

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND FORGOTTEN SPACES

This book constitutes a novel contribution, combining recent theoretical developments and empirical contributions, as well as the recent and latest trends and challenges on the issue of Forgotten Spaces. Forgotten Spaces – like the Forgotten Regions, in particular – are Spaces that in potential can and do create significant value (if their resources are properly rediscovered) and create many potential costs (if these Spaces are increasingly neglected by economic agents). The editors have identified a gap in current research because there is not enough empirical evidence about these places as well as about the role of their actors.

Abandoning regions can lead to, for example, pollution, uncontrolled forest fires, vandalism, heritage deterioration, and potentially untreated industrial facilities, carrying potential costs not only in environmental sustainability, but also in values such as landscape aesthetics.

Thus, this book reflects on the dimensions of the identification of such Forgotten Spaces, on the design of policies focused on minimizing the associated costs, and on the scope of programs to promote these areas, not only for upgrading them but also for promoting their environmental sustainability. The comparative approach of the empirical part also allows knowledge and experience from diverse longitudes and latitudes. The editors highlight the richness of the experience of Latin American countries, the polarization and interesting experiences from several sectors rediscovered in Europe, as well as the holistic cases coming from several African experiences.

This book will attract the attention of academicians, politicians, and ultimately the attention of all decision-makers who most likely are forgetting many of the Spaces around them.

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**Regional Development and Forgotten Spaces: Global Policy
Experiences and Implications**

*Edited by María del Carmen Sánchez-Carreira, Paulo Jorge Reis Mourão,
and Bruno Blanco-Varela*

Regional Development and Forgotten Spaces

Global Policy Experiences and Implications

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Sánchez-Carreira, Paulo Jorge Reis
Mourão and Bruno Blanco-Varela**

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1 Compensation policies in forgotten territories of peripheral regions

The case of Casamance (Senegal)

*María José Piñeira Mantiñán, Ramón López Rodríguez
and Issa Mballo*

1 Introduction

There are many definitions in the literature on Regional Development, but they generally refer to issues such as economic, political, cultural, social, or environmental inequalities, but always with a geographical connotation of scale and spatial variation (Pike et al., 2011). This development has always been linked to the implementation of a series of programs, interventions, or policies aimed at spreading and redistributing economic growth from more powerful regions to more backward ones. The capitalist conception of growth has tended to create highly developed central regions and less developed and dependent peripheral regions (Scott & Storper, 1990). Thus, policies aimed at fostering this economic development have been generalized regardless of the territory, based on achieving an improvement in the level of social welfare. The formula has been to invest in infrastructure, in education, and in the promotion of innovation and industrial development, and if these investments are directed mainly to lagging regions, it would also contribute to economic convergence (Rodríguez Pose, 2013).

Given this situation, which has led to an increase in the gap between rich and poor today and has reinforced the idea of the center–periphery, or the differences between the global north and south, we wanted to focus our work on a forgotten territory in an African country. The reason for this is the situation this continent is going through, with a limited role in the world economy, and with large differences between countries in terms of per capita income, from \$10,764 in the Seychelles to \$239 in Burundi in the year 2020 (World Bank, 2022). Africa seems to have become one of the strategic areas of the different international regional actors. An example of this is the Cotonou Agreement of the beginning of the century (renewed in 2021), which formed part of the European strategy with the countries of the African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) zone. It was based on improving economic, social, and political relations with these countries, to which must be added the various initiatives that have been implemented to date on the basis of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or, since 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This has involved the intervention of the international community through various forms of cooperation, implementing strategies and policies that help development

and the elimination of poverty. In addition to these international agencies, there are several regional organizations that will influence the development of countries' national policies (African Development Bank Group (AfDB), African Union (AU), or different subregional African economic communities). As in other regions of the global south, structural adjustment programs and forced privatization have reduced the development capacity of many governments. This has implanted the idea that the State is ineffective and obsolete unless it adapts to market dynamics, seeing this as the option for improving economic performance (Pike et al., 2011).

In this context, we have decided to analyze what is happening in Senegal's internal Regional Development. Senegal was chosen because it has one of the most stable democracies on the continent, while at the same time sharing many of the general problems that Africa has been experiencing, such as religious, cultural, cross-border, and migration conflicts, which have generated instability in the different countries. Specifically, the case study will focus on a peripheral region of the country, Casamance, a region marginalized and forgotten by the country's central government, where the measures applied to improve the deficiencies or problems have been insufficient or non-existent. This has led to social, political, and economic dysfunction and disparities in relation to the rest of the country, weakening the region.

Throughout this chapter, we will first characterize the case study, explaining the characteristics that make it a forgotten region. We will then show the various factors that have influenced the region to be ignored over a long period of time. Finally, we will discuss some of the policies or initiatives that are being developed in Casamance in different areas to improve its economic development and its disconnection from the rest of the country. For this purpose, scientific bibliography has been consulted, as well as documentation published by various institutions (legal texts, operational programs, reports, projects and webpage information). Furthermore, data were collected from official database as World Bank, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Finance and Recovery as well as Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. However, with regard to the statistical bases, we must point out that the data provided are scarce, which makes it difficult to research and analyze the development impacts derived from the programs that have been implemented.

2 Casamance, a peripheral, marginal, and forgotten region of Senegal

Casamance is a natural region of Senegal located between two countries, Guinea Bissau to the South and the Republic of Gambia to the North. The latter is a 280-km-long enclave that serves as a border, disconnecting the region from the rest of the country, with an area of 28,340 km² and a population of 1.7 million inhabitants, and its original administrative unit has been replaced by the regions of Ziguinchor, Kolda, and Sedhiou (separated from Kolda in 2008) (Figure 1.1). It is characterized as a region with a structural food deficit and political marginality despite numerous modernization and development actions carried out by the French and Senegalese colonial governments post-independence (Niadme, 2017). A reality that clashes with the denomination of "granary of Senegal" is also how it is known, because of its protracted natura, a dense river network, abundance of fertile soils,



Figure 1.1 Territories of Senegal and region of Casamance

and agricultural potential. Its economic base is mainly based on the primary sector, and its population reflects the ethnic diversity of Senegal, being composed mainly of Diolas in the lower part of the region, Mandingas, in the middle part, and Peuls in the upper part, which coexist with the Soninke, Sérere, Wolof, and Bambara.

Although their geographical and political separation from the rest of the country by the Gambia River and the former British colony of Gambia has allowed them to preserve their own languages and cultures, this has been one of the main causes of the armed conflict that has been raging in the region for more than 40 years. The conflict is justified by: a) feeling marginalized by the macrocephaly of Dakar; b) the de facto dispossession of the territory by the administration; c) the administrative bias that favors the political elites and businessmen from the North who monopolize the business fabric; and d) the lack of the growing domination of the Wolof in language and religion Wolof (Gueye, 2013).

In this context, Casamance can be considered a peripheral, marginal, and forgotten region within Senegal (Table 1.1).

- a) Peripheral: geographic distance between Casamance and the rest of Senegal reflects differences – socially, culturally, economically, and ecologically – that are both historic and modern (World Bank, 2020). Lack of infrastructure limits

Table 1.1 Defining features of peripheral, marginal, and Forgotten Regions

Condition	Factors
Peripheral	Distance from the core (the city of Dakar) and remote in physical sense Landlocked and cut off of the rest of the country by the Gambia In between of three countries: the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Guinea Conakry Poor transport infrastructures
Marginal	Dysfunctions in a system that cannot regain its equilibrium Disparities in income and political power Disengagement of stakeholder networks
Forgotten	Lack of public initiative and investment focused on development Gap between policy initiatives and real needs Weak industrialization and technification Resource-limited societies Undermining trust in government institutions among the local population

Source: Authors.

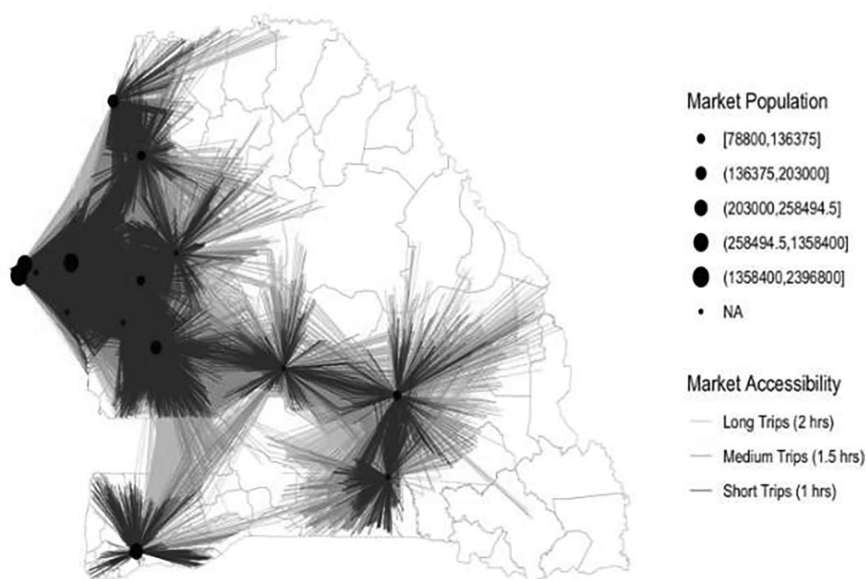


Figure 1.2 Market accessibility in Senegal

Source: World Bank (2020).

intra- and inter-territorial capillarity. Options range from travelling by ferry, driving through the Gambia – but historically its relationship with Senegal has been bad – or driving on poor roads that pass through Tambacounda. As a result, significant parts of Casamance are still substantially disconnected from local markets (Figure 1.2). At the same time, this lack of connectivity translates in turn to low levels of economic activity relative to the rest of the country.

This situation of peripherality is compounded by the fact that Casamance forms a border with Guinea Bissau and Guinea Conakry and that the border region not only can be regarded as a manifestation of geometrical marginality (Leimgruber, 1994) but also represent centripetal thinking, because they are considered as being at risk from invasions hence investments are limited.

- b) Marginal: peripheralization is directly linked to exclusion from networks and from political power in decision-making. Public actors find it difficult to join, so as not to upset the existing relationships and balances of power negotiated between those who are part of the system, and thus included in the process of shaping and the implementing decisions and control, and those who are not (Petsi & Urso, 2016). As a result, there is a lack of control over the decision-making process, unbalanced (power) relationships, and more or less unintended marginalization processes due to side effects of politician interventions.
- c) Forgotten: because being regions situated at the periphery of a country, they risk being forgotten for the majority of the politicians and citizen (Leimgruber, 2010). The result is a lack of investment in the region that limits not only its economic development, but also the processes of territorial and social cohesion. The lack of resources, coupled with the implementation of initiatives detached from the local reality, has led to a feeling of distrust toward public institutions by a population that feels unprotected and vulnerable.

Thus, the isolation that Casamance has suffered for decades, far from the capital Dakar and the economic and financial networks that favor development, has chronicized a feeling of political, social, and economic marginalization in the region that still persists today.

From the political point of view, the representation of Casamance in national politics is scarce, which limits not only to transfer to a forum of debate the needs and problems of the region, but also to have real capacity to modify the scheme of capital distribution so unbalanced that exists at present, and that speaks to us of a useful and attractive Senegal for the investment and of another marginal one (Dramé, 1998). The central government's lack of knowledge and interest in the region, together with the incompetence of political leaders and the inefficiency of the decentralization model – which remains crypto-theoretical – determine the ineffectiveness of public actions, often out of step with local urgencies. This inefficiency is often linked to the instrumentalization of conflict.

On the social level, Casamance is one of the most impoverished regions in Senegal. According to the Oxford University Multidimensional Poverty Index, the MPI of the Kolda (0.50) and Sédhiou (0.44) regions is significantly higher than the national MPI of 0.288 (Camara, 2002; World Bank, 2020). The poor population (75% of the total) resides in self-built housing, located in sectors at risk of flooding, built with flimsy materials, and suffering from a total lack of infrastructure and basic services (Samba, 2021); they have low levels of education – as a consequence of early school drop-out due to the lack of economic means; they are easily influenced and are partly stigmatized (mainly the Diola) as rebels. Moreover, Casamance

is a hot spot for illegal migration. The negative effects of climatic hazards on rural communities cause rural exodus of young people who do not see opportunities to make ends meet. In addition, clashes between the Senegalese army and members of the separatist Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) have caused between 10,000 and 40,000 internally displaced persons in 2010. Of these, between 10,000 and 14,000 have sought refuge with family, friends, and host communities in Ziguinchor, the largest city in Casamance (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2010). The consequences of such migration leave serious effects on communities, where social ties are broken by forced displacement, and the informal institutions that regulate many parts of village life are disrupted, leaving them less able to prepare for and respond to other risks (World Bank, 2020).

Finally, from the economic point of view, Casamance's economic development remains limited. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood, although it is also the sector which employs the largest share of the poor nationally. It employs 80% of the population and contributes 43.99% of GDP (Table 1.2). However, agriculture, mostly subsistence farming, is heavily affected by climate variability and other problems related to the supervision of farmers in structures and organizations (Ba, 2009). There are also problems with access to fertilizers and the disposal of agricultural products. Delays are constantly noted in the distribution of fertilizers to farmers in the countryside as winter approaches, due to poor planning of agricultural campaigns. In addition, the marketing campaigns for agricultural products are sometimes the subject of polemics between farmers and State authorities: they are observed problems between the Senegalese State and agricultural producers over unpaid vouchers, or the fixing of the State's purchase price per kilogram of this or that product (millet, groundnuts, sorghum, etc.) (Ngom, 2021). The Dakar region – the most developed and least agricultural – escapes these problems. Its activities are much more attractive for the former agricultural labor force. Provincial industrial and service activities that could have grown due to local deagrarianization become less attractive than wealthier Dakarian counterparts, so underdeveloped provinces may find their gap with the capital (Mukashov et al., 2021). In the context of Senegal, the degree of industrialization in Casamance is low with a contribution of

Table 1.2 Economic structure of Senegal by major regions

	<i>Total %</i>	<i>Crops</i>	<i>Oagr</i>	<i>Mini</i>	<i>Agpr</i>	<i>Oind</i>	<i>Serv</i>	<i>Padm</i>
National GDP	100	9.26	6.20	3.17	9.38	14.08	52.34	5.57
Dakar	55.34	0.73	0.44	2.18	8.68	16.86	63.91	7.21
Thi-Dio	17.22	5.49	5.10	5.24	10.15	16.59	53.99	3.44
Center	9.05	38.47	20.48	1.70	5.26	6.21	26.14	1.73
North	10.10	21.03	18.58	6.56	16.57	8.67	23.12	5.47
South	8.29	27.76	16.23	2.97	8.19	5.58	35.86	3.41
Export in output	10.27	7.36	2.38	23.84	15.83	14.15	7.65	–
Consumption	100	7.68	4.20	2.86	14.35	32.74	34.51	3.66

Source: Mukashov et al. (2021).

Note: Crops = crops production; oagr = other agriculture (livestock, fishery, forestry); mini = mining; agpr = agroprocessing; oind = (other) industry; serv = services; padm = public administration.

16.74% to GDP compared to 27.72% in Dakar or 31.80% and 31.98% in the North (Saint-Louis & Matam) and Thies and Diourbel, respectively. The fact is that the abundance of unskilled workers causes the population that leaves the countryside to opt to work in informal services or activities linked to tourism, although the latter has been degraded by decades of low-intensity conflict in the region.

It has been noted in this context of intrinsic territorial disadvantages and state neglect that feedback loops have been created that have derived real systemic traps (Cañete et al., 2017) and in the conflict that has afflicted Casamance since 1982. This is the year in which the Mouvement des Forces Democratiques de Casamance (MDFC) emerged, created by Mamadou Sané, coming from the village Diégoune en Blouf (a Diola territory in the west of the department of Bignonne) in lower Casamance. A peaceful movement in its beginnings, but a few years later it turned into a separatist rebellion demanding independence, which put a brake on the development of the region, along with other factors.

3 Factors that have limited the region's development

If in the introductory section we referred to the peripheral condition of Casamance as the main factor of the marginality afflicting the region and justifying the desire for independence, we cannot ignore the fact that historically there have been other factors that have helped to chronicle this situation.

First, we must go back to the period of colonization. While Casamance was under Portuguese influence – as were its neighbors in southern Guinea Bissau – the rest of the country was under French influence. Although in 1886, Portugal ceded the Ziguinchor sector to France (Trincaz, 1984), the population did not feel linked to the new metropolis. From then on, Ziguinchor was gradually transformed into a real city with a European-style layout. The populations located on the banks of the river were subjected to an intense port activity, importing peanuts (despite the great resistance) and exporting rice. Trade with the metropolis became the main activity of the city whose objective was to serve the interests of the colonizer. Consequently, the development of the region was oriented to the exclusive benefit of this trade, neglecting the interests of the local population (Trincaz, 1984). A population that was beginning to reveal itself and that provoked the Gallic government – with the support of the Wolof population of northern Senegal – to carry out a military campaign to take control of the population. Since then, the Wolof would remain in the imaginary of the region as a foreign population (Madruga, 2021). On the other hand, with decolonization, Casamance will come under the control of Senegal – when the French government had promised it to be independent – and will see its trade with France collapse in favor of Dakar, which will monopolize commercial transactions and exercise a new domination over the peripheral territories (Trincaz, 1984).

Cultural and religious differences have also been a determining factor. In the cultural field, Casamance stands out for the ethnic diversity (Diolas, Peuls, Mandingas, etc.) present in the territory, which is not a problem in itself, but the repeated relocation policies applied by the central government are. In addition, there is an intention to implant in Casamance the Wolof language and culture predominant in the

country and in its capital Dakar (about 40% of the population). Regarding religion, Senegal is a secular country where it is estimated that about 94% of the population is Muslim and about 4% Christian. The latter is mostly concentrated in the south – where traditional beliefs based on superstitions also survive – and its presence is due to the missions that tried to counteract the rapid advance of Islam and which popularized the identity of the main ethnic group: the Joola (Madruga, 2021).

Finally, we must refer to the political factor. After years of conflict, the 1990s marked a turning point with an attempt to consolidate peace. However, the distrust on the part of some MFDC leaders toward the “*nordists*” (a derogatory term for the inhabitants of the north of Senegal, considering them as people who break their promises for political and economic gain) hindered the process (Tomàs, 2016). But as P. Lavigne states, the inclusion of the Casamance people was key to the resolution of the internal conflict (Lavigne, 2011).

It was necessary to wait until the 2012 elections to glimpse some change. The figure of Macky Sall was seen as the alternative to the government of Abdoulaye Wade, characterized by corruption, the constant rise in food and housing prices, the construction of meaningless pharaonic works, and the lack of essential services (such as education and administration). For his mandate, he promised constitutional reforms to limit the length and number of presidential terms, to launch administrative decentralization processes, and to reduce poverty through the implementation of the “*Plan Senegal Emergente*”, as well as to implement measures to lower the prices of basic products (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 2021). However, the lack of initiatives for development in Casamance by the renewed government and the slowness in the decentralization process (with the horizon of 2022) generated disappointment among the Casamance elites and population, as they continued to feel undervalued by the government in Dakar (Tomàs, 2016). Consequently, in the 2019 elections, Macky Sall, despite being re-elected, did not win in Ziguinchor.

Moreover, geopolitical relations with neighboring countries have gone from conflictive or non-existent to cordial and improving. The causes that strained relations in the past were, on the one hand, the fact that members of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) took refuge in the border areas – some of them were extradited and handed over to the Senegalese government; and on the other hand, they had to take in the population displaced by the conflict, which initially affected Ziguinchor, but spread eastwards from 1995 onwards. In total, it involved more than 62,600 long-term internal displacements, of which between 10,000 and 13,000 took refuge in equal parts in the Gambia and Guinea Bissau where MFDC guerrillas have rear bases (Evans, 2004, 2007). However, in recent years, relations with the Gambia have been improving thanks to initiatives such as the construction of a road linking Casamance with the north of the country through the neighboring country.

4 The challenge of turning Casamance into an economically dynamic region

Aware of the isolation and vulnerability of the Casamance region, and now that the armed conflict has stopped, the Senegalese government is trying to promote social cohesion and economic dynamization in the region through various initiatives (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3 Problems identified and initiatives put in place for the revitalization of Casamance

<i>Area</i>	<i>Problem</i>	<i>Initiative for Improvement</i>
Territory	Border-conflict region Physical separation of Casamance from the north of the country	Border region – opportunity to expand into new markets Construction and rehabilitation of roads and bridges, improvement of air and maritime transportation
Policy	War conflict	Liberal government End of the conflict
Society	Expulsion of population due to war conflict Lack of inter-ethnic integration	Social integration measures for returnee population Multicultural society as a value to be promoted
Economy	Centralization of investment in the Dakar macrocephaly Agriculture – natural hazards Lack of industrialization Slowdown in tourism due to the conflict situation	Decentralization of investment Creation of the Casamance Development Pole Agriculture and tourism: basis of economic dynamization

Source: Authors.

From a territorial point of view, the main challenge facing Casamance is to combat isolation. In fact, this is one of the objectives set out in the Emerging Senegal Plan (PES), a strategy for the period 2014–2023, supported by a vision of an emerging Senegal by 2035, which focuses on three strategic axes (Ministère de L'Économie des Finances et de la Relance, 2022):

- a) Structural transformation of the economy and growth: through the consolidation of current growth drivers, the development of new sectors that generate wealth and employment, and the promotion of zones and growth poles that favor inter-regional balance and drive inclusive and sustainable industrialization processes. To this end, a Casamance Development Pole Project has been launched. It is an initiative of the State of Senegal, co-financed with the World Bank, reflecting the Government's commitment to improve the prospects for sustainable peace through economic and social development. The project aims to promote the emergence of commercial agriculture on the basis of the development of value chains with high economic and social potential. It aims to contribute to reducing the vulnerability of young people and women in Casamance by expanding their opportunities for income-generating activities to address the root causes of the conflict.
- b) Human capital, social protection, and sustainable development: improving the quality of life of the population, combating social inequalities, favoring access to energy and land, and preserving the resource base.
- c) Governance, institutions, peace and security: protecting rights and freedoms and consolidating a rule of law that fosters peace and promotes the full development of Casamance's potential.

In recent years, many initiatives have already been launched in an attempt to put in place positive factors that have hitherto been seen as barriers to development. In this sense, the diagnosis on the territorial attractiveness of Casamance elaborated by a partnership between the Entente Interdépartementale de Ziguinchor and the Région Grand Est, accompanied by the operator Gescod, is particularly relevant. Among the positive aspects are first the geographical situation of the region:

- a) Its border location with the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Guinea makes it a strategic center for subregional (Diabé market) and regional trade flows (economic, commercial, population).
- b) Its 70 km of waterfront would allow it to host a port with international projection.
- c) Casamance River (300 km long) would be an ideal channel for trade and population flows as it crosses the entire Casamance.

Second, it highlights the richness of its land and natural resources, key elements for the promotion of agricultural and tourism activities, which are the basis of the strategy of the Casamance Development Pole. However, it is not proving to be easy.

As far as agriculture is concerned, land ownership has always been a problem in the region due to disputes between villages over the scarce cultivable land; clashes with the colonial government over the question of land use and land taxes before independence; expropriations and disputes linked to the new law of national domain shortly before the violent turn of the conflict; and more recently the landmines limiting livelihood strategies groups in rural areas and towns (Gueye, 2013). On the other hand, the disengagement of the State from the rural world in 1984 liberated agrarian Spaces, which favored their occupation by farmers. Farmers had been organized since the 1970s in the form of village associations, economic interest groups, farmers' unions, farmers' federations and associations, etc., and received assistance through cooperation (projects, donations, and support from nongovernmental organizations). However, agricultural production in Casamance remains in a situation of stagnation and fragmentation, which limits the implementation of initiatives linked to agro-industry and product marketing. Although the Senegalese authorities present Casamance as the Granary of Senegal, the truth is that storage, packaging, and processing infrastructures are lacking; there is no efficient control of the production process, there are logistical difficulties due to the weak tertiary sector, informal production remains the majority, and farmer training is insufficient. All these result in the export of raw products and, consequently, a lower level of income (Gueye, 2013).

In addition, for years there has been massive logging of the region's forests to be sold to the Chinese – in exchange for motorcycles – across the Gambian border. While it is true that for decades, Senegal maintained the nationalized forestry model established by the French Civil Code adopted in 1904, which divided forests into classified domain, protected domain, and private domain (which usually consisted of planted forests), and which established strict quotas for timber and charcoal, in 1993, it tried a new Forest Code that transferred forest management and exploitation to rural councils (elected from rural communities) in order to fulfill its plan to decentralize powers to local communities and give them the option of showing their

commitment to participatory governance. That decentralization was accompanied by great pressures on local leaders from outside the community to supply the demand for timber, mainly *ven* (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*), African mahogany (*Khaya senegalensis*) and teak (*Tectona grandis*). Recent research claims that 25% of Casamance's forests have been depleted since 2010 and that the sale of timber has been the basis for financing the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (Fent, 2018), although other factors have also contributed to the deforestation of the region, such as the need for charcoal or more agricultural land.

Faced with this situation, several projects have begun to promote the enhancement and sustainable exploitation of forest resources. Of particular note is the Eco-park Project, close to the village of Diembereng, which has succeeded in preserving 32 hectares of an endemic littoral forest (Ecofund, 2016) or the Sustainable Forest Management in the Priority Vulnerable Forest Ecosystems of Senegal to enhance Ecosystem Services for Climate Resilience in Senegal project whose priority areas of intervention include the Casamance region, in which the restoration of mangroves (which in turn will favor fishing and tourism) and the restoration and sustainable management of natural forest – palm grove are some of the most outstanding interventions (Green Climate Found, 2017).

On the land side, numerous fields and villages that were abandoned because of the armed conflict have been repopulated, and agriculture has become not only the livelihood for the displaced population, but also a mechanism for integration. Initially, IDPs started returning to villages closer to Ziguinchor and gradually returned into rural areas. Some aid is channeled through government bodies and local NGOs, providing materials for houses rebuilt mainly by returnees themselves. Aid also funds construction of village amenities including wells, schools, clinics, and community centers, as well as other infrastructure including roads, barrages to improve lowland rice cultivation and farm tracks to facilitate marketing of produce. Nevertheless, returnees initially maintained a foothold in their place of displacement to ensure continued access to livelihoods while reconstructing their homes and restarting agricultural production in their areas of return. The fact is that the demining of the most part of only the return villages and not of the surrounding farmland has hindered the success and sustainability of many return movements. In any case, the government is committed to their social integration and economic stabilization. To this end, a labor market research is being developed in Ziguinchor to identify specific opportunities in the city and help redirect efforts at vocational training in the right directions; and specific activities are being explored with UNICEF and local authorities to both attract teachers back in areas that have proved to be insecure in recent times and to provide an updated curriculum for children that have missed on school because of their displacement (Evans, 2009, 2014).

But really, the administration's greatest effort is focused on changing the image of Casamance and promoting it as a region that is committed to an environmentally friendly production model that values traditional methods, but that is at the same time committed to research and innovation. To achieve this, the training of local administration technicians has been improved, so that they are able to design, implement, and manage development projects and programs, as well as carry out

participatory diagnostic sessions to determine the priority areas for investment in the region. Similarly, farmers have received sufficient training to set up farms to improve production, increase their added value, favor their marketing, overcome the limitations associated with the institutional credit system, promote local savings capacity (Dramé, 2005), and favor decent work and social protection.

In this context, agroecology is positioning itself as the best business alternative and a mechanism to “retain” young people. In the town of Bignona, the Émile Badiane agricultural technical high school is working to prepare future senior managers in agricultural and rural development and young people to manage a farm or an agri-food processing unit. In addition, the school supports the integration of new graduates, thanks to an incubation plot and support in obtaining land. Thus, numerous farmers have already started their own businesses in new income-generating areas such as beekeeping, arboriculture, grafting, composting, horticulture, and animal care, mainly for small ruminants (sheep and goats). In the field of agriculture, cashew nut cultivation is proliferating, used as a snack and also in the chocolate industry; cashew apple pulp, very rich in vitamin C, is being used to make jam and fruit juice; while “soum-soum”, an artisanal alcohol obtained after fermentation of the pulp, is also being produced.

It is worth mentioning that work is being done to create appellations of origin thanks to the richness and quality of natural resources (madd, mango, toll, banana, ditakh, palm oil, cashew nuts, fish, Casamance honey, mangrove, forests, etc.). The first initiative was that of “Madd de Casamance”, launched by the Association for the Protection and Promotion of the GI Madd de Casamance (APPIGMADD), which is well advanced, especially with the creation of the National Committee of the Geographical Indication by order of 12/12/2019 (Sambou & Schmitt, 2020). An initiative that speaks to us of the changing conceptualizations that are being registered in Casamance on the rural, where criteria such as quality and durability, intelligence, sustainability, and inclusive development acquire special relevance (Lois & Piñeira, 2014; Latouche, 2003). On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that Designations of Origin and Protected Geographical Indications allow placing the territory, the place, the image of entire regions in a global framework where the claim of the local product has been significantly revalued (Unwin & Rose, 2004; Armesto & Lois, 2007).

Along with agriculture, tourism is positioned as a dynamizing and structuring element of the region. In this regard, the Senegalese Tourism Promotion Agency has declared Casamance a national tourism priority zone. It has also set up a tourism cluster and is encouraging the arrival of new investors through advantageous tax exemptions. Thus, any tour operator setting up in this region, or already established there, will be exempted for 10 years from paying income tax on the values received by the company on the dividends distributed; any tax borne by the company and based on the salaries paid by the company, in particular the flat-rate contribution payable by the entrepreneurs; all registration fees, stamp duties, and similar taxes accruing on acts or operations carried out during the period those years; the license tax, the land tax for constructed real estate, the land tax for non-constructed real estate, the license tax; the flat-rate minimum tax; the value added tax and the tax on

financial activities invoiced by local suppliers of goods, services, and works necessary for the realization of the investments envisaged under conditions to be specified in the decree implementing this law; and the corporate tax or income tax due on industrial and commercial profits (Republic of Senegal, 2015).

The goal is to turn Casamance into a tourist destination of exceptional value, with a great natural wealth and a long tradition that makes the trip a unique experience. Enjoying the beaches of Cap Skirring, learning the ancestral techniques for the cultivation of rice fields, the construction of huts, the smoking of fish, or the work with wood are combined as activities capable of increasing the economic income of rural communities and highlighting the cultural peculiarities of its people and the natural beauty of its environment.

To this end, the Regional Development agencies of Ziguinchor, Sédhiou, and Kolda, in collaboration with the Senegalese Agency for Tourism Promotion (ASPT), have launched a territorial marketing project that aims to (Sambou & Schmitt, 2020):

- a) Improve, promote, and protect the image of Casamance at national and international level.
- b) To be a lever for the development of a responsible economy respectful of the richness of the territory and its components.
- c) To gather the diversity of Casamance actors around a unifying project, thanks to a shared governance.

Achieving this will require the support of local sectors with high attractiveness and visibility in the region (tourism, arboriculture, beekeeping, fishing), improving the professionalization and training of staff, and launching awareness-raising campaigns for environmental preservation. The aim is to demonstrate that Casamance is a territory of the future that wishes to evolve in symbiosis with nature and ancestral knowledge and to become an alternative tourist destination based on ecotourism and solidarity tourism. Out of the more than 100 tourists interviewed for the Casamance attractiveness diagnosis (Sambou & Schmitt, 2020), 63% of the tourists surveyed stated that they visited Casamance for its natural wealth, to carry out solidarity actions (53%), to learn about traditions (53%), and to enjoy spa tourism (13%). Their profile corresponds to a national clientele – since thanks to an improvement in infrastructures and the establishment of transport at competitive prices they can afford to visit – but on an international scale, the French and Spaniards stand out. All of them have a wide network of local tourist agents (network of guides, tourist agencies, travel agencies, cultural centers, leisure operators, hoteliers, and so on) who make their trip a unique and authentic experience through their immersion in the village camps. In fact, 87% of the tourists interviewed said they were very satisfied with their stay in the campsites.

But the economic dynamization of Casamance also requires an improvement of the infrastructures that connect the region with the rest of the country and with international markets. In this sense, important investments have been made to improve roads, build bridges, increase the frequency and number of ships on the maritime line, and modernize the airports of Ziguinchor and Kolda.

In the area of roads, road 4 between Senoba and Ziguinchor (144 km), considered as a vital axis for the accessibility of the Casamance region and which plays an important role in the collection and distribution of agricultural products to major shopping centers, has been rehabilitated. Furthermore, the rehabilitation of the roads from Cap Skiring to Diembering (12 km) and those from Vélingara to Kounkané (29 km) and Tanaff to Ziguinchor (116 km), which connect the regions of Ziguinchor and Kolda, has been carried out within the framework of the cooperation between Senegal and the United States, known as the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCA). The state of Senegal is also rehabilitating the Emile Badiane bridge (gateway to the city of Ziguinchor) on the Casamance River and is building new ones in the regions of Sédhiou (Marsassoum bridge), Ziguinchor (Baila and Diouloulou bridges on the Banjul–Bignona axis (Route Nationale 5), and Kolda (Abdoul Diallo bridge). In addition, the construction of the dyke-bridge built between the Gambia and Senegal, specifically between the communities of Nioro Katim and Passy Ndery, has allowed the free movement of more than 50,700 people each year between the two shores and has generated the recovery of 15 hectares of arable land. The impact of this project on improving the lives of citizens has been such that it has been awarded the Entrecanales Foundation's Development Cooperation Award. However, the most ambitious project has been the construction of the Senegambia bridge (1.9-km long) (Figure 1.3) and the construction of two border posts to link the north and south of



Figure 1.3 Senegambia bridge

Source: AFP.

Senegal through the Gambia. Financed almost entirely by the African Development Bank Group, through an \$88.4 million grant to the Gambia and a \$4.4 million loan to the Senegalese government, the bridge reduces travel times to Dakar by 8.50 hours compared to the previous 13 hours (travelers had to wait hours or even days to board a ferry, which resulted in huge losses of goods and perishables destined for markets), boosts trade (as border crossings shorten the time needed for customs clearance), helps open up rural areas, and brings previously isolated communities closer to each other (Groupe de la Banque Africaine de Développement, 2019).

On the other hand, given that maritime and river transport at the regional level contributes greatly to the fight against poverty and to the opening up of the region, the authorities are trying to boost this sector by investing heavily in the acquisition of ships (Aline Sitoé Diatta, Aguène, and Diambogne) that ply the route between Ziguinchor and Dakar. The maritime route has become the transport par excellence of goods traded in the three regions or in neighboring countries (the Gambia and Guinea Bissau), so that in the 2010–2012 period, there has been a significant increase in the maritime transport of cement (45,281 tons) and rice (15,918 tons). In addition, the reduction from 10,500 to 5,000 francs in the economy class fare for ship transport has boosted its use moving between regions and boosting local tourism.

The opening up of the region has also become a reality with the creation of Air Sénégal SA. The company was created following the bankruptcy of Senegal Airlines in 2016 with the ambition of becoming a major player in air transport in West Africa. Casamance is served by the airports of Cap Skiring, Kolda, and Ziguinchor. The latter ranks third nationally after the two in Dakar (Léopold Sédar Senghor and Blaise Diagne) and is the one that maintains the most regular traffic (along with Cap Skiring) with the other regions of the country.

Thus, we can affirm that Casamance is trying to position itself as a competitive region within Senegal, with new business initiatives and an opening to the outside world, although there is still some uncertainty about its future, as a result of decades of armed conflict, which will fade away as the region consolidates as a new agro-industrial and tourist center.

5 Conclusion

In Africa, we find regions whose status as forgotten and marginalized regions is not only due to economic factors, but goes back in time as well, specifically to the colonial period. In the case of Casamance, its dependence on the Portuguese metropolis determined its segregation from the rest of the country (under French influence), limiting its economic development since then. The availability of fertile lands and a great natural wealth was not enough for the take-off of this region in an autonomous way. The armed conflict it has suffered for more than 40 years has not helped either, which has depleted the labor force as a result of the flight to neighboring countries and has made it an unsafe region for investment.

However, once the conflict was over, its great potential in terms of resources and human capital has been realized. The region and its inhabitants have been able to respond to the different policies and initiatives carried out by the administration

and non-governmental cooperation institutions with the aim of territorial cohesion, economic dynamism, and the enhancement of its multicultural character. As a result, Casamance is becoming a competitive region and a commercial focus of reference in the country. Its endogenous development based on a sustainable economy, with enormous potential in the fields of agriculture, tourism, and trade, is correcting the regional imbalances resulting from the macrocephaly of Dakar and is positioning it as a strategic enclave in the opening of new markets with bordering countries. However, in the African context, we must be aware of the fragility of this development, always conditioned by the geopolitical situation, the continuity of peace, or the arrival of new pandemics.

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