

Senegal's Agricultural Sector: An Analysis of Its Development Using Political Ecology

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Abstract:

Agriculture has long formed an integral part of Senegambian peoples' lives. For centuries before European conquest and occupation, agriculture was not merely an activity accomplished for survival, but an extension of life and identity. As a result, agriculture practiced in Senegal today reflects a mélange of traditional and modern methods; pre-colonial mechanisms that survived paradigm shifts imposed during colonial occupation. Political Ecology as a field offers critical insights into the processes that shaped Senegal's agriculture sector. In this paper, ideas adopted from Marxist Political Economy, Gender and Feminist Studies, Environmental History, and Peasant Studies are combined with applications of the five theses of Political Ecology - degradation and marginalization, conservation and control, environmental conflict and exclusion, environmental subjects and identity, and political objects and actors - to construct a different understanding of how Senegal's agricultural sector has been steered over the last few centuries to arrive at its current place.