Chapter 3

Articulation of modes of production and the beginning of labour migration among the Diola of Senegal

Jos M. van der Klei

Introduction

The Diola inhabit the larger part of the abundantly watered Lower Casamance region in southwest Senegal. They are proud and capable farmers with a strong sedentary tradition. Their villages are large and predominantly endogamous. In the nineteenth century, on the eve of the imposition of colonial rule, the villages had a high degree of political and social independence. There was no political organization above the level of the individual villages. Relations between neighbouring villages were sometimes marked by outright hostility. Consequently, the Diola preferred not to venture outside the territory of their own villages for fear of being captured and sold as slaves. But the Diola villages did have trade relations with the outside world. These relations were maintained by traders belonging to the ethnic groups surrounding the Diola, mainly the Islamic Malinke; these travelled to the Diola villages with their wares.

The area was subjected to a military pacification campaign in 1917, particularly at the insistence of French trading companies which had established themselves in the region at the end of the nineteenth century but had managed to gain only very little grip on the Diola. In subsequent years, rapidly increasing numbers of young Diola went to work as seasonal migrant labourers in the cash crop regions of the Gambia and Central Casamance.

Many writers have viewed colonialism in Black Africa, and the developments that have taken place since, within the framework of the expansion of capitalism throughout the African continent. They have stressed the fact that ever since the arrival of
colonialism, Africans have increasingly applied their labour-power in production processes centred on the capitalist world market. This often necessitated migration. Modern labour migrations as generated in this context differ from traditional migrations in Africa in that the traditional migrations tended to constitute a geographical expansion of one and the same type of society and mode of production, whereas modern migrations are characterized by the fact that the migrant enters into a totally different mode of production, i.e. the capitalist one.

The question remains as to just exactly how this incorporation into the world market, now so widespread in Africa, came about at the time. It is clear that the opening up of the African labour market for capitalist market production was one of the principal aims of colonial government policies. This opening up, and the consequent start of labour migration, can be explained primarily as the result of certain policies deliberately carried out by the colonial authorities. Amin (1974b) and many other authors have been very explicit on this point. The methods used by colonial officials to further a policy of capitalist penetration in various parts of Africa included levying taxes in money, periodic forced labour for the colonial government (corvée), porter duties and so forth. Sometimes the incorporation into the capitalist system took place more indirectly. For example, Meillassoux (1962) showed how the suppression of African commercial trade by the colonial government led to the same result.

Although Meillassoux (1965, 1977a, 1977b) and Rey (1971, 1976) both saw this opening up of the African labour market as primarily a result of the policies carried out by the colonial government, they also noted a number of other factors. They made it clear that the developments were not solely the result of government intervention, but that internal contradictions within the African social formations could also have contributed. Rey (1971) argued that as soon as the dominant group of elders within the pre-capitalist mode of production started to demand that brideprices be paid in money, the younger people were forced to go out and earn money by selling their labour-power outside their community, i.e. in the capitalist sector. So here we find that pre-capitalist contradictions characteristic of the domestic African mode of production could serve to promote the expansion of capitalism.

In this chapter, the rapid rise of labour migration among the Diola will be explained on the basis of the specific historic combination of these two factors (government policies and internal contradictions within the pre-capitalist mode of production). Immediately after the military pacification of the region in 1917, labour migration began among the young Diola. This was not due to direct coercion on the part of the colonial government, nor was it brought about by the brideprice mechanism. The Diola did not pay bridewealth. The function fulfilled by the brideprice elsewhere in Africa with respect to the articulation of the domestic and the capitalist modes of production is here discharged by initiation ceremonies. At these ceremonies, and on the occasion of the death of a family elder, prestige goods — notably cattle — are ostentatiously slaughtered in large numbers. In the pre-colonial period, these prestige goods were obtained from the neighbouring Malinke by trade. At the end of the nineteenth century this form of trade lost much of its importance, causing a subsequent fall in the supply of prestige goods. The reasons for the decline of cattle can be sought in the reduced demand for the products traditionally supplied by the Diola (mainly rice and slaves), and in the fact that during this period the colonial government, struggling to impose itself, made every effort to restrict internal African trade. Therefore, when we devote this chapter to the incorporation of the Diola into the market economy, special attention will have to be focused on the development of internal African trade.

First a description will be given of Lower Casamance and the Diola. Then a general account will be presented of the functioning of their mode of production as it still existed around 1900. The external trade relations that the Diola maintained with neighbouring peoples played a central role within their social formation. What did these trade relations consist of? With whom were they maintained? How did they change under the influence of the imposition of colonial rule upon the Diola and their traditional trade partners? In what way did this contribute to labour migration among the Diola, and how can the specific features of that migration (its being seasonal and confined to youth) be accounted for? These are the questions we hope to answer in the course of this chapter.

**Lower Casamance and the Diola**

Lower Casamance covers an area of about 100 by 100 kilometres
Before the military pacification of Lower Casamance, the main occupation of the Diola was growing rice. Portuguese travellers who visited the region around 1450 noted the intensive and ingenious nature of their farming methods. The Diola grow rice on the gently sloping banks of the many tributaries of the Casamance River. The clearing of these fields required a great deal of work. The most favourably situated fields have been cultivated for centuries. A system of small dikes catches the rainwater during the rainy season (July–October), so that every year rice can be grown on the same fields.

The agricultural implements used are simple but efficient: a long arched wooden spade (kajendo) to cultivate the rice-fields, and knives to cut off the ears.

In farming, there is a clear division of labour between men and women: the men work the land and the women sow and harvest the crops. The cattle, constituting a considerable herd, are not commonly used as beasts of burden or as draught animals. Instead, they function as prestige objects and are ostentatiously slaughtered on special occasions.

In addition to growing rice, the Diola also hunt, fish, and gather forest produce. Since the beginning of the colonial period, fields all over the higher plateaux round the villages have been cultivated for groundnuts. Unlike rice, this crop has always been sold. In the course of the present century, many of the rice-fields that were relatively difficult to cultivate ceased to be used and very few, if any, new rice-fields were started, so that there was a fall in the production of rice. The clearing of large parts of the forest for the cultivation of groundnuts reduced the importance of hunting and gathering as a means of subsistence.

The Diola mode of production in pre-colonial times, and the importance of external trade relations

Up to 1900, before the imposition of colonial rule, the Diola villages were quite autonomous in many ways. Their contact with the outside world consisted of wars with neighbouring villages or trade with the Malinke. Therefore, as far as the characteristic features and the functioning of the pre-capitalist Diola mode of production are concerned, a description of the socio-economic structure of one village will suffice.
If we try to imagine ourselves in a Diola village at the time, we would see the following picture. The Diola village is a predominantly endogamous community consisting of at least two exogamous wards. Each ward (kololo) has its own meeting-place and sacred forest, where the ward's most important shrine (bukin) is located. There is a clear dividing line between the different wards of the village, and in many ways they are completely separate units. The first Frenchmen to visit the region regarded these units as individual villages, and referred to what we now call a village as a 'groupe de villages'. The various wards of a village are linked to each other by marriage. Once in every twenty to twenty-five years, all the boys from the various wards of the village are initiated together in the sacred forest of one of the wards, the one recognized as being the most important. About the time of these initiation rites (bukut), the neighbouring villages are often raided and captives and cattle are brought back.

The population of a ward consists of the members of one or more patrilineal descent groups. These descent groups are organized in extended families (elup) which each inhabits its own compound (fank). The extended families are the most important socio-economic units. Each extended family consists of a group of close patrilineal relatives of about three or four generations with a family elder as leader. This group has a certain amount of inherited or recently cleared rice-fields, which are divided among the married male members of the group. Upon his marriage, which cannot take place until after he has been initiated, a man is apportioned a piece of his father's land to provide for his family. Polygamous marriages are rare. Women do not inherit any land. When they marry, they take up residence in their husband's ward and compound. If necessary and if available, a man can borrow rice-fields from his mother's relatives.

The captives (amikel) taken during the raids on neighbouring villages are not locally kept as slaves: they are either incorporated in the community or sold to the Malinke.

Each nuclear household within this patrilineal extended family has its own share of the family land. The family elder is in charge of the livestock and acts as the group's main representative to the outside world. He has the best fields and his household has the largest number of productive members.

Each nuclear household eats the rice produced on its own fields. The fields are cultivated by members of the household, but the various households in one extended family also take turns in helping in each other's fields.

Labour is organized not only on the level of the nuclear family and the extended family but also on the ward level: unmarried young men and girls are organized into age-groups which do farming work for various households in other wards of the village as well as in their own. When these groups work in their own ward, they are 'paid' with food. When they work outside their ward, they usually work for the prospective father-in-law of one of the members of the group. This labour is not remunerated since it is part of the bride-service the father-in-law is entitled to. If we draw a distinction between the elders on the one hand (who control the production factors), and the unmarried younger people (who by definition do not), then it can be said that the rice surplus controlled by the elders is mainly produced by the younger people. This rice surplus can be quite sizeable. It is a source of prestige, and it is not unusual for rice to be saved for decades.

What do the elders do with this rice surplus? Some of it is to be eaten on special occasions such as weddings, funerals and initiation ceremonies, and some of it is traded for articles that come from outside the Diola region and cannot be locally produced. In addition to iron (for weapons and tools), the main articles in this respect are prestige goods such as loincloths and, even more important, cattle.

These cattle constitute a scarce resource which has to be replenished constantly for two reasons: environmental conditions in the Diola region are not conducive to the natural reproduction of livestock (Pélissier 1966: 762); and moreover the Diola slaughter their cattle in large numbers on two occasions — at the death of a family elder, and at initiation ceremonies.

Rice is not the only means of acquiring cattle. In addition to other products such as beeswax, captives taken in the wars with other Diola villages are traded with the Malinke for cattle. These inter-village wars mainly take place when a village holds its initiation rites. The initiates have to prove their courage, usually by attacking a neighbouring village and bringing back cattle and captives.

Death of a family elder

The death of a family elder represents a situation of crisis and of
transition. It means that the descent group has lost its central figure. But when the relatives of the deceased slaughter all the group’s cattle on this occasion, the unity of the group is confirmed and the centrifugal forces that might lead to the segmentation of the group are countered. This communal tie acquires a very concrete form when the relatives jointly lease part of their family land to a different descent group in order to secure cattle to be slaughtered at the funeral of the family elder. For this leased land will be returned to the descent group only if, at some future time, they have amassed enough cattle to ‘buy’ it back.

The amount of cattle slaughtered on this kind of occasion is a public manifestation of the manpower the deceased family elder used to control when still alive: the more dependants, the more surplus production and the more prestige goods such as cattle. Thus the massive cattle-killing serves as a source of prestige for the deceased and his surviving relatives.

**Initiation rites (bukut)**

Only once in about every twenty to twenty-five years, each village holds its own initiation rites for all the young men who have not yet been circumcised. Once a man has gone through the rites, he can marry and thus gain access to the main production factors: land and labour. And in fact we see that immediately after the initiation, an entire age group of young people gets married, bringing about a village-wide redistribution of land and labour. The initiation rites are one elaborate social drama lasting about a year and reaching its climax in the circumcision of the young men in the village’s central sacred forest. They then spend about two months in isolation there, and under the harshest of conditions are initiated into the secrets which are known only to initiated men. It is a part of the rites that the initiates have to fight their way into the group of initiated men. The symbol of this ‘fighting their way in’ is an actual fight between the older men and the initiates, which is won by the latter. The initiation also means that the young men no longer belong to the group of women and non-initiates. So before they are circumcised in the sacred forest, the prospective initiates bid farewell to their mothers. It is on the occasion of these rites that we witness the reproduction of the Diola mode of production (characterized by the dominance of a small group of married men, and within this group the elders particularly, over the unmarried men and the women). The biologically reduced ranks of the group of married men are filled again by the younger men. The initiation rites take place only once in every two decades; a father and a son cannot be initiated at the same time and ideally there even has to be one bukut between a father’s and his son’s. These conditions result in the fact that Diola men marry at a relatively late age (thirty or older). Therefore the dominant group of married men remains small, and the group of dependent young men large.

On the day the initiates enter the sacred forest, large numbers of cattle are slaughtered by each descent group in the village. The meat is divided among the members of the descent group, and the relatives of the initiates’ mothers also have a right to a share. During one bukut, most of the village’s cattle are thus slaughtered altogether.

So, among the Diola, livestock proves to serve an essential function in the reproduction of the relations of production. A large group of dependent young men produces a surplus which is then controlled by a small group monopolizing the means of production. Some of this surplus is converted into cattle. On two occasions (major funerals and initiation), the killing of these cattle is an indispensable step in the process through which the descent group, and the dominant position of the elders within it, is to reproduce.

The external trade relations enabling the Diola to acquire this livestock are closely linked to the Diola mode of production. The following section will describe the development of these trade relations.

**The external trade relations of the Diola over time**

**The period up to 1850**

In the period immediately preceding the arrival of the first Europeans (1450), a considerable part of West Africa belonged to the Mali empire, which was dominated by the Malinke. The Diola were on the periphery of this empire, but most probably were never politically a part of it (Curtin 1975: 8–9). Around 1500, this empire broke up into a number of more or less autonomous states.

The fact that they occupied junctions of the internal African trade routes largely provided the economic basis for the Malinke states. The Diola were surrounded by several of these states: those
Modes of production and labour migration among the Diola

along the Gambia River to the north, and the Gaabu state to the east. All the trade contacts of the Diola with the outside world took place through the intermediaries of the Malinke, some of whom had by then been converted to Islam. The Diola traded prisoners, beeswax, salt and rice for cattle, iron and textiles. Starting in the fifteenth century, Europeans began to participate in West African trade, and in this region they had trading-posts on the Gambia River and (to a lesser degree) in Guinea-Bissau. Malinke traders brought various commodities from the hinterland (including the Diola region) to these ‘factories’, and then returned inland with European articles. Thus until the beginning of the twentieth century, the Diola were never in direct contact with European traders; at first the Malinke, and later the Afro-Portuguese as well, acted as intermediaries. Mungo Park, the explorer who visited the region at the end of the eighteenth century, described the Diola as ‘a wild and unpleasant tribe’, and noted this intermediary trade role of the Malinke (Park 1969: 4).5

The participation of Europeans in West African trade did not bring about any essential alteration in the transactions of the Diola with the outside world. However, there was a change in the provenance of some imported goods: African iron was replaced by European iron. Exported goods such as captives and beeswax were now also supplied to the European merchants by the Malinke. The import of firearms probably did much to enlarge the scale of the inter-village wars and subsequently the number of captives who were sold as slaves. The Europeans were not interested in purchasing rice, nor did they have any interest in cattle transactions. Trade in these commodities remained completely African, as did much of the slave trade. The livestock that the Diola got from the Malinke had been obtained in turn by the Malinke from the Fulani in Upper Casamance. To the north of these various ethnic groups (Diola, Malinke and Fulani), the basin of the Gambia served as a trade route.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, trade conducted by Europeans on these coasts was limited and irregular. The rulers of the Malinke states on the Gambia River regulated the supply of African commodities and stored them until the European ships arrived. In the eighteenth century, the slaves brought to the shores of the Gambia River to wait for transportation to America were put to productive work: they cultivated groundnuts for their masters (Curtin 1975: 230). Others, who had come there as free

men with the trade caravans from the east, seeking their fortune in this trade centre while waiting for the European ships, also used their time productively by cultivating groundnuts on leased land in the area (Curtin 1975: 231). Were these groundnuts perhaps purchased by the European slave-ships as food for the slaves during the voyage?6 Anyway, the groundnut producers on the shores of the Gambia River were the forerunners of the ‘strange farmers’, immigrants who made the Gambia the first groundnut-exporting region of West Africa about 1850, after the trans-Atlantic slave trade had largely subsided. By then, however, a period had begun which differed fundamentally from the previous one in which European trade was still irregular, in which the European traders had to pay the Malinke rulers toll-money for the right to conduct trade, and in which it was ultimately the Africans who set the prices. The European forts along the coasts at this period were built more to ward off the ships of other competing European nations than to impose European conditions of exchange on the Africans. However, there was a fundamental change in these relations in the course of the nineteenth century, and the middle of the century can be viewed as the turning-point.

The period from 1850 to 1917

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, Europeans had only conducted trade with Africa and had not played any direct role in actual production there. Slaves had been the most important African export. This changed when the trans-Atlantic slave trade was formally prohibited (England 1807 and France 1816); a few decades later the European powers put an end to slavery and the slave trade in their spheres of influence in Africa (England 1833 and France 1848). These spheres of influence still only covered a very small part of the African continent, and internal African slavery and the slave trade there continued to exist up until the beginning of the twentieth century, when European control became effective throughout Africa.7

After the suppression of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, there was an increasing interest on the part of the Europeans in other African products. The growing industries in Europe created a need for a larger and more continuous supply of raw materials, and at the same time European technological and industrial
developments (arms, steamships, railways, etc.) made it possible for a larger part of Africa to play (voluntarily or involuntarily) an active role in production for the European market. Europeans, who until then had confined themselves to their trading-posts on the coast, now made their way inland, often accompanied by military troops, in order to establish relationships with the local rulers and to make formal trade agreements.

One of the side-effects of the Europeans' conducting trade direct with the African producers was that the intermediary role played by the African rulers gradually came to be viewed as an obstacle. When the colonial powers started to make capital investments (railways, ports, roads, telegraph facilities, etc.) in order to facilitate and augment trade in manufactured commodities, the days of the political and economic autonomy of the local states were numbered, and European colonial rule was instituted. Initially the Diola were unaffected by all these developments, but the adjacent regions to the north (the Gambia and Central Senegal) and to the east (Central Casamance) were very deeply concerned. The Gambia, which had formerly been one of the most important regions exporting slaves from the interior, now became one of the foremost groundnut-producing and -exporting regions of West Africa. The same held true for the neighbouring region of Central Casamance (Curtin 1975: 141).

Who produced these groundnuts? As has already been noted, it was the 'strange farmers' or nañetes, seasonal migrants who had come mainly from western Mali to Senegal and the Gambia, and who either leased a plot of land there and cultivated groundnuts on it, or came to live on a farmer's property where, in exchange for food and lodgings, they worked a few days a week in their host's fields and spent the rest of the week growing groundnuts on a plot of borrowed land. The Diola did not engage in this kind of 'free' contract labour in the Gambia or anywhere else, although the Gambia did border on their region. However, it is very possible that until the beginning of the twentieth century, Diola captives were bought up by Malinke traders and put to work as slaves on the groundnut fields in the Malinke area (Central Casamance and large parts of the Gambia).

It was not until the last quarter of the nineteenth century that French trading companies were established in the Diola region itself. For their trade with the Diola, they used the services of the Malinke traders, who had been playing this kind of intermediary role for centuries. Following the Conference of Berlin in 1885, Lower Casamance was allocated to France. This meant that from then on the French were to have a monopoly on trade there and could refuse to allow entry to traders from other European countries. First, the French tried to take over the existing African trade. Military expeditions were sent out to draw up an inventory of the products and the labour supply in the region. Lieutenant Noury, who headed a small military party traversing the Diola region in 1902, stated in his report: 'The region is extremely rich; the plains bordering the arms of the river are fertile and produce a great deal of rice [...], the region has many rubber trees [...], they are hard workers and they have large herds of livestock.'

The French traders were not very successful. The existing flow of trade through the intermediary of the Malinke continued to be mainly directed towards the English colony of the Gambia, and the goods involved (rice, prisoners and cattle) were not for the European market. Time after time, French attempts to force the Diola villages into maintaining fixed trade relations with them proved to be in vain because the region was so inaccessible and because there were no local political leaders. The villages may have formally put themselves under French 'protection' and promised to pay taxes, but as soon as the military party left the village, the Diola forgot all the agreements that had been made: 'The inhabitants do not refuse to engage in trade, but they want no part of fixed relations with the administration' (Villard 1943: 172).

The levying of taxes proved to be a sorry affair. If a village did pay taxes, it was because the French sent armed men to collect them, and even then they had to accept payment in kind (rice, cattle, rubber, etc.). As an excuse, the villagers said that they could not possibly come to the administrative posts to deliver their taxes because the neighbouring villages would not let them pass but would take them captive, which was actually the case.

In the meantime, this situation did work to the advantage of the Malinke traders, and they duly exploited it. They were the real authorities in the region, and often the people who maintained relations with the French commercial companies. They used this position to threaten the Diola with French military intervention if they were not willing to engage in trade with the Malinke on the latter's terms. Often it was also the Malinke who collected the taxes, claiming to be acting on behalf of the French. There was a gradual change in the traditional trade between the Diola and the
Malinke: such products as rubber and palm kernels came to be included, and rice ceased to be important (Roche 1975: 368).

Around 1890, the French tried to gain more direct control over the villages by appointing Malinke (who were then actually the real authorities in the region) as representatives of the colonial administration. This more or less formalized the exploiting position which the Malinke had built up on the basis of their intermediary role. In each village these new colonial representatives appointed a headman. These headmen were usually people who were part of the Malinke trade network; sanctioned by the colonial authorities, they did not hesitate to appropriate cattle and other goods for their own use under the guise of levying taxes. The French policy was a complete failure and led to rebellion among the Diola, so it was soon abandoned. All attempts to gain more control over the Diola, and particularly over their production, proved to be in vain. The French trading companies in the region lodged a complaint with the Governor in St Louis, the colonial capital, demanding that punitive expeditions be sent to the ‘disobedient’ Diola villages (Roche 1975: 381). However, there were not enough soldiers in Lower Casamance to undertake such a mission, and the colonial government shrank for the time being from the expenses involved in a once-for-all military pacification of the Diola. Moreover, the French troops had their hands full trying to deal with the militant Muslim leaders (marabouts) from Central Casamance and the Gambia who had declared war on the Diola ‘heathen’ at the end of the nineteenth century.

In a renewed attempt to gain economic control over the area, the Malinke traders were tackled. They were made to report for registration. The advanced trading-posts of the European companies, largely staffed by Malinke, were withdrawn so that the Diola had to emerge from their forest if they wanted to engage in trade. Payment in kind was no longer accepted. Customs posts were set up on the borders with the Gambia and Portuguese Guinea in order to restrict the existing flow of trade to those regions, and to channel it to the French trading companies (Roche 1975: 265–6). So the traditional trade-routes now formally became routes for contraband traffic. It did not have much effect, as the products still did not end up in the hands of the French trading companies. These companies even had a great deal of difficulty finding enough labourers to load the ships in Ziguinchor, the regional capital of Casamance (Roche 1976: 315).

The resistance on the part of the Diola around the turn of the century, and their refusal to adapt to and participate in production for the European market, contrasted with the attitude of the Malinke at the time. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Malinke region was already producing groundnuts for export. This took place within relations of production that were based either on slavery or on its more contractual derivations (Péliassier 1966: 553). Unlike the Diola, the Malinke wanted to be paid in cash (Roche 1976: 316), and they purchased rice from the Europeans. In 1906, rice was, in terms of money, the most important article imported by the European traders into the Casamance region (Roche 1976: 317). This imported rice was sold not to the Diola (who produced a surplus of rice), but to the Malinke. The Malinke had increasingly replaced their food production of millet by the cultivation of groundnuts. The money they received for their groundnuts they now used to buy rice from Indo-China instead of getting it from the Diola region, as they used to do (Péliassier 1966: 762). This is sign enough that the external trade relations of the Diola significantly altered during this period. The Malinke, who had traditionally absorbed part of the Diola rice surplus in exchange for cattle and other commodities, now bought rice from the Europeans, to whom they sold their groundnuts.

It was not until France became involved in World War I in 1914, and came to be in increasingly urgent need of its colonies’ products and labour, that the Diola region was firmly confronted. As late as 1917 van Vollenhoven, the Governor-General of French West Africa, lamented: ‘We still do not have Lower Casamance under our control [ . . . ] We can no longer accept the fact that this region is a tumour in the colony while it should be its show-piece’ (Roche 1975: 483).

The military pacification of Lower Casamance took place in the course of the next year, and in the following years there was a rapid growth in the direct participation of the Diola in the capitalist market economy. After that, the seasonal migration began of young Diola men to the groundnut fields of the Gambia and Central Casamance.
The military pacification of Lower Casamance and the beginning of Diola labour migration

One might assume that the start of Diola labour migration was related to the pacification of their region. Let us therefore examine just exactly what this pacification implied and see to what degree it can account for the subsequent migration.

The pacification consisted of the following aspects:

a. the periodic levying of poll-tax;
b. the enlistment of periodic forced labour for the colonial administration (corvée);
c. the recruitment of soldiers for the French army;
d. the disarmament of the population;
e. the appointment of village headmen;
f. instituting effective control of the borders with the Gambia and Portuguese Guinea;
g. the suppression of inter-village wars and raids;
h. the elimination of the relative trade autonomy of the Malinke.

Let us discuss these points in the order in which they are listed here.

The levying of taxes was seen by the French as well as by the Africans as the symbol of subjugation, but the French also viewed it as a means of forcing the Diola to use their labour-power for market production: ‘The obligation to pay taxes will promote trade, because once they [the Diola — JvdK] are forced to have money, this will force them to work for it.’ (Leprince 1905: 324).

Thus labour migration to the cash-crop regions of the Gambia and Central Casamance could be interpreted as something the Diola were compelled to do in order to earn the money they needed to pay taxes. But what happened in reality was that the migrants did not return with money. They either used their wages to buy goods on the spot, or they made a détour of some two hundred kilometres to buy cattle from the Fulani in Upper Casamance and bring them home with them (Pélissier 1966: 541, 762).

Unlike the case in many other regions of French colonial Africa, here the forced labour instituted by the French did not mean that Africans were taken from their villages to work in distant places as porters or otherwise. In Lower Casamance, forced labour was restricted to the construction and maintenance of local roads. Each village was responsible only for the stretch of road in its own territory. If the work had to be done more than 5 kilometres away from the village, meals were provided.

In the war years 1917 and 1918, the recruitment of soldiers was initially a very frightening affair for the villagers, and many of the young men fled into the forest when the recruiters approached, but in the end only a few hundred men were recruited out of a total population of approximately 100,000 (Roche 1975: 450).

When the population was disarmed, numerous rifles and other firearms did turn up, but probably an even larger number remained concealed. Moreover, new arms were smuggled in from the Gambia. Nevertheless, this disarmament contributed towards the termination of the inter-village wars and raids for which the region was notorious in earlier years.

The appointment of village headmen by the French aroused a great deal of opposition on the part of the Diola. Traditionally, the Diola villages did not have any formal leaders. In each village, the only political authority was a council of family elders or a ‘big man’. The French often had a difficult time finding someone who wanted to be village chief, because the person chosen would then live in great fear of being punished by his fellow-villagers. The French gave the village headman who was finally appointed ‘carte blanche’ in carrying out his responsibilities, which frequently led to large-scale abuses of power (Suret-Canale 1964: 439). The village headman was the lowest rank in the French colonial administrative hierarchy, but he had a very important say in matters involving the levying of taxes, the organization of forced labour and the recruitment of soldiers.

The increased supervision of the borders with the Gambia and Portuguese Guinea did make the traditional African trade-routes more difficult — but not altogether impossible — to use.

The suppression of the raids and wars between the various Diola villages was effective. This had two significant effects on subsequent developments. In the first place, captives were no longer taken, so that this means of attaining prestige goods was eliminated. In the second place, the cessation of hostilities made it possible for the Diola to move freely outside the territory of their own village. This had previously been impossible, as is evident from written accounts and oral statements. The greater freedom of movement was a first prerequisite for the beginning of migration.
Finally, an effect of the French pacification was that the Malinke traders who, for centuries, had served as the only link between the Diola and the outside world, had to surrender this position to the French colonial authorities and the French commercial companies. They were either incorporated into the colonial trade system, where they merely served as a link, or they disappeared altogether from the scene, together with the flow of trade they had controlled for centuries (rice and slaves in exchange for cattle and other prestige goods).

No single one of all these effects of the military pacification of the Diola region can be viewed as the sole direct cause of the labour migration that began at the time. Only a combination of a number of these factors, brought to bear upon the features of the traditional Diola mode of production, and the fundamental role played by external trade relations, would enable us to fit together the separate pieces of the jigsaw puzzle in such a way as to explain the beginning of labour migration. This would lead to the following reconstruction.

In the traditional Diola mode of production, where the elders controlled the means of production, the younger people produced a surplus which the elders appropriatetd. Production was organized on the basis of descent groups. The elders exchanged part of the surplus for prestige goods such as cattle, which were brought in from outside the area by Malinke traders. The amount of prestige goods in the hands of a family elder reflected the number of dependants in the descent group and was thus an expression of his manpower and strength. On two occasions, which were both inevitable crisis situations in the life of the descent group, this wealth and power were publicly displayed and at the same time destroyed. Consequently, the constant supply of these prestige goods was an essential condition for the continued existence of the Diola mode of production, and thus for the power relations between the older and younger generations. About the turn of the century this supply of prestige goods was endangered, as rice (in exchange for which the Diola traditionally got their prestige goods from the Malinke) came to be less in demand. This decline began in the middle of the nineteenth century when in Central Casamance the Malinke started cultivating groundnuts for the market, using the money they got for their crops to buy Indo-Chinese rice from the European traders.

Captives, another important export product which the Diola traditionally exchanged for prestige goods, did not cease to play this role until the time of the French pacification. Due to the eclipse of slave-raiding, the disappearance of the Malinke intermediary trade, and the fact that the French trading system did not take over the traditional trade flow of rice and captives in exchange for cattle and other prestige goods, the supply of prestige goods was greatly endangered.

However, this supply was re-established when young Diola, instead of using their labour-power for producing a surplus within the traditional mode of production, were sent out by the elders to work as migrant labourers within the capitalist mode of production in the groundnut fields of the Gambia and Central Casamance, both of which were Malinke regions. They either used the money they earned there to buy such goods as loincloths on the spot, or went by foot to the Fulani who lived about two hundred kilometres to the east and bought cattle from them. When they returned to their villages, these goods were handed over to the elders. Thus the supply of prestige goods was re-established.

This line of reasoning also provides an explanation for various other phenomena. When young Diola went away to work as migrant labourers, the most labour-intensive paddy fields fell into disuse; a surplus of rice for external trade purposes was no longer necessary, and the production of rice was now confined to direct food production. This also makes it clear why migration did not start until after the pacification of the Diola region. Before then, travel was too dangerous and external transactions always took place through the intermediary of the Malinke. Moreover, this also explains why it was precisely the young unmarried Diola men who went away to work as migrant labourers, why the money they earned was so often spent on prestige goods, and why this labour migration was largely confined to a specific season: a few weeks in October and November when the groundnuts were harvested (Suret-Canale 1964: 313). This migration period did not have a detrimental effect on the rice production in the Diola villages, which mainly required the men's labour in the months from July to September.

The period (immediately following the pacification of the region) during which the Diola mode of production was articulated with the capitalist one without this altering the internal relations of production of the former, was a very short one and can be viewed as transitional. For the internal relations of production were soon
Modes of production and labour migration among the Diola

to undergo very drastic changes as a result of labour migration, and even more so as a result of groundnut farming, which was introduced in the Diola region by the returning migrants in the 1920s. The descent group as a production unit was to split up into separate households.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to show how and why the Diola came to participate in the capitalist market economy. This process of integration started all over West Africa at the time of the establishment and expansion of European colonialism: at the end of the nineteenth century. Amin and other authors view this integration as a direct result of colonial government policies specifically designed to promote market production among the African population. They refer in this respect to the levying of taxes, forced labour for market production, and other forms of government coercion. With the model of the domestic community or the domestic mode of production, and even more specifically with the idea of the articulation of this mode of production with the capitalist one, French Marxist anthropologists such as Meillassoux and Rey offer a new approach to this question. This enables us to see this integration process as the result not only of external coercion but also of internal contradictions (older generation versus younger generation) within the relations of production of the domestic community. Rey stressed that, in various parts of Africa, the older generation more or less forced the younger generation to go out and work in the capitalist sector by demanding that brideprices be paid in money. A similar development, however, did not occur among the Diola, among whom the function fulfilled by the brideprice elsewhere in Africa was performed by the prestige goods necessary for the initiation rites which, in turn, were a precondition for marriage. These prestige goods — cattle — were obtained from the neighbouring Malinke by means of trade. About the turn of the century, when this trade came to an end, the supply of prestige goods was endangered. The main factor in the re-establishment of the supply was the fact that the dominant group within the Diola mode of production — the elders — sent the young men off to sell their labour power outside the Diola region in the places where cash-
crops were grown. The money they earned this way was spent on the traditional prestige goods, and when they returned to their villages these goods were handed over to the elders. This appears to have been the essence of the initial articulation between the old Diola mode of production and the capitalist one.

The development of internal African trade plays an important role in this chapter. It accounts for the very first incorporation of the Diola into the capitalist market economy. In the nineteenth century, the expansion of capitalism outside the Diola region appeared to have very clear repercussions for the Diola, although so far they had been only indirectly affected by the market economy through their traditional trade partners (who had been incorporated into it already). Meillassoux, especially, does not seem to appreciate this form of indirect expansion of capitalism in Africa: he views the African domestic communities and their modes of production as being more or less isolated socio-economic systems and would seem to underestimate the significance of the trade relations involving these systems.

Notes

1 This chapter is based, in part, upon field-work that I conducted in Lower Casamance in 1974 and 1975 as a member of a multi-disciplinary research team from the African Studies Centre, Leiden.
2 The Diola consist of a number of sub-groups which, though they all have certain features in common, also have their own characteristic features (Thomas, 1958, 1959, 1963, 1965). In this chapter, the Diola referred to are those living in the central part of Lower Casamance, the ‘Boulouf’. Reference is primarily to the situation prevailing in the village of Diatock; structural variation in the Boulouf is not explicitly taken into account.
3 The ethnographic present in this section of the chapter clearly refers to about 1900. My historical reconstruction is based, in part, on Mark (1976) and Roche (1976). Additional oral data, and the methodological difficulties attending such reconstruction, will be discussed in my forthcoming doctoral dissertation.
4 Archives Nationales du Sénégal (Dakar), 13 G 498 5.
5 Park refers to the Diola as ‘Feloops’ and to the Malinke as ‘Mandingo’.
6 For a long time, groundnuts were referred to in Europe as ‘slave food’ (Johnson 1964: 41).
7 Up until the 1870s, slaves were still shipped illegally to South and Central America. It was not until Brazil abolished slavery in 1880 that the trans-Atlantic slave trade came to an end.
8 An earlier attempt in Carabane in 1836 did not prove successful.
9 Archives Nationales du Sénégal (Dakar), 13 G 498 5.
10 Hecquard, a Frenchman who travelled through the Diola region in
1863, noted that ‘Laws are laid down only by physical violence and
wealth’.

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