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), f.n. 17, 141.

reported “Thus Fara Ndiao not only has no more sorghum territory, he also sees his subjects cultivate the former *lougans* of his village without receiving any fees for his profit.”⁹⁸

Martin counseled the disputing leaders, who had met at the fort of Taouey with other village chiefs, to compromise. His solution was that the *dîme* would be equally shared by the owner (*propriétaire*) of the land and the chief of the village to which the cultivator belonged. With this solution, Martin claimed, “The question of ownership, so rich in difficulties and reclamations because it always entails the question of the *dîme*, lost a great deal of its importance and it became possible to let the current delimitation of the territory stand.”⁹⁹ By splitting the tax between the owner of the land and the person with authority over those actually farming it, Martin acknowledged that the borders actually had little meaning when it came to questions such as these. Land use did not correspond with the boundaries the French had drawn, so Martin found it better to work around the boundaries in order to avoid the onerous task of redrawing them. Martin touted this solution as one that could work elsewhere, as it had kept arguments to a minimum. He wrote to the governor, “If the path that I believed I should follow to reconcile the differences of interest between the chiefs of the cantons of Mbilor and Ndiangué and the chiefs of the independent villages of Khouina and Richard-Toll obtains your approbation, Governor, I would hope to apply it to the villages of Dimar where the questions of territory and *dîme* have also raised numerous difficulties.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ “Ainsi Fara Ndiao non seulement n’a plus de territoire de gros mil mais il voit ses sujets cultiver les anciens *lougans* de son village sans aucune redevance a son profit.” Martin, Commandant of Dagana, to Governor, 17 May 1865, ANS 13 G 29.

⁹⁹ “La question de propriété, si fertile en difficultes et reclamations à cause de celle de la *dîme* qu’elle entraine toujours avec elle, perdait une grande partie de son importance et il devenait possible de laisser subsister les delimitations actuelles de territoire.” Martin, Commandant of Dagana, to Governor, 17 May 1865, ANS 13 G 29.

¹⁰⁰ “Si la voie que j’ai cru devoir suivre pour concilier les differends d’interet entre les chefs des cantons de Mbilor et de Ndiangué, et les chefs des villages independants de Khouina et de Richard Toll obtenait votre approbation,

The problem in Dimar centered on a dispute over territory belonging to the Sonnabé Diandal under the chief Diom Sampo, particularly the territory of Boubou Yéré. In the delimitation of Dimar and Toro, Boubou Yéré was included in Dimar, controlled by the French, but the *lougans* and lands dependant on the village were in Toro.¹⁰¹ Martin's information was that the staff captain Martin, who had set up the division, had divided each village to be in either Dimar or Toro with the idea "that the territory of each village would follow the classification of the village itself." However, the leaders of Toro were claiming the lands used by villagers from Boubou Yéré, but not technically part of the village, for themselves.¹⁰² The border that the leader of Toro, Lamtoro Mouley, was claiming was a road that would give Toro the bulk of the land, Martin argued. As for the Soonabé Diandal, they assured Martin they would obey orders, "they only demanded to not have to obey two chiefs simultaneously, Diom Aliou, named by you, and Lamtoro, who calls himself master of the terrain, and whose exactions they would like to escape."¹⁰³ Martin wrote that the preference was understandable, as in Dimar, residents had to pay only the personal tax and the *dîme*; after these taxes, there could be no other charges. On the other hand, in Toro, there was no personal tax, but there was the *dîme*, an annual payment in guinée cloth dependant on the size of the *lougan*, a payment due by those who did not cultivate their *lougans* for any reason, succession fees, forced gifts, obligations to put up passing chiefs,

Monsieur le Gouverneur, j'essaierais de l'appliquer aux villages du Dimar chez lesquels les questions de territoire et de dime ont également soulever de nombreuses difficultés." Martin, Cmdt of Dagana, to Governor, 17 May 1865, ANS 13 G 29.

¹⁰¹ Martin, Commandant of Dagana, to Governor, 17 May 1865, ANS 13 G 29.

¹⁰² Martin, Commandant of Dagana, to Governor, 24 March 1869, ANS 13 G 29.

¹⁰³ "Ils m'ont du reste, assuré de leur soumission et de leur obéissance à vos ordres: ils ne demandent qu'à ne pas avoir à obéir simultanément à deux chefs: à Diom Aliou, nommé par vous, et à Lamtoro qui se dit maître du terrain et aux exactions duquel ils voudraient se soustraire. Martin, Commandant of Dagana, to governor, 12 March 1869, ANS 13 G 29.

“and a multitude of other small exactions.”¹⁰⁴ Martin touted the French system as orderly and well-regulated, even as he outlined some of the problems caused by the new administrative divisions.

French rule had its own “exactions,” of course. Yet for the chiefs chosen as intermediaries, the tax system could be turned to their benefit. L. Diop, the chef de canton of N’der, wrote several times to the French administration to ask for a verification of borders in his favor or to ask to collect a tax on livestock grazing in his canton.¹⁰⁵ Asking the French to set the borders between the canton of N’der and that of Ndiangué at a site he called “the most just and clear boundary,” Diop wrote, “Monsieur le directeur, I count upon you greatly in this request, which will perhaps be accorded me. However, you must not consider me to be like the other chiefs, I who have received your instruction, who has the same religion, the same customs, and the same character as you; in a word who is truly French.”¹⁰⁶

The impact of these changes was not earth-shaking in many areas. Klein writes of the newly annexed lands of the early 1860s, “Little effort was made to invest in these areas or to change the ways of their peoples. The French yoke was light during the generation that followed, and was probably welcomed by some of the peoples involved, especially those living on the periphery of established states, who were subject to frequent raids.”¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the experiments in administration were aimed at instituting a form of control that was indirect, an improvised

¹⁰⁴ Martin, commander of Dagana, to Governor, 24 March 1869, ANS 13 G 29.

¹⁰⁵ L. Diop to Director, 21 February 1868, ANS 13 G 29; L. Diop to Governor, 18 April 1868, ANS 13 G 29; L. Diop to Governor, 8 May 1868, ANS 13 G 29.

¹⁰⁶ “Monsieur le Directeur, je compte beaucoup sur vous pour cette demande; qui me sera peut-être accordée. Or, vous ne devez pas me considérer comme les autres chefs; moi qui aie reçu vos instructions qui aie la même religion, les mêmes mœurs et le même caractère que vous, en un mot qui suis véritable français.” L. Diop to Director, 21 February 1868, ANS 13 G 29.

¹⁰⁷ Klein, *Islam and Imperialism*, 61.

system in a colony where the apparatus of state, including a system of justice, was not firmly established. In these conditions, assimilation was out of the question. While L. Diop could claim Frenchness, a larger scale civilizing mission was not a major concern at this point at time.

Still, the territorial expansion of the colony, experiments with administration and new leaders, boundary drawing, and the new tax regime marked important changes in the logic of colonialism in Senegal. The role of the colonial government was no longer simply to protect and encourage commerce. While the colony's expansion came out of those justifications, administration required the development of a new kind of colonial state.

Infrastructure

The growing size of the colony and its apparent position on the cusp of great economic development, now that impediments to free commerce had been removed (as the argument went) and now that the peanut had begun to be seriously exploited, meant that the colony needed a more developed infrastructure, particularly in terms of transportation. Proposals for improved transportation networks, even if they did not come to fruition, reveal another aspect of the colonial logic in Senegal in the 1850s and 1860s. The state would need to be a promoter of public works on a scale not yet seen, argued Pinet Laprade, the main figure behind a proposed railroad linking Saint-Louis and the new settlement of Dakar, near Gorée. However, objections would delay the project, revealing the limits of plans for an interventionist colonial state.

Navigation in the colony and in and out of the colony was dangerous and limited in the mid-1850s. As it had been for years, the river was only navigable in its upper reaches during the season of high waters. Overland caravan routes existed, but direct road networks envisioned by

the French did not. In front of Saint-Louis, the main port of the colony, a shifting sand bar at the mouth of the Senegal River made entering and leaving the colony difficult. Incoming ships often had to anchor outside the harbor and wait until conditions made the bar passable. When Faidherbe, as Director of Engineers, wrote to the minister with his assessment of a project to improve navigation past the sandbar in 1853, he judged it to be impossible: "It is something that we believe to be beyond human forces."¹⁰⁸ he noted. Shipwrecks were also common and posed their own problems. Faidherbe complained that people from Kajoor would come to loot goods stranded on shipwrecks. He suggested a small fort on the bank by Saint-Louis would stop merchants from having to burn their goods so they did not fall into the hands of pillagers.¹⁰⁹

In 1853, Faidherbe judged it absolutely necessary to connect the main French establishments. He complained, "The Americans would have established a railroad here long ago. We do not even have a courier on horseback."¹¹⁰ He continued, "It is indeed fortunate that the minister has perscribed to deal with beginning communication between Saint-Louis and Gorée because it is incredible that France has possessed two points as important as Gorée and Saint-Louis for two centuries, commercial cities of a high order, the first with 12,000 residents and the second 20,000, and that there is not the least communication by land between them."¹¹¹ Faidherbe did not, however, propose concrete plans for a railroad at this time.

¹⁰⁸ "C'est une chose que nous croyons au-dessus des forces humaines."

¹⁰⁹ Faidherbe, Directeur du Génie du Sénégal, to governor, 15 March 1853, ANOM SEN XII 12d, in Charpy, *La fondation de Dakar*, 90.

¹¹⁰ "Les Américains y auraient depuis longtemps établi un chemin de fer. Nous n'y avons pas même un courrier à cheval."

¹¹¹ "Il est bien heureux que M. le Ministre ait prescrit de s'occuper de ce commencement de communication de St Louis a Gorée car il est incroyable que la France possède depuis deux siècles deux points aussi importants que Gorée et St Louis, villes commerçants d'un ordre élevé, dont la première a 12,000 habitants et la seconde 20,000 et qu'il n'y ait pas entre elles la moindre communication par terre." Faidherbe, Directeur du Génie du Sénégal, to governor, 15 March 1853, ANOM SEN XII 12d, in Charpy, *La fondation de Dakar*, 90.

Pinet Laprade, officer in the engineering corps and commandant of Gorée who would later become governor of Senegal, first proposed the railroad around 1856. It was a practical project, meant to fix some of the problems of the port at Saint-Louis. The project especially gained attention after it was published in the *Revue coloniale* in January 1857. In the published explication of the project, Pinet Laprade laid out the goals of the railroad:

To free commerce in Senegal from the obstacles and dangers it is faced with by the sand bar on the river, facilitate the flow of products, and to make it so the merchant of Saint-Louis does not sometimes wait, for months at a time, his storehouses empty, for cargo that has arrived at the harbor of Guet'n'dar [Saint-Louis], would be give our commercial operations in Senegal more activity, more safety; this would be progress.¹¹²

Pinet Laprade's proposed railroad would go between the Ile de Sor, at Saint-Louis, and Cap-Vert, the peninsula where missionaries and later French governmental agents were in the process of founding Dakar. Pinet Laprade argued that while railroads were expensive to build in England and France because of the costs associated with entering towns, the Germans and Americans had found a way to save money by building outside of populated centers.¹¹³ Senegal would be able to follow the latter model, as there were no expropriations to make and little to no obstacles on the flat terrain between the two points. The Casamance and Senegal River regions would provide enough trees for the construction. Pinet Laprade estimated that for the 140 km of track, 5,600,000 fr. would be the cost.¹¹⁴

¹¹² "Dégager le commerce du Sénégal des entraves et des dangers que lui oppose la barre du fleuve, faciliter l'écoulement des produits, faire que le négociant de Saint-Louis n'attende pas quelquefois, pendant des mois entiers, ses magasins vides, des cargaisons arrivées en rade de Guet'n'dar, serait donner à nos opérations commerciales du Sénégal plus d'activité, plus de sûreté; ce serait progresser." Pinet Laprade, "Projet de chemin de fer," *Revue coloniale* 17 (January 1857), 5-6.

¹¹³ Pinet Laprade, "Projet de chemin de fer," 6-7.

¹¹⁴ Pinet Laprade, "Projet de chemin de fer," 7.

Of course, the railroad would not be of any use if Senegal did not have a commercial future to make it worthwhile. Pinet Laprade assured readers that commerce was on the upswing. Before the expedition of Podor, that is, in 1853, the number of imports and exports amounted to 28,000 tonnes. French merchants also revealed the healthy state of French commerce in their demands for two tug boats between Bakel and Podor. They could, with this assistance, load at least 200 boats per year with peanuts. In 1856, merchants decided to build a tugboat themselves.¹¹⁵ For Pinet Laprade, this was evidence of a strong trade.

Part of Pinet Laprade's goal in proposing the railroad was to encourage the growth of Dakar. In 1846, Creuly, battallion chief, had promoted the occupation of Cap-Vert after an inspection, a position upheld by the Committee of fortifications in 1847.¹¹⁶ Missionaries set up the mission of Dakar in 1847. However, M. Masson, Chef du Génie du Sénégal et dépendances, rejected the plan to develop Dakar in 1850. In 1856, Pinet Laprade argued that it was time to occupy the peninsula, as had been suggested a decade earlier. Reiterating points he had made in previous memoirs, Pinet Laprade emphasized military and commercial reasons for the occupation. First, he argued, the defense of Gorée required the occupation of Cap-Vert by the French. Since the island of Gorée obtained provisions from the mainland, an occupation would secure this source of food and water. If communication was cut off for fifteen days, Pinet Laprade warned, Gorée would starve. The occupation also had an interest for the colony of Senegal and its center of Saint-Louis, since, as Pinet Laprade noted, the trading houses all had branches at Dakar. A fortification at Dakar would also allow more military communication

¹¹⁵ Pinet Laprade, "Projet de chemin de fer," 8-9.

¹¹⁶ Rapport de Pinet Laprade sur la Défense de la presqu'île du Cap-Vert, Gorée, 15 April 1856, (ANS 13 G 299), in Charpy, *La fondation de Dakar*, 95.

between Saint-Louis and Gorée. As Pinet Laprade noted, the use of colonial troops was beginning to provide France with a larger military force. With troops from Saint-Louis, Waalo, and parts of the Fuuta, the French had a force of 2,500, of which 3/5 were the colonial troops. Pinet Laprade noted this army would soon grow to 3,000 soldiers at the ready to be called up. A fort at Dakar would provide a place for troops from other parts of the colony to assemble to defend Gorée in case of an attack by the English. It could also serve as a post from which troops could be sent to defend Saint-Louis in case of attack.¹¹⁷

The railroad and the occupation of Dakar were two linked developments in Pinet Laprade's vision. In his analysis of the need for the occupation of Dakar, Pinet Laprade predicted the settlement at Dakar would also become an important port once a railroad linked the new establishment with Saint-Louis.¹¹⁸ Conversely, in his article on the railroad, he wrote, "We therefore believe we can conclude in a certain manner that the establishment of a railroad between Sor and Dakar will be possible in little time and will produce a most happy revolution in the running of commercial operations in Senegal, all the while favoring to the highest degree the development of our establishments on Cap Vert."¹¹⁹ Pinet Laprade insisted that Saint-Louis would not suffer as a result of the train line. It would remain the colonial center.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Rapport de Pinet Laprade sur la Défense de la presqu'île du Cap-Vert, Gorée, 15 April 1856, (ANS 13 G 299), in Charpy, *La fondation de Dakar*, 95-96.

¹¹⁸ Rapport de Pinet Laprade sur la Défense de la presqu'île du Cap-Vert, Gorée, 15 April 1856, (ANS 13 G 299), in Charpy, *La fondation de Dakar*, 95-96.

¹¹⁹ "Nous croyons donc pouvoir conclure d'une manière certaine que l'établissement d'un chemin de fer entre Sor et Dakar sera possible dans peu d'années et produira une révolution des plus heureuses dans la marche des opérations commerciales du Sénégal, tout en favorisant au plus haut degré le développement de nos établissements du cap Vert." Pinet Laprade, "Projet de chemin de fer," 10-11.

¹²⁰ Pinet Laprade, "Projet de chemin de fer," 11.

This project was received with enthusiasm in an article in a Marseille paper that emphasized the railroad's value for merchants. The anonymous author summarized Pinet Laprade's project from the *Revue coloniale* in glowing terms. The article even suggested that Pinet Laprade, wanting to limit himself to rigorous arguments supported only with verifiable facts, had left out some of the arguments that might have been seen as unprovable by critics. The Marseille author suggested the railroad could transport travelers and cattle to be sent to the Antilles, which would add to the colony's revenue. Second, he noted that Pinet Laprade had not taken into account the boost in commerce that would come from the fact that boats of greater tonnage could be brought to the point of Dakar, in comparison to the smaller vessels capable of entering the river at Saint-Louis. Finally, the article noted, Pinet Laprade's project would save merchants from having to spend time waiting to cross the bar at the entrance to the Senegal River.¹²¹

Yet there were doubts about the project as it was conceived. An article in the *Moniteur* in June 1856 agreed that a railroad would be useful, responding to Pinet Laprade's project before it was published in the *Revue coloniale*. The article nonetheless scaled back Pinet Laprade's plan, disagreeing with his focus on Dakar as the endpoint. While the article was anonymous, since it appeared in the *Moniteur*, the official paper, it can be assumed to reflect the views of the administration, if it was not written by Faidherbe himself. Though Dakar's future was bright, the article stated, it relied on the future growth of agriculture in Kajoor and Bawol, a phase that had not yet occurred. Dakar would not become the port of the colony, the article predicted, as the harbor was not deep enough. This meant that boats needed to remain at a distance, which added

¹²¹ "Marseille, 27 Janvier," *Courrier de Marseille* (28 January 1857), 1.

substantially to the loading and unloading time in comparison to Saint-Louis, where boats anchored in the river. Merchants would have less control over their goods, would be forced to hire agents and rent warehouses at Dakar, and would risk damage to their merchandise from having to move it so much.¹²² At Saint-Louis, these problems would be avoided, and the sand bar could be gotten around by means of a tugboat.

While the article dismissed Pinet Laprade's argument about the importance of the railroad to Dakar, it nonetheless emphasized its importance to the security of the peanut trade. In Kajoor, which had produced 5 million kg of peanuts since the previous year, peanut growers had to rely on the Moors to transport their goods. The Moors, "profiting from the monopoly that is abandoned to them by the indifference of the merchants of Saint-Louis, take, depending on the distance, a third and more often half of the value transported; it is necessary to add to this the thefts that the Moors commit against the proprietors of peanuts and humiliations of all sorts they make them suffer."¹²³ The railroad would bring not just ease and speed of transport, but "the even more precious benefit of security." The damel of Kajoor would benefit as well, as he would have a share of the revenues collected by the French government.¹²⁴ The 1856 *Moniteur* article, then, proposed a more limited railway project with a focus on security of commerce rather than the development of the new port of Dakar.

¹²² "De l'établissement d'un chemin de fer entre Saint-Louis et Gorée," *Moniteur*, 17 June 1856, in Charpy, *La fondation de Dakar*, 106-107.

¹²³ "Or, chacun sait que les habitants de Cayor manquent absolument de moyens de transport, et qu'ils sont forcés d'avoir recours aux Maures. Ceux-ci, profitant du monopole que leur abandonne l'insouciance des commerçants de Saint-Louis, prennent, selon les distances, un tiers et plus souvent la moitié des valeurs charroyées; il faut ajouter à cela les vols que commettent les Maures sur les propriétaires d'arachides et les vexations de toute sorte qu'ils leur font subir." "De l'établissement d'un chemin de fer entre Saint-Louis et Gorée," *Moniteur*, 17 June 1856, in Charpy, *La fondation de Dakar*, 107.

¹²⁴ "le bienfait plus précieux encore de la sécurité." "De l'établissement d'un chemin de fer entre Saint-Louis et Gorée," *Moniteur*, 17 June 1856, in Charpy, *La fondation de Dakar*, 108.

Faidherbe reiterated these sentiments in a letter to the Minister in early March 1857, not long after the January appearance of Pinet Laprade's article in the *Revue coloniale*. Faidherbe cited his 1853 letter before he had become governor to establish that he too had once called for better transportation. In that year, however, it took boats waiting at the sand bar 110 days to enter the river, an extremely long time. If this was the normal state of things, Faidherbe wrote, an alternative route would be necessary. However, he noted, since he had been in Senegal, the average time to pass the sand bar was 20 days to enter the river, and 13 days to leave, and in the past year it had been 15 days to enter and 5 to leave. Saint-Louis did not need to be replaced as the colony's port, Faidherbe argued. The town's harbor allowed traders to put goods from their warehouses directly on the ships waiting alongside the buildings in the river, whereas in Gorée goods needed to be loaded on scows to be transported to ships. Producers, then, would favor Saint-Louis, to the degree that three quarters of peanuts would go to that port anyway even if a railway gave producers a choice. The small scale of the trade at that time also made the project seem too ambitious for the time, said Faidherbe. Nevertheless, Faidherbe said he would do studies on the project.¹²⁵

When the metropolitan colonial administration asked an expert named Roux to comment on Faidherbe's assessment of the railway project, Roux brought up concerns about the cost of the plan.¹²⁶ Roux is not identified further in the letter, but the bureaucrat who requested his opinion, Godefroy, thought him a suitable contact on the question of transportation in the colony. Roux did not agree with all of Faidherbe's arguments, and he criticized Faidherbe's optimistic

¹²⁵ Faidherbe to Minister, 4 March 1857, ANOM SEN XII 40.

¹²⁶ Roux to Godefroy, 2 May 1857, ANOM SEN XII 40.

judgment of the navigability of the sand bar. The current ease in crossing the bar, he warned, was accidental and temporary. The colonial government should not discontinue studies on the possibility of a railroad, then, since even though the bar might not return to the abnormally difficult situation of 1853, Saint-Louis would never become an ideal harbor. Yet Roux did not wholeheartedly embrace the train project, writing,

What I see as unfortunate for the railway project is the few benefits it will give in its beginnings, and it is precisely these beginnings which, in multiplying transactions and in creating new ones, would considerably increase the advantages. We are placed in a vicious circle, and I see only a subsidy from the state during the first years to get us out of it.¹²⁷

In other words, the railroad would promote the commerce that was supposed to be served by the railroad, but this commerce could not justify the railroad nor fund its early stages since it needed the railroad to emerge itself.

The metropolitan administration found these objections and caveats convincing. A draft of a letter from the minister of the navy to the governor, the commander of the flotilla of the west coast of Africa, and the commandant of Gorée and dépendances, outlines several objections.¹²⁸ The project was well planned, but it was only a sketch, the letter said. The minister objected that the land in question had not been fully explored yet for the purpose of the project. He also suggested the scale of the project was too large, emphasizing that a railway pulled by horses, rather than locomotives, would suffice. In addition, Pinet Laprade had ignored the political

¹²⁷ “Ce que je vois de fâcheux pour le chemin de fer projeté, c’est le peu de bénéfices qu’il donnera au débuts, et c’est précisément lui qui, en multipliant les transactions, en en créant de nouvelles, doit considérablement accroître les bénéfices. L’on est placé ici dans un cercle vicieux, et je ne vois guère qu’une subvention de l’état pendant les premières années pour nous en faire sortir.” Roux to Godefroy, 2 May 1857, ANOM SEN XII 40.

¹²⁸ Minister of the Navy to Governor, Commandant of the flotilla, Commandant particulier de Gorée et dépendances, n.d. (1857?), ANOM SEN XII 40.

context in his proposal, the draft noted. The writer raised questions about how secure the railway would actually be considering threats in Kajoor. Finally, the minister balked at the price. He suggested a *compagnie* be founded by merchants, seemingly to defray the cost onto merchants and away from demands on the colonial budget or additional funds from the metropole.¹²⁹

In 1863, the idea of railroads was taken up again by Faidherbe in the interest of his projects of exploitation, but the project would not begin until 1876.¹³⁰ A telegraph and attempts to make the river navigable instead attracted the attention of French engineers and the administration more broadly. Yet the story of the railroad shows a new logic of infrastructural expansion.

An End to the Faidherbe Era

If the 1850s and first half of the 1860s was a period of development for a colonial logic of military expansion in the name of protection and security, experimentation in administration, and infrastructural projects. In justifying military campaigns, the administration had looked backward to what I have deemed the commercial logic of the 1830s and 1840s in order to contrast their interventions with an ineffective and untenable colonial past. As Faidherbe finished his tenure as governor and returned to France in 1865, this narrative was again called up to emphasize the revolutionary nature of the changes that had occurred in the previous decade.

¹²⁹ Minister of the Navy to Governor, Commandant of the flotilla, Commandant particulier de Gorée et dépendances, n.d. (1857?) ANOM SEN XII 40.

¹³⁰ Ernest Amédée de Renty, *Les chemins de fer coloniaux en Afrique, troisième partie, Chemins de fer dans les colonies françaises* (Paris: F. R. de Rudeval, 1905), 5.

When Faidherbe left the colony in May 1865, ceding the governorship to Pinet Laprade, the occasion was marked by speeches emphasizing Faidherbe's contribution. Ten years ago, Pinet Laprade stated, the colony had been "tributary" to its neighbors, and insults against commerce limited its growth. Pinet Laprade continued, "the political and social organization of the natives had for its goal only war and pillage, it stopped the growth of agriculture on which rests, in large part, the prosperity of nations."¹³¹ Yet, Pinet Laprade suggested, Faidherbe had changed all this. "By the glorious struggles of our arms, by a clever and prudent policy, by an enlightened, benevolent administration, appropriated to the ways and customs of the natives, you have erased this past."¹³² Faidherbe had replaced anarchy with order, introduced public works projects and education, and oversaw the compilation of new knowledge in ethnography, geography, linguistics, and natural history. Laprade told Faidherbe, "you have broken the barriers that barbarity opposes to civilization."¹³³

Just two months later, a bridge between the mainland and the island that was the colonial center of Saint-Louis opened. The Pont de Sor, which a decree would soon name the Pont Faidherbe, was inaugurated in a ceremony on July 2, 1865. In this ceremony too, the mayor of Saint-Louis praised the new policy of 1855. The mayor gave a speech praising Faidherbe's actions as courageous: "in effect, it took all his perserverance, firmness, and his persuasive ideas to reduce this innate robbery among the half-savage people who surround us."¹³⁴ Faidherbe had

¹³¹ " . . . l'organisation politique et sociale des indigènes n'avait pour but que la guerre et le pillage, elle arrêta l'essor de l'agriculture sur laquelle repose, en grande partie, la prospérité des nations." *Moniteur*, 2 May 1865, 81.

¹³² "Par des luttes glorieuses pour nos armes, par une politique habile et prudente, par une administration éclairée, bienveillante, appropriée aux moeurs et aux coutumes des indigènes, vous avez effacé ce passé." *Moniteur*, 2 May 1865, 81.

¹³³ "vous avez brisé les barrières que la barbarie opposait à la civilisation. . ." *Moniteur*, 2 May 1865, 81.

¹³⁴ " . . . en effet, il fallait toute sa persévérance, sa fermeté et ses idées persuasives pour comprimer ce brigandage inné chez les peuples à moitié sauvages qui nous environnent. . ." *Moniteur*, 4 July 1865, 119.

made it possible to travel outside of the capital without feeling threatened or having to pay. The mayor framed Faidherbe's conquest as being about much more than commerce: "The resistance of the barbaric chiefs that obtain a profit from this state of social disorder should be an obstacle to the civilizing ideas of France, and battles necessarily had to happen."¹³⁵ The bridge connecting the colonial center to the mainland was a concrete outcome of those battles. More than an engineering feat, it was a symbol of civilization, security, and the colony's expansion inland.

However, the late 1860s and 1870s can be described as a period of imperial implosion, reminding us that as in the previous half century, colonialism did not happen in a linear way, but progressed through different logics in fits and starts. The period after Faidherbe saw a scaling down of imperial ambitions. Louis-Napoleon's failures elsewhere around the world, including Mexico, left French imperialism with a bad reputation; there was not a rush for further expansion. The Franco-Prussian war directed resources, men, and attentions away from the colonies, as the budget shrank.¹³⁶ In 1871, France gave autonomy back to a number of regions in West Africa that it had previously annexed, including Kajoor, annexed in 1865.

The legacy of the Faidherbe era, then, is complicated. The period was indeed marked by annexation, administrative expansion, and infrastructural projects, features that look closer to the "modern" new imperialism of the late nineteenth century. But future colonial commentators would see this period as one of failure as well, as their concerns were different. In an 1895 letter to the governor proposing the organization of the colony into cercles (a different structure than

¹³⁵ "La résistance des chefs barbares qui tiraient un profit de cet état de désordre social devait être un obstacle aux idées civilisatrices de la France, et des luttes devaient nécessairement s'engager." Faidherbe was victorious." *Moniteur*, 4 July 1865, 119.

¹³⁶ Kanya-Forstner, *The Conquest of the Western Sudan*, 3.

the cercles of the 1850s), the director of political affairs complained that the many different kinds of administration that had been tried since Faidherbe had been fairly changeable. He wrote, “It would be too long to give here the history of the successive regime changes. There is nonetheless a fact to note: it is that all these attempts at more or less complete assimilation that have been attempted with natives with races, regions, and customs so different from ours have lamentably failed.”¹³⁷ For this author, assimilation was the goal. The director complained that “at the beginning of our expansion outside our old posts, the word “annexation,” used in several of the treaties that bear the signature of the governor Faidherbe, had in no way the sense that we have attached to it since.”¹³⁸ Annexation had meant keeping native legislation and ways, while at the same time creating problems by replacing the traditional authorities. Indeed, for this later commentator, the administration of Faidherbe did not look very modern or desirable, at least in terms of administration.

Yet there had been a major shift. A much more invasive colonial state had been formulated, the logic developed out of the failure of commerce to work without force behind it. The triumph of free trade had required a more elaborate state, whose conquests necessitated attempts to rule and communicate. At the end of the Trarza war in 1858, an article in the *Moniteur* expressed the potential of the new colonial logic, though it would take another quarter

¹³⁷ “Il serait trop long de donner ici l’historique de ces changements successifs de regime. Il est toutefois un fait à noter: c’est que tous ces essais d’assimilation plus ou moins complète tentés sur des indigènes de races, de religions, de moeurs si différentes des nôtres ont lamentablement échoué.” Rapport à Monsieur le Gouverneur en conseil privé suivi d’un arrêté divisant les territoires du Sénégal en huit cercles et portant organisation de ces cercles, ainsi que de la direction des Affaires politiques, 9 May 1895, ANS 13 G 30.

¹³⁸ “. . . au debut de notre expansion hors de nos anciens comptoirs, le mot “annexion”, employé dans plusieurs des traités qui portent la signature du gouverneur Faidherbe, n’avait nullement le sens qu’on y a attaché depuis.” Rapport à Monsieur le Gouverneur en conseil privé suivi d’un arrêté divisant les territoires du Sénégal en huit cercles et portant organisation de ces cercles, ainsi que de la direction des Affaires politiques, 9 May 1895, ANS 13 G 30.

century of to act on this prescient statement: “We have opened the door to the Soudan, now we just have to enter it.”¹³⁹

¹³⁹ “Nous avons ouverte la porte du Soudan, il s’agit d’y entrer.” *Moniteur*, No. 116, 15 June 1858, 4.

Chapter V

Missionaries and a Moral Vision for Empire, 1819-1870

In the late 1840s and early 1850s, missionaries from the order of Saint-Esprit set up several posts in Senegambia. One of these settlements, near the French post of Bakel far up the Senegal River, did not attract much attention from the commandant of the post. His letters continued to be full of reports on the political disputes between neighboring peoples and reports on the gum trade. Finally, he included a brief report on the mission in one of his letters to the governor, apologizing for having taken so long: “Though I have not yet had the honor to discuss the mission with you, this does not mean I take any less interest in it; every man should give himself the duty to take part in a work of civilization and regeneration.”¹ These terms of “civilization” and “regeneration,” in the French case so often closely associated with the secular and even anti-religious tradition of the revolution, were, in Senegal at least, in the hands of the religious.

This chapter takes a broader chronological view to examine missionaries’ visions for Senegambia through the colonial logics discussed in the previous chapters. The chapter traces the development of missionaries’ goals from 1819 to 1870, examining moments when their goals aligned with the colonial administration as well as moments of tension between the two groups. In the years immediately following the French reoccupation of Senegal in 1817, the Sisters of Saint-Joseph de Cluny arrived in Senegal to staff hospitals and schools, with gouvernement

¹“Quoique je n’ai jamais eu l’honneur de vous entretenir de la mission, je n’y prends pas moins d’intérêt pour cela; tout homme se fera un devoir de prendre part à une oeuvre de civilisation et de régénération.” Commandant du poste Rey, Bakel, to Governor, 25 August 1851, ANS 13 G 166.

support. The sisters were situated in fairly solid areas of French control and were mostly in contact with populations they were not in great danger of turning away from French power, thus their notions of civilization and teaching received praise from colonial officials. Anne-Marie Javouhey's plantation project aligned with that of the government and thus supported the agricultural logic of the 1820s. For Javouhey, the themes of abolition, agriculture, and civilization were closely connected. When the plantations failed, the sisters remained in Senegambia, but their failure to civilize through agriculture would leave space for others to promote new paths to "civilization."

The chapter then turns to the Frères Ploermel, a French teaching order, and their conflict with clergy of Senegalese origin who started a *collège* (secondary school roughly equivalent to middle school) in the early 1840s. In a period in which commerce was seen to be the main purpose of the colony, the administration had little interest in ambitious educational experiments. In this case, the colonial administration ruled on behalf of the French teachers, asserting control over the educational system and preventing the Senegalese priests from going too far with their plans for the population. While there were several motives given for the closing of the college, the outcome meant that the Senegalese priests' vision of more opportunities for Senegalese boys in the colonial system and beyond was extinguished for the moment, showing the limits of "assimilation." The "civilizing" project of l'Abbé Boilat ran up against the reality of an administration that valued commerce above all.

Finally, I will examine a moment of increased missionary activity on the edges of the colony of Senegal from the late 1840s through the 1860s as the Spiritans made their entry into Senegambia. As the colony began to expand militarily, missionaries attempted a parallel spiritual

expansion into regions outside the colony proper. At first, the missions toward the interior allowed missionaries to set themselves up as a force independent of the colonial government, a role they explicitly embraced. Ironically, the move towards the interior drew the missionaries closer to the colonial government. The failure of missions in the late 1840s and early 1850s led missionaries to reshape their rhetoric to portray the French expansionary government as protectors. By the 1860s and 1870s, the Spiritans openly aligned themselves with the state, even if the goals of the two parties were not always the same. They embraced the military logic of expansion in the name of the protection of missions.

I argue that the relationships between the colonial administration and different orders did not depend on matters of ideology, as one might imagine in the case of France where the anticlerical tradition of the revolution ran up against a Catholicism that felt besieged and has been often viewed by scholars as reactionary. The relationship between missionaries and the administration instead rested on practical concerns. When missionary practices complemented the colonial logic of a given moment, missionaries found allies in the colony. As long as the missionaries were not creating conflicts that would disrupt the colony's precarious position, they were welcomed as a civilizing force. J.P. Daughton has argued that in the Third Republic, ideology remained of secondary importance as a driving force behind the church-state relationship in areas where French missionaries traveled.² By examining this earlier period, it becomes clear that a model for missionary participation in colonial spaces was forming long before the Third Republic. Much like the colonial administration's agricultural and commercial

² J.P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

projects of the early nineteenth century drew on earlier models, religious figures and administrators working out the missionary presence in the colony also drew on the tradition of the pre-revolutionary colonies, where religious orders would send colonial clergy and hospital workers, for example.

Missionaries promoted a particular vision of the colony as a site for moral regeneration. Missionaries' work in the colony shows that the civilizing mission did not grow out of only secular sources. For the period described here, the task of "civilizing" was delegated in part to missionary orders and priests, and was closely and explicitly linked with Catholic morality and with education. Missionaries shaped the meaning of "civilization," and in doing so, promoted a particular vision for the region: that of Catholic families free of the vices of polygamy and alcohol. Some clashes aside, missionaries came to the conclusion that the colony had the duty to support and protect missionary activity.

Civilization, Agriculture, and the Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Cluny

The notion that religion would be the main civilizing force in Senegal dated to the preparations of the French to take back their possessions of Senegal from the British in 1816.

The instructions to Schmaltz, the first governor, said:

Sublime in its origin, respectable in its principles, religion is one of the most powerful checks on the passion of men. It teaches each person their duties towards the state, their peers, and themselves. By giving consolation in the face of unhappiness, recompense to virtue, punishment to vice, it has a large role in conserving the necessary equilibrium to maintain the social order. Religious practice should thus be particularly protected, by a wise and paternal government, as the most certain means to better men and, in consequence, to prevent crimes and avoid the sorry necessity of punishing them. In addition, religion should provide the largest advantages in the execution of the current

views of the government regarding the civilization of the people of the interior of Africa, where the government proposes to form new establishments.”³

In these instructions, the metropolitan government ordered the colonial administration to support Catholic missions, promising it would reap the benefit of ruling over more obedient subjects. Religion was the most important element in a three-pronged strategy of civilizing that consisted of missions, elementary education in the colony, and the engagement of Africans as free laborers on the planned cotton plantations. Schmaltz supported the school and (unsuccessfully) set the plans for the agricultural establishments in motion, but in July 1817 the new governor expressed worries that directly challenging Islam amongst the population along the river would be counterproductive. The Minister replied:

I approve your renunciation of the idea to link a plan of missions destined to convert Africans with the plan of agricultural colonization. The time has not yet come to introduce Christianity among the natives along the Senegal River, and they will be much more prepared for it, even if it is far away, by free labor and elementary education, than by premature and possibly dangerous attempts at proselytism.⁴

The belief that Islam was a serious check against the influence of Catholicism was an idea that would channel missionary activity in later years largely to non-Muslim people, as in the case of

³ “Sublime dans son origine, respectable dans ses principes, la religion est un des freins les plus puissants que l’on puisse mettre aux passions des hommes. Elle enseigne à chacun des devoirs envers l’État, ses semblables et lui-même. En présentant des consolations au malheur, des récompenses à la vertu, des châtements au vice, elle concourt fortement à conserver l’équilibre nécessaire au maintien de l’ordre social. L’exercice du culte doit donc être particulièrement protégé, sous un gouvernement sage et paternel, comme le plus sûr moyen de rendre les hommes meilleurs et, par conséquent, de prévenir les crimes et d’éviter la douloureuse nécessité de les punir. La religion doit présenter en outre les plus grands avantages dans l’exécution des vues actuelles du Gouvernement pour la civilisation des peuples de l’intérieur de l’Afrique, chez lesquels il se propose de former de nouveaux établissements.” Quoted in Joseph Gaucher, *Les Débuts de l’enseignement en Afrique francophone, Jean Dard et l’École mutuelle de Saint-Louis du Sénégal* (Paris: le Livre africain, 1968), 19.

⁴ “J’approuve que vous renonciez à l’idée de lier au plan de colonisation un plan de missions destinées à la conversion des Africains. Le temps n’est pas encore venu d’introduire le Chrétianisme parmi les indigènes des rives du Sénégal, et ils y seront préparés beaucoup mieux, quoique de loin, par le travail libre et l’instruction élémentaire, que par des tentatives de prosélytisme prématurées et peut-être dangereuses.” Minister of the Navy to Schmaltz, 31 December 1818, quoted in Gaucher, *Les Débuts de l’enseignement*, 22.

the Sereer, and to limit the projects of Catholic priests when they might anger Muslim populations.

Meanwhile, in France, the nineteenth century saw a post-revolutionary revival of religious orders and a revitalization of popular religion, especially among women.⁵ Religious orders that had been suppressed during the French revolution were reformed, and new ones created. This revival extended overseas – including to the colonies – as organizations like the Oeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi, founded in Lyon in 1822 by Pauline-Marie Jaricot, collected funds and publicized missionary endeavors.

Though missions toward the interior were put on hold in Senegal, one of the newly-formed French female orders began playing an important medical and educational roles in the colony's colonial centers. The Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Cluny, founded in 1806 by Anne Javouhey, were part of a larger moment of the founding of religious orders after they had been outlawed in the revolution. The Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Cluny became the official order staffing the hospitals and schools of the French colonies.⁶ Javouhey's abolitionism became the driving force for her work in Senegal and later in French Guiana. The first sisters arrived in Senegal in 1819, under the watch of Javouhey's sister, Rosalie, who was in charge of the Senegalese mission in the early days. Anne Javouhey also spent two years there.

⁵ Thomas Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983); Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789-1914* (London: Routledge, 1989); Raymond Anthony Jonas, *France And The Cult Of The Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale For Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Suzanne K. Kaufman, *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture And The Lourdes Shrine* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Caroline C. Ford, *Divided Houses: Religion And Gender in Modern France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

⁶ Sarah A. Curtis, *Civilizing Habits, Women Missionaries and the Revival of French Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 184-185. Gaucher suggests the decision came after the indendant of Bourbon intervened with the Minister of the Interior on behalf of Javouhey, 34-35.

The decision to bring the Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Cluny to Senegal to act as nurses and teachers drew on older colonial traditions. The order was in fact replacing another religious order that had provided nuns for the old regime colonies but that proved unable to furnish enough in the new colonial situation.⁷ Female religious orders played an important role in hospital work and primary education in France as well.⁸ Sarah Curtis suggests the decision to send women to Africa reflected a “new approach to to colonization” that was focused on “settlement” and the role of women in “civilizing.”⁹ However, the nuns’ work was focused on a very small population that could only loosely be called “settlers,” as Senegal did not become the kind of settler colony that Algeria would, and the Africans they strove to “civilize” were also a small segment of the population. In many ways, the nuns were an extension of old regime methods of staffing the colonies.

The sisters were clearly under the protection, and the control, of the government in terms of their placement. They received government salaries and rations, and the Minister of the Navy paid the congregation for their travel costs.¹⁰ New staff was needed quite often to replace sisters who were sent back because of illness or who died in the colony. When there was a shortage, the governor would request replacements from France. At certain times this meant there would be an extra sister in the colony, but more often than not, illnesses and deaths meant that the schools or

⁷ They were replacing the Soeurs de St-Paul de Chartres. See Lecuir-Nomo, *Anne-Marie Javouhey*, 61-62; Curtis, *Civilizing Habits*, 184-185.

⁸ Sarah A. Curtis, *Educating the Faithful: Religion, Schooling, and Society in Nineteenth Century France* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000).

⁹ Curtis, *Civilizing Habits*, 191-2.

¹⁰ Lecuir-Nomo, *Anne-Marie Javouhey*, 97-98.

hospitals were short-staffed.¹¹ Still, the system provided a steady workforce for the colony's institutions.

The sisters' role in military hospitals was an important one; they served as nurses to the European population stationed in the colony. Aside from their nursing duties, it seems that, at least as of 1831, the sisters were taking care of at least some of the accounting at the hospital, though the colonial inspector recommended they be relieved of this duty.¹² In a period in which the colony was largely staffed by the navy (there were few civilian administrators and a small European population in general), the nurses found themselves mostly treating male, European military forces.¹³

While sisters worked in the hospitals to attempt to keep the military healthy, others staffed schools aimed at educating the young female populations of the colonial centers of Saint-Louis and Gorée. Here, the sisters encountered another population: largely girls from the mixed-race *habitant* class of the cities. They had risen to become an important commercial class. *Habitant* identity was tied to the French – they were Catholic, spoke French, engaged in commerce with the French as their livelihood, and many had French ancestors.

The colonial administration and male religious hierarchy viewed the double role of the sisters positively, on the whole. This positive opinion came out of the goals of staffing military

¹¹ For one example among many, see letter urgently requesting replacement nuns for hospital, Charmasson to Minister of the Navy, 30 August 1840, ANOM SEN I 22b.

¹² The colonial inspector recommended they be relieved of this task because they did not know anything about accounting, and because it was a burden to them. Rapport sur la situation des diverses branches du services de la Colonie du Sénégal et dépendances, 1 July 1831, ANOM SEN XIX 2b.

¹³ As late as 1862, when there was a question of an ill indigent European woman being admitted to the hospital on Gorée, the authorities responded there was no place for women at the hospital and no room in the budget for a civilian hospice. Extrait du rapport médical relatif à la situation de l'hôpital de Gorée pendant le 3^e trimestre 1862, ANOM SEN XI 39.

hospitals and teaching a restricted class of women to become good mothers. A shared language of Christian morality linked these projects. This was the case from the earliest days of the order's existence in Senegal. Governor Roger wrote that in Gorée:

The customs of the *habitants* have, in some ways, nothing Christian or even European about them; legitimate marriage is unknown and polygamy is established there by universal usage. One hopes that the school for girls, that I recently opened under the direction of the sisters of Saint-Joseph, will contribute to the adoption of the best moral principles, and religion can do much there. The Goreens are naturally religious, they only lack being enlightened.¹⁴

The sisters were then to work on a group that was already Catholic to some degree, at least in name or background. While Roger's connection with Javouhey may have helped predispose him to the notion that moral change could be brought about through the religious curriculum of the sisters, this idea was shared by others.

The curriculum of the girls' schools included reading, writing, and needlework, while internal students (boarders supported by the government) also learned household tasks.¹⁵ This combination of work and study was part of Javouhey's plan. Work was important for the character, and rewarding it reinforced important lessons. For example, the school organized a public exposition of needlework, which according to one nun reduced laziness among the pupils and got them excited about their work.¹⁶ One sister wrote in a report, “We are especially attached, Monsieur le Ministre, as in the past, to religious instruction and manual work, that is to

¹⁴“Les mœurs des habitants n’ont, sous certains rapports, rien de chrétien, rien même d’Européen; le mariage légitime y est inconnu et la polygamie s’y trouve établie par l’usage universel. Il faut espérer que l’école des filles, que j’ai fait ouvrir dernièrement sous la direction des soeurs de St Joseph, contribue à faire adopter de meilleurs principes de morale; la religion y peut aussi beaucoup. Les Goréens sont naturellement religieux; il ne leur manque que d’être éclairés.” [Roger, Saint Louis, to Minister], 30 or 31 May 1826 (two copies of letter have different dates), ANOM SEN I 11a.

¹⁵ Governor Soret to Minister of the Navy, 4 April 1838, ANOM SEN X 3bis.

¹⁶ Rapport, from Soeur Marie de la Croix, Saint-Louis, 2 September 1852, ANOM SEN X 5a.

say *la contine*, embroidery, tapestry, etc., understanding that this is the only way, on one hand, to form the heart and spirit of our young children, and on the other, to make them into true family mothers taking care above all of their households and the Christian education of their children.”¹⁷

This rhetoric did not seem to be accepted by some parents. One report noted that this curriculum had little valuable practical application in the eyes of families: “The instruction of girls doesn’t promise them, as it does the boys, an honorable and lucrative position in the administration or in commerce, the sole object of their desires.” Parents therefore kept their daughters at home at the slightest excuse, the inspector complained.¹⁸ However, the instructors insisted that the curriculum would have an moral outcome.

The schools were the site where the most transformation could occur, administrators and religious agents alike agreed. When Mère Javouhey was in Senegal, she wrote a letter to her sister in France that emphasized the moral nature of both the hospital and education parts of the mission, but also highlighted the differences between the tasks. As for the sick in the hospital, mostly European soldiers, she wrote it was a matter of charity: “much charity is needed to serve them; most are bad subjects, who do not want anyone to talk to them about religion, neither during their lives nor at death; but in the end if our motives are truly pure, God will always judge them as agreeable.”¹⁹ In contrast, she wrote, “I like the blacks better; they are good and simple

¹⁷“Nous nous sommes attachées tout spécialement, Monsieur le Ministre, comme par le passé à l’instruction religieuse et au travail manuel, c’est-à-dire la contine, la broderie, la tapisserie, et et –comprenant que c’est la le seul moyen, d’un cote, de former le coeur et l’esprit de nos jeunes enfants et de l’autre d’en faire de véritables mères de famille s’occupant avant tout de l’intérieur de leur ménage et de l’éducation chrétienne de leurs enfants.” Rapport à son Excellence, Monsier le Ministre de la Marine et des colonies, sur l’instruction primaire donnée aux jeunes filles de Gorée par les soeurs de Saint Joseph de Cluny, Sr Xavier, Gorée, 7 October 1854, ANOM SEN X 5a.

¹⁸“L’instruction des demoiselles ne leur promet pas comme pour les garçons une position honorable et lucrative dans l’administration ou dans le commerce, objet unique de leurs voeux.” Inspection des Ecoles par le Préfet Apostolique, to governor, 20 September 1842, ANS J1.

¹⁹ “il faut bien de la charité pour les servir : la plupart sont de mauvais sujets, qui ne veulent pas qu’on leur parle de

people; they have no malice except that which they learn from us; it will not be difficult to convince them by example; they easily imitate what they see among the whites. You know that they do not have many religious virtues to copy.”²⁰ Some parents did want their children to copy the religious virtues of the sisters; when Javouhey visited Gorée in May 1822, overseeing a new batch of three sisters sent to reopen the hospital and open another girls' school, she noted the *signares* happily brought their children and that some attended a class intended for women in their early twenties.²¹

In the early years of the sisters' presence in the colony, their mission was shaped by Javouhey's particular interest in abolition and in agriculture. As mentioned in Chapter I, Anne Javouhey was acquainted with the Baron Roger, the governor who directed the plantation experiments of the 1820s. Javouhey herself embraced agricultural establishment, and the order founded their own. In 1822, she reported that her cousin Boissart had been named surveyor, and they had asked the Minister that his brother Louis be sent to assist him. She reported that they had a concession of 900 arpents “for him and the congregation.” Each party, presumably meaning Boissart and the congregation, would put in 1500 fr to pay the “nègres,” while the gouvernement would feed the workers for a year and provide tools, seeds, and transport.²²

religion, ni pendant la vie, ni à la mort ; mais enfin si nos motifs sont bien purs, Dieu les aura toujours pour agréables.” Anne-Marie Javouhey, Senegal, to Mère Clothide Javouhey, Bailleul, [end of April or early May] 1822, Letter 59, quoted in Lecuir-Nomo, *Anne-Marie Javouhey*, 106.

²⁰ “J’aime beaucoup mieux les Noirs : ils sont bons, simples, ils n’ont de malice que celle qu’ils tiennent de nous; il ne serait pas difficile de les convaincre par l’exemple ; ils imitent facilement ce qu’ils voient faire aux Blancs. Vous jugez qu’ils n’ont pas beaucoup de vertus religieuses à copier.” Anne-Marie Javouhey, Senegal, to Mère Clothide Javouhey, Bailleul, [end of April or early May] 1822, Letter 59, quoted in Lecuir-Nomo, *Anne-Marie Javouhey*, 106.

²¹ Lecuir-Nomo, *Anne-Marie Javouhey*, 107-110.

²² Anne-Marie Javouhey, Sénégal-Gorée, to Mère Marie-Joseph, Beauvais, and to Mère Clotilde Javouhey, Bailleul, 20 April, finished 22 May 1822, Letter 60, in Anne-Marie Javouhey, *Correspondance, 1798-1851*, ed. Jean Hébert and Marie-Cécile de Segonzac, vol. 1 (Cerf, 1995), 114.

Several months later, Javouhey reported on the “charmante habitation” that had been founded, 40 *lieues* from Saint-Louis and one *lieue* from Dagana. The settlement, where she had spent six weeks, was made up of six huts they had built. The huts of the blacks were in the courtyard, she noted, while the two huts for her and her sister were in the garden. Javouhey’s hut consisted of three rooms: a salon “to receive the princes and kings who visit us often,” an office, and a kitchen.²³ The habitation was surrounded by two thorny hedges, which Javouhey noted served to protect them from wild animals “and also to avoid the continual visits that trouble us.”²⁴

Javouhey viewed her order’s agricultural and moral missions as one and the same.

Writing to her sister Rosalie, she used the metaphor of a nursery to make the connection between agriculture and education explicit: “It is on our plantation [habitation] that we propose to build the two establishments for the instruction of the black youth; it will be, I hope, a nursery of honest men and good Christians.”²⁵ The establishment would allow the order to find a place for orphans without a vocation for their order, “Indeed, we will give them 100 *louis* to give them a small dowry, whether to get married or enter into commerce, or finally to enter into another congregation.”²⁶ Javouhey described the Senegambians she encountered as a gentle and simple people. She wrote, “There are many observations to make on a people so savage yet so gentle;

²³ “l’une sert de salon pour recevoir les princes et les rois qui nous visitent souvent” Anne-Marie Javouhey to Mère Marie-Joseph Javouhey, Letter 65, 6 September 1822, in Javouhey, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, 126.

²⁴ “et puis pour éviter les visites continuelles qui nous ennuieraient.” Anne-Marie Javouhey to Mère Marie-Joseph Javouhey, Letter 65, 6 September 1822, in Javouhey, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, 125.

²⁵ “C’est sur notre habitation qu’on se propose de bâtir les deux établissements pour l’instruction de la jeunesse *noire*, qui seront, je l’espère, une pépinière d’honnêtes hommes et de bonnes chrétiens.” Anne-Marie Javouhey to Mère Rosalie, 25 November 1822, Letter 68, in Javouhey, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, 137.

²⁶ “Eh bien, nous leur donnerons cent louis pour leur faire une petite dot, soit pour se marier ou entrer dans le commerce, ou enfin pour entrer dans une autre congrégation.” Anne-Marie Javouhey, Sénégal-Gorée, to Mère Marie-Joseph, Beauvais, and to Mère Clotilde Javouhey, Bailleul, 20 April, finished 22 May 1822, Letter 60, in Javouhey, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, 114.

for me I would be less scared of fifty blacks than of two whites.”²⁷ The people of the country, especially the herders, were not tempted by money, but rather led a simple life. There were religious parallels to be found here; “Their life has a resemblance to the patriarchs of the Old Testament; they keep flocks and always sleep under tents and on simple mats.”²⁸ Through work and education, the missionary order believed they could bring Christianity to a people that already showed the virtues of humility.

While Javouhey cultivated a close relationship with the government, the goals of the congregation were not completely synonymous with the French government’s goals. Javouhey saw the importance in founding missions outside of the colony’s boundaries. There were plans for an establishment in Sainte-Marie de la Gambie, and the English governor of the colony there sent her a letter asking her to start it in October 1822.²⁹ When Javouhey arrived, she found that 500 girls and 1000 boys had been captured at Sierra Leone. She planned to pick 50 children, from ages 8-10, and take them to an uninhabited building which had been built as a hospital near Ste Marie. For Javouhey, religious motivations transcended nationality:

It seems to me that it is a great good to found this establishment, it will be a guarantee for the others in Africa, in case of a rupture between the French and English governments. The latter seem to me to have indeed decided to second our beneficial plans for the young of Africa, they give us a complete liberty to raise them in the Catholic religion, they do not spare any expense for the initial expenses of the establishment.³⁰

²⁷ “Il y a bien des observations a faire sur un peuple aussi sauvage et cependant si doux; pour moi j'aurais moins peur de cinquante noirs que de deux Blancs.” Anne-Marie Javouhey to Mère Marie-Joseph Javouhey, 6 September 1822, Letter 65, in Javouhey, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, 125.

²⁸ “Leur vie a du rapport avec celle des patriarches de l'Ancien Testament ; ils gardent les troupeaux et couchent toujours sous des tentes et sur de simples nattes.” Anne-Marie Javouhey to Mère Marie-Joseph Javouhey, 6 September 1822, Letter 65, in Javouhey, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, 127.

²⁹ Anne-Marie Javouhey to Mère Marie-Joseph Javouhey, 6 September 1822, Letter 65, in Javouhey, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, 128.

³⁰ “Il me semble que c'est un grand bien de faire cet établissement, il sera une garantie pour les autres d'Afrique, en cas de rupture entre le gouvernement français et anglais. Ces derniers me paraissent bien décidés a seconder nos vues bienfaisantes sur la jeunesse africaine ; ils nous donnent une entière liberté pour les élever dans la religion

The English were not enemies, but simply another power that might support the Sisters of Saint-Joseph de Cluny in their work with children.

The sisters in fact did not entirely trust the metropolitan French government; a legacy of the French Revolution was a fear of threats to religious orders. If anything, the colonies would be a refuge. After Anne Javouhey left Senegal she traveled to Cayenne to attempt to found an agricultural colony there. In 1831, she wrote to Therese Javouhey, who was in Martinique, warning her there was news of religious persecution in France, where “They strike down the cross, destroy the seminaries, mistreat the priests; nothing is respected.”³¹ Javouhey warned Therese not to try to return to France and suggested she should fill the colonial houses with French sisters to protect them from events in France, even if it meant replacing black men and women. She wrote, “If, against all hope, they oblige us to give up our sacred habits by force, there is no resistance; but I think that they will not go to such extremes in the colonies. Let us hope that God preserves us from this misfortune.”³²

France had also sent priests to the colonial centers, and while they sometimes had a contentious relationship with the sisters, they largely praised them and recognized their value. At an event recognizing prize winners from the girls' school, with the governor in attendance, a

catholique; ils n'épargnent aucune dépense pour les premiers frais de l'établissement.” To mère Roasalie Javouhey, 28 January 1823, Letter 71, in Javouhey, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, 143-144.

³¹ “. . . on abat les croix, détruit les séminaires, maltraite les prêtres, rien n'est respecté. . .” Anne-Marie Javouhey to Mère Thérèse Javouhey, 11 May 1831, Letter 235, in Javouhey, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, 503-504.

³² “. . . on abat les croix, détruit les séminaires, maltraite les prêtres, rien n'est respecté. . . . Si, contre tout espoir, on nous obligeait à quitter notre saint habit, à la force, il n'y a pas de résistance ; mais je pense qu'on ne se portera pas à cette extrémité dans les colonies. Espérons que Dieu nous préservera de ce malheur.” Anne-Marie Javouhey to Mère Thérèse Javouhey, 11 May 1831, Letter 235, in Javouhey, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, 503-504.

priest gave a telling speech about the male hierarchy's view of the sisters' important role.³³ The speech looked back to the historical days of Jesus to describe women's fall in society:

Before him, among almost all of the nations' women had fallen to the lowest degree of debasement, as they still are among peoples where the light of the Gospel does not exercise its sanitary influence. Submitted to the bizarre whims of divorce and polygamy, they are slaves to their husbands who see in them so much inferiority, that they regard them as a different species.³⁴

Women were not innately inferior, but had fallen; Jesus could raise their status to free them from cruel social constructs, polygamy being the most important in the Senegalese context.

The priest noted that women were instead supposed to play a major domestic role and serve as a trusted confidant for their husbands:

Lets say it then, why should we hide it? Whether we want it or not, women dominate because they preside over the good or bad destiny of families and nations: it seems that God has placed them on the earth to constitute family ties and there give birth to affections without which a real civilization would never exist.³⁵

The women and teachers were warned that without the strong, virtuous mothers that could be created through religion, children would run into trouble. Louis IX, the patron saint of the colonial city of Saint-Louis, was cited as having a good mother, in contrast to the bad mothers of Voltaire and Byron. The priest thanked those who resolved “to encourage our teachers and to

³³ Allocution du v. Préfet apostolique du Sénégal pour le dix Septembre jour de la distribution des prix aux demoiselles de l'école tenue par les dames de St Joseph de Cluny, 1847, ANS J1.

³⁴ “Avant lui chez presque toutes les nations les femmes étaient tombées au dernier degré d'abaissement, comme elles le sont encore chez tous les peuples où les lumières de l'Evangile n'exercent point leur influence salutaire. Soumises aux bizarres caprices du divorce et de la polygamie, elle sont les esclaves de leurs maris qui voient en elles tant d'infériorité, qu'on dirait qu'ils les regardent comme d'une espèce différente de la leur.” Allocution du v. Préfet apostolique du Sénégal pour le dix Septembre jour de la distribution des prix aux demoiselles de l'école tenue par les dames de St Joseph de Cluny, 1847, ANS J1.

³⁵ “Disons le donc, et pourquoi le cacherions-nous? qu'on le veuille ou non les femmes dominent parce qu'elles président aux destinées bonnes ou mauvaises des familles et des nations: il semble que Dieu les a placées sur la terre pour constituer les liens de la famille et en faire naître les affections sans les quelles il n'existera jamais une véritable civilisation.” Allocution du v. Préfet apostolique du Sénégal pour le dix Septembre jour de la distribution des prix aux demoiselles de l'école tenue par les dames de St Joseph de Cluny, 1847, ANS J1.

work with them toward the regeneration of the country by favoring an education based on solid instruction and based on this religion descended from heaven that alone can civilize peoples and bring them to the bosom of honor.”³⁶ The priest here explicitly linked the education of women and civilization, emphasizing religion was the sole means to bring about the transformation.

Of course, this praise could be tempered in the case of what was judged as immoral behavior; faults could not be tolerated in a climate where religious agents were meant to be examples. Around 1844, the prefect apostolic, Maynard, and the Soeurs de Saint-Joseph were drawn into a controversy over the order's confessor. Maynard had assigned the sisters a special confessor against their wishes. The sisters submitted, but on the condition that they did not have to confess to him if they did not want to; Maynard responded by refusing the sisters even normal confession. The acting governor, Thomas, came in on the side of the sisters, judging that Maynard had assigned the special confessor in a spirit that was “hardly generous.” Thomas allowed that according to a 1840 royal ordonnance, he had no authority over “the spiritual surveillance and ecclesiastical discipline” of the order.³⁷ Still, he asked for Maynard's replacement and asked the Minister “to make a decision in order that these good sisters so worthy because of their devotion do not have to stay a long time under such a measure that deprives them of the only consolation they have in the world.”³⁸ Thomas emphasized the sisters' devotion and moral standing to support their cause.

³⁶ “pour encourager vos institutrices and pour concourir avec elles à la régénération des pays en favorisant une education basée sur une instruction solide et fondée sur cette religion descendue du ciel qui peut seule civiliser les peuples et les conduire au sein du bonheur.” Allocution du v. Préfet apostolique du Sénégal pour le dix Septembre jour de la distribution des prix aux demoiselles de l'école tenue par les dames de St Joseph de Cluny, 1847, ANS J1.

³⁷ The reference is to article 42 of a royal order of 7 September 1840. “la surveillance spirituelle et la discipline ecclésiastique”

³⁸ “. . . je crois devoir . . . prier Votre Excellence de vouloir bien prendre une décision afin que ces bonnes soeurs si

Two years later, the administration again weighed in on the issue of confessors, this time against the Sisters of Saint-Joseph. The administration's criticisms, however, were aimed at individual women rather than the order as a whole, reflecting the importance of the sisters and the official acceptance of their role in the colony. Interim governor Houbé recommended that the current mother superior in Senegal, Soeur Léonie, should be sent back to France because of some kind of immoral intrigue with the order's confessor. Houbé, supporting a proposition first sent by a priest named Arlabosse, argued that Léonie "has neither modesty, nor humility. She seems to have intelligence and instruction, but the spirit of intrigue that torments her, her angry, indomitable character has constantly been an object of trouble among the clergy and of scandal for the population."³⁹ The problem was that the community's confessor, chosen because the superior did not want anyone else, was l'abbé Fridoil, a Senegalese priest who had been trained in France by the Soeurs de Saint-Joseph. The report described him as "young, insubordinate, ambitious"⁴⁰ and defended Maynard by suggesting the préfet had wanted to break "an intimacy that seemed to him contrary to the interests of religion."⁴¹ This intimacy was left undefined, but Houbé noted that it had invited "the most bitter and regrettable critiques on religion, all the more regrettable because here it is important that ecclesiastics and their sisters be more than anyone resigned and charitable." Houbé suggested that even though Arlabosse had corrected, in

méritantes par leur dévouement ne restent par plus longtemps sous le coup d'une mesure qui les prive de la seule consolation qu'elles ont dans ce monde." Acting governor [Thomas], Saint Louis, to Minister of the Navy, 27 December 1844, ANOM SEN X 4a.

³⁹ "n'a ni modestie, ni humilité. Elle paraît avoir de l'intelligence et de l'instruction; mais l'esprit d'intrigue qui la tourmente, son caractère colère, indomptable ont été constamment un sujet de trouble parmi le clergé et de scandale pour la population." Interim governor Houbé, Saint Louis, to Minister of the Navy, 13 July 1846, ANOM SEN X 4a.

⁴⁰ "jeune, insoumis, ambitieux" Interim governor Houbé, Saint Louis, to Minister of the Navy, 13 July 1846, ANOM SEN X 4a.

⁴¹ "une intimité qui lui paraissait contraire aux intérêts de la religion." Interim governor Houbé, Saint Louis, to Minister of the Navy, 13 July 1846, ANOM SEN X 4a.

appearance at least, the behavior of Léonie and Fridoil, both should be sent to France.⁴² In short, the administration had a stake in retaining good examples (and getting rid of bad ones).

On the whole, the sisters were praised, and did not seem to clash much with the government at this period; if the religious hierarchy did try to discipline individuals, the utility of the order itself was not questioned. The sisters filled an important role in the colony and thus coexisted easily with the colonial administration and religious hierarchy. They picked up on the tradition of religious orders sending women religious to educate young girls and staff hospitals in the colonies. Their moral goals echoed the administration's plantation projects in the 1820s, and after the failure of the plantation experiment, they generally dealt with the limited sphere of the *habitant* class of women in the coastal settlements, a focus that did not threaten French strategic interests. The religious goals of nuns synced with practical goals of state.

The Limits of Assimilation: A Native Clergy

Boys' education became a more contentious affair when the elementary schools run by the Frères Ploërmel, a teaching order, came into conflict with several French-educated Senegalese priests who had founded a *collège*, or secondary school. Whereas the sisters were able to fulfill a role necessary for the colonial administration, largely without stepping out of bounds of expectations as far as interactions with Senegalese people, the debate over boys' education was more contested because it brought to the fore competing visions for religious and

⁴² Houbé wrote he was not going to go into the intrigue, “mais je ne dois pas nier qu'elles ont appelé sur la supérieure et le confesseur les critiques les plus amères et les plus fâcheuses pour la religion, d'autant plus fâcheuses qu'ici il importe que les ecclésiastiques et les soeurs soient plus que personne résignés et charitables.” Interim governor Houbé, Saint Louis, to Minister of the Navy, 13 July 1846, ANOM SEN X 4a.

educational authority in the colony. The eventual demise of the *collège* marked the reestablishment of a rather conservative use of resources and vision of education for the colony proper. However, as the final part of this chapter will outline, a new order would revive the idea of a native clergy around the time the *collège* was closing, but this time outside of the colonial centers.

The Frères d'instruction chrétienne de Ploërmel, or Frères Ploërmel, were a teaching order formed in France in 1819 and approved in 1821. The government had initially run elementary schools in Senegal with a non-religious, civilian staff, but providing teachers proved to be difficult.⁴³ In April 1838, for example, when the boys' schools were still under secular watch, the governor remarked that the teacher had returned to France, and the man supposed to serve as his replacement had died of illness, leaving the boys' school without a teacher for six months.⁴⁴ As early as November 1837, the minister was inquiring into the possibility of inviting the Frères Ploërmel to Senegal “because we must recognize that nothing truly effective can come without the participation of religious associations offering the necessary guarantees.”⁴⁵ The founder of the order, M. de La Mennais, hesitated at first, not having enough brothers to send (as he was also sending some to the Antilles) and worrying about the problem of having Catholics and Muslims in the same school.⁴⁶ After the minister convinced him in 1839 that he would not be

⁴³ On early secular schooling, see Gaucher, *Les Débuts de l'enseignement*; Denise Bouche, *L'enseignement dans les territoires français de l'Afrique occidentale de 1817 à 1920 : mission civilisatrice ou formation d'une élite?*, vol 1, (Université de Lille III, Service de Reproduction des thèses, 1975), Chapter 1.

⁴⁴ Governor to Minister of the Navy, 4 April 1838, ANOM SEN X 3bis.

⁴⁵ “car il y a lieu de reconnaître que rien de véritablement efficace ne pourra être obtenu qu'avec le concours d'associations religieuses offrant des garanties nécessaires.” Quoted in Maurice Lallemand, *Comme un long fleuve fertile de passion et d'action éducatives: 150 années de présence à l'enseignement en Afrique des Frères de Ploërmel* (Nantes: Frères de l'instruction chrétienne de Ploërmel, 1992), 19.

⁴⁶ La Mennais, Response of 11 July 1838, quoted in Lallemand, *Comme un long fleuve fertile*, 20.

forced to deal with this problem, citing the rules of the girls' school saying that children would be raised in the practice of Catholicism, he acquiesced.⁴⁷ Thus the Frères were chosen to run the schools, which they reopened in Saint-Louis in December 1841 and Gorée in March 1843.⁴⁸

The schools fulfilled social, political, and educational goals. On one hand, they offered a shelter to orphaned children; some of the internal students being put up at the school by government funds were orphans whose parents had died in the colony. Another role of the school consisted of cementing relations with nearby chiefs. The children of chiefs from the interior, held as hostage (not in the sense of captured prisoners, but as a tribute given as a sign of friendship), also made up part of the internal students of the school.⁴⁹ The schools' curriculum focused on reading, writing, arithmetic, and some drawing, but did not include any advanced training. Still, the schools provided enough education to produce functionaries for the colony; in 1842, one inspector noted that the school could furnish writers for the administration.⁵⁰

In the boys' schools, too, education had a moral element that was identified to be particularly necessary in Senegal. While the emphasis on manual work and parenthood was not present as it was in the girls' schools, the religious hierarchy argued that the boys' school would teach Christian morals through example. The préfet apostolique Arlebosse wrote in 1846 that it was easy for boys to fall prey to passions when they were turned away from the teachings of Catholicism. For that reason, "It is therefore necessary that, more than elsewhere, if we want to

⁴⁷ Lallemand, *Comme un long fleuve fertile*, 21.

⁴⁸ Bouche, *L'Enseignement dans les territoires français*, 75.

⁴⁹ This would be more famously expanded later with Faidherbe's *école des otages*. There were hostages in the school as early as 1820, when 4 young Sarracolet princes from Galam entered the school. Bouche, *L'Enseignement dans les territoires français*, 322.

⁵⁰ Prefet apostolique Maynard to governor, Inspection des Ecoles par le Préfet Apostolique, Saint-Louis, 20 September 1842, 15, ANS J1.

obtain useful results for the civilization and moralization of indigenous people, there be an eminently religious education and that we everywhere keep away from the schools anything that can even indirectly distract from religion.”⁵¹ This included the families of the students, who served as a bad example. Luckily, however, the brothers, especially the zealous Frère Euthyme, inspired confidence in the boys' fathers, so the trusted brothers could have an influence almost as if the boys were internal boarders at the school.⁵² It was not just the Senegalese who were bad examples though; Arlabosse noted that most of the French population did no better. Of the several Senegalese who had gone to study in France, none of them had come to anything, and “following the example of most of the Europeans who have come to Senegal”⁵³ they gave up religious practice. To the *prefet apostolique*, and probably the Frères Ploërmel, religious education was necessary to counter the bad example of both Senegalese and irreligious Europeans. Religion was the sole force that could rein in the passions of Africans, Arlabosse suggested.

Even as the brothers were founding their school, a proposal for a secondary school set up a conflict. Rather than finding teachers within the newly formed system run by the Frères Ploërmel, the government turned to newly minted priests of Senegalese origin who were just completing their studies in France. The students had been part of a group of young Senegalese

⁵¹ “il faut donc qu'ici, plus qu'ailleurs, si on veut obtenir quelques résultats utiles pour la civilisation et la moralisation des peuples indigènes, une éducation éminemment religieuse et partout éloigner des écoles primaires et secondaires tout ce qui pourrait, même indirectement, détourner de la religion.” Arlabosse, *Rapport sur l'enseignement des écoles chrétiennes de la colonie française du Sénégal depuis le 1er Janvier jusqu'au 1er Juillet 1846*, ANS J1.

⁵² Arlabosse, *Rapport sur l'enseignement des écoles chrétiennes de la colonie française du Sénégal depuis le 1er Janvier jusqu'au 1er Juillet 1846*, ANS J1.

⁵³ “A l'exemple du grand nombre des Européens venus au Sénégal,” Arlabosse, *Rapport sur l'enseignement des écoles chrétiennes de la colonie française du Sénégal depuis le 1er Janvier jusqu'au 1er Juillet 1846*, ANS J1.

students sent to study in France by the Soeurs de Saint-Joseph in the 1820s. Unfortunately, most of the students died, and a number of parents petitioned that their children be brought back to Senegal. However, three of the students, David Boilat, the already mentioned Arsène Fridoil, and Jean-Pierre Moussa, were eventually sent to the seminary of the Pères de Saint-Esprit. The three were of different backgrounds; Boilat had a French father and a Senegalese mother, Fridoil's father was English, and Moussa's parents were both African. Governor Bouet, before departing for Senegal, consulted with the new Senegalese priests and wrote to the minister that “the two indigenous abbés destined for Saint-Louis have offered me their participation in the organization of a secondary institution; there, elements of Latin, history, geography and drawing will be taught to the most capable and studious subjects, classed following the method adopted in our *collèges*.”⁵⁴ The minister agreed; in the instructions sent to the Governor at the end of 1842, the Minister of the Navy noted that the arrival of the Senegalese priests was so highly anticipated that French seminaries might begin educating more Africans to become priests and return to their homelands. The minister consulted the Spiritan abbé Fourdinier, who concurred with this project while at the same time noting that “les jeunes créoles” sent to France should have a basic education when they arrived, including basic Latin, exactly the kind of education young boys would receive from the Senegalese priests in charge of the new secondary school.⁵⁵

The school opened in Saint-Louis in October 1843. From the beginning, Boilat, the first director of the school, had broader goals for the school than preparing students to go to seminary.

⁵⁴ “que les deux abbés indigènes destinés pour St Louis m’ont offert leur concours dans l’organisation d’une institution secondaire; les éléments de latin, d’histoire, de géographie et de dessin y seraient enseignés aux sujets les plus capables et les plus studieux classés suivant la méthode adoptée dans nos collèges.” Extrait d’une lettre, Bouet, Paris, to Minister of the Navy, 12 October 1842, ANOM SEN X 3bis.

⁵⁵ Instructions from Minister of the Navy to Governor, 16 December 1842, ANS 13 G 22.

In the speech he gave on the opening of the collège, he compared the fate of Senegal to the Israelites emerging into justice and the light after the Babylonian captivity.⁵⁶ Africa had been the home of the early fathers of the Church, such as Augustine, but Islam had exerted a fatal effect on the continent. If religion had failed the children of Africa, education had hardly been kinder. Here, he was specifically criticizing European education. Boilat argued that to that point, students had only received an elementary education, and “all of their ambition is aimed toward being traders or employees in the various bureaus of the colony.”⁵⁷ In both cases, Boilat claimed, an elementary education would only take them so far; they would be either fooled by people who could calculate better than them or find themselves stuck as a writing clerk, a position that would not allow them to earn much. The *collège* would educate students as they were educated in France, with Latin being a particular focus. This education, Boilat told the crowd of parents, would open up doors: “Your children coming out of the collège will be able to aspire to all the honorable positions a young man can set his ambitions on.”⁵⁸ Boilat suggested a number of vocations, from going to a school of navigation to becoming an officer at the prestigious military academy of Saint Cyr to becoming a priest or doctor. These ambitions went far beyond the basic elementary education favored by the Frères Ploërmel.

Boilat’s assimilationist goals are reflected in his insistence on teaching in French. He argued that girls from Gorée who were enrolled at the girls’ school there did not show the same

⁵⁶ Reprinted in P.-David Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises* (P. Bertrand, 1853), beginning on 230.

⁵⁷ “toute leur ambition se borne à être traitants ou employés dans les différents bureaux de la colonie.” Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 235.

⁵⁸ “Vos enfants sortant de notre collège [sic] pourront aspirer à toutes les places honorables qu’un jeune homme peut ambitionner.” Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 236.

degree of piety as girls in France, a fact he attributed to the fact that the girls of Gorée were speaking Wolof at home.⁵⁹ Boilat worried:

We teach them the catechism, and those who know French understand it; the others only learn the words. We can explain it in Wolof only roughly. This language lacks any theological words, how then teach them Catholic dogma perfectly, the duties of the Christian, without the French language?⁶⁰

Boilat allowed that this principle only applied to French schools meant for the métis populations of Saint-Louis and Gorée; the rest of the population would have to be instructed in native languages.⁶¹ However, Boilat's comments imply that the real work of creating true Catholics, or perfecting the deficient Catholicism of the *habitants*, was confined to the colonial centers.

However, the *collège* began to receive complaints. In June 1846, the director of the *collège* went to Gorée, where he made agreements with some of the parents of children then attending the Frères Ploërmel school in Gorée. He proposed to send them to the *collège*, despite the fact that the school year was not done and he was withdrawing seven students before exams in order to take them to St. Louis. Arlebosse reported that he had tried to delay this transfer until the end of the school year, but his letter arrived too late, and the situation appeared to be a case of the Senegalese priests of Saint-Louis stealing students from the Frères Ploermel school at Gorée. Arlebosse reported that "We are loyal to the *collège* and would like to conserve it, but we are also loyal to the other schools that serve larger numbers; for the moment then, we must find a sure and efficient way to get rid of the problems that have occurred in the past and maintain

⁵⁹ Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 10-11.

⁶⁰ "On leur apprend le catéchisme; celles qui comprennent le français saisissent, les autres n'apprennent que des mots. On ne peut que grossièrement le leur expliquer en wolof. Ce langage manque de tous les mots théologiques, comment donc leur enseigner parfaitement le dogme catholique, les devoirs du chrétien, sans la langue française?..." Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 13-14.

⁶¹ Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 18-19.

order and harmony between the various schools.”⁶² He suggested a solution in which parents wanting to send their children to secondary education would have to propose the child's name to the director of the *collège*, who would pass it on to the governor and the ecclesiastical head of the schools, to investigate if the child was advanced enough, or appoint someone else to make that decision: “Thus any collision between the various schools will be impossible and the students will not be exposed to the possibility of wasting their time.”⁶³

This solution might have worked, but attacks on the Senegalese priests by French clergy in Senegal had already started to erode their authority. It appears that they faced distrust from within the religious hierarchy. Moussa was accused of being a drunk who disappeared for a week on a bender, Fridoil was chastized for poor management of the *collège*'s finances, and Boilat was questioned for having inappropriate relations with a woman. It seems that the nature of these attacks may have been shaped by personal animus. Even before the student-stealing episode, the prefect apostolic Maynard began making complaints. In 1844, Governor Thomas hesitantly sent the Minister of the Navy a report from Maynard against Moussa, while protesting he did not think it was a true reflection of the priest's worth, a sentiment backed up by a letter from the commandant of Gorée saying Moussa had been fulfilling his duties well.⁶⁴ In a 1845 letter, Thomas blamed the personal hatred of Maynard toward Fridoil and the sisters for the drama.⁶⁵ In

⁶² “Nous tenons au collège et voudrions le conserver, mais nous tenons aux autres écoles qui sont pour le plus grand nombre, il s'agit donc, pour le moment de trouver un moyen sûr et efficace pour obvier à toutes les misères [sic] qui ont eu lieu par le passé et pour maintenir l'ordre et l'harmonie entre les diverses écoles.” Arlabosse, Rapport sur l'enseignement des écoles chrétiennes de la colonie française du Sénégal depuis le 1er Janvier jusqu'au 1er Juillet 1846, ANS J1.

⁶³ “Alors toute collision entre les diverses écoles sera impossible et les enfants ne seront pas exposés à perdre leur temps.” Arlabosse, Rapport sur l'enseignement des écoles chrétiennes de la colonie française du Sénégal depuis le 1er Janvier jusqu'au 1er Juillet 1846, ANS J1.

⁶⁴ Governor Thomas to Minister of the Navy, 13 August 1844, ANS 2 B 24.

⁶⁵ Thomas to Minister of the Navy, 22 April 1845, ANS 2 B 24.

contrast, Governor Baudin, in a “very confidential” letter about the resignation of the Prefect Apostolic Maynard in 1848, opined that while Maynard had been harsh to Boilat, Moussa, and Fridoil, they had deserved it. Fridoil had calmed down, and the direction of the *collège* provided him with a good occupation, but “It’s impossible to trust the two others.” He pledged to facilitate reconciliation between various parties “in the interest of civilization” but opined that Moussa and Boilat should be sent away from Senegal and replaced with European priests.⁶⁶

By the late 1840s, funding for the *collège* dried up and it was closed. Boilat, the most famous of the three Senegalese priests, returned to France and would spend the rest of his life there as a member of the clergy. He would publish his *Esquisses sénégalaises* in 1853, an important text on customs and peoples in Senegambia. This episode pitted two different religious orders against each other, as well as two visions of education in Senegal. Clergy and missionaries in the colony may have shared a religious identity, but they were not immune to debates over authority. Despite the hopes for the African priests, a native Christian clergy did not develop in Senegal as it did in other parts of Africa, and Boilat’s vision of young Senegalese men rising to important positions in the colony or elsewhere was not realized at this time. Boilat’s ideas about what the school should be did not intersect with the wishes of other religious figures or with the government. Civilization, it seemed, had its limits, or at least, it needed the right teachers.

Missionaries from 1848-1870: Expansion into the Interior

⁶⁶ “Il est impossible d'avoir confiance dans les deux autres.” “dans l'intérêt de la civilisation. . .” Governor Baudin to Minister of the Navy, 22 January 1848, ANOM SEN X 3bis.

In the 1850s and 1860s, two new dynamics changed the relationship between religious orders, the government, and Senegalese people: the abolition of slavery and even more strikingly the expansion of missionary activity outside of the colonial centers. Missionaries' and religious teaching orders' connections with new portions of the population meant new occasions for conversion and bringing "civilization," but also the possibility for new conflict. In these interactions, one is struck by the care the French government exerted in order to not use too heavy a hand in matters of religion. Since the French were still not well established in Senegambia, the government wished to not disturb the status quo too much. Missionaries at first tried to create new spaces for their moral vision, out of the administration's reach. Their criticisms of the ways that European contact had corrupted coastal Africans echoed earlier French complaints that commercial contact between Europeans and West Africans could spark out-of-control greed among the latter.⁶⁷ The missionaries feared the harmful effects that non-missionary Europeans could have on the as yet uncorrupted Africans of the interior. However, missionaries and administrators drew together again when their practical goals once more intersected.

One major process that changed the place of French religious men and women in the colony was the abolition of slavery in Saint-Louis and Gorée in 1848. This meant that a large number of the former slaves who had been owned by the *habitant* class and worked in domestic jobs, as trade auxiliaries, in furnishing food or labor for commerce, or were simply dependents within families, now had free status. The government had to address the question of their

⁶⁷ See Chapter III.

obligations to this free class, including, possibly, education. A large number of the newly-free population were Muslim.

In the boys' schools, a consequence of the changes that came with abolition was more tension over both the Catholic and French identity of the schools. In 1849, a father complained that his Muslim son would be forced to convert if he was admitted into the Frères Ploërmel school in Saint-Louis. Governor Baudin condemned the brothers' alleged action.⁶⁸ Not many Muslims seemed to want to attend the school, probably in part due to perceived proselytism on the part of the European missionaries. A year later, a marabout (Muslim religious leader) was apparently telling the residents of Saint-Louis, including former slaves, not to go to the brothers' schools, saying that they would be made into soldiers and sent to France where they would die of cold.⁶⁹ Muslim schools would have been a more attractive alternative for Muslim parents. The sisters' schools adapted to the new situation to some extent, but they were not very successful in drawing Muslim students either. In 1854, only 17 students out of 170-180 were Muslim, but the nuns hoped to welcome them as they did the Christian girls, "in order to propagate, as much as possible, religion and civilization among the blacks." This goal, of course, in its assumption that Muslim girls needed the explicit influence of Catholicism, would not have been in line with what many Muslim parents would have wanted for their children. At the same time, the school was giving religious lessons in Wolof to adult women, a shift from an earlier era, in which French had been emphasized above all.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Governor Baudin, Saint-Louis, to Minister of the Navy, 10 March 1849, ANOM SEN X 4a.

⁶⁹ Report, Frère Etienne Marie to Minister of the Navy, Saint Louis, 21 November 1850, ANOM SEN X 5a.

⁷⁰ Rapport à Monsieur le Ministre de la marine et des Colonies, sur l'instruction primaire des jeunes filles de Saint-Louis (Senegal), Soeur Marie de la Croix, 23 September 1854, ANOM SEN X 5a.

A second change that created new relationships between missionaries, the administration, and Senegalese was that missionaries began traveling to regions outside the areas where the French were formally established. Francis Libermann, a Jewish convert to Catholicism, had founded the Congregation of Sacred Heart in the 1840s. The order would merge with the Congregation of the Holy Spirit in 1848 and take on the name of the latter order, otherwise known as the Spiritans.⁷¹ Libermann was interested in sending missionaries to newly freed slaves in Haiti, Reunion, and Mauritius. The order expanded its interests to the west coast of Africa when it came to an agreement with Monseigneur Barron, a priest of Irish descent from Philadelphia who had been named head of the newly-formed Apostolic Vicariate of the Two Guineas and Sierra Leone, created September 28, 1842.⁷² In 1843, Libermann negotiated with the French government and the two sides came to an agreement, approved by Barron and the Propaganda fide. The agreement allowed Libermann to send three missionaries and more lay brothers for each post and allotted funds for their payment. The agreement stated:

The missionaries, while they will be placed under the spiritual jurisdiction and ecclesiastical discipline of the bishops *in partibus* having authority over them, according to their respective residence, will have to report on their work to the colonial authority, with which, in the interest of service and for the success of the religious work itself, they will have to maintain relations that are as regular as possible.⁷³

⁷¹ The order merged with the already existing Congregation of the Holy Spirit in 1848 and Libermann became the new superior of the reformed Congregation of the Holy Spirit, or Spiritan order. The Spiritan seminary had supplied priests to Senegal and Gorée throughout the early nineteenth century.

⁷² Henry J. Koren, *The Spiritans: A History of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University, 1958), 78-9.

⁷³ “MM. les Missionnaires, tout en demeurant places sous la juridiction spirituelle et la discipline ecclésiastique des évêques in partibus ou vicaires apostoliques ayant action sur eux, à raison de leur résidence respective, seront à rendre compte de leurs travaux à l’autorité colonial, avec laquelle, dans l’intérêt du service et pour le succès de l’oeuvre religieuse elle-même, ils auront à entretenir des relations aussi suivies que possibles.” Paule Brasseur, “Missions catholiques et administration française sur la côte d’Afrique de 1815 à 1870,” in Paul Coulon, Paule Brasseur, et al., *Libermann 1802-1852: une pensée et une mystique missionnaires* (Paris: Cerf, 1988), 857-859.

In return, the missionaries would receive subsidies, free transportation, hospital care, and rations, all important for the survival of the new mission.⁷⁴ From the beginning, then, the missionary movement was linked financially and practically to the colonial state, while being subject, in theory, only to the religious hierarchy. The first mission, further down the coast at Gabon, was attempted in 1844; a mission in Dakar was founded in 1845.

Libermann's project of moralizing and Christianizing in Africa required the right Europeans. In an 1846 *mémoire*, he emphasized the importance of missionaries in the new movement to bring Africans out of ignorance and darkness. Libermann explained that a universal humanitarian movement to aid former slaves was gathering steam, but this movement could easily go awry since many European government employees, commercial agents, and humanitarians were not the best Europe had to offer and were indeed "enemies of the church."⁷⁵ In fact, it had been similarly problematic Europeans who had caused some of the problems in Africa and the former colonies in the first place, such as blacks' supposed laziness. Libermann's abolitionist leanings led him to blame this unwillingness to work on the system of slavery, arguing that in the case of "men that have been obliged from birth to do the work of beasts of burden, by force of whips and poor treatment, forced labor without respite from which they see no fruits, nor get any satisfaction; should we be surprised that such men learn the distaste for work from their childhood?"⁷⁶ In order for religion to spread, subjects required a base level of

⁷⁴ Koren, *Spiritans*, 90.

⁷⁵ Francis Libermann, "Mémoire sur les missions des noirs en général et sur celle de la Guinée en particulier. présenté par Libermann, le 15 août 1846 à la sacrée congrégation de la Propagande," in Paul Coulon, Paule Brasseur, et al, *Libermann*, 231.

⁷⁶ "... des hommes que l'on a oblige dès l'enfance à un travail de bêtes de somme, et cela à force de coups et de mauvais traitements, travail sans menagement et sans relâche dont ils ne retirent personnellement aucun fruit, ni aucun satisfaction, faut-il s'étonner que des homes pareils soient nourris dès leur enfance dans le dégoût de travail?" Libermann, "Memoire sur les missions," 238.

civilization and needed to embrace the value of work, Libermann argued. It was the role of the missionaries to impart these ideas, since civilization could not exist without religion. Libermann wrote that the duty of the missionary was to institute civilization, “not only in the moral part, but also in the intellectual and physical parts, that is, in instruction, agriculture, and trades. It is he alone who, by his supernatural authority as an envoy of God, by his charity and his priestly zeal, is capable of producing a complete effect, the task thus lies with him alone.”⁷⁷ Simple work, not greed-inducing commercial transactions, would produce a civilizing effect, Libermann suggested.

Libermann’s plan needed more than good European missionaries; it aimed to create subjects who would not reject Christianity the moment the missionaries were out of their sight. Converts had to undergo an interior change in their values, not just the external changes of religious practice or work habits. Libermann wrote, “It is not enough to show these new men the practice of work; it is necessary to little by little inculcate in them the theories of things, in order to put them little by little in a position where they will not need the aid of missionaries to continue the work.”⁷⁸ Another key pillar of Libermann’s plan would further solve the problem of spreading Christianity with a small number of European missionaries facing high mortality rates: the training of a native clergy.⁷⁹ The morality of missionaries would indeed continue to be a

⁷⁷ “Le 2. principe est que la civilisation est impossible sans la foi. De là c'est la tâche du Missionnaire, c'est son devoir d'y travailler, non seulement dans la partie morale, mais encore dans la partie intellectuelle et physique, c'est-à-dire, dans l'instruction, l'agriculture et les métiers. C'est lui seul qui, par son autorité surnaturelle d'envoyé de Dieu, par sa charité et son zèle sacerdotal, est capable de produire un effet complet, c'est donc sur lui seul que repose l'oeuvre.” Libermann, “Memoire sur les missions,” 249.

⁷⁸ “Il ne suffit donc pas de montrer à ces hommes neufs la pratique du travail, il faut peu à peu leur inculquer les théories des choses, afin de les mettre par là peu à peu en état de n'avoir plus besoin du secours des Missionnaires pour continuer l'oeuvre. . .” Libermann, “Memoire sur les missions,” 249.

⁷⁹ He had already proposed this in 1844. See Libermann, “Projet pour le salut des peuples des côtes d'Afrique,” 23 October 1844, in Coulon et al., *Libermann*, 211-220. The plan did not come to immediate fruition; the first priest

problem; between 1843 and 1862, 108 men were sent out as part of Spiritan missions, and 42 died, while 34 left because of illness or “discouragement.”⁸⁰ A seminary in Senegambia would allow the missionaries to train Senegalese priests.

Reports back from members of the congregation of Sainte-Coeur de Marie in Africa supported Libermann’s proposed strategies and suggested that increased missionary activity away from the small, coastal European colonies would allow missionaries a greater chance of spreading civilization. M. Briot, a missionary, reported on the three years he had spent in Gabon and Dakar in a November 1847 letter to his superior. Briot judged that while polygamy was the greatest vice among West Africans, the influence of Europeans was another danger. He wrote:

there is a very large difference in terms of customs and integrity between the blacks of the interior and those who, on the coastlines, have frequent relations with the Europeans. The latter have to this point, sadly, only learned from their compatriots to drink liquors, smoke, and commit all kinds of excesses. Commerce with foreigners will always be an obstacle to the success of the mission. We enthusiastically desire the moment when we can set up establishments far from the coasts and from scandal.⁸¹

Indigenous clergy and missionaries would of course make this more of a possibility. Briot reported that West Africans had an “excessive sensibility that easily degenerates into susceptibility, but that also can become affectionate recognition and boundless devotion toward a

entirely trained in Senegal, Guillaume Jouga, was ordained in 1864. See Bernard Noël, “Aloÿs Kobès,” in Coulon et al., *Libermann*, f.n. 8, 653.

⁸⁰ Koren, *Spiritans*, 193.

⁸¹ “Du reste, il y a une bien grande différence, sous le rapport des mœurs et de la probité, entre les Noirs de l’intérieur et ceux qui, sur les bords de la mer, sont en relations fréquentes avec les Européens; ces derniers n’ont malheureusement appris de nos compatriotes, jusqu’à ce jour, qu’à boire de l’eau-de-vie, à fumer, et à commettre toute sorte d’excès. Le commerce avec les étrangers sera toujours un obstacle au succès de la Mission. Nous désirons avec ardeur le moment où nous pourrions faire des établissements loin des côtes et du scandale.” “Lettre de M. Briot, Missionnaire Apostolique de la Congrégation du Saint-Coeur de Marie, à M. Libermann, Supérieur de la même Congregation,” Dakar, 29 November 1847, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 20 (1848): 317.

benefactor.”⁸² They would thus become good followers, once the missionaries could speak their language. Briot agreed that a native clergy was the answer to the missionaries’ problems: “Our main hope is in our children, precious seed of the indigenous clergy.”⁸³

In the establishments founded by missionaries in Senegambia between 1845 and 1850, the importance of forming good relations with local leaders was clear. As the missionaries tried to keep themselves away from the dealings of the colonial state, they struggled to get along with the kings they bought or rented land from. The experience allowed both the missionaries and the colonial state to see what would happen when things went wrong, observations that would shape future relations between the government, the missionaries, and leaders of states neighboring the colony.

One of the earliest sites founded by the Sacred Heart missionaries was Dakar, on the peninsula across from the French-controlled island of Gorée. The mission at Dakar was founded in 1845 when a delegation of missionaries convinced the king of Dakar that the French school they were founding there would allow the students liberty of conscience and would not compete with the religious schools where students learned Arabic.⁸⁴ By 1847, the missionaries had erected a seminary where native clergy could be trained and additional buildings.⁸⁵ Boilat reported that boys at the school, embracing their future as native clergy, were dividing up the Senegambian

⁸² “La sensibilité paraît être un des traits les plus marqués du Guinéen, sensibilité excessive qui dégénère aisément en susceptibilité, mais qui devient aussi reconnaissance affectueuse et dévouement sans bornes envers un bienfaiteur.” “Lettre de M. Briot,” *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 20 (1848): 318.

⁸³ “Notre principal espoir est dans nos enfants, germe précieux du clergé indigène.” “Lettre de M. Briot,” *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 20 (1848), 319.

⁸⁴ Arragon to Libermann, 27 September 1845, reprinted in Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 32-34.

⁸⁵ Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 46.

regions for themselves, as they claimed regions – Kajoor, Fuuta, Guinea, and elsewhere – where they would serve as priests.⁸⁶

Yet the seeming early success of the mission did not mean the missions were completely accepted by the surrounding leaders, and this led to problems. In 1847, two missionaries, Arragon and Siméon, traveled into the kingdom of Kajoor and were arrested by the damel, or king. The governor wrote a threatening note refusing to pay the ransom the damel was demanding, insisting he instead treat the missionaries as French subjects and not allow any harm to come to them.⁸⁷ From the letter, it is clear that the governor was anticipating the damel was claiming a ransom to settle a dispute over the customary rights claimed by residents of the villages of the Dakar peninsula to pillage shipwrecks, a matter of continued contention. Three weeks later, the commandant of Gorée wrote to intervene on behalf of the missionaries, who were being held captive in the damel's capital. He emphasized the missionaries' benefits to the damel: "I have learned that you have arrested two Frenchmen who were going into your kingdom to preach the religion of Christ and teach the virtues that tend towards bettering men and making subjects more submissive to their sovereigns."⁸⁸ The damel had claimed that the missionaries had threatened him with death if he refused to shave his head, a claim the commandant did not believe. The commandant threatened the damel with the retaliation from

⁸⁶ Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 51.

⁸⁷ Governor to Maissa Dendé, 22 April 1847, ANS 13 G 256.

⁸⁸ "J'apprends que tu a arrêté deux Français qui se rendaient dans ton royaume pour prêcher la religion du Christ et enseigner les vertus qui tendent à améliorer les hommes et à rendre les sujets plus soumis envers leurs souverains." Commandant particulier de Gorée to Damel, king of Cayor and Baol, 17 May 1847, ANS 13 G 256.

French warships if he did not let the missionaries go.⁸⁹ The commandant of Gorée and king of Dakar finally secured their release after three weeks.⁹⁰

But the missionaries did not seem very grateful for their rescue, and were in fact surprised about the fuss over the incident. However, the bishop, Truffet, realized conflict between missionaries and their hosts was not good publicity, so he forbade the priests from leaving the mission without him.⁹¹ In his 1853 work *Esquisses sénégalaises*, l'abbé Boilat explained the event in terms of cultural misunderstanding, in that the missionaries had not known the custom of bringing gifts to the king. It was not a hatred of Christianity that led the damel to capture the voyagers, Boilat insisted, but the king's desire to receive gifts of liquor.⁹² Boilat of course had an interest in making arguments that emphasized the friendliness of Senegalese people to Catholicism. This argument allowed Boilat to emphasize that there was not a fundamental problem with the Christianizing mission. In any case, though, the misunderstanding represented what could happen if missionaries overstepped their bounds. Even if they did not provoke religious prejudice, they threatened to disrupt the balance of customs and agreements that allowed French people to operate in the colony.

The Spiritans founded a number of other missions in the following years, including one at Joal, not far south of Dakar, where there was still a memory of Portuguese priests and a population of Christians, at least in name.⁹³ In January 1849, three other missions not far from

⁸⁹ Commandant particulier de Gorée to Damel, king of Cayor and Baol, 17 May 1847, ANS 13 G 256.

⁹⁰ Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 52-54.

⁹¹ Koren, *Spiritans*, 90.

⁹² Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 54.

⁹³ An account of Christianity in Joal in the early days of the mission, including the judgment that the "soi-disant chrétiens" are worse than pagans, can be found in Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 99-128. For an overview of missionaries in Siin, see Martin Klein, *Islam and Imperialism in Senegal: Sine-Saloum, 1847-1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 46-54.

Dakar were founded: Ndiangol, Mbour, and Sainte-Marie de Gambie. In 1850, a mission was founded at Albréda on the Gambia River, and in January 1851, a mission at Galam, or Bakel, on the upper Senegal River, was founded.⁹⁴ Again, the missions encouraged optimism; the Sereer people south of Dakar seemed especially amenable to Christianity. The missionary Gallais recounted that the king of the Sereer kingdom of Siin and his father had asked for a cross and a medal from the missionaries, revealing their interest in the mission at Joal.⁹⁵ The missionaries bought land for a settlement near what the natives called “Gasobile,” near Joal, for “some pieces of colorful cloth, along with a certain number of iron bars, standard money of the country.”⁹⁶ The settlement, Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil, soon became the site of the seminary, which was moved from Dakar, and an agricultural establishment. A missionary wrote of Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil: “Your little seminary is founded in the healthiest, most fertile, and best situated place on the entire coast. As for your establishment of Saint-Joseph, its position seems to offer every advantage, and it would be difficult to be able to find a place more suitable for a model farm.”⁹⁷ The farm would be useful to the children in the school, as it would fulfill the goal “to join to their classical education, as both a complement and recreation, some practical notions of agriculture,

⁹⁴ A mission was also founded at Grand-Bassam. Excerpt from *Aperçu historique sur la mission de Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil*, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 48 (1876): 114.

⁹⁵ “Lettre de M. Gallais, Missionnaire de la congrégation du Saint-Esprit sous l'invocation de l'immaculé Coeur de Marie, à Mgr Kobès, Coadjuteur du Vicaire apostolique de la Guinée et de la Sénégalie,” *Joal*, 10 March 1850, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 23 (1851): 18.

⁹⁶ “quelques pièces d'étoffe bariolées, jointes à un certain nombre de barres de fer, monnaie courante du pays.”

“Extrait d'une lettre de M. Durand, Missionnaire apostolique de la Congrégation du Saint Coeur de Marie, à sa mère,” *Ste Marie*, 15 February 1852, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 24 (1852): 392.

⁹⁷ “Votre petit séminaire est fondé dans l'endroit le plus sain, le plus fertile et le mieux situé de toute la côte. Quant à votre établissement de St-Joseph, il semble offrir par sa position tous les avantages, et bien difficilement on aurait pu trouver un emplacement plus convenable pour une ferme-modèle.” “Lettre de M. Gallais, Missionnaire de la congrégation du Saint-Esprit sous l'invocation de l'immaculé Coeur de Marie, à Mgr Kobès, Coadjuteur du Vicaire apostolique de la Guinée et de la Sénégalie,” *Joal*, 10 March 1850, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 23 (1851): 18.

indispensable resource to the missionary in this area, and also a fecund means to do good.”⁹⁸

While a fire destroyed the first constructions, the Spiritans did not lose hope, rebuilding and clearing a garden where cabbages, lettuces, turnips, and other crops were grown.⁹⁹

Where the missionaries met distrust, it could be explained by fears of forces unrelated to the missionary presence. Boilat included a story recorded by Gallais of missionaries traveling to the villiage of Gnaning in Bawol, when they were met by residents with guns and lances and an angry chief.¹⁰⁰ The missionary remembered, “I showed him then that I had no weapon, that I was a priest, that is to say a man of peace and conciliation. He asked my pardon and excuse in adding that the damel had the custom of pillaging the country from time to time, and to take the children into captivity, and that this was the reason the children were frightened.”¹⁰¹

Meanwhile, in Joal, the inhabitants were not frightened, but rather made demands on the missionaries based on their supposed special status as Chistians and their love of alcohol. When the Spiritans founded the mission at Joal in 1848, the missionaries found themselves among a people who had previously been Catholic, though “Their last missionaries rest in the middle of the cemetery, and with them must have dissapeared the piety of the faithful; so that when we

⁹⁸ “de joindre à leur éducation classique, comme complément et récréation tout ensemble, quelques notions pratiques d'agriculture, ressource indispensable au Missionnaire dans ces parages, et aussi moyen fécond d'opérer le bien.”

“Extrait d'une lettre de M. Durand, Missionnaire apostolique de la Congrégation du Saint Coeur de Marie, à sa mère,” Ste Marie, 15 February 1852, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 24 (1852): 393.

⁹⁹ Excerpt from *Aperçu historique sur la mission de Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil*, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 48 (1876): 116-117.

¹⁰⁰ A large section of Boilat's *Esquisses sénégalaises* is drawn from the writing of the missionary Gallais. The section starts on page 48.

¹⁰¹ Je lui montrai alors que je n'avais aucune arme, que j'étais prêtre, c'est-à-dire un homme de paix et de conciliation. Il me demanda pardon et excuse, en ajoutant que le demel avait coutume de piller le pays de temps en temps, et d'en emmener les enfants en captivité; que c'était là le motif pour lequel les enfants s'étaient effrayés.” Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 75-6.

arrived, everyone had several wives. . .”¹⁰² Polygamy was not the only vice that had corrupted these so-called Catholics; they were constant drinkers of alcohol. For them, this drinking was in fact tied to Christianity: “Talk to them about a Christianity of temperance, they cannot understand it; they take you for Muslims and tell you coldly that a Christian should drink!”¹⁰³ The supposed Christians were cunning and underhanded, but the fact that they were free and Christian gave them a sense of superiority in comparison to the population surrounding them, many of whom were slaves. Boilat quoted Gallais:

To make a slave of or even mistreat a Christian of Joal, it’s unheard of! In a word, to be a Christian in Joal, it is to have numerous privileges, it is to be noble, to be a Roman citizen! And what contributes in what is not a small degree to bringing them wealth and making them important, it is that they have the monopoly on these unhappy liquors for which these people are so greedy.¹⁰⁴

The inhabitants wanted to be called “les blancs de Joal, les chrétiens de Joal.”¹⁰⁵ This combination of racial differentiation, religious tradition, and cultural difference made the citizens of Joal a particular elite who the missionaries found hard to control.

The missionaries chafed at the demands of the Christians of Joal and quickly grew to distrust them. The missionaries met Papaille, an older man who remembered the sign of the cross from the time of Portuguese influence, and his brother Michel Maria, a “false prophet” who had taken leadership of the Christians.¹⁰⁶ Michel had the qualities of “an insatiable leech, an eternal

¹⁰² “Leurs derniers missionnaires reposent au milieu du cimetière, et avec eux aurait disparu la piété des fidèles; si bien qu’à notre arrivée, tous avaient plusieurs femmes...” Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 105.

¹⁰³ “Parlez-leur d’un christianisme tempérant, ils ne le conçoivent guère: ils vous prennent pour des mahométans et vous disent froidement qu’un chrétien doit boire!” Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 106.

¹⁰⁴ “Faire esclave, ou même maltraiter un chrétien de Joal, c’est chose inouïe! En un mot, être chrétien de Joal, c’est avoir de nombreux privilèges, c’est être noble, c’est être citoyen romain! Ce qui ne contribue pas peu à les enrichir et à les rendre importants, c’est qu’ils ont le monopole de ces malheureuses liqueurs dont ces peuples sont si avides.” Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 107.

¹⁰⁵ Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 108.

¹⁰⁶ Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 109-111.

beggar!” He was a thief who only wanted *eau-de-vie*, according to the account reproduced in Boilat’s *Esquisses sénégalaises*.¹⁰⁷ The missionaries at first gave in to their demands, realizing to set up a successful establishment, they would need to offer liquor, an expedient they judged as only temporary. However, the account reads,

As soon as the two huts were set up, the singular Odor of this detestable poison made brains ferment, our miserable abode was soon no more than a tavern steaming with the vapors of the dreadful *sangara* [liquor], which excites the devoted Christians of Joal and makes them no longer masters of themselves! From the morning, before the orison, before mass, our huts are jammed so it’s impossible to evacuate them, impossible to say prayers, it is no more than a tumultuous band of drunks who want to drink, and drink at any cost. The very devoted Michel is completely taken by fervor, he dreams of nothing but prayer! From the morning, before dawn, he comes knocking at the door; the night is not made for sleeping nor the day for working, but only for praying and for drinking!¹⁰⁸

Michel followed the missionaries around, making a triple cross sign in the Portuguese fashion, “asking to drink in order to have more devotion.”¹⁰⁹

While Michel was bothersome, more worrisome to the missionaries would have been precarious relations with the leaders who gave missionaries permission to stay on their land. The king of Siin would not allow the missionaries to build stone houses, “viewing any construction of this genre as taking possession, and fearing to see them sooner or later change into fortresses.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ “une sangsue insatiable, un mendiant éternel!” Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 115.

¹⁰⁸ “Dès que ces deux huttes furent installées, la seule odeur de ce poison détestable faisaient fermenter les cerveaux, notre chétif loyer ne fut bientôt plus qu’une taverne fumante des vapeurs de l’affreux *sangara*, qui exalte les dévots chrétiens de Joal et ne les rend plus maîtres d’eux-mêmes! Dès le matin, avant l’oraison, avant la messe, nos cases sont encombrées: impossible de les évacuer, impossible de faire la prière; ce n’est plus qu’une tumultueuse troupe d’ivrognes qui veulent boire et qui le veulent à tout prix. Le très dévot Michel est tout embrasé de ferveur, et il ne rêve plus que la prière! Dès le matin, avant l’aurore, il vient frapper à la porte; la nuit n’est plus faite pour dormir ni le jour pour travailler, mais seulement pour prier et pour boire!” Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 118.

¹⁰⁹ “et demandant à boire pour avoir plus de dévotion.” Boilat, *Esquisses sénégalaises*, 119.

¹¹⁰ “Jamais, jusqu’à ces dernières années, le roi de Sine n’avait voulu consentir à ce que les Européens ou les indigènes construisissent sur son territoire des maisons en pierres, regardant toute construction de ce genre comme une prise de possession, et craignant de les voir tôt ou tard se changer en forteresses.” “Lettre du R. P. Lamoise, Missionnaire de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit et du saint Coeur de Marie, au T.R.P. Schwindenhammer, supérieur général de la même Société,” Joal, 2 July 1862, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 35 (1863): 263.

A bullet had to be able to pass through any wall that was constructed, a later report recalled.¹¹¹ Even when the missionaries built ovens out of clay, it worried the Sereer people around Saint-Joseph, as they thought that if the white people built walls on their land, they would soon come and chase them off with guns. Gallais recorded this event, along with his sentiments, which are reproduced by Boilat: “Poor people, I said to myself, while smiling at their fear, it is not your land that I have come here to take, but rather your souls that I would like to guide to heaven.”¹¹²

On July 31, 1850, Governor Baudin told Boulanger, the vicar general, to leave Mbour and Ndiangol because a war with Kajoor was about to begin. The missionaries did not leave in time, and both missions were pillaged and burned shortly after.¹¹³ The pillage, by the *ceddos* or slave soldiers of the damel of Kajoor, led to the theft and destruction of many objects in the chapel: “The stolen books were ripped apart and converted into gris-gris; the vestments, cut into pieces, served as amulets or ornaments; the chalices and ciborium were broken and made into bracelets.”¹¹⁴ These images made the defeat of Catholicism quite literal, as its objects were repurposed for traditional uses. In January 1851, the king of Siin demanded that the commandant of Gorée remove the missionaries from Saint-Joseph. The king claimed he could not stop the

¹¹¹ Excerpt from *Aperçu historique sur la mission de Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil*, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 48 (1876): 115.

¹¹² “Pauvres gens, me disait-je, tout en souriant de leur frayeur, ce n’est pas votre pays que je suis venu prendre, mais bien vos âmes que je voudrais conduire au ciel.” “Extrait d’une lettre de M. Durand, Missionnaire apostolique de la Congrégation du Saint Coeur de Marie, à sa mère,” Ste Marie, 15 February 1852, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 24 (1852): 394-5.

¹¹³ Joseph Roger de Benoist, *Histoire de l’Église catholique au Sénégal du milieu du XVe siècle à l’aube du troisième millénaire* (Dakar: Clairafrique-Karthala, 2008), 154.

¹¹⁴ “Les livres volés furent déchirés et convertis en grisgris; les chasubles, coupées par morceaux, servirent d’amulettes ou d’ornements de toilette; les calices et les ciboires furent brisés et changés en bracelets.” Excerpt from *Aperçu historique sur la mission de Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil*, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 48 (1876): 118.

ceddos from pillaging. While the bishop did not remove the missionaries immediately, Ngasobil was disbanded in October 1851 under continued threat of pillage.¹¹⁵

If the Spiritans found their missions poorly protected because of uncertain relations with local leaders, they also had complicated relationships with the colonial administrators, especially in the early days of their missions. Libermann told Spiritans:

Divest yourselves of Europe, its customs and mentality. Become negroes with the negroes, and you will judge them as they ought to be judged. Become negroes with the negroes, to train them as they should be trained, not in the European fashion but retaining what is proper to them. Adapt yourselves as servants have to adapt to their masters, their customs, taste, and manners, in order to perfect and sanctify them, to raise them from their low level and transform them slowly and gradually into a people of God.¹¹⁶

The vicar apostolic of the Two Guineas, Truffet, echoed Libermann's sentiments and exhorted the missionaries to be loyal only to God, stating, 'We do not go to Africa to establish there Italy, France or any other European country, but only the Holy Church of Rome, without regard to nationality. With God's grace we will divest ourselves of everything that is exclusively European and retain in us only the thoughts of the Church.'¹¹⁷ Truffet's desire to give up European things expanded to making everyone speak Wolof and eat as the locals did. He soon fell sick, which observers at the time blamed on the Senegalese food, following common understandings of illness at the time. He then refused to allow doctors to come from the colony, and died soon after.¹¹⁸ After his death, another missionary, Fr. Arragon, took the opportunity to write to the

¹¹⁵ Excerpt from *Aperçu historique sur la mission de Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil*, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 48 (1876): 120-122.

¹¹⁶ Koren, *Spiritans*, 175.

¹¹⁷ Koren, *Spiritans*, 169.

¹¹⁸ For an example of a criticism of Truffet's activity, see Baudin to Minister of the Navy, 19 February 1848, Document 20 (2 B 27), in Jacques Charpy, *La fondation de Dakar (1845-57-1869)* (Paris: Larose, 1958), 41-47.

Navy saying the fathers did not want the aid of the French, which caused the government to discontinue monetary support to the mission, a situation his superiors had to intervene to fix.¹¹⁹

If the missionaries tried to distance themselves from the colonial state in order to secure their liberty of action, colonial administrators also sometimes looked at the missionaries with distrust. In 1848, the Governor of Senegal, Baudin, complained that the missionaries were not finding any results because they were trying to make Christians without passing on other elements of civilization. His words echoed the words of Libermann, but whereas Libermann thought missionaries were uniquely fit for the civilizing project, Baudin thought they were uniquely unfit. Speaking of the missionaries, he wrote, “it does not suffice to teach the religion, it is necessary to teach the civilization, intelligent and progressive work, to break with established customs little by little without too abrupt a disturbance, for this, I do not mind repeating, one needs a great experience with men and things that one would have trouble learning in a convent or a seminary.”¹²⁰ Baudin also objected to the French government funding the missionaries, arguing that English and American missions operated entirely on charity.¹²¹

In the 1840s and early 1850s, then, the missionaries had sometimes operated outside of the wishes of the government in the interior, largely because they wanted to remain independent from the government. Their attempts to act independently sometimes led to political fallout, as in the case of the missionaries captured by the damel of Kajoor. But their relative independence

¹¹⁹ Koren, *Spiritans*, 91.

¹²⁰ “. . . car ici il ne suffit pas d’enseigner la religion, il faut savoir enseigner la civilisation, le travail intelligent et progressif, rompre peu à peu les usages établis et sans froissement trop brusque, il faut pour cela je ne crains pas de la répéter une grande habitude des hommes et des choses qu’on peu difficilement apprendre dans un couvent ou dans un séminaire.” Baudin to Minister of the Navy, 19 February 1848, Document 20 (2 B 27), in Charpy, *La fondation de Dakar*, 42.

¹²¹ Baudin to Minister of the Navy, 19 February 1848, Document 20 (2 B 27), in Charpy, *La fondation de Dakar*, 47.

also left them open to pillage and conflict with unfriendly neighbors. Governor Faidherbe's conquests in the 1850s allowed missionaries more security and also a closer relationship with the government. Faidherbe built a small fort in Joal for strategic reasons in 1859, and P. Lamoise celebrated a mass for the expeditionary corps.¹²² The school at Dakar also took on new importance to the colony, and in 1857, a mission of 300 soldiers built a fort at Dakar and took possession of the land.¹²³

After the conquests of Faidherbe, missionaries related the memory of the earlier mission attempts as a period of trials, and portrayed Faidherbe as having delivered them from danger. In 1863, for example, P. Lamoise reported that the mission of Joal was located in a "pays encore sauvage" but that the situation had changed. In the past, the arbitrary rule of the king of Siin and the pillages of the *ceddos*, or royal slaves, were the largest dangers; the *ceddos* were "Brigands, hungry for plunder and sure of the impunity guaranteed them by the sovereign. These soldiers from time to time make incursions into the villages, and give themselves over to the most dreadful devastation under the pretext of collecting taxes."¹²⁴ The missionaries at Joal had been forbidden from building a chapel out of bricks, despite the efforts of the head of the naval station on the coast to negotiate with the king of Siin. Since the officer had to return to France without having helped the missionaries, Lamoise wrote, "this act was reserved for the intelligent energy of the governor of Senegal." Faidherbe, after pacifying the river and pushing back the "fanatical

¹²² Benoist, *Histoire*, 154.

¹²³ Benoist, *Histoire*, 155.

¹²⁴ "Gens de sac et de corde, avides de rapines et sûrs de l'impunité dont les garantit le souverain, ces soldats font de temps à autre des incursions dans les villages, et se livrent aux dévastations les plus affreuses, sous prétexte d'opérer la levée des impôts." "Lettre du R. P. Lamoise, Missionnaire de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit et du saint Coeur de Marie, au T.R.P. Schwindenhammer, supérieur général de la même Société," *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 35 (1863): 264.

populations of the interior,” chose Joal as his next point to protect, for commercial and strategic reasons. The conquest was simple, and Joal was declared French, with troops sent to protect it from any revenge attempts from the king. Lamoise wrote, “With French protection, our hopes began to be realized.”¹²⁵

An 1876 report also emphasized the hardships of the early Spiritan missions. It emphasized the horror of the pillages, and noted that the dissolution of Saint-Joseph in 1851 had been brought about by “the harassment of the *ceddos* of the king of Siin, the wars that were taking place in other kingdoms,” and other news that seemed to make the security of the mission impossible.¹²⁶ As late as 1858, France did not have a hold on much of Senegambia, and the Moors and others were oppressing the populations of the region, the report stated.¹²⁷ The author wrote, “A strong hand was needed to make these fanatics feel the force of France. . . That which the divine Providence reserved for this task was M. Faidherbe, placed at four different moments at the head of the colony, and who acquired, among the blacks, a reputation of extraordinary value. His name was spread more than 500 *lieues* into the interior.”¹²⁸ Faidherbe’s return in the 1860s finally made the region the missionaries had abandoned safe from *ceddo* raids; it was

¹²⁵ “. . .cette acte était réservé à l’intelligente énergie du gouverneur du Sénégal. . . Avec la protection française, nos espérances commençaient donc à se réaliser.” “Lettre du R. P. Lamoise, Missionnaire de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit et du saint Coeur de Marie, au T.R.P. Schwindenhammer, supérieur général de la même Société,” *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 35 (1863): 265-7.

¹²⁶ “. . .les tracasseries des tiédos du roi de Sine, les guerres qui avaient lieu dans les autres royaumes. . .” Excerpt from *Aperçu historique sur la mission de Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil*, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 48, (1876), 117.

¹²⁷ Excerpt from *Aperçu historique sur la mission de Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil*, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 48 (1876): 124-5.

¹²⁸ “Il fallait une main ferme pour faire sentir à ces fanatiques la force de la France. . . Celui que la divine Providence réservait à cette oeuvre, était M. Faidherbe, placé à quatre reprises différentes à la tête de la colonie, et qui s’acquitt, auprès des noirs, une réputation de valeur extraordinaire. Son nom s’était répandu à plus de cinq cents lieues dans l’intérieur.” Excerpt from *Aperçu historique sur la mission de Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil*, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 48 (1876): 125.

these victories that spurred the missionaries to consider reoccupying Saint-Joseph, the report states.¹²⁹ Faidherbe had been introduced by divine providence, and missionaries viewed his expansionary projects in terms of protection for their task.

This is not to say that Faidherbe had a positive view of missionaries and priests. In 1855, he complained to the Minister of the Navy that the priests “are starting to go beyond the limits they should maintain. The priests of Senegal, not being able to convert a single black to their religion, are using all their zeal and efforts to make the Christian female *signares* too pious, to say the least.”¹³⁰ Faidherbe's complaint was that rather than confining their work to the task of stopping women from entering into illegitimate marriages, a pursuit he deemed as noble, priests were limiting *habitant* girls' ability to meet in public. The trigger for the complaint had been a ball Faidherbe held to celebrate the emperor of France. No *habitant* families came, which Faidherbe attributed to the priests' supposed threat to refuse the girls absolution if they attended balls. This measure, too strict in Faidherbe's eyes, served to hurt relations with the French: “I believe it is very regrettable that we are distancing the indigenous population from us entirely, and I believe this is not the goal toward which the budget supports a large clergy on the west coast of Africa.” The clergy responded, saying they had not outlawed young girls from going to Faidherbe's ball. They took offense to Faidherbe's accusations: “It is true that [the priests] exert themselves, by their counsel and exhortations, to turn [the girls] away from vice and to lead them

¹²⁹ Excerpt from *Aperçu historique sur la mission de Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil*, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 48 (1876): 126.

¹³⁰ “Je crois devoir vous rendre compte des faits et gestes du clergé à St Louis, parce qu'il me semble qu'il commence à dépasser les bornes dans lesquelles il devrait se maintenir. Les prêtres du Sénégal ne pouvant parvenir à convertir un seul noir à notre religion, emploient tous leur zèle et tous leurs efforts à rendre très pieuses, pour ne pas dire plus, les femmes *signares* chrétiennes.” Faidherbe to Minister, 16 August 1855, ANOM SEN X 4a.

to virtue, but in this task they respect their liberty, always leaving them to their own conscience.”¹³¹ Faidherbe himself had a questionable relationship; he lived with a Sarakole woman, Nkounda Siadibi, for two years and had a son with her.¹³² While the clergy criticized this, the missionaries of the interior, at least publically, still praised him as a protector.

Since Faidherbe had made the region more secure, the missionaries sought to re-found Saint-Joseph in the early 1860s, which they succeeded in doing. The renewed mission at Saint-Joseph represents a deeper engagement between state, industry, and Catholic mission, but one that echoes the agricultural establishment of Anne Javouhey and her order 40 years earlier. The Spiritans negotiated with the French government to obtain a concession, and on May 2, 1863, an imperial decree granted the missionaries 1000 hectares with 300 immediately available, with a small fee to be paid on each hectare after 10 years.¹³³ The mission would attempt to grow cotton on the concession. The goals of the new project were not fundamentally different than the goals Libermann had laid out almost 20 years earlier. Mgr Kobès,¹³⁴ the organizer of the mission, wrote of the creation of the new establishment:

This work will permit us 1) to preach by example the utility of work to the natives and the profits that they take from it will make them love and esteem work, which, to this point, was the condition of slaves and despised as such; 2) it will give us direct access to a considerable number of native workers who will be catechized during work; 3) later on, it will create for us financial resources to bring together a larger number of children and continue the task of primary and professional education on a scale more vast than we

¹³¹“Il est vrai qu'ils s'efforcent, et par leurs conseils et par leurs exhortations, de les détourner du vice et de les porter à la vertu, mais en cela même ils respectent leur liberté, les laissant toujours à leur propre conscience.” Superior general of Saint-Esprit Schwindenhamer to Minister, 12 October 1855, ANOM SEN X 3bis.

¹³² Hilary Jones, *The Métis of Senegal: Urban Life and Politics in French West Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 86.

¹³³ Benoist, *Histoire*, 151.

¹³⁴ Aloÿs Kobès, in 1848, was named coadjutor to the bishop (Bessieux) of the Vicariate Apostolic of the Two Guineas. In 1863, the Vicariate Apostolique of Senegambia was separated, and Kobès became the vicar apostolic of that jurisdiction.

have been able to up until now, and in this way; 4) it will make us prepare the precious elements that make up the Christian family and develop the work of native clergy so necessary for the evangelization of the country.¹³⁵

The Spiritans' focus on developing a work ethic, creating a native clergy, and educating children remained. However, the interests of mission, state, and commerce had now intersected, much as it had in the 1820s. The U.S. Civil War had led to a cotton shortage, which prompted France to attempt to look for colonial cotton. Pinet-Laprade, governor of Senegal in 1860, wrote a report promoting cotton exports from Senegal, and the colonial minister intervened to grant concessions, provide funds to encourage cultivation, provide seeds, and set up model farms.¹³⁶ Industrialists, who wanted cheap cotton, helped to encourage the growth of cotton as well; Antoine Herzog provided funds to the Spiritans, for example.¹³⁷ Herzog, an industrialist from Alsace, had been a condisciple of Libermann, and helped raise a capital of 60,000 fr.¹³⁸

While the first harvest at the concession of Saint-Joseph seemed promising, the cotton growing experiment failed by the later 1860s for a number of reasons. Yellow fever, locusts, and labor problems challenged the missionaries as well as others trying to grow cotton on concessions. Senegal could never produce cotton cheaply enough, and the end of the American

¹³⁵ "Cette oeuvre nous permettra 1) de prêcher par l'exemple l'utilité du travail aux indigènes et le gain qu'ils en retireraient leur fera aimer et estimer le travail qui, jusqu'ici, a été la condition des esclaves et méprisé comme tel; 2) elle nous donnera une action directe sur un nombre considerable d'ouvriers indigènes qui seront catéchisés pendant le travail; 3) elle nous créera plus tard des ressources pécuniaires pour réunir un plus grand nombre d'enfants et continuer l'oeuvre d'éducation primaire et professionnelle sur une échelle plus vaste que nous n'avons pu le faire jusqu'ici et par là, 4) elle nous fera préparer de précieux éléments pour constituer la famille chrétienne et pour développer l'oeuvre du clergé indigène si nécessaire pour l'évangélisation du pays." Rapports de Mgr Kobes aux Conseils de la Propagation de la foi et de la Sainte-Enfance, *Annales spiritaines*, quoted in Benoist, *Histoire*, 151.

¹³⁶ Richard Roberts, *Two Worlds of Cotton: Colonialism and the Regional Economy in the French Soudan, 1800-1946* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 68-70.

¹³⁷ Roberts, *Two Worlds of Cotton*, 70-71.

¹³⁸ Joseph-Roger de Benoist, "Monseigneur Aloys Kobès, pionnier de l'autosuffisance de l'Église locale," in *Les conditions matérielles de la mission: contraintes, dépassements et imaginaires XVII-XX siècles*, ed. Jean Pirotte (Paris: Karthala, 2005), 322.

Civil War meant the experiment was no longer necessary.¹³⁹ Mgr Kobès, the architect of the project, died in 1872; the beginning of the Third Republic and the building of the colonial state in the 1880s and beyond strengthened France's control over the lands that would become Senegal and made the clergy and missionaries reconsider their relationship with the republican government.¹⁴⁰

Looking back at this period, it might appear to be one of failure for the missionaries. Indeed, the fits and starts with which they founded and dissolved mission stations meant that the motives of Spiritan missionaries – to civilize and Christianize Africans in Senegambia by acting upon their souls, and to spread their religion into the interior regions of Africa that remained untouched by the corrupting influence of European debauchery and commerce – did not proceed as the missionaries would have liked. Yet the changing relationship of missionaries and colonial state, in this period before the church/state battles of the Third Republic, reveal the practical relationships that emerged between administrators and Spiritans. Ideological battles were of less importance than the ways each side could assist the other in an uncertain era of tenuous colonial and missionary expansion.

¹³⁹ Roberts, *Two Worlds of Cotton*, 72-75.

¹⁴⁰ Elizabeth Foster, *Faith in Empire: Religion, Politics, and Colonial Rule in French Senegal, 1880–1940* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).

Conclusion

Colonial Logics and Empire Building

The military expansion Faidherbe had begun took off in earnest in the late 1870s and 1880s. The Dakar-Niger railroad began construction, and the campaigns of Joseph Gallieni extended French rule in the Western Sudan. In 1895, the federation of French West Africa was formed, bringing the now-enlarged colony of Senegal together with other conquests in western Africa and eventually encompassing Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey (now Benin), French Guinea, French Sudan (now Mali), Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso).

However, as this dissertation has argued, the progression towards “high imperialism” in Senegal was far from linear. This dissertation has outlined the fits and starts that characterized the development of French colonial rule in Senegal in the century before the French Third Republic and the “scramble for Africa.” This dissertation puts “high imperialism” in a new perspective by seeing it as a phenomenon that grew out of previous trials and failures. The origins of late-nineteenth-century French territorial expansion and colonial rule in West Africa cannot be found in a particular moment, but rather in a series of shifting colonial logics that both framed the opportunities for and marked the limits of the French presence in northern Senegambia. From 1763 to 1870, a series of visions for Senegal were attempted by French agents; their successive failures pointed to military intervention and territorial expansion as the new model for the colony.

As this dissertation has outlined, a combination of local factors and global concerns shaped French colonial experimentation in Senegal. The models that other colonies provided

were important in shaping visions for Senegal's place in the French empire. In Kanya-Forstner's brief summary of French policies in Senegal between 1816 and 1860, he writes that colonial officials successively viewed Senegal as a colony that would "replace the West Indies," a "second Nile," a colony modeled on "military expansion in North Africa," and a "second India."¹ Other parts of the world thus provided models to emulate.

Yet the particular situation of Senegal – its status as an "old colony," or at least a trading post; its inhospitable climate; its history as a slave trading port and its existing gum trade; the relationships, both real and imagined, between French and Senegambian people dating back centuries – greatly shaped the French presence there in the nineteenth century. In the half-century after the Seven Years' War, despite intermittent British occupation of France's former West African establishments and the interruption of revolution and war, French interest in northern Senegambia was kept alive by the history of a French presence in the region, rivalry with the British, a growing base of knowledge about the region that seemed to promise economic opportunities, and what seemed to some to be an alternative to the apparently doomed slave system. As the French readied to take back possession of Senegal after the Napoleonic Wars, a failed settlement attempt ruled out the possibility of Senegal becoming a settler colony. In the 1820s, the failure of plantation projects due to local causes led to a turn to a commercial logic for the colony. When the gum trade seemed to be reaching a low point, a turn to military expansion became the solution to commercial failure. Missionaries remained in the colonial centers at first, then proposed to move away from the realm of European corruption and state control, though in the end they accepted help from the colonial administration in the interest of forwarding their

¹ Kanya-Forstner, *The Conquest of the Western Sudan*, 24, 25, 29, 31.

particular logic of spreading Christianity and civilization. For missionaries too, then, failures led to a reconfiguration of their role in Senegal and their relationship with the state.

Shifting colonial priorities also led to changing meanings of “civilization.” Through examining varied notions of “civilization” before the French Third Republic, the era most associated with the *mission civilisatrice*, it becomes clear that the term was used in ways that shaped and justified various colonial initiatives, including the plantation schemes of the 1820s, commercial development of the 1830s and 1840s, the infrastructural and military efforts of the 1850s and 1860s, and missionary establishments from 1818-1870. Whereas the language of a “civilizing mission” is not central in the administrative documents, letters, and published works considered in this survey of the period of 1763 to 1870, understanding how “civilization” does appear suggests ways the Third Republic civilizing mission was prefigured.

The themes of experiment, failure, and shifting logics are not unique to this location or period, but these notions have a particular resonance in nineteenth-century Senegal. The end of the eighteenth century empire – France’s begrudging acceptance of the abolition of the slave trade (at least officially), the loss of Saint-Domingue – and shifts in colonial political economy – free trade’s replacement of mercantilism, the replacement of company rule by a French administration -- made this a period in which a new colonial order had to be created. At the same time, the legacy of the past remained strong in the form of agreements with the *habitants*, treaties and tribute payments, and the memory of former French establishments. While established colonial institutions were not entirely lacking, the fact that there was no coherent doctrine or large existing administration provided room for experimentation and the need for a series of logics to direct what kind of establishment the colony would be. The frameworks of creative

failure and imperial logics emphasize that French colonial rule in Senegal came about through a continual process of experimentation and improvisation.

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