



‘Adversely Incorporated yet Moving up the Social Ladder?’: Labour Migrants Shifting the Gaze from Agricultural Investment Chains to ‘Care Chains’ in Capitalist Social Reproduction in Senegal

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Abstract

In Senegal, the growth of horticulture has been particularly rapid in the last decade or so, partly coinciding with the 2007–2008 ‘land rush’ and a boom in agricultural investment. This article analyses the implications of the rise in foreign direct investment (FDI) in the horticultural sector in northern Senegal. Specifically, it examines FDI’s effects on labour migration and the social reproduction of rural classes of labour through an intersectional feminist and gendered lens. It argues that invisibilised ‘care chains’ that overly burden women, and communities of solidarities, play a crucial role in the social reproduction of horticultural workers, most specifically migrant workers, and provide a subsidy to agrarian capital. Yet, capitalist development does not always translate to better wages and more inclusive laws and policies for horticultural wage workers and providers of caring labour who are adversely incorporated in these political economies. As a result, this requires further attention from policy-makers and political leaders. Using a combination of working-life histories and survey data gathered through two rounds of fieldwork over two years, and secondary data from relevant databases, this article focuses on the River Valley Region and Louga to analyse the emerging challenges of labour migration, social reproduction and caring labour in rural Senegal.

Keywords: labour, migration, care, social reproduction, agricultural investment, Senegal, feminist political economy

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Résumé

Au Sénégal, la croissance de l'horticulture a été particulièrement rapide au cours de la dernière décennie, coïncidant en partie avec la « ruée vers les terres » de 2007-2008 et un boom des investissements agricoles. Cet article analyse les implications de la hausse des investissements directs étrangers (IDE) dans le secteur horticole au nord du Sénégal. Plus précisément, il examine les effets des IDE sur la migration de main-d'œuvre et la reproduction sociale des classes de main-d'œuvre rurale dans une optique intersectionnelle féministe et genrée. Il soutient que les « filières de soins » invisibles qui pèsent trop sur les femmes, et les communautés de solidarités jouent un rôle crucial dans la reproduction sociale des travailleurs horticoles, plus particulièrement des travailleurs migrants, et subventionnent le capital agricole. Pourtant, le développement capitaliste ne se traduit pas toujours par de meilleurs salaires et de lois plus inclusives pour les salariés de l'horticulture et les fournisseurs de soins qui sont négativement intégrés dans ces économies politiques. Par conséquent, une plus grande attention est nécessaire de la part des décideurs et des dirigeants politiques. À l'aide d'une combinaison d'historiques de vie professionnelle et de données d'enquête recueillies au cours de deux séries de travaux de terrain sur deux ans, et de données secondaires provenant de bases de données pertinentes, cet article porte sur la région de la vallée du fleuve Sénégal et Louga pour analyser les défis émergents de la migration de main-d'œuvre, de la reproduction sociale et du travail de soins dans le Sénégal rural.

Mots-clés : travail, migration, soins, reproduction sociale, investissement agricole, Sénégal, économie politique féministe

Introduction

In 2016–2017, I was conducting fieldwork on the socioeconomic outcomes of selected agricultural investments in the regions of Saint-Louis and Louga in Senegal. Indeed, the rise in farmland acquisitions following the 2007/2008 commodity prices boom had led to food riots¹ in Senegal and other West African countries, such as Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Cameroon, due to the increasing cost of living. These acquisitions had been called, interchangeably, the 'land rush', 'land deals', 'large-scale land acquisitions', 'agricultural investments' or 'land grabs' in the relevant literature (Patnaik, Moyo and Shivji 2011; Borras et al. 2011; Cotula 2011; Oya 2013; Tsikata and Yaro 2014; Osabuohien 2014; Kaag and Zoomers 2014; Hall, Scoones and Tsikata 2015; Dieng 2017). According to the World Bank's 2011 *Rising Global Interest in Farmland* report, 4 million hectares of land were involved by 2008, and around 56 million hectares of farmland investments were announced before the end of 2009, of which two-thirds were in Africa (Deininger and Byerlee 2011).

Against this background, export horticulture, particularly in the fresh fruit and vegetables sector, has been praised for its potential to structurally transform the economy away from manufacturing (the traditional smokestacks industry), hence services and export horticulture being labelled 'industries without smokestacks' (Newfarmer, Page and Tarp 2018). Senegalese horticulture² export to Europe experienced a spectacular rise in the last decade. It represented 7,767,319 kilograms in 2000, 29,910,997 kilograms in 2009 and 105,982,906 kilograms in 2019, according to data collected from the Senegalese Government's Investment Agency (APIX 2020). Meanwhile, other parts of the country, such as the peri-urban Niayes in north-western Senegal (renowned for producing 50 per cent of Senegal's fresh fruit and vegetables, mainly thanks to market gardening), have not received comparable levels of resources and attention, despite their major share of export horticulture in GDP (Mackintosh 1989; Fall and Fall 2001; Touré and Seck 2005; Baglioni 2015). As a result, the northern part of the country has experienced a migration of people and capital at regional, national and international levels (Adams 1977; Cooper 1996; Manchuelle 1997; Ba 1998; Bredeloup 2007; Top 2014; Tandian 2015, 2016; Ndione 2018; Niyonsaba 2019).

As I went to do fieldwork on this topic, I organised my days around my months-old child's nursing and sleeping times; my mobility was dictated and constrained by being her sole caregiver during that time, and by not having a means of transportation, which often led me to have her with me while I worked. Going back to the UK as a precarious migrant PhD researcher and a mother, I carefully reflected, with family members, on how to make the second part of my fieldwork smoother and more effective for reaching the desired outcomes. This would lead me to return for the second part of my fieldwork with different family members, who joined me at different times. My sister, first, provided not only research assistance but also moral and emotional support while her children were being taken care of by their father and paternal grandmother, and often by my own parents. We were accompanied by my maternal uncle, who drove my father's car and did some translation for us while accessorially posing as the 'male figure of authority'; his wife took care of their children in his absence. Finally, my husband joined us for the final part of the fieldwork, driving and taking on his fair share of caring labour. During that second part of research, I relied on extensive kin and solidarity networks in Saint-Louis and Louga, including staying at faraway cousins' houses, relying on the University of Saint-Louis's nursery, or being recommended from afar by my parents or cousins to stay at village chiefs' houses.

This first-hand experience as a researcher-migrant-mother opened my eyes to the centrality of communities of care for the mobility of migrant workers and their capacity to pursue economic or academic ventures. Therefore, I could not help but ask myself why care work and care communities were so invisibilised in my own topic of research – the debate about agricultural investments that rely heavily on migrant workers' labour power. If migrant workers' and their families' involvement in the migration project – as shown by previous studies and others in this special issue – is well documented, analysing the challenges of labour migration and food security through the double lens of caring labour and social reproduction theory (SRT henceforth) can be fruitful to challenge the idea that the stakes and interests at play in agricultural investments are primarily economic in nature.

This article provides an intersectional feminist political economy analysis of gendered labour migration and the daily, as well as intergenerational, social reproduction of the labour force. It critically examines current shifts in labour migration and implications for care work and social reproduction in the context of the boom in large-scale agricultural investments in 2007 and 2008. It sets out to analyse two questions: 1) What are the implications of agricultural investments for labour mobility and migration, social mobility and social reproduction? 2) How and to what extent do 'care chains' bear the brunt of the social reproduction of mobile and migrant labour forces, thereby allowing capitalist social reproduction to take place? Crucially, I argue that the social reproduction of migrant labour, facilitated by the adverse incorporation of those who provide waged and unwaged caring labour in those political economies through 'care chains', is central to *capitalist* social reproduction.

To support this argument, this article first brings some conceptual clarifications, then discusses the research methods and material, before reviewing historical labour migration in northern and central Senegal in the quest for food security and development. Next, I set out to demonstrate shifts in labour migration and how mobilities and migration are central to the daily, inter- and intragenerational social reproduction of not only the labour force but also capitalism across time and space. Indeed, profit-maximising horticultural employers seek to minimise the costs of *mobilising and maintaining* workers within and outside their workplaces, including in social, cultural and religious relations and practices, while extracting surplus value from them. Finally, I illustrate and give foundation to my above proposition through four workers' life stories, interviews and survey data. The empirical data presented in this article comes from long engagements, first with critical feminist theories and subsequently the topic of land rushes

since 2013, and with research participants from 2016. I use mixed methods combining participant observation, semi-directional interviews, focus groups, life stories and a survey (using Survey Solutions), all involving more than 200 participants of various genders, age groups, socio-professional categories, migrant statuses, marital statuses and levels of education, among others, across thirty villages of Saint-Louis and Louga.

I recommend a feminist and intersectional political economy approach to analysing the results of these agricultural investments. This could benefit political and policy actors in their decision-making regarding the issue of labour migrants in the national horticultural sector as well as in all levels of global value chains and production networks.

Conceptual Framework

Centring the labour theory of value, the article analyses how wage labour is used by 'classes of capital' to extract surplus value from 'classes' of (migrant) labour (Bernstein 2006, 2007), often below the cost of reproduction of labour power. It also assesses how, combined with other forms of motives – affective, emotional, moral, caring – wage labour creates or maintains the conditions for capitalist accumulation and social reproduction, while relying on care chains and communities of solidarity, faith and belonging to increase the dependency of workers on participation in rural labour markets. Not only does it ask, Who owns what? Who does what? Who gets what?, it also asks, How do gender, class, migrant status, caste, generation and marital status impact upon who is able to do, own or get what? Using intersectionality and political economy both as a method of inquiry and for their rich theoretical insights can shed light on the motives at play in migration and mobility decisions. Lastly, they may be helpful to (re)map care chains between family members, or between workers and employers, and thus reposition caring labour in time and space.

Key elements of this research are interdisciplinarity, using comparative case studies that draw on a blend of qualitative and quantitative research methods, and a commitment to feminist and decolonial methodologies. Another important aspect is the rejection of essentialising rural African women in gender and development discourses (Mohanty 1984; Win 2004; Cornwall et al. 2007). Therefore, centring intersectionality in analysing gender, class, and race together can provide a more accurate picture of postcolonial economies (Crenshaw 1989; Pollard et al. 2011; Salem 2018) and acknowledging 'situatedness' in analysing different political economies and socialities is crucial (Haraway 1988; Oyewumi 1997; Dieng 2020).

As a result, I analyse both the emancipatory and oppressive dynamics that can result from one's participation in rural labour markets (Johnston 2007; Cramer, Oya and Sender 2008; Stevano 2014; Hathie et al. 2015; Oya and Pontara 2015; Van den Broeck, Swinnin and Maertens 2016; Jha, Chambati and Ossome 2021). Further conceptual clarifications are necessary for understanding the analytical tools that I am using to investigate the issues at stake.

One first crucial question is 'Who owns what'? It asks who owns the means of production, and reproduction 'of the means of production, of current and future production, and of the social relations between producers and between producers and others' (Bernstein 2010: 18). According to Bernstein, four types of funds are central for reproduction and constitute claims on the products of labour:

1. The consumption fund (to cover basic needs such as shelter, food, rest, etc.).
2. The replacement fund, which allows for the replacement of the tools and 'instruments of labour' as well as the production of future producers (generational reproduction).
3. The ceremonial fund for activities and practices such as festivities and rituals that (re)create 'social relations and cultures of farming communities'.
4. The fund of rent for payments to landlords, states, etc. (Bernstein 2010: 18–20).

This question about who owns what is as central as the question of power, because it reveals the gender and class dynamics of agrarian change. Then, 'Who does what?' investigates not only who migrates for work in horticulture, but also who cares for migrant labourers. Caring labour is here taken to mean any type of labour involving a 'caring motive', in accordance with feminist economist Nancy Folbre's use of the term as 'labour undertaken out of affection or a sense of responsibility for other people, with no expectation of immediate pecuniary reward' (Folbre 1995: 75). But this inquiry will also encompass waged forms of care work, as not all caring labour or work is unpaid, although these forms are often paid below the cost of the social reproduction of labour power, despite their essential role in reproduction at large. As for social reproduction, it can be defined as 'the integrated process which makes possible the production of goods and services at the same time as the production of life' (Luxton, in Bezanson and Luxton 2006: 36). The first three types of funds identified by Bernstein are central to this process. Social reproduction theory seeks to render human labour and work visible in its analysis and refers to 'the activities and attitudes, behaviors and emotions, responsibilities and relationships directly involved in the maintenance of life on a daily basis and intergenerationally' (Bhattacharya 2017; Laslett and Brenner 1989: 382). These factors include food, clothing, housing, care of the sick,

the elderly and children, as well as 'the social organisation of sexuality' (Laslett and Brenner 1989: 383). Another important point is that the concept of 'care chains' was first used by Arlie Hochschild, building on the work of Rhacel Parreñas, to refer to 'a series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring' (Hochschild 2000: 131). Parreñas uses the concept of the 'International Division of Reproductive Labour' to refer to diverse forms of labour needed 'to sustain the productive labour force' – such as those listed in the previous paragraph – and which are also a marker of class privilege as they mostly benefit more privileged individuals to the detriment of gendered and racialised migrant workers (Parreñas 2015: 29). In this article, I seek to go beyond the dichotomy of 'productive/reproductive' to analyse care work and labour in all relevant spaces of socialisation and life-making. I also use this concept to analyse how care chains work horizontally, inside the same country, rather than vertically, in the transnational family (Parreñas 2015; Neveu Kringelbach 2015).

Furthermore, to grasp a more comprehensive picture of issues of migration and mobility in the River Valley Region, around the Lac de Guiers and the Louga Region, it is useful to go back in time, through history, to understand the successive events that engendered current migration trends. With Patricia Daley (2021), I believe that adopting a perspective that contextualises migration and mobility historically carries the promise of rehumanising and, therefore, dignifying migrants, including those whose mobility is under constraint or voluntary (CODESRIA 2021: 17). In addition, it is key to stress that mobility includes the movement of values and ideas as well as people, and that being mobile represents for many a way of life as well as a path to a livelihood (Marcus 1995; Van Dijk, Foeken and De Bruijn 2001). This dimension is central for intra- and intergenerational social reproduction. Therefore, this article seeks to analyse intra- and international labour migration at the intersections of food and agricultural policy, and its implications for (rural) development and agrarian change, by telling the working-life stories of Senegalese/African migrant workers who maintain strong ties with their communities.

In addition, this article seeks to contribute to the already growing body of research on farmland acquisitions, social reproduction and rural labour markets (Li 2011; Borrás et al. 2011; Oya 2013; Baglioni 2015; Hall et al. 2015; Mbilinyi 2016; Naidu and Ossome 2016; Chung 2017; Cousins et al. 2018; Ali and Stevano 2019; Dieng 2019; Ossome and Naidu 2021). Indeed, previous studies, such as Claude Meillassoux's *Femmes, Greniers et Capitaux* (Meillassoux 1992), have taken an interest in analysing the conditions under which 'the domestic sector' contributes to capitalist

social reproduction despite the limitations of an approach that takes power dynamics in this sector as given and therefore neither challenges them or their underlying patriarchy (Mackintosh 1977; O’Laughlin 1977; Katz 1983). Recent research on gendered labour migration and modes of social reproduction in Africa and Asia have shown that the processes of social differentiation ‘from above’ and ‘from below’ are always being (un)made for better or for worse (Sow 1986; Fall 1998; Cross 2013; Mutopo 2014; Gore and LeBaron 2019; Parreñas 2015; Shah and Lerche 2020; Mezzadri 2020). Therefore, it is important to analyse the varied repertoire that ‘classes of capital’ use to mobilise and exploit migrant ‘classes of labour’, without paying (or paying little) for the cost of social reproduction of their labour power.

Finally, this article takes a political economy approach to labour migration by not investigating the motivations for migration separately from the structures and dynamics of capitalist development. This is because, though agency matters to understand migration decisions, it is critical to analyse the bigger picture, because ‘individual decisions are underpinned, if not determined by structural conditions’, including patriarchy, poverty and other forms of violence and oppressions of capitalist development (Veltmeyer and Wise 2016). This can be done by asking the questions: Who migrates? Who stays back? Why? How are rents generated by migration used? In addition, identifying how migration is made possible by communities of care through the porous rural-urban ‘divide’ is of utmost importance for understanding issues faced by ‘the global rural populace’ (Ossome and Naidu 2021).

Materials and Methods

The empirical data presented here is based on a multisite comparative ethnographic study, which involves analysis at global, national and local levels with key actors, including national international managers working in three different companies in the Senegalese fresh fruit and vegetable sector, policy and political officials, and local horticultural workers. It is this last category of actors – specifically migrant workers – that this study centres on. I use life stories, semi-directional interviews, focus groups, historical accounts and cultural materials (including archives and popular knowledge), secondary data from sources such as the Land Matrix, the World Food Organization and the Senegalese government agencies, and a survey, to combine feminist methodologies and the methodologies of political economy, as explained previously (Dieng 2017, 2018, 2019). Through these methodologies, I explore the unique complementarity of mixed-research methods. Repeated conversations with the participants allow me and them, together, to recreate their stories and escape normative narratives.

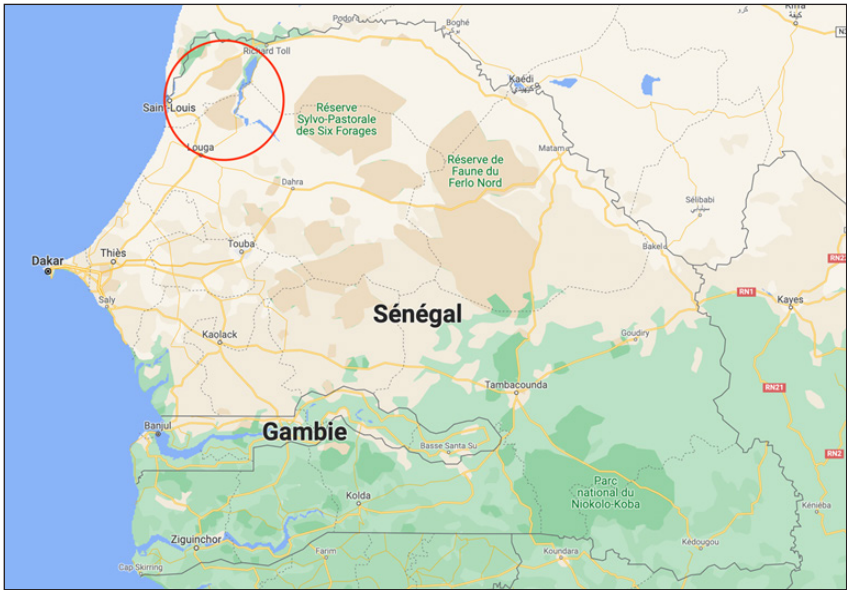
I agree that there are challenges as well as advantages associated with doing research in one's own country (Amadiume 1993; Mama 2011). However, I have tried to be open about my positionality (Dieng 2018). The advantages include the fact that I am Senegalese, and proficient in French and Wolof and conversant in Pulaar, which are the languages spoken in the selected research sites. The cons included the fact that in rural Senegal land is mostly discussed by men with other men. Thus, for the interviews and survey, which involved mostly women, it helped that my sister and I were of the same gender. Additionally, we were able to access male milieus and official gatherings by being assigned an 'honorary male' function due to being outsiders accompanied by our uncle. I was mindful of the 'double consciousness' and 'the outsiders within me' that were due to my location and multiple positionalities as a Senegalese woman and mother studying the Senegalese society, yet being a migrant and a feminist academic living in the UK, therefore inhabiting many different and overlapping spaces (Collins 1986; Davis and Craven 2016).

In addition, I have engaged constantly with the participants of this research since 2016, and with the field as well. I conducted participant observation during two stays of four and three months respectively, living with families in villages in rural Senegal where the selected horticultural farms were located (April to July 2017, then October to December 2017).

It is useful to specify that the case studies focused on investments in fresh fruit and vegetable export that took place in Senegal between 2006 and 2012. Based on these criteria, I zoomed in on three horticultural landholdings, located respectively in Saint Louis (near the Senegal River Region), near Lake Guiers and in the Louga Region. In all three cases, the state facilitated investors' access to land.

The Case Studies Comprised:

- A small-size firm funded by European and African capital, which is an example of North-South investment involving global value and investment chains, and which had one operation site that worked with six villages;
- A large-scale agricultural company assisted by French capital, which had three different sites and involved twelve villages;
- An Indian firm with horticultural (and estates) activities, and is an example of South-South investment. This case involved one working project in which five villages participated, and another that was aborted during the negotiations.



Map 1: The regions of Saint Louis and Louga, Senegal

Source: Google Maps



Map 2: The research sites in Saint Louis and Louga, Senegal

Source: Google Maps

Table 1: Main research sites

Region	Department	Administrative District	Comune /Villages
Saint-Louis	Saint-Louis	Rao	Fass Ngom (4 villages)
			Gandon (5 villages)
	Dagana	Ndiaye	Gnit ³ (6 villages)
			Diamana (8 villages)
		Mbane	Mbane (7 villages)
Louga	Kebemer	Ndande	Diokoul (4 villages)

Source: Assembled by researcher from POAS, field notes and desk research

Three caveats might be crucial for understanding the methodology used in this article. First, I cite the work of other scholars and research participants extensively (including in French and Wolof), because: 1) citation is political and my decolonial praxis requires acknowledging the generations of social scientists on whose scholarship this piece of work builds and engages with; and 2) it is critical to move away from English language dominance (Okech 2020) because of the multilingual and multivocal contexts of research in/on Africa. Second, for this research I use an intersectional feminist political economy lens and seek to go beyond traditional methodological binaries (for instance, gender vs class) to embrace methodological pluralism. My intersectional view enriches the theory of totality central to political and economic approaches by paying attention to social relations based on gender, class, race and ethnicity, migrant status, caste, generation, marital status and ability. Last, my use of multidisciplinary research draws from critical feminist studies, the sociology of work and migration, critical agrarian studies, political economy and geography, especially on the topic of gendered 'caring labour' and the political economy of work and reproduction on (rural) labour markets (Elson and Pearson 1981; Sow 1986, 1992; Mackintosh 1989; Bryceson 1995; Folbre 1995; O'Laughlin 1995; Katz 2001; Whitehead and Kabeer 2001; Koopman 2009; Nation 2010; Federici 2014; Razavi 2017; Doss, Summerfield and Tsikata 2014; Mutopo 2014; Tsikata 2016; Naidu and Ossome 2016; Mezzadri 2016; Mbilinyi 2016; Werner et al. 2017; Baglioni 2018; Barrientos 2019; Dieng 2019; Stevano, Ali and Jamieson 2021).

‘Investment Chains’ and ‘Care Chains’: Gendered and Classed Mobilities and Social Reproduction after the Contemporary Land Rush

The notion of ‘investment chains’ has been central to the quest of policymakers and researchers for sustainable ways to hold actors involved in agricultural investments accountable, alongside finding ‘pressure points’. The analytical and heuristic importance of the concept of ‘investment chains’ lies in the fact that it provides a tool to identify ‘the multiplicity of actors and relations linked to a project, and the flow and distribution of value among those actors’ (Cotula and Blackmore 2014: 1), especially in the context of the ‘land rush’ (Matondi, Havnevik and Beyene 2011; Schoneveld 2011; Koopman 2012; Cotula 2013; Verma 2014; Hall et al. 2015; Dieng 2017; Ndiaye 2018; Gagné 2019; Chung 2020).

Here, I propose that, just as the term ‘investment chains’ is used by a myriad of actors interested in social justice, it is crucial to analyse the central role of ‘care chains’ to capture the variety of actors involved in providing unwaged caring labour to labour migrants so that investors may mobilise and exploit their labour in rural markets and beyond. This mapping exercise would be useful for designing inclusive social policies that would address the needs of the most vulnerable in society (Mkandawire 2004).

Migration and Mobility in Senegal

Four facts are worth noting in relation to migration and mobility in the selected regions. First, labour migration in these places is nothing new, especially for women, as their lack of representation in early historiographical accounts would suggest. Local, sub-regional and international migrations of labour (even forced), which some qualify as ‘globalisation from below’, through people (Portes 1999; Tarrius 2002), are not new phenomena in West Africa, or even the Senegal River Region (Diop 1965; Fall 2011; Manchuelle 1997). Indeed, from the mobilisation of forced and indentured slave labour in the colonies for the culture of cotton and then groundnut production, labour migration has been mobilised for over a century in the quest for food security in the Senegambia Region (Cooper 1996; Daviron 2010; Fall 2011; Tiquet 2014; Oya and Pontara 2015). These cultures in turn contributed to further labour migration which has had a lasting impact on the political economy of the valley, with rural inhabitants joining the *Navetaan* labour reserves (the migrant workers of the rainy season) to work in the Groundnut Basin (Oya 2001, 2002; Fall 2011; Faye 2016). In addition, some of the migrants settled permanently in response to the

growing surplus of labour that the Groundnut Basin could not provide. Gradually, thereafter, new urban destinations emerged for these migrants: Mauritania, Dagana, Podor, the new cotton basin in southern Senegal, as well as Côte d'Ivoire (and other West African countries) and France.

The natural disasters and financial shocks of the early twentieth century would further encourage labour migration. In fact, the emergence of rural horticultural labour markets, the challenges of climate change, droughts and land degradation (for instance, the droughts of the 1930s, 1950s and 1970s, which led to severe food crises), and the economic and financial crises of the 1970s, would contribute to increasing the number of migrants and diversifying their profile. These challenges, combined with the imperative of food self-sufficiency, led the Senegalese government to invest massively in large-scale irrigation infrastructure projects in northern Senegal (Lavigne-Delville 1991). In addition, a variety of public and private international development actors (including the World Bank) invested in large-scale development infrastructure as well as horticultural projects for the domestic markets or for exports in this region, starting from the end of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs).

In this context, migration became a form of social innovation in the search for poverty reduction and food security (Sall et al. 2011), and a strategy that has been used by families, the private sector, the state and colonial powers to mobilise labour. Entire regions and towns depend on this type of economic and social activity to reproduce themselves. It is also practised by many families for their daily, intra- and intergenerational reproduction.

Secondly, migration is almost always linked to large-scale infrastructure and agricultural projects and urbanisation. After independence, from the 1970s, the Senegalese government's decision to invest heavily in the Senegal River Valley Region to encourage the development of productive activities there launched the era of dams. The construction of such large-scale infrastructure has generated a rich parallel literature on expectations and realisations, hopes and discontent, because it shapes places and territories over time (Adams 2000; Boone 2003). More recently, several large-scale agricultural investments have been made in the valley, involving a myriad of actors. The most recent waves of land rush occurred in 2007–2008 following multiple crises – of food, commodities and finance. In 2020, the Land Matrix reported on its website a total of thirty-four intended, concluded and failed land deals in Senegal between 2003 and 2018. The total intended size of the deals was 539,460 hectares, the contract size 327,229 hectares and, surprisingly, by 2018, only 21,686 hectares were in

production. According to the Land Matrix Repository, 63.6 per cent of the total deals took place between 2006 and 2012, hence our focus on deals that materialised in that period.

Thirdly, migration motives and the profile of migrants vary. In our survey, migrant workers constituted more than half of the respondents (seventy-five out of 166 respondents). Responding to the question of their migration motives, twenty-five respondents (twenty of whom were men) said they migrated for work, thirty-seven women travelled to join their husband’s house (*sëyi*), and seven women interviewed did so for ‘family reasons’. Indeed, previous studies have shown that women rarely migrate independently in search of paid work, but rather to marry or join relatives (Mackintosh 1989) because patrilocality is still dominant in the rural areas of northern Senegal (Diop 1985).

Table 2: Gender and Reasons for Migrating (n=75)

Reason for Current Migration	Male	Female	Total
Job	20	5	25
	80 %	20 %	100 %
	83 %	10 %	33 %
Family	2	7	9
	22 %	78 %	100 %
	8 %	14 %	12 %
Marital home	0	37	37
	0	100 %	100 %
	0	72 %	49 %
Other	2	2	4
	50 %	50 %	100 %
	8.33%	3.9%2	5.33%
Total	24	51	75
	32 %	68 %	100 %

Source: Workers survey, 2017

Fourthly, major historical, political, religious or personal events have constituted a tipping point in the life of migrant workers, often leading to major work transitions and influencing generations of workers. The *événements Naar* (the Mauritania events),⁴ and large-scale projects such as the construction of dams or the arrival of horticultural firms that quickly

became company towns, are some illustrations of this. Such events may shift (migrant) workers' and their families' careers and work-life histories for generations. They may lead migrant workers or their families to change their sector of activity, mode of migration (for instance, from temporary to permanent or vice versa) or destination, or simply force them to stop travelling for work, to cease work or to change their working hours.

This is the case of Maajigeen, a daily worker (*journalière*) in her fifties from the Lac de Guiers Region of northern Senegal. More than thirty years ago, Maajigeen and her mother used to go to Mauritania for work. The type of wage labour they both chose was in care chains, forms of work that are essential for the reproduction of the labour force and therefore for the reproduction of society. Such work is not always paid, or if it is, it is considered 'cheap labour'⁵ (Mbilinyi 1986). Indeed, while her mother worked as domestic help (*mbindaan* in Wolof), to cook, iron and do the laundry, Maajigeen looked after the children of her mother's employers, thereby reproducing class- and gender-subservient labour relations.

Shortly before the *Naar* events, Maajigeen's mother died. Thereafter, Maajigeen stopped going to Mauritania, and sought safety in Saint-Louis:

I went there twice, staying there each time for a year to work as a domestic: 'ligeeyu kër'. Those were the good times. I didn't have any children or a husband. You only took care of yourself. What I earned allowed me to help my family while keeping some money for myself. (Interview)

Maajigeen is now the first of three wives of a local village chief. She has had eight children in total, two of whom have died. Like her two co-spouses, Maajigeen works at the farm as a day worker when it is not her turn to cook (*njël*). Two of her older kids live in another city for their studies, returning to the family home during the weekend or after a fortnight. They then cook, do their laundry and support their mother with domestic work. During my last visit, the father had asked the oldest daughter to stop going to school and start working at the farm as a day worker while 'getting ready' for marriage. The second-oldest daughter (brilliant at school and very beautiful) feared she would be next, as her father did not like her staying in another town with her mother's sister. But Maajigeen, who had not been to school, promised to shield her daughter from her father's expectations and cover for her in her domestic duties so that she could further her studies until the ultimate paternal decision regarding the future of her studies. Maajigeen explained, 'My husband is the decision-maker in this house. I am under his authority. He leads me/us⁶ (*kilifë fook mu am baat ci kërëm, te surga dong laa, dañ ma yilif*)'.

Like Maajigeen, Idriss's work life was shaped by his mother's migration choices (she moved to Fatick for work when he was younger), his later professional choices and familial responsibility between Dakar and Fatick. He is a polygynous, fifty-five-year-old, former daily farm worker (*journalier*) turned shopkeeper and fisherman. Being among those who advocated for the establishment of the farm, Idriss's work life story has been influenced by his family's many migrations:

My family and I are Beydaan Moor. I went to Fatick in 1949 with my mother, then I left with my family to live at the Benn Taly Factory in 1965. I returned to settle there as a shop trader (*boutiquier*) in 1974. I have left Dakar since, and now live in Fatick in December to August as a shop trader with my second wife and children. Then, I returned to my village (near Mauritania) for my annual leave with my first wife and our children to fish from August to December. During this period, I left my sons at the boutique (shop).

Male Senegalese (*Beydaan*) Moors migrate a lot, to Dakar, Saint-Louis, other major cities, and also within Mauritania, although this has decreased due to the need to 'have papers' (to be documented) as stated in many of our interviews. In the case of Idriss, who is the eldest son of his family, the notion of *kilifé*, the authority based on seniority which confers rights and duties, is central (Group Interview). Indeed, even powerful, middle-aged men still respect older men or women, regardless of their class. Such social imperatives can cause the eldest son (and unmarried daughter) to return to the village immediately after the demise of the father or other older male figures, to fulfill their duties to their family, lineage and social group. As was the case for Idriss, migrant workers who are the eldest or have caring and decision-making responsibilities for their families often make the choice to settle and limit their mobility because of their prerogatives and family duties. Idriss was still in the position to travel for work only because his older sons could replace him at the boutique. His children of school-going age were educated in schools at another village and resided with extended kin. Those who were too young stayed with their mothers and went to Koranic school.

Rural wage Work, Gender and Generation: The Promise of Upward Social Mobility

There are changing links between migration and the definitions of upward ('rich', 'well-off' or 'successful') or downward social mobility ('poor', 'precarious' or having socially 'failed'). In Senegal, (migrant) workers, and other social categories such as expatriate university students who are temporarily economically and socially precarious, may be called *doxandeem*. They may be called *neew ji doole* in Wolof if they fall more permanently into

poverty (including the working poor), and *miskiin* if they rely on family or kin solidarity networks for basic survival (Fall 2005). As for success, it is generally defined by wealth, kinship linkages and social and marital status. Success is also traditionally shaped by migration and mobility, as illustrated in popular culture by narratives of the return of the 'prodigal son' after a long stay abroad to ease the collective efforts and sacrifices of the migrant's family. The central role that migration plays is also illustrated by the 'Four Ts' (*Tukki, Tekki, Tedd, Teral*), as in a popular saying among young Senegalese migrants or aspirants to migration: 'Travelling, making it, succeeding socially, and helping family and friends' (Sall et al. 2011: 24). *Tekki* does not merely translate into 'making it', but success also means meeting social expectations associated with this new social position (for example, by helping one's family and extended kin).

The findings of my research in thirty villages in Saint-Louis and Louga showed that rural horticultural wage work in the selected farms offered new avenues for upward social mobility, especially for migrant workers. In addition, meanings and values associated with being 'successful' or being a 'good person' were influenced by horticultural wage labour. A central observation based on the interviews and life stories of the selected research participants is that, for migrant workers from other villages or from the city – an increasingly important trend – 'becoming someone' was now possible without having to travel, as illustrated by the many stories of workers returning home and their recurring claims to 'get there and be successful at home' (*tekki fii*). Yet, migrant workers often found themselves experiencing simultaneously upward and downward social mobility, an outcome that was differentiated along gender, class, status, caste and marital status. This was the case of Marie, whose story can be summarised as follows:

A young single woman of almost thirty years, Marie lives in another city for her work, separated from her siblings and her parents. She visits her family in town every two to three months because of her job. Holder of a Bachelor's degree from the University of Dakar, after an internship she worked for a producer of fresh fruit and vegetables in the Niayes (peri-urban area of Senegal). She joined one of the companies in this study in 2014 as an agricultural supervisor of a team comprising between fifteen and thirty-five people, fifty in high season. She earns CFA 200,000 net per month.

Marie works from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday to Saturday. She eats the bread distributed by the company to all workers for breakfast but has lunch at home between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. after work. She divides her salary between her own expenses and the needs of her family back in town. She also saves a small amount in the bank. Her salary, she told me, was 'virtually finished' before it even reached her account at the beginning of each month. Therefore, she hoped for a salary increase.



Figure 1: Marie manages one of these teams in the fields, May 2017, near the River Senegal

Despite her professional success, Marie kept being questioned about when she intended to marry and have children. This is because in (rural) Senegal, women's 'social success' is still assessed through their marital status and ability to procreate.

The account of Marie indicates that she had moved far from the familial household and was not regarded by her family as 'someone' because she was not married. It also shows that becoming 'someone' on the farms allows everyone to witness it and so workers can 'have a name' without migrating or moving (Interview). In addition, the establishment of horticultural farms has broadened the aspirations of poorly educated or uneducated workers and has in a way opened up avenues of success far from the exclusive 'empire of the literati' through school (Coulon 1999). Politics and business nonetheless remain attractive to many. The horticultural farms have also opened new routes for accumulation, including that of social networks (Fall 2005; Coulibaly-Tandian 2008; Bredeloup 2015). Such upward mobility is described well in the life trajectory of S. Fekhe, a young worker who is officially twenty-six years old but unofficially thirty-one years old. His story can be summed up as follows:

After interrupting my studies in 2012, I worked as a *surga* (seasonal wage worker) in what has become known as the '*pataas* project' (sweet potato projects) of a farmer in the Lac de Guiers Region. At that time, I was not returning home during the rainy season but was working on different jobs at the same time. It is only when I started as a day labourer in one of the farms of this region that I started going back home during the rainy season.

He had been working on the farm since 2013 and became a supervisor in 2014, resulting in a seasonal contract in 2015. S. Fekhe left his family in Kaolack where his wife and parents lived. He had first met his wife on the farm before she moved to her parents' place in Kaolack, where, under patrilocal rule, she helped Fekhe's ageing mother with domestic work.

S. Fekhe used to be a continuous migrant, and started returning to his village only when he knew his day job would still be there after the rainy season. Then, as he was not under contract when the farm closed during the summer, he would return to his parents' village in order to cultivate the family field. At his workplace, S. Fekhe stayed in a small one-bedroom apartment he shared with another farm worker, also from Kaolack. Fekhe was paid around 200,000 francs per month. Every month, he saved CFA 20,000, sent 120,000 to his family and paid CFA 15,000 for lunch prepared by a local family in a nearby village, with whom he registered, a practice known as *bindu bool*. S. Fekhe also left CFA 10,000 at the boutique (the local shop) for his groceries and kept the rest for his other expenses. He had no loans and hardly managed to save – he did so thanks to being part of the *natt-u-teggi* (*tontine*, in French), a joint financial arrangement whereby the participants (some men from his company) contribute equally to a prize that is awarded entirely to a selected participant at the end of each month. Some months, he ate with the other workers in the local canteen of the compound (*popotte*, in French), paying a small contribution because everything was subsidised by the employer. He had his medical needs met at the farm's small clinic (which also took care of his wife when she suffered a miscarriage). S. Fekhe was part of the solidarity and mutual aid group that brought together workers from his native region, as well as the local *Dahira* (his local religious brotherhood). At the time of our interviews, his wife had come to visit him and was cooking for him.

Discussion: Adverse Incorporation of Communities of Caring Labour and Social Reproduction

The life stories presented above show that, after rural migrants start horticultural labour, there is a greater densification of economic and non-economic links between those who work in horticulture and their families and kin than before. Also, ties based on solidarity, ethnicity and faith communities in both rural and urban areas are stronger. Indeed, as illustrated by the life stories of Idriss and Maajigeen, Marie and Fekhe, and our interviews, these links of mutual aid, economic support or solidarity between migrant and non-migrant workers and their families are based on gender, caste, class, marital and migrant status, faith, ethnicity and

generation. In fact, kin and solidarity communities (including those that are faith-based, ethnic and ceremonial, i.e. *tontines*) constitute social safety nets for the most deprived (Dimé 2007; Fall and Cissé 2007). Marital status, gender and age, for instance, play a key role in the allocation of daily, intra- and intergenerational social reproduction obligations and expectations. This is shown by the fact that Maajigeen (when she was single) and Marie (currently single) were expected to provide economically for their families and for themselves until they married, and Idriss and S. Fekhe provided financially for their families including the costs of educating their children. Married women, on the other hand, are expected first to provide labour and emotional support to their families (mostly the man in their life and their children) and share domestic chores, and only then can they seek employment in rural horticulture. This shows that patriarchal conjugal contracts do not prevent married women and unmarried or divorced women from participating in rural wage work as long as this does not conflict with domestic duties. As for Marie, she occupied the role of an honorary male providing for herself and her family because of her single status. These life stories highlight the financial emancipation that migrant workers have gained with their work, but also the obligations that fall on them because of 'having a job and a salary'.

The social links, caring labour activities and practices of migrants (and their families, kin or solidarity and faith communities) along the care chains in horticulture that I came across during our research took different forms. The first was the circulation of labour, between members of the same family (generally young men and women, and wives) or between neighbours, or for local employers in the form of collective (*santaane*) or individual work paid in kind or in cash (*gasanu*), in the form of temporary contracts, or in collective and associative work (*bokk bay*). This included the mobilisation of migrant labour by horticultural firms or local employers (via contract farming, the use of *nawetaan* or *surga* labour, and the use of different contracts – permanent, seasonal or day contracts). This labour circulation involved the development of certain service/care economies to cater to migrant workers' wellbeing and needs, including:

- Food provision/restaurant food/catering via the company's canteen, or via the payment of a small sum to a landlord to eat with the family (*bindu bool*), or through the food sellers in the vicinity of horticultural farms;
- Housing/rental accommodation free of charge via employers, for permanent and, more rarely, seasonal workers who were deemed essential for the firms; renting a room privately; or staying at a relative's house;
- Money transfer services and grocery shops.

It is also worth mentioning that, based on some interviews, I suspect that some form of clandestine prostitution was taking place in the vicinity of the horticultural farms, and that some male migrants used these services. However, I had no overt confirmation from male and female migrant workers because reputation is the most important asset (mostly for women) in those rural settings. Such prostitution services are also part of the care chains that allow the social reproduction of the labour force.



Figure 2: Breakfast time, October 2017, Saint-Louis Region

The second type of care exchange included the care, socialisation and often mobility of young children between different families, for their school or Koranic education, or for the school holidays (*vacansu*). Some migrant workers and couples also placed their children in their trusted kin's homes to be taken care of while they worked (*denkaane*). This involved, although not always, the transfer of cash for the main expenses of the kids, who also often helped with domestic chores and errands. Better-off migrant workers hired domestic help to look after their households (cooking for them or their family, doing the laundry, looking after the children, etc. in their absence). This affective care labour was very gendered depending on the conjugal contract, household composition, gender, marital status, ethnicity and age of family members, perhaps more so in Wolof and Pulaar villages and less in Moor villages, where men, and in particular husbands, tend to participate in housework. However, with most women who are working on farms in the selected rural areas, the lines are shifting, with more and more older men and their children (especially young girls) attending to the needs of the younger ones in the absence of their wage-earning mothers/wives. In a context where polygamy is common, horticultural export work is more suited to this type of conjugal contract because the wives (and their eldest daughters) can divide up the domestic work, as has been corroborated by other research articles (Diop

1985; Sow 1986; Mackintosh 1989; Gadio and Rakowski 1999; Nation 2010). Likewise, the older male children also divide up the work in the family field, in small-scale cattle-breeding or in small family businesses.

The third type of caring labour involved migrant workers' visits 'back home' to take care of sick or old relatives. This was carried out mainly by young women and older women. This type of care work involved not only financial support, but also daily and intergenerational support, as well as medical assistance (the lack of which was strongly felt in rural areas). This challenge leads to many conflicts and negotiations within families, which have been highlighted in the emerging literature on this question (Gning 2014; Hane 2015).

The fourth type of care practice was migrant workers' visits to attend family or religious ceremonies, including naming ceremonies and funerals, or to ensure that certain rights, including inheritance or land rights, were safeguarded.

In addition to these forms of care practice, there were exchanges of goods – between rural and urban or rural and rural households – as gifts or counter-gifts. These were made possible by the increased purchasing power of migrant workers, especially as a result of paid horticultural work. There were also exchanges of cash through remittances, sending money to family and kin in the village or in town, or as contributions towards ceremonies, be they religious, traditional or cultural. Women remained central in the organisation of these ceremonies and used a significant portion of their salaries as ceremonial funds, which helped to strengthen community ties.

Women and girls also engaged in forms of collective saving. For instance, their monthly *natt* (*tontines*) allowed them to combine ceremonial activities and forms of social reproduction and organisation such as GIEs (economic solidarity collectives). Through these GIEs, young men and women sought to obtain land, not by inheritance or donations from the family, but through other channels such as the local community (commune), or through international development agency programmes such as those of the World Bank.

The relationships illustrated above, between migrants and non-migrants and extended kin and solidarity networks, allow for the reproduction of the workforce as well as capitalist social reproduction through the extraction of surplus value. In addition to playing a central role in the political economy of work, migrant workers and their networks most often had to rely solely on their own wages to cover all their needs, unless they were considered essential workers by employers who then provided them with more or less secure working contracts, housing and social security. This free-rider attitude allowed employers to exploit the labour force at a lower cost, using them as de facto cheap labour, while relying on care chains to provide most unwaged or wage caring labour (Mbilinyi 1986; Dieng 2019).

Here, a critical and powerful concept is that of 'adverse incorporation' (Du Toit 2005; McCarthy 2010; Hall 2011; Vicol 2017). Migrant workers and providers of cheap care work are in this sense adversely incorporated in these political economies. Going beyond the rhetoric of 'inclusion/exclusion' of migrant workers and communities of care allows us to shift our gaze and, thereby, to critically examine the debates around employment creation and other opportunities brought about by agricultural investments, and the *terms of incorporation* of migrant workers and communities of care in these local and global political economies.

Indeed, migration and mobility play a central role in 'everyday' caring labour and inter- and intragenerational reproduction using mostly unwaged care chains. This allows agricultural employers – generally the only company or one of few in town – to externalise the cost of social reproduction of migrant workers to the workers' extended communities. For migrant seasonal workers or workers on fixed-term or indefinite contracts, companies set up structures such as workers' accommodation and a dispensary, and covered some costs of social reproduction, such as part of the national insurance and other benefits (i.e. housing, food provision, health and transportation), included in the salary or in nature.

Outside of the companies, workers, especially migrants, rely on care chains that allow them to organise their lives between their village (or town) of origin, their village of residence and their place of work. Care chains are organised around practices such as the fostering of children, taking turns (*njël*) between co-wives and their daughters in polygynous conjugal contracts, the unpaid work of community leaders such as village matrons (*bajjanu gox*), etc. for capitalist social reproduction. This denotes the strategic alliances between patriarchal conjugal norms and capitalist labour exploitation within and beyond workplaces, 'the fleshy, messy, and indeterminate stuff of everyday life' (Katz 2001: 711) as is well known, moves from place to place without a fixed home. However, vagabondage insinuates a little dissolution – an unsettled, irresponsible, and disreputable life, which indeed can be said of the globalization of capitalist production. This paper reframes the discussion on globalization through a materialist focus on social reproduction. By looking at the material social practices through which people reproduce themselves on a daily and generational basis and through which the social relations and material bases of capitalism are renewed – and the havoc wreaked on them by a putatively placeless capitalism – we can better expose both the costs of globalization and the connections between vastly different sites of production. Focusing on social reproduction allows us to address questions of the making, maintenance, and exploitation of a fluidly differentiated labor force, the productions and destructions.

In most of the villages in this study, social reproduction also relied on land, forest and cattle, which were viewed as a resource but most importantly were one of multiple livelihood strategies. Therefore, migrant workers often sought to acquire land assets or cattle alone or jointly with their spouse. This was more difficult for migrant women because negotiations over granting land were mostly the business of men. Migrant workers also sought to buy domestic animals like sheep, goats or chickens that they could either breed for sale or consume during hard times. They also invested in parallel activities such as the *natt-u-teggi*, and self-exploitation through small businesses (selling food to other migrant workers, for instance).

Finally, across all villages workers testified that horticultural work had created new social relations and fostered cross-cultural understanding. There is evidence to suggest that marriages took place following work opportunities, as exemplified by the case of S. Fekhe. In addition, new communities of care, based on faith (such as the *Dahira*) or economic and cultural interests (such as the *natt-u-teggi* and the *tours* – women's monthly celebration of winning the *natt*) allowed migrants and non-migrants to gather to practise their faith. There was also a decrease in discrimination based on caste and other traditional legacies of class because at the farm 'we are all wage labourers' (FGD7).⁷ This was recounted by a worker who was *nyeeño* (supposedly lower caste), who testified that, at the beginning, especially in Saint-Louis, 'those originating from families of previous slave-owners and their former slaves or supposedly lower caste, would not mix or talk' (FGD6).⁸ This was confirmed by a supervisor who said: 'Each group would stay in their corner. But things are much better now: they even invite each other to social events outside the farm' (Interview SMP6).⁹

Conclusion: Who Cares and Why Does it Matter?

The research questions of this article were twofold:

- 1) What are the implications of agricultural investments for labour mobility and migration, social mobility and social reproduction?
- 2) How and to what extent do care chains bear the brunt of the social reproduction of mobile and migrant labour forces, thereby allowing capitalist social reproduction to take place?

This article critically examined the centrality of caring labour by mapping some of the essential activities and practices that exist within care chains to accommodate horticultural wage work in the Senegalese export industry. The development of these care chains might be part of a long-term process of change involving different classes of (migrant) labour and equally variegated

classes of capital. I suggest that they are non-exceptional elements of any dynamic and evolving society, although this represents a major opportunity for positive social transformation. Since what counts cannot always be counted, I suggest that mapping these care chains to identify pressure points could be a central action-research project for feminist activists as well as policy and political leaders interested in addressing the needs of those who are adversely incorporated in these political economies.

In light of the empirical evidence presented, it appears that centring care and social reproduction alongside the more pre-eminent questions of work and horticultural production by migrant labourers is fruitful for at least two reasons: it brings together questions of production and social reproduction that more often than not are seen/treated as separate; it repoliticises the questions of who does what and who gets what in order to understand theories of value in the processes of capitalist social reproduction.

'Who cares' matters because without those essential actors providing invisibilised caring labour, often below the cost of social reproduction, migrant workers – who are crucial for global production networks – would not be able to participate in rural labour markets. Therefore, there are two urgent and critical priorities to which such a policy-research agenda could contribute. First is the recognition of (unpaid) caring labour, decent work and fairer wages for those who provide care work; second, more inclusive sectoral policies and laws in favour of migrant workers, and improved urban–rural mobility infrastructure to aid the reproduction of workers (Doherty 2021). Intersectionality as a methodology and a theory can provide useful insights into this agenda.

Notes

1. Émeutes de la faim in Senegal.
2. Excluding cashew.
3. Often also written 'Ngnith'.
4. These events started on 20 April 1989 with the death of two Senegalese nationals, at Diawara in Matam, on the bank of the river. They ended with over 50 Maures dead in Senegal, and between 200 and 1,000 Senegalese dead in Nouakchott, Mauritania (Reyna and Downs 1999: 177–212).
5. Marjorie Mbilinyi (1986) defines 'cheap labour' as 'labour which is remunerated below the level of reproduction of labour power'.
6. 'kilifë fook mu am baat ci kërëm, te surga dong laa, dañ ma yilif' in Wolof.
7. 22/11/17
8. 14/11/17
9. 19/06/17

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