

***How political factors shape the labor  
market evolution in Senegal after  
1945? Lessons from History***

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# Objective of this presentation

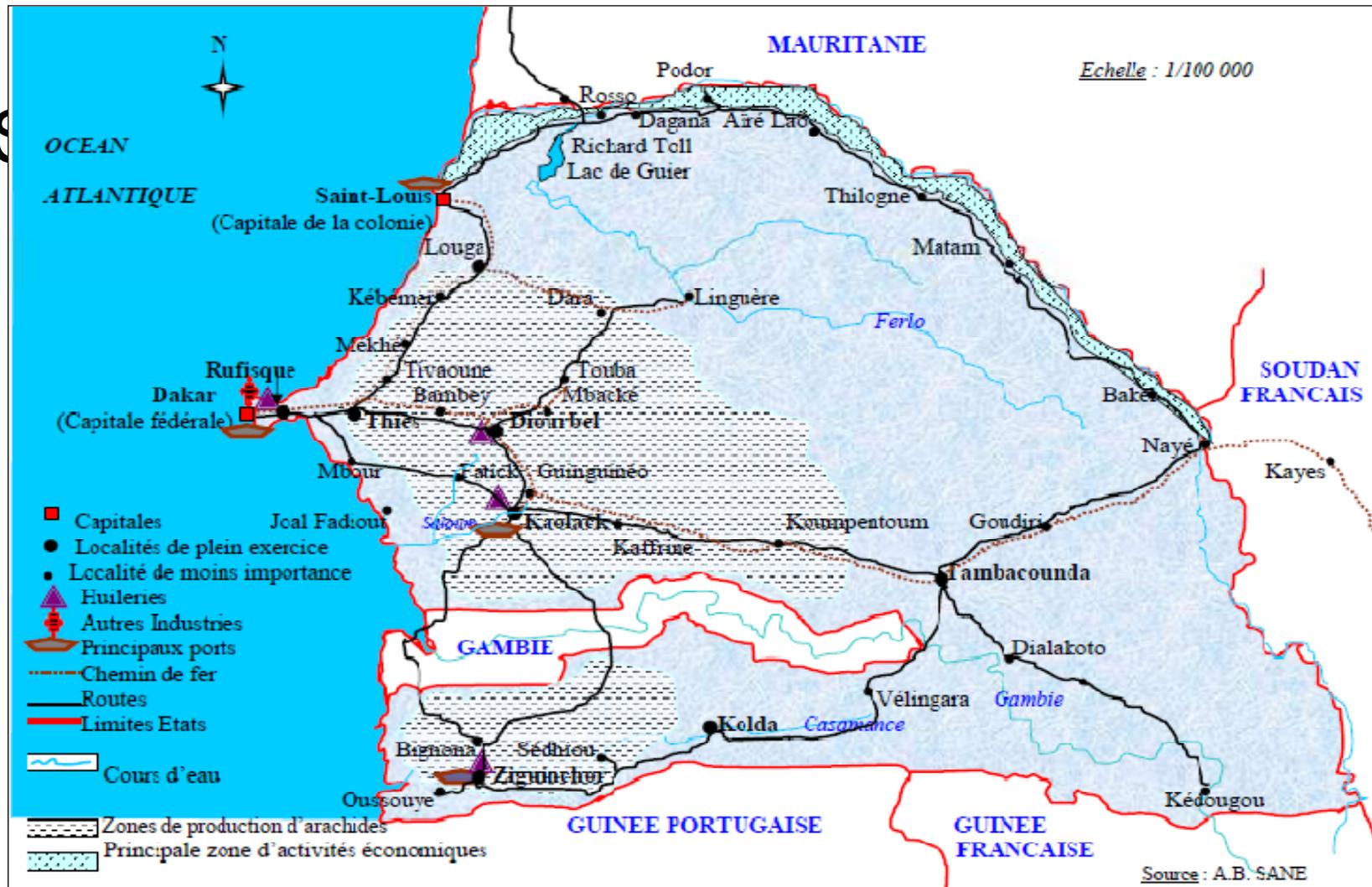
- Mapping the transformations occurred in Senegal's economic, social and political spheres from the colonial era to post-independence State
- Pointing out the political factors as a key element in the evolution of the labor market since 1945

# Outline

- From the labor question to the labor market
- The political factors as a key element in the evolution of the labor market

# French West Africa in 1905





# From the labor question to the labor market

- For a comprehensive approach of the labor question in Senegal, this paper has considered the paths of the wage laborer from *the village to the urban city dealing with different forms of work in the framework of the integration of the Senegalese societies in the world capitalist system.*
- *In this respect, work has been understood as the human effort of men as well as women adding use value in agriculture, industry & services and the so called « informal sector ».* ( See Bill Freund, *The African worker*, 1988 & Chris Tilly and Charles Tilly: *Work under Capitalism*, 1998 )

# The changing representations of work and the changing status of workers

- Changing representations of the meaning of work and the workers according to the evolution of the society: from a value, a contempt, a rehabilitated practise
- ✓ Workers valued through the *hero of the fields*, a hard working man known for his physical strength and endurance
- ✓ Artisans , the only professional group is subject to contempt
- ✓ With the widespread use of slaves due to the Atlantic slave trade, manual work came to be undertood as a degrading activity consigned to people of inferior status; in the process it came to stigmatise people as poor

# The changing representation of work and the changing status of workers

- ✓ Work recovered a certain dignity with the rise of the monetary economy, peanut production and wage labor under colonialism
- ✓ After 1945, salaried workers emerged as a major driving force in economic and social change even though they were a numerical minority (9% of the working population)
- ✓ The labor market became a reality with the abolition of the forced labor and with two major actors: the private sector and the civil service

# The political factor as a key element in the evolution of the labor market

- The change in the labor market is not only due to economic factors. It has also been mainly shaped by political factors as illustrated by four cases:
  - ✓ The Union française : 1946 to 1956
  - ✓ The Loi-cadre: 1956 to 1960
  - ✓ The early post independence State policy: 1960 to 1980
  - ✓ The post independence State policy at the adjustment structural era: 1980 to 2000

# The Union française (1946 to 1956)

- Two key-elements in that policy:
  - ✓ The assimilationist constitution adopted in 1946
  - ✓ The extension of the investment policy through the adoption of the Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Economique et Social des Territoires d'outre-mer (FIDES)
- A major output: development of the industrialization process in AOF by French companies

# A changing element in the colonial policy: the extension of the industrialization investment

- The golden era for import substitution industrialization in AOF : from 1948 to 1956
- A varied range of manufacturing plants in many sectors , including vegetable oil refining, fish and grain processing, tobacco, coffee roasting, textile, engineering, shipping, construction materials and mineral extraction derived from the *Fonds d'investissement pour le developpement economique et social des territoires d'outre-mer* ( FIDES).
- It made Senegal the most industrialized territory in French West Africa (AOF) with about 31,98% of the salaried workers in all AOF and its private sector became the biggest employer from 1946 to 1966

# The place of the private sector as the biggest employer in Senegal from 1946 to 1966

- Industrial activity constituted the bulk of activities in the private sector, the biggest employer in the country (compared to public sector, the weight of the private sector had varied from 85,37% in 1948 to 59,52% in 1966)
- The industrial sector is mainly concentrated in the area of Dakar, the capital of the French West Africa and the major city of the Federation

# The loi-cadre : from 1956 to 1960

- The loi-cadre (1956) , a metropolitan France response to the growing favour for decolonization in the international community and the defeat in the colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria
- The loi-cadre introduced the breakdown of the French West Federation (AOF) and the drastic reduction of industrial investment
- From 1958 to 1960, change in political relations between France and its colonies happened at an accelerated pace, culminating in the many proclamations of independence in 1960.

# The loi-cadre and the beginning of the job crisis

- The Territory of Senegal : The major consequence of the loi-cadre was the loss of the major markets ( Guinea, Soudan and Ivoirly Coast) and the revealing of the increasing obsolescence of production facilities
- The private sector progressively ran out of steam and in 1966 it lost its status as the country's main source of empoyment
- This generated a lingering crisis within the industrial sector and an employment crisis

# The burgeoning public sector job growth from 1966 to 1980

- The post colonial State had stimulated a burgeoning public sector job growth which made it the biggest employer in Senegal from 1966 to 1990
- The State's role as the country 's biggest employer is not a legacy of the colonial era despite the weight of the civil service herited from the AOF administration

# The post independence State policy at the adjustment structural era: 1980 to 2000

- The economic crisis that began in 1968, as well as the effects of rapid population growth and accelerated urbanization deeply compounded the problem of an oversupply of unemployed and underemployed workers.
- The adoption of structural adjustment policies led to the withdrawal of the State from the labor market in 1980 and brought the employment crisis to the public eye in stark and painful ways.

# The adjustment era and the job crisis

- The adjustment era brought three important consequences:
  - ✓ the rapid development of the called *informal sector* ( the biggest employer since 1990);
  - ✓ the steady growth of unemployment which weighs especially heavily on young people and women
  - ✓ the development of the migration towards other African countries, Europe and America as the only recourse left in the face of the current severe job crisis.

# Conclusion

- By analyzing these different steps in the French colonial as well as in the Senegalese *Post Independence State* policies, this communication has pointed out how the change in the labor market was not determined by economic factors alone but was shaped by political factors too.
- From this case study, lessons must be drawn for advocating more attention to the relationship between economic and political factors in history.

Thank You !

Thank you for your attention