

## DOMESTIC ECONOMY AND FAMILY SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN CASAMANCE

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**Abstract :** How are work activities in a family organized to ensure that subsistence needs are met? What is the place of women and children in this domestic economy? What strategies and tactics do individuals develop to get out of a situation of prevailing poverty? How can a source of income be created when unemployment persists in a given locality? These are the questions that this article will attempt to answer through the study and examination of the domestic economy and the survival strategies of families in Casamance in southern Senegal. The material mobilized in this article stems from a series of field surveys conducted in Casamance, between 2014 and 2018, with a cohort of 50 families. We conducted 70 interviews with families living in rural and urban areas. This series of surveys took place in several sites in Casamance (Ziguinchor, Kolda and Sedhiou). Our methodological approach was built on the establishment of a relationship of trust with our interviewees, which allowed us to conduct semi-structured interviews and observations and to collect a series of interviews from the families through an iterative approach and a search for empirical saturation.

**Keywords :** domestic economy, survival strategy, family, Casamance

**Résumé :** Comment s'organisent les activités de travail dans une famille pour assurer la satisfaction des besoins de subsistance ? Quelle est la place des femmes et des enfants dans cette économie domestique ? Quelles stratégies et tactiques les individus développent-ils pour sortir d'une situation de pauvreté ambiante ? Comment créer une source de revenus lorsque le chômage persiste dans une localité donnée ? Telles sont les questions auxquelles cet article tentera de répondre à travers l'étude et l'examen de l'économie domestique et des stratégies de survie des familles en Casamance, au sud du Sénégal. Le matériau mobilisé dans cet article est issu d'une série d'enquêtes de terrain menées en Casamance, entre 2014 et 2018, auprès d'une cohorte de 50 familles. Nous avons réalisé 70 entretiens avec des familles vivant en milieu rural et urbain. Cette série d'enquêtes s'est déroulée dans plusieurs sites en Casamance (Ziguinchor, Kolda et Sédhiou). Notre approche méthodologique s'est construite par l'instauration d'une relation de confiance avec nos interviewés, ce qui nous a permis de réaliser des entretiens semi-directifs et des observations et de recueillir une série d'entretiens auprès des familles à travers une approche itérative et une recherche de saturation empirique.

**Mots-clés :** économie domestique, stratégie de survie, famille, Casamance

## Introduction

This article examines the domestic economy and survival strategies of families in Casamance in southern Senegal. Based on a series of surveys carried out between 2014 and 2018 in Casamance, the article highlights different actions, strategies, tactics and practices developed within family units established in rural or urban areas, which aim to provide for their vital needs. Four (4) field surveys lasting two (2) months each were conducted from 2014 to 2015, from 2015 to 2016, from 2016 to 2017 and from 2017 to 2018). They have allowed us to better understand the experience of households in precarious situations and who deploy multiple strategies daily to get out of the crisis. Our field observations carried out in the most remote regions (Ziguinchor, Kolda and Sedhiou) have also enabled us to understand the daily life of families and show the characteristics of each family monitored over time and to see how its members struggle day to day to solve this or that problem. We have thus been able to detect a real economy of "survival" or "resourcefulness", revealing the accentuation of the ambient poverty that plagues many families throughout Casamance. The article is in three parts: a first part will examine the domestic economy of families in rural areas, a second part will analyze the domestic economy of families in urban areas and a third part will shed light on the charismatic figure of the "gorgorlou" head of household and other strategies that people in Casamance use to improve their living conditions.

## 1. Methodology

The material mobilized in this article stems from a series of field surveys conducted in Casamance, between 2014 and 2017, with a cohort of 50 families within a multi-sited ethnography approach (Marcus 1995). This allowed us to probe in depth the strategies and tactics implemented within families to survive in a context of ambient and chronic poverty. We conducted 70 interviews with families living in rural and urban areas. This series of surveys took place in several sites in Casamance (Ziguinchor, Kolda and Sedhiou). Our methodological approach was built on the establishment of a relationship of trust with our interviewees, which allowed us to conduct semi-structured interviews and observations and to collect a series of interviews from the families through an iterative approach and a search for empirical saturation. Semi-structured interviews and observations complemented each other during all the phases of our fieldwork, allowing us to inscribe our epistemological posture in a socio-anthropological approach. To avoid any bias, the interviews were, most often, conducted in Wolof and then translated into French. The interviews were then transcribed and subjected to a content analysis.

## 2. Results and discussion

### 2.1. *The domestic economy of families in rural areas*

#### 2.1.1. *A domestic economy based essentially on agriculture*

Casamance is one of the regions where a large majority of the population is active in agriculture, livestock or fishing, which are the main means of subsistence in many areas. In this region, the main mode of production in rural families is structured around agriculture - even though it is called food agriculture, although peasants carry out other activities in parallel. In Casamance, many families find agricultural work their main livelihood. Considered as one of the levers of the region's economy and economic development and ensuring the survival of many rural households, the agricultural sector is a food security valve for the poorest families, whether in rural or urban areas. The channelling of agricultural production to the country's urban and peri-urban markets enables families with average resources to obtain food at low prices. Within the framework of traditional agricultural activity and the so-called "informal" sector of handicrafts and urban service micro-enterprises, families are the main units for job creation, training of young people for working life, production of wealth, and distribution of goods between producers and non-producers (Locoh, 1995). Despite its position in the region, the agricultural sector is shaken by problems related to the supervision of farmers in structures and organisations. There are also problems with access to fertilisers and the disposal of agricultural products. Delays are constantly noted in the distribution of fertiliser 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. It is quite common, for example, for there to be problems between the Senegalese state (or even certain agents) and agricultural producers over unpaid vouchers<sup>1</sup>, or the fixing of the state's purchase price per kilogram of this or that product (millet, groundnuts, sorghum, etc.). In the mode of production of families in rural areas, we find some rather characteristic features of Marshall Sahlins' work concerning so-called primitive societies. It can be observed that the relationship between man and tool is the result of the individual handling (as Sahlins

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<sup>1</sup> It is partly because of the importance of the agricultural sector in the country that most of the candidates in the various presidential elections put agriculture at the forefront of their electoral programme. This was the understanding of the first president of the Republic of Senegal, Léopold Sédar Senghor, who campaigned mainly in rural areas where a large mass of the electorate is concentrated.

suggested) of an organised agricultural production system whose main objective is the satisfaction of basic needs such as food, this being possible only by de facto limiting production according to the Chayanov law<sup>2</sup> (Chayanov, 1966). Thus, one of the characteristics of production in rural societies is the need to produce a sufficient quantity of food for household subsistence. The survival of families is closely linked to good harvests. Agricultural production is also intrinsically dependent on rainfall during the winter period. Despite the place and role of the agricultural sector in the region, it is paradoxical that development policies give it only a minimal place in the implementation of their various programmes, even though taking into account and developing the agricultural sector would make it possible to combat the process of impoverishment which increases from year to year.

### *2.1.2. The organization of agricultural activities within families*

In the countryside, families organize themselves so that each member has a plot of land to cultivate and contribute to subsistence needs. The land is bequeathed over the generations to the children, who are responsible for perpetuating the family tradition. In most cases, there are land conflicts that often require the intervention of the relevant local authorities such as the sub-prefecture or the village chief, among others. The plots of land available to farmers in rural areas are sometimes insufficient in some villages in the region to adequately meet the food needs of families. In the villages, family members get up very early in the morning, eat breakfast together and work in the fields until midday when everyone returns home. Tasks such as clearing land and harvesting are sometimes carried out with the help and assistance of other members of the village community or relatives<sup>3</sup>. So, there is a real system of self-help and village solidarity that continues over the years.

### *2.1.3. The flow of agricultural production: income for the subsistence of families*

Part of the agricultural production is sold at the markets, and in many cases, it is the women who are responsible for selling the products on their way to the city. The traditional

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<sup>2</sup> Chayanov's law assumes that peasant families adapt their efforts to their needs. There is a marginal balance between the pain of extra effort and the satisfaction derived from the product of that effort. The author bases his analyses on a study of Russian families at the beginning of the 20th century.

<sup>3</sup> Such a system constitutes a form of tontine that can be described as a working tontine.

urban and peri-urban markets, called "loumas"<sup>4</sup> in local jargon, are the places where certain products (groundnuts, millet, beans, sorghum, etc.) are sold each year at the end of the harvest. The traditional markets in Casamance include the market of Diaobé, in the region of Kolda, where every Wednesday many farmers and traders come to sell their products. The sale of agricultural produce not only provides rural people with an income, but also ensures the supply of food to many middle-income families living in urban areas. The other part of the production is kept in granaries so that they have enough to last until the next harvest. It is thus up to the head of the household to ensure on a daily basis that the products (in the granaries) are used correctly and not wasted, hence the idea of the non-equivalence between anthropogenic production and consumption (Bertaux, 1977). However, this pattern is not always respected since in some household's agricultural production is exclusively for consumption and not for sale. This is particularly the case of families who have agriculture as their sole activity. Income from agricultural production is used to pay school fees for children, to pay for medical care in case of illness of one of the family members, to buy food, to prepare certain events and religious festivals. Some of the money is also used to buy agricultural materials to better prepare for the coming harvests, as a lack of fertilizer during the rainy season can have an impact on production, as the land becomes increasingly impoverished. As agriculture represents the main source of income in the countryside, this income needs to be managed (and especially not wasted on expenses that are not considered to be utilitarian for the household) until the next winter season. Usually, all income from production is concentrated in the hands of the head of the household, even if it is the women who have the task of selling the production.

#### *2.1.4. The role of women in the domestic economy of rural families*

It is also important to stress the role of women who are heavily involved in the harvests, despite the domestic tasks to which they are assigned (education, taking care of children, various domestic tasks, etc.). They face many problems, especially when they must fetch water from wells tens of kilometers away from their homes, due to problems of access to drinking

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<sup>4</sup> The "loumas" are weekly markets found in villages in some regions of Senegal. Farmers, herders and traders come together every week to sell their products. Many traders flock there every week and come from the surrounding villages to sell but also to buy products of all kinds. They constitute the place of sale par excellence of the agricultural production.

water in several villages in the region. In addition to this, they also have daily chores such as fetching wood from the forest to prepare the family's daily meals. They therefore have more tasks to accomplish than the men, who, after returning from the fields, prefer to stay under the tree to drink tea and exchange with their other comrades (peers) in the village. Despite the many burdens on their shoulders, women still manage to participate fully in the productive activities of the family. In many villages in Casamance, they usually have a plot of land at their disposal, which they cultivate while their husbands are engaged in other activities such as animal husbandry or trading. They are much more active in rice production, in the rice fields. Some of them are also involved in urban agriculture by creating a small space in their houses where they grow certain products. They play an important role in the domestic economy of families in rural areas. Other strategies can also be identified in the area of trade. This is the case of women who buy goods (fabrics, palm oil, wines, etc.) in other neighboring countries and sell them in local markets. In the Ziguinchor region, for example, they are the main processors and producers of palm oil, which they transport to Dakar, the capital, and other parts of the country. Well organized as economic interest groups (EIGs) in many neighborhoods, women are active in the processing of local products such as cashew nuts as well as in market gardening activities in several cities in the country. This allows them to increase their cash income and save for a certain period of time while contributing to the food needs of their families. In a study of Senegalese women heads of household, Codou Bop (1996) illustrates this idea well and shows how, in a difficult economic and social context, women manage, depending on the structures, "to drain as many resources as possible to themselves and their families" (Bop, 1996), in particular by creating associations which enable them to have resources. These various associations concern the tontines, the "dahiras"<sup>5</sup>, the "ndeydikké"<sup>6</sup> to which most women in Senegal belong because, beyond the contributions they make, they provide a place for exchange and discussion. These associations show that to better understand the survival strategies adopted by women in a context of crisis and precariousness, it is necessary to go beyond the scale of observation that is the family to extend it to the neighborhood, the lineage, or the extended family. Not only do women participate in the production of resources in the household, but they also have the capacity to manage them, for

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<sup>5</sup> Religious associations.

<sup>6</sup> Wolof term which designates forms of exchange between women of the same age grouped together in the form of an association. The women are paired up and meetings are organised regularly. The idea is that one pair brings gifts to the other and vice versa. This form of exchange creates strong bonds between the women.

example when their husbands give them the "daily expenditure". These reflexive and entrepreneurial capacities of women who adopt various strategies to participate fully in the household economy is not specific to Casamance but also concerns other regions of Senegal. This active participation of women in household production does not, however, give them a superior position in relation to their husbands, because although they are increasingly acquiring, through their economic activity, a crucial importance in the survival of families, they are kept in an inferior status and, more often than not, kept out of decision-making spheres, except for the subsistence of their families (Locoh and Odile, 1990).

### *2.1.5. Sending young girls to the city by families*

At the heart of the various strategies described above is the case of girl domestic workers, or 'maids', who move from the villages and most remote areas of the country to work in the cities with middle-income or better-off families. In most cases they come on their own initiative, but often it is their families, especially parents, who encourage them to go to the city to work there. The girls generally work as maids or domestic servants for middle-income or better-off families. Some of these girls come during the post-harvest season and leave as soon as winter approaches; other girls are increasingly trying to move to the city. The case of these girls who leave the villages to go to the city in search of work can be observed in Casamance as well as in other regions of Senegal. For example, in Sine Saloum (now the Fatick and Kaolack region), this practice has been common among young girls for many years. The wages received by these girls do not necessarily correspond to their expectations and depend on the price offered by their employers<sup>7</sup>. In spite of the difficulties they face, part of the money they earn is sent to the parents who have stayed in the village, the other part being used to cover their needs in the urban environment (rent, food, clothes...). Thus, most girls in rural areas leave their villages to go to other parts of the country - even if their preferred destination remains the capital Dakar - to look for work as domestic workers. In peri-urban areas, especially in the suburbs, young girls are busy doing laundry and ironing for wealthier (or average) families, which gives them a source of income. They most often live in the home of a "Djatigué"<sup>8</sup> or in shared flats with other girls from the same or other villages. The men are just as likely to be

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<sup>7</sup> The monthly salaries earned by these young girls range from 20000FCFA (36\$) to 50000FCFA (90\$).

<sup>8</sup> It is the person who lives in the town who accommodates one or more relatives from the village under his or her roof.

involved in banditry or delinquency as the women, and the women are just as likely to be involved in clandestine prostitution networks. It should also be noted that it is not only individuals from rural areas who engage in these activities (trade, laundry, cleaning), but that they increasingly concern individuals from families living in urban areas who are also confronted with the difficulties of daily life. In the case of young girls, they would stay working in the city for a certain period until the winter period approached, after which they would return home to help their parents with their work in the fields. Some, however, decided to move to the city. Many girls who used to go to school had to leave school early because of their parents' situation to go to work in the city and help their families. Young girls are employed in the (maid) domestic service sector in other cities (Hamer, 1981), particularly in the Dakar region, which is the main destination for these girls, although other regional capitals also receive them.

#### *2.1.6. The strong involvement of children in the domestic economy in rural areas*

In addressing the strong involvement of children in the production of resources within Senegalese families, it should be made clear that the child labor in question here is to be distinguished from domestic work, which covers all kinds of tasks (watering animals for boys, sweeping or preparing meals for girls). The work referred to here is strictly productive. In other words, any activity that can contribute to the additional production of family resources. Casamance is one of the regions where children are involved, from an early age, in the production of family resources because of poverty. In the villages, children are integrated into the agricultural production system at a very early age, unlike their peers in the cities. This is because, because their father's belonging to a particular position in society (farmer or peasant), it is only natural that they should contribute to agricultural production in order to perpetuate the tradition. The role of children in production is also important because very early in the morning they accompany their parents to the fields and when they are quite old enough, they even have a plot of land at their disposal. Children strive to participate early in resource production and domestic activities (Ferry, 1976). In rural areas, some children do not go to school and thus constitute an added value in terms of an arm in domestic production. Highlighting this strong involvement of children in agricultural production, Daniel Bertaux shows that the peasant family differs from small urban producers: agricultural production can and does use child labor. It is known that the established relationships of land transmission have a considerable influence on anthroponomic production in the peasant environment (Bertaux, 1977). However, in families where the parents have some financial affluence, as in



average families, rather than involving children in resource production, the parents are careful to provide good conditions for their children to study. In the face of the difficulties and inability of heads of household to ensure the survival of the household, it is observed that children are put to good use in production and in some cases even play an important role in meeting daily expenses.

## ***2.2. The domestic economy of families in urban areas***

Unlike the mode of production of families in rural areas, families living in urban areas adopt different strategies in the production of the necessary resources. This is insofar as the diversity of activities in urban areas allows family members a wide margin of manoeuvre, unlike in rural areas where there is only agriculture and livestock farming. In the mode of production of the family in the city, all family members participate in the diversification of resources. Even if the head of the family has a job that generates income, this does not in any way prevent the woman from engaging in activities that enable her to contribute to the family's burdens. Since there are more expenses in the city (rent, water and electricity bills, etc.) than in the countryside, the family burdens are heavier and all members - at least those with jobs - have to contribute actively to the generation of household resources.

### ***2.2.1. The role of women in the domestic economy***

As we have shown above in the domestic economy of rural families, urban women are also at the heart of the production process within families, and in some cases even bear the burden of managing daily expenses (Bisilliat, 1996). When the money for daily expenses is insufficient, they add what little they have earned from parallel activities. The husband's income is not always sufficient to cover the various expenses related to household maintenance (payment of electricity, water, telephone bills, etc.) because of the number of children to maintain. Many women are also active in the commercial sector in order to help their husbands take care of the family. In many neighborhoods in the region, women are content to open a small shop in the neighborhood to earn income and contribute to the production process of the family's resources; some even set up a small table in front of the door of their house, on which they place vegetables, fish, etc. Others sell peanuts and fruit in the corners of the neighborhood, in schools, markets, etc. These kinds of strategies and actions, however insignificant they may seem, even to the informed observer, are of paramount importance because they generate income for the family. The image of the passive woman

confined to the home and responsible for her role as educator of children and domestic tasks is thus giving way to the entrepreneurial woman, who has been able to take initiatives to play a full role in the process of resource production within the family unit. Let us note the importance of the role played by women, who, faced with a situation, are capable of developing a whole arsenal of know-how, actions and strategies to support their husbands who are struggling to ensure the survival of the family. Still on the subject of this mode of production, we also observe that some women go to other countries (in Gambia, Mali and other neighboring countries) to buy goods that they resell. The case of the women selling basin fabrics and other articles in the markets of almost all the districts of the region is quite illustrative. They go to Mali and to a lesser extent to Gambia to buy fabrics at a good price and sell them on the market, thus earning a profit and increasing their income. This strong involvement of women in the mode of production is highlighted by many anthropologists, including Claude Meillassoux (Meillassoux, 1999). Despite their poverty situation, families are well organized in the production of resources useful for the survival of all their members. In the city, women are also well represented in small and medium-sized enterprises and small and medium-sized industries with income-generating activities, whether it be dyeing, trading, market gardening, sewing... It is very common to see them organizing themselves in the neighborhoods in the form of economic interest groups (EIGs) and applying for funding either at the level of state bodies (regional council, town council for example) or women's promotion organizations. These women's economic interest groups are present in almost all regions of the country and reveal their organizational capacity. It is probably this proliferation of economic interest groups in Casamance as well as in other regions of the country that has led to the creation of a Ministry in charge of women's entrepreneurship, whose role or task is to assist and support women's projects. Training for women's advancement groups and grants are provided by the Ministry as part of its women's policy. The importance of the role of women as an added value to the economic development of the region has been recognized for many years. The organization of women into economic interest groups reflects their desire to fight poverty in their own way and to play a full role in the country's development process. Even beyond the economic interest groups to which they are affiliated, women's action is perceptible in the tontines which provide them with significant sums of money that can be invested (Ndione, 1994). In Casamance, women most often group together in women's groups to work together and drain resources which contribute to the development of the region. In almost every district there are a significant number of women's groups engaged in activities with economic profitability. They sometimes apply for loans from banks and mutual insurance

companies, especially in order to be able to finance an income-generating activity. They sometimes benefit from a favorable repayment rate, spread over several years, from their creditors. The trade sector is the main activity in countries where there are more women than men. This is one of the reasons why there is a much more significant presence of women in the markets of the region.

### *2.2.2. The place of the informal sector in the domestic economy of families*

The informal sector includes all the activities of production of goods and services that are not subject to regulation. The sector includes carpenters, mechanics, craftsmen, traders, etc. The term informal sector was first used by Keith Hart in 1971. It is a creation of international institutions (Lautier, 2004) according to the terminology proposed by Bruno Lautier. A few years later, the BIT defined the sector as a set of units producing goods and services with the main aim of creating jobs and income for the people concerned. These units with a low level of organization operate on a small scale and in a specific way, with little or no division between labor and capital as factors of production. Employment relationships, where they exist, are based mainly on casual employment, kinship or personal and social relationships rather than on contractual agreements with formal guarantees (BIT, 1993). The informal sector is well integrated into the household economy of families and contributes to some extent to absorbing the active and unemployed labor force, which in most cases does not have the vocational training that would allow it to be better integrated into other sectors. The informal sector can be analyzed as a palliative to the rising unemployment rate, since the sector also employs a significant number of young people. The informal sector is also an exit route for the many graduates who are ejected over the years from the school system and are unable to find employment in the modern sector. Thus, the proliferation in the districts of the region of all these small activities that can be described as survival testifies to the development of the informal sector. However, it should be remembered here that the sector is developing because of its place in commerce apart from other activities, such as car washers, shoe shiners, bus apprentices for public transport... this list is still long and non-exhaustive. One of the main characteristics of the sector is its weak regulation by the state authorities, despite a willingness to organize the sector. Since Karl Marx's work on capitalism, it has been known that in any society the distribution of resources is unevenly distributed among the different strata of the population. In fact, at the moment when a large part of the population has more or less financial resources which enable them to obtain supplies on the so-called informal market -

where products are cheaper and therefore more accessible - in food and various equipment, we observe on the other side a section of the population whose resources are less limited and who obtain their supplies from the services and goods offered by the informal sector at low prices (Gaud, 1991). The results of the National Survey on the Informal Sector in Senegal (ENSIS), carried out by the Directorate of Economic Statistics and National Accounts (DSECN) under the supervision of the National Agency for Statistics and Demography, reveal that the said sector employs 48.8% of the working population (ANSD, 2013). It can be observed that the sector absorbs a large part of the active labor force, which does not manage to fit into the formal sector (office, administration, civil service, etc.). In terms of value added in the country's national economy, in 2010 alone the informal sector produced 39.8 per cent of output and therefore weighs heavily on the country's GDP. In the region, most families live off the income of the informal sector, which has grown exponentially in recent years, especially with the street vendors. The informal sector employs a significant proportion of the working population. Most of the young people who have dropped out of school manage to enter this sector easily, especially in commerce. Small family businesses are being set up, particularly in the field of crafts, commerce, mechanics, etc. For example, a father may run a family business for several years and over the years insert his children, teaching them the tricks of the trade in particular, so that one day they can take over from the parents and thus perpetuate the small family business. This situation we have just described applies above all to caste-based activities. In response to the difficulties of daily life and the uncertainties of tomorrow faced by many families, whether in rural or urban areas, families adopt various survival strategies, including sending one of their members abroad. Thus, clandestine migration, which we will analyze in this thesis, reveals all its importance in this economy of survival.

### *2.2.3. "Gorgorlou" or the charismatic figure of the resourceful head of the family*

Faced with the difficulties of daily life and the need to improve their situation, the heads of families show, day after day, imagination and ingenuity through various strategies to meet the demands and needs of their families, in particular by providing them with daily meals. It is in this context that we find, among so many other figures characteristic of the economy of resourcefulness, that of "gorgorlou," the title of a famous sketch illustrating the daily life of a father who is always looking for new strategies to ensure daily spending for his family. The figure of the "gorgorlou" can be found in almost every city in the country. Sometimes it is the prerogative of retired fathers who, having no relief in the family, have to

provide for the daily needs of their families. In other cases, they are fathers from poor families, with few means to ensure the survival of their families or who work in low-paying jobs. In the popular conception, the rule is that the husband should provide for all family members, including food, clothing, shelter and other maintenance costs. In Casamance, the charismatic figure of the "gorgorlou" is present in many families who are unable to make ends meet. The heads of the families try to find the daily expenses. There is a strategy of "resourcefulness," which in local jargon is very often called the logic of "taxalé"<sup>9</sup> or "taxed," which is a strategy of "resourcefulness". (Fall, 2007) in order to have an income that can be used to provide midday meals for families. Resourcefulness strategies are by no means based on wages or fixed incomes, but rather are the result of day-to-day inventiveness on the part of heads of household to find a few pennies to take care of the family. Some fathers and/or mothers seek support from the neighborhood or their immediate environment, in other cases it is close relatives whose situation is stable who are asked for help. In most cases, these "gorgorlous" do not refer to heads of families who are active or have a well-paid job, but rather to old pensioners who have no one to take over the daily expenses. The "gorgorlou" gets up in the morning hoping to find the money to provide the family with three meals. The "gorgorlou"'s strategy may consist of going door to door in order to ask for help from his family circle or from a stranger. It can also involve going door-to-door to share their problems with others in the hope that they can help them. For example, it may be a prescription that he walks around with all day to get people to feel sorry for him. This figure illustrates very well the economic difficulties faced by many families, both in the city and in the countryside. The need to find money to support the family leads the "gorgorlou" to do many kinds of odd jobs. Examination of these different strategies shows that, upstream, there is a real economy of survival for families in a precarious situation, whose head of household does not have the financial resources to support himself, and who are always looking for increasingly innovative strategies which are characteristic of 'getting by' (Anderson, 1993). Although very present in Casamance, the resourceful economy is also widespread in other parts of Senegal, where the poorest families find it difficult to support themselves.

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<sup>9</sup> Wolof term which means a form of do-it-yourself

#### 2.2.4. *The economy of "getting by": a marker of families experiencing poverty*

The various field surveys carried out as part of our work in Casamance have enabled us to gain a better understanding of the experiences of households in precarious situations and who deploy multiple crisis exit strategies on a daily basis. Our field observations carried out in the most remote villages of Casamance have enabled us to understand the daily life of families and show the characteristics of each family monitored over time and to see how its members struggle day to day to solve this or that problem. We have thus been able to detect a real economy of "survival" or "resourcefulness". An economy of survival revealing the accentuation of the prevailing poverty that is plaguing many families throughout the Casamance region. In the arteries of the neighborhoods, many individuals from the rural exodus circulate with carts to collect rubbish, sell fish, meat and various goods. Young men sometimes group together in non-profit associations or work individually to peel vegetables for festive ceremonies (baptisms or weddings) in order to earn an income that, although insufficient, allows them to meet many of their needs. These are activities that work very well because these young men are frequently solicited by the women during the ceremonies. The young men most often leave their telephone details with women who pass them on to others when they need their services. These various strategies that make up what can be called the "economy of resourcefulness" are, as Abdou Salam Fall's (2007) analyses for the Dakar region show, very present in the country's other localities. In reference to these multiple strategies, the author speaks of a form of "do-it-yourself" intended for the survival of the various protagonists who try day by day to find the resources necessary for their survival. It is clear that all the strategies are good to implement in a context of poverty where the difficulties of the population are increasing day by day, and where the government also struggles to give a glimmer of hope despite the efforts made for several years in the social field. Other young people are shopkeepers or street vendors. They sell small items, even go out to meet the valet drivers on the roads and take advantage of traffic jams and temporary stops by drivers to sell their goods (handkerchiefs, car accessories, water in bags, small cakes, small gadgets for domestic use, telephone credit cards, etc.). The aprons, which were once the prerogative of women, are increasingly used by young men who sell various items in the urban and peri-urban markets of the capital. Despite rising unemployment and diminishing prospects for the future, the small-scale activities carried out in various spaces show that young people have not remained passive in the face of their destiny and are trying every day to find sources of income to improve their situation and that of their families. From another point of view, this situation and hostile environment reveal upstream the great precariousness in which many

families live, but also the persistence of unemployment and the increase in underemployment; it corroborates in the same perspective the many difficulties facing the country's leaders as they have been engaged in the paths of development for several decades now, not to say since Senegal's independence in 1960. In Casamance, the foreigner and the least well-informed observer are struck by the itinerant merchants who crisscross the city's arteries, markets, and places of public relaxation (green spaces, large squares, in neighborhoods, around places of administration or work). The development of underemployment in this area is characteristic, apart from being a response to the increased unemployment of thousands of young people, of the failure of the employment policies of the various governments that have succeeded one another at the head of the country.

## Conclusion

In this article, we have shown how the economic and social context leads the populations of this region to be very imaginative in finding the resources necessary for their survival, particularly through a very well-organized domestic economy, whether in rural or urban areas. At the end of this article, the observation which emerges, and which can be seen, as a watermark, is the extent to which the analysis of the domestic economy reveals the diversity of activities which are carried out within families with a view to diversifying their resources and improving their living conditions. The importance of shedding light on production processes makes it possible to understand and grasp not only the day-to-day experience of families and the crisis exit strategies to which they have recourse on a daily basis, but also reveals the existence of powerful mechanisms of mutual aid and solidarity within families in Casamance in particular and in Senegal in general.

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