

**Emergence instead of development in Senegal: cosmetic change,
new institutional mode or (r)evolution in the paradigm?**

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Abstract

Drawing on the example of Senegal, and in particular by means of a critical analysis of the *Plan Sénégal Émergent*, our purpose is to show how the concept of emergence has come to replace that of development, and to analyse the epistemological, theoretical, institutional and geopolitical implications which may be attributed to this situation. To this end, our contribution sets out a historiography and archaeology of the concept of emergence. It highlights how this concept came to have such a seductive effect on political decision makers in Senegal, and how its victory also marked a decline in the appeal of the concept of development. A good part of the analysis is devoted to ascertaining whether the new concept actually introduces shifts in the country's development strategies and models, or whether it is in fact no more than a new avatar of the newspeak of development. In other words, whether it is merely the product of a new intellectual fashion in the "development marketplace", where portmanteau words regularly appear: endogenous development, the fight against poverty, women and development, local development, policy decentralization, climate change, the green economy, etc. Is emergence simply an intermediate path in the trajectory of development? Does its victory instead bring paradigm shifts which ought to prompt sociology and development economics to modernize their orientation, their theoretical models and their teachings? This article endeavours to respond to these questions.

Introduction

This article sets out a theoretical discussion on the unexamined aspects of the concept of emergence, from the time it appeared until it came to dominate the field of development, as well as its ability to push into the background the concept of development, which appears less and less frequently in political speeches and papers. We plan to question the intellectual, theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of the loss of appeal of the concept of development in favour of that of emergence. We will also analyse the many implications of the fashion for emergence in order to show that they are not concomitant with paradigm shifts in approaches to the governance of African societies, in the roles of the authorities, particularly the State, or in the priorities which are set out in public policies.

After briefly outlining the history of the concept of emergence, emphasizing the various routes it has taken before reaching its intellectual “hegemony”, we will focus on elucidating the concept in order to bring out the shifts and the continuities it introduces into the debates on the future of African societies. A good part of the analysis will then be devoted to a theoretical discussion on the theoretical, epistemological and programmatic limits of the concept of emergence itself, but especially the public policies which it generates. It will also highlight the ideological assumptions bound up with the concept: neoliberal orientation, accelerated integration of African countries in globalization flows while restricting them to the margins, prioritization of infrastructure at the expense of human capital (education and health), and so on.

1. Emergence: a marketing idea and new reference concept?

Emergence has become a particularly fashionable concept in the development field (Harsman 2100, Jaffrelot 2008). In Africa, it has become the new leitmotiv of public policies and the pet slogan of today’s political elites. Newly emerging countries try to become organized and enhance their influence on the international scene (Kateb 2011). International agencies have tuned in to emergence and no longer hesitate to define it as the goal of their activities and the economic programmes they support. Proof of the popularity of emergence in African countries is the fact that almost all of them have adopted plans to achieve emergence.¹ Gabon was one of the first in sub-Saharan Africa to do so.² Côte d’Ivoire, Cameroon, Morocco, Tunisia and others have adopted plans for emergence, whose preparation is often entrusted to foreign consulting firms.

In Senegal, from the *Plan Sénégal Émergent* to former Prime Minister Aminata Touré’s general policy statement, by way of the many papers produced for the country’s appearance before the Consultative Group in Paris, emergence is the flagship concept. Today’s political elites in Senegal have ears only for this word, in every combination, as witness the stream of slogans uttered by leaders at the start of the last electoral campaign in 2012 – “For an emerging Senegal by 2030”, or “Senegal on the path of emergence”. The current leaders cite it wholesale in their speeches and policy papers. It would be no exaggeration to describe President Macky Sall as an apostle of emergence given how much and how constantly he refers to it, and he has even managed to impose it in administrative jargon and in government phraseology, for example in the adoption of the *Plan Sénégal Émergent*, which is intended to embrace all public investment between 2014 and 2018 (Senegal 2013). As if to instil emergence more thoroughly in the imagination of the people of Senegal, the authorities have attached the name to a range of infrastructure – the *autoroute de l’émergence*, or the *cit  de l’émergence*. Not a day passes without a public event being organized under the banner of emergence

¹ Alioune Sall, Director of the African Futures Institute, emphasized in a lecture on “Africa’s search for meaning” delivered on the occasion of the General Assembly of CODESRIA on 9 June 2015 that only 7 of 54 African countries did not have a long-term strategic plan which could follow the outlines of a plan directed towards emergence.

² Specifically through its *Gabon un pays  mergent   l’horizon 2025*.

– seminars, political rallies, gala events, etc. – fostering its popularization, but also its entry into folklore. Nimble political entrepreneurs skilled in the hijacking of trends and the processes of political positioning wasted no time in appropriating the concept of emergence. This led to the appearance of a succession of bodies dedicated to emergence: women’s network for emergence, Disso for an emerging Senegal, Alliance for green emergence, emergence in health, agriculture, the local economy, and so on.

The concept of emergence is currently fashionable in Senegal and elsewhere in Africa, steadily pushing the concept of development into the background, even though this has been a key concept in public policies as well as in development cooperation since the era of independence. The centrality of the concept of development until recently can be gauged in terms of the scope of the disciplinary field to which it has given birth in the social sciences. Development sociology, anthropology, geography, economic and political sciences have generated an abundant theoretical and empirical corpus to accompany development activities, identify obstacles to development or document the many failures in the processes in African countries. Despite the economic, social, political and institutional transformations which have been achieved, these countries are still labelled “underdeveloped”, less developed or developing. It should be underlined that, in institutional language, these terms are increasingly dropped in favour of “emerging countries”. Whereas in the 1960s, the task of countries was to develop or break out of underdevelopment, today it is to achieve emergence or be emerging. As for development, it seems to have been relegated to a distant future.

The concept of emergence appeared for the first time in 1980 in the works of the Dutch economist Antoine Van Agtmael, to designate developing countries which offered opportunities for investors (Vercueil 2010, Sgard 2008). It was a concept closely linked to the financial markets in such countries, which offered greater scope for profitability than the so-called developed countries; hence the concept of emerging markets. It is thus a concept linked to finance more than to the real economy. Its victory must undoubtedly be attributed to the impressive economic and social performance of the countries designated by the acronyms BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), BRICM (Brazil, Russia, India, China and Mexico) or BRICI (Brazil, Russia, India, China and Indonesia). These countries, described as “emerging Powers” or “emerging economies”, have not only helped to disrupt the international geopolitical scene, but have also taken their places as new players in development cooperation (Vercueil 2010, Jaffrelet 2008a, 2008b). As Piveteau and Rougier (2010) emphasize, emergence cannot be separated from the economic and social changes which are closely associated with globalization. China, thanks to its industrial expansion in recent years and its economic model, but also because of the scale of its investment in Africa, has become the new yardstick for those involved with public policy in most African countries.

Contrary to an idea which is spreading rapidly, emergence as an economic approach is not inconsistent with the Washington Consensus,³ which prescribed for the countries of the South accelerated deregulation, privatization of public enterprises, minimization of the role of the State and liberalization of trade and capital markets. Better still, it does not challenge any of these neoliberal prescriptions, but rather reinforces them by adding the infrastructure dimension which they had

³ The Washington Consensus designates a set of economic measures inspired by neoliberal ideology and applied under the auspices of the IMF and the World Bank with a view to reducing the debt of African and Latin American countries. The Washington Consensus served as a foundation for the structural adjustment programmes implemented in most African countries from the end of the 1980s to the early 2000s. They were perceived as having made a major contribution to the worsening of living conditions. The flagship measures advocated under the Washington Consensus included cuts in public expenditure in the social sectors (education, health and housing), encouragement of the shrinking of the State, liberalization of foreign trade, privatization of public enterprises, market deregulation, and so on. The severity of criticism, prompted in particular by the harmful social impacts of the adjustment programmes, led the supporters of the Washington Consensus to revise some measures linked with the shrinkage of the State. This gave rise to the idea of a new Washington Consensus which gives the State a renewed role in the economy, in particular in sectors where the markets are failing. This school of thought is led by Nobel Economics Laureate Joseph Stiglitz (2008) and the neo-Keynesian economists.

always refused to take into account. By suggesting action in this direction, the emergence-based approach looks more like a sort of methodological hybrid combining neo-Keynesianism and new classical economics, rather than a break with the dominant view of neoclassical economics. This presentation has, it seems, appeased the critics of the neoliberal approach to development, who might have viewed it as a return to the traditional functions of the State, but at the same time it has made the concept more complex or more vague.

However, when the concept is analysed, and particularly its operational content and the arrangements for financing the types of policies it advocates, one very quickly notes the extensive recourse to the private sector and the philosophy of “less State and better State”. These two paradigms of neoliberal economics hardly disappear. All the countries which have drawn up an emergence plan have entrusted the task to private consulting firms, which are often at the heart of the globalized liberal economic system. They have subsequently had the plans validated by private partners – in this case, the Consultative Club of Paris – and, lastly, have set up a comprehensive communication strategy centred on the “pre-eminent role of the State”. The role of the State would seem to be somewhat of an illusion, a sort of construction or spinning of opinions floated in the current climate with the intention that, by means of targeted, intensive and long-term communication, what is virtual becomes real, even if the role of what is virtual has been boosted under emerging markets in comparison with adjustment programmes. From this viewpoint, the champions of emergence merely interpret and harness resources offered by the new information technologies and the major role played by communication in today’s societies.

In sub-Saharan Africa, where it is still in its early stages, emergence, because of its procedures but more so because of its content, is in line with the fundamental principles of the adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 1990s, while seeking to remedy their weak points. It does not challenge the central role of private investment and individual entrepreneurs, still less the role of individual responsibility and the organizational responsibility of society. It is notable for a slight shift in policies of emergence towards investment to benefit vulnerable groups and grants the beneficiary States the choice of infrastructure to be put in place. This relative freedom is extremely important in understanding the political dimension of emergence, since it makes it possible to say that emergence is consistent with adjustment policies. It also allows government and affiliated agencies to take up the concept as if it had been arrived at locally.

In comparison with development, which is often a concept difficult to grasp, the stage of emergence, which is not yet that of development, is a “wager” for development (Delannoy 2012). Nevertheless, it offers two advantages: first, the geopolitical and economic reclassification of countries as xxx, “emerging countries”, “emerged countries” and “developed countries”, and second, the drawing of a line in respect of scientific, technical and economic progress beyond which a country changes its classification. This aspect should not be ignored, especially where governance is concerned, because it enables governments to promise their demanding citizens an improvement in living conditions through the creation of infrastructure similar to that found in the developed countries, which are held up as models and “goals” to be reached. The reclassification of countries is another way of rethinking and restructuring global geopolitics. Beside the countries which can be considered “completely emerged”, like China, Brazil, India, South Africa, and so on, and which act as global Powers or counter-Powers vis-à-vis the traditional Powers (United States, France, England, Germany, Japan), forms of economic, scientific and military cooperation are established on smaller scales – regional and subregional – in which the Powers that act are either emerging countries or xxx countries.⁴

⁴ This reclassification may be observed in Haiti, where Brazil played a leading role beside the United States in emergency aid and reconstruction following the earthquake. In South Sudan, South Africa acted as an African Power entrusted with the task of helping to find solutions to the conflict between the two Sudans. In West Africa, Nigeria had been envisaged for this role in Mali, but “unexplained” reasons connected with relations with France persuaded the Nigerians to withdraw.

As the Western model of development seems to be an unattainable ideal,⁵ Western development strategies and standards have lost their attraction among the political and administrative elites, which, observing the many development failures, adopt more “modest” ambitions which are subsumed in the concept of emergence. The success of emergence is also based on the sharing of some similarities (colonial domination, economic delinkage, population explosion, poverty, etc.) with the countries that are described as emerging, in particular the Asian tigers, which are now presented as successes in “escaping from underdevelopment”. The spread of the concept of emergence also seems to close the chapter of the fight against poverty, which was the key objective of public actions during the 2000s, following the socioeconomic disasters caused by the structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and the 1990s (Bartoli 1999, Coussy 1999, Illich 1997).

2. The emergence of emergence. Breaks and continuities in the debates on the XXX duality/dichotomy “underdevelopment – development”

If the birth of the concept of emergence has to be located in the discussions on the transformation of countries which had long been labelled with the disparate and highly restrictive categories of “developing countries”, “xxx”, “third world”, “least developed countries”, “new industrialized countries”, “dominated countries”, “countries of the South”, “middle-income countries”, etc., the 1980s cannot be avoided. Most writers (Nicet-Chenaf and Rougier 2009, Sgard 2008, Jaffrolot 2008b) select this period in dating the entry of the concept of emergence into thinking, approaches and writings on the XXX duality/dichotomy “underdevelopment – development”, which, since the 1960s, have polarized theoretical output in the social sciences of development. This period corresponds to the rise of a category of countries which harness the dynamics of globalization to speed up structural changes in their economic and social foundations and thus achieve spectacular growth rates, in particular China, enabling them to stimulate large-scale economic, social, political and institutional changes.

The economic and social success of these countries showed the threadbare nature of the extensive range of terms used hitherto to describe the highly disparate bloc of countries considered to be developing vis-à-vis the single Western model postulated as a reference and a goal to be reached. The term originated in the offices of American investment banks which were trying to talk up the growth potential of the high-yield financial markets of certain developing countries to their clients. Emergence is in a way an analytical and statistical category created by investors in relation to the development of stock markets in the countries of the South. It is used to designate countries which are notable for significant growth in per capita income, and hence their share in global income is rising sharply. At the same time, they are rapidly becoming integrated in the world economy in the spheres of trade (by developing their export sectors) and finance (by opening their financial markets to foreign capital).

Before spreading into the field of development, emergence was much used by economists, who claim to have invented the concept. They suggest a simplistic definition: “An emerging country is one whose GDP per capita is lower than that of the developed countries, but one which is experiencing rapid economic growth, and where the standard of living and economic structures are converging towards those of the developed countries” (Piveteau and Rougier, 2010). Economic, or econometric, criteria were given priority in the initial approaches to emergence, hence the vague and relative nature of the definitions, which assign no absolute content to the concept of emergence, but link it to the GDP of the developed countries and to convergence towards their economic structures.

⁵ Notwithstanding President Leopold Senghor’s promise, Dakar did not resemble Paris in 2000.

The rise of this concept is therefore indissociable from globalization and the paths followed by a limited number of countries (China, Brazil, South Korea, etc.) which have been able to exploit the boom in trade to thoroughly transform the shape of their economies and their societies. The primacy of the economic dimension in the initial definitions of emergence is far from indicating consensus in the approaches. On the contrary - there is no single definition of emergence. A range of definitions depending on the development agencies and the theoretical references of the authors can be reviewed to illustrate the multiplicity of approaches. In the 1980s, the expression “emerging countries” made it possible to categorize countries and thus to separate those with high growth, low debt and business environments conducive to foreign investment from those facing short-term and structural constraints which prevented them from combining the three conditions enjoyed by emergence’s winners.

Today, defining an emerging country is not easy. The criteria are contingent and variable depending on the institution concerned. We could have referred to the lists of countries drawn up by the international agencies (World Bank, IMF, OECD), the financial organizations (Goldman Sachs) or groups of experts (Boston Consulting Group, Standard and Poor’s, Ernst and Young) to outline this category of countries. But since the 1980s there has been constant proliferation and revision of the lists of emerging countries (each international agency has its own list) without any real possibility of matching them up – except for the perennial Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) – or identifying genuinely shared criteria used in their preparation. These lists mix large and small countries (in terms of size and population), rentier and oil-producing countries and countries with a greater or lesser degree of integration in world trade.

The wide range of definitions and categories of emergence is more an indication of the complexity and difficulty of correctly gauging a country’s level of advancement, or simply its development. It could be interpreted as the refusal to allow certain countries which formerly lagged behind in the field of technology, science and the economy to join the closed circle of the Western Powers. The recent attempts by the major emerging countries to group together, to adopt economic intervention tools like those of the World Bank, point to an unmistakable desire on the part of these countries to put an end to Western supremacy and confirm the shift in the balance of power between North and South.

Above and beyond often vague definitions, the question is as follows: is emergence a process which opens up the path to development? In other words, is emergence a stage in economic development which is similar to the concepts of economic take-off or convergence which were to be found in the economic theories explaining XXX development in the years 1960-1970? We must ask what is the relevance of this concept in the light of the processes which explain XXX development (Goussault and Guichaoua, 1997). Is it simply a concept which allows us to prepare a rating that helps international investors in their choices, or is emergence a political construct used by the leaders of developing countries in their economic reports, or is it a concept which allows us to understand paths of development, and which can be elaborated on so as to understand its replicable features?

The need to implement policies designed to ensure emergence arose at the time when NEPAD – whose priority for infrastructure has been taken up by these policies – lost its popularity. It is interesting to reflect on the low level of interest raised by NEPAD – despite being endorsed by African cooperation forums (ECOWAS, CAEC, African Union, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, etc.) in international financial agencies (the World Bank – IMF tandem) and Western countries. NEPAD is facing substantial funding problems. The rare lenders which have undertaken to fund some aspects of NEPAD are African development banks (African Development Bank, regional and subregional banks). Like the plans for emergence, NEPAD assigned priority to the development of infrastructure which would facilitate stepped-up African integration. Just as the lenders displayed a lack of enthusiasm towards NEPAD, so they have shown a real keenness to become involved in funding the various areas outlined in the plans for emergence. The commitments

entered into by the lenders, both private and public, when Senegal appeared before the Paris Consultative Group, clearly show their ambivalence, not to say double-dealing.

3. The *Plan Sénégal Émergent* : the ambitions and the limits of a new socioeconomic and political system of reference

Despite the inability of public policies implemented since independence to overcome the many problems of development, the political elites in Senegal have decided, without even carrying out a review of the five decades of development, to adopt a new model of development in order to bring the country into the category of emerging countries within a few years. This strategy, underpinned by the *Plan Sénégal Émergent*, has in fact become the system of reference supporting economic and social policy in the medium and long term. It should be stressed that the decade 2000-2010 witnessed the adoption of a number of documents focused on very modest poverty reduction objectives under the auspices of IMF and the World Bank, in particular after the disasters caused by the austerity programmes (Dezalay and Garth, 1998). The poverty reduction strategy documents 1 and 2 were criticized in particular for their lack of ambition even while addressing a large-scale social problem. Poverty expanded following the succession of structural adjustment plans which have been adopted since the end of the 1990s.

Following the country's second change of government, in which Macky Sall was elected, he quickly became the President of emergence. At the time when he came to power, his manifesto was full of references to emergence as a path to be taken to stimulate a new economic process.⁶ Hence it is not surprising that once he held the reins of government, he did his utmost to spread this concept and place it at the heart of the political agenda and policy papers. Although he helped to popularize this term, President Sall could not be said to have invented it. The need to achieve emergence was affirmed with emphasis in the *Stratégie Nationale de Développement Économique et Social pour la période 2013-2017* (national strategy for economic social development for the period 2013-2017)(SNDES), which was declared to be an agreed framework for the coordination of government activities over that period. The drafting of this strategy was started and finalized under President Wade. The new authorities capitalized on SNDES and its counterpart, the *Stratégie de Croissance Accélérée* (SCA), in order to effect the switch to emergence.

We can go back even further to find the first references to emergence. As early as 1988, this term was uttered by the then Prime Minister, Mamadou Lamine Loum, in his general policy statement. The target for emergence was set at 2010 thanks to the implementation of an industrial strategy, which at least in theory was to ensure that the conditions for the country's economic emergence were met. As for most government programmes, the goals are ambitious, the strategy clearly defined and the plan impressive, at least on paper, but every time implementation was the problem. Both under Abdou Diouf and under Wade, the race to emergence barely happened, as the authorities failed to effect the vital changes in the governance of public resources or to achieve the levels of performance in agriculture, industry and infrastructure which would enable Senegal to lay claim to emergence.

Even if the previous governments had appropriated the concept of emergence, which has become popular internationally as a result of the tremendous development achieved by the countries dubbed emerging, it was only with the coming to power of Macky Sall that emergence became the benchmark concept in Senegal, though no one knows exactly where he acquired this fixation, this obsession with emergence. Some columnists in the Dakar press have pointed out that during one of his visits to Gabon he heard about the *Plan Gabon Émergent*, and wanted to take the same initiative in Senegal, incidentally drawing on the Gabonese document, hence the similarities between the two

⁶ *Yonou yokouté* – a Wolof expression meaning literally path to grow, path to progress.

plans. Others say that during a visit to Morocco, President Sall, marvelling at the country's performance in the field of infrastructure in particular, began to display a liking for emergence. His interest was subsequently boosted as a result of advice from the Disso group, which contributed to the drafting of the *Plan Sénégal Émergent* and facilitated contacts with the consulting firm McKinsey, which had originated the Plan.

Other elements can be highlighted in order to understand the ubiquity of emergence in today's pronouncements by the State. It should be emphasized that under the Wade presidency, Senegal took some important diplomatic decisions which have brought it much closer to the emerging countries, particularly China and Brazil. Their economic success has exerted a fascination for the authorities in Senegal, who may therefore find the experience of these countries, the path they have taken and their strategies a much greater inspiration for Senegal than the developed countries' model, since Senegal displays more situations of convergence with these two leaders in the field of convergence in terms of structural and short-term constraints in achieving sufficiently high growth rates and thereby responding to needs in terms of infrastructure to be built, social programmes to be funded and wealth to be distributed.

Macky Sall was elected in a tense social situation. Social problems (large-scale unemployment, the scale of difficulties in the education, health, housing, agriculture, fisheries and transport sectors and in the environment, and so on) worsened during the last years of Wade's rule. They also go a long way towards explaining the frustration and disillusionment of the people of Senegal towards their government. As soon as he took office, Macky Sall decided to place emergence at the heart of his plans. During his first months in power, it was the concept of *Yonou yokouté*, the key slogan of his campaign, which was most used. But very quickly, emergence replaced it,⁷ especially when the new government decided to adopt the *Plan Sénégal Émergent*, the preparation of which was entrusted to the international consulting firm McKinsey, supervised by a group of expatriate Senegalese (in the form of a group known as Disso⁸) and by government experts.

The genesis of the Plan and the participants in its design offer indications as to one of its weak points. In contrast to other policy documents like the PRSDs, which were drawn up using a participatory approach with the widest possible involvement (professional organizations, employers, civil society, the State, trade unions, and so on) and on the basis of priorities and strategies identified by representative stakeholders and drawing on expertise in the country, the Plan made use of outsourcing and externalization of the drafting process. Questions may be asked about the scope of a document which is supposed to serve as a reference base for the next 30 years but which has been drawn up without the involvement of those concerned with its implementation. It has to be said that this approach has prevailed in most other African countries which have adopted plans for emergence. The World Bank has given much encouragement to this systematic use of the expertise of consultants in the drafting of government policies in African countries. Whatever the quality of the document produced and the relevance of the proposed guidance, the Plan suffers from the congenital defect that it is the product of a consulting firm and has not undergone a process of confirmation of its conclusions along the lines of previous practice, at least for policy documents adopted in recent years (the PRSDs, the SNDES, the SCA, and so on).⁹

⁷ Emergence, as a public policy, is clearly dated, but certain ideas contained in the *Plan Sénégal Émergent*, especially the emphasis on infrastructure, may be found in Macky Sall's election manifesto. However, the concept was not given prominence, as it has been since *Yonou yokouté* was dropped in favour of the Plan.

⁸ The role of this grouping within this club and the status of its members (who included the then Minister of the Economy and Finance, Amadou Kane) prompted controversy, which grew in particular after the resignation (or sacking?) of Moubarack Lo from his post as deputy private secretary to the President. As the author of *Le Sénégal émergent: agenda pour le futur*, Lo declared himself to be the leading light of emergence in Senegal, citing the creation of the Indicateur Synthétique de l'Émergence Économique (synthetic indicator of economic emergence) (ISEME).

⁹ For example, the PRSDs were drawn up using an approach which involved civil society and assigned a central role to local expertise in the diagnosis of poverty and the evaluation of programmes. For each of the two PRSDs applied in

Once finalized, the Plan was adopted by the government. The members of civil society did not engage in the expected critical review, perhaps because they endorsed the political and philosophical scope of the document. The Plan did not provoke a nationwide debate on the type of society it advocates, the governance model it proposes, the economic system to be favoured, the priorities to be adopted in order to move towards emergence. Few critical voices were raised concerning the meeting of social needs, or especially concerning the type of country to which the Plan should lead: a frenzied march towards a neoliberal economy based on the shrinking of the State and the privatization of broad sectors of activity? A society with a range of State regulatory machinery, working towards a redistribution of public resources? In order to find resources to fund it (for the period 2014-2018, estimated requirements stand at CFAF 9,685.6 billion), the government presented the Plan to the lenders when it appeared before the Paris Consultative Group on 24 and 25 February 2014, accompanied by deafening media hype.

The goal of the Plan is that in 2035 Senegal will be a society with “a competitive economy supported by strong growth whose benefits are more widely distributed, throughout the country; an educated, well-trained population which is engaged in the local and national community, a better quality of life; peace stability and democracy; good governance and dynamic, balanced development” (Senegal, 2013: 1).

The Plan’s strategy is built around three pillars:

- Structural transformation of the economy and growth through the development of agriculture, fisheries and the agro-food industry, the enhancement of food security, the boosting of the rural economy and the voluntary sector, the promotion of social housing, etc.;
- Human capital, social welfare and sustainable development, promotion of education, health and nutrition; improvement of the environment; protection of vulnerable groups;
- Governance, institutions, peace and security: promotion of human rights, the rule of law and justice, decentralization and promotion of grassroots development.

Implementation is centred on the *Plan d’Actions Prioritaires* (priority action plan), and the machinery involved in its implementation, follow-up and evaluation was, initially, the Presidential Orientation Council, the National Guidance Committee and the Parliamentary Follow-up Commission. Subsequently, following a meeting of the Council of Ministers on Thursday 13 March 2014, a *Bureau Opérationnel de Suivi du Plan Sénégal Émergent* (operational bureau for the follow-up of the Plan) was set up to oversee the implementation of the Plan. The first head of the Bureau was subsequently appointed as Prime Minister.¹⁰

With the Plan, the government is seeking a metamorphosis in Senegal in the economic, social, institutional and political fields. But a legitimate question in the light of the 50 years of development in the country is how far the ambitious objectives and the range of pious hopes set out will be realized. A subsequent question would be how a country still battling with the basic problems of underdevelopment can extract itself from such a situation and achieve the miracles promised in the Plan.

Senegal, the process consisted of several stages which took over a year: workshops (regional and national), establishment of a permanent secretariat and thematic groups, drafting of a provisional document, amendments and adjustments, confirmation by IMF and the World Bank.

¹⁰ This was Mohammed Boun Abdallah Dione. He was for many years an official in the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

The Plan suffers from a number of conceptual, operational and methodological weaknesses which could hinder its implementation. Another limit is theoretical in nature. It is related to the inadequate conceptualization of emergence and an insufficient description of its content, history and path. One might even regret the disappearance of *Yonou yokouté*, a concept tested during the election campaign, which at least had the advantage of indicating a path and a methodology whose name in Wolof facilitated understanding and engagement by the population. The Plan, not having been presented for the judgment of the population, will always suffer from this weakness. A simple growth rate is used for emergence to be declared, without any rigorous examination as to the economic framework or the structures which are supposed to underpin the doubling of the growth rate and the social, cultural and institutional changes which it should engender. Another limit is linked to the remoteness of the target date of 2035 for emergence (in Côte d'Ivoire, the date is set at 2020), whereas shifts in the governance of public resources, the removal of structural and short-term obstacles and the reorientation of socioeconomic priorities would be likely to have an impact on the country's performance. What is more, the Plan is not the government's only plan. It takes its place in the context of the third phase of the decentralization programme, the creation of development poles and policies for the promotion of social welfare (universal medical coverage, family allowances, and so on) as well as the *Programme d'Urgence pour le Développement Communautaire* (emergency programme for community development)(PUDC). Thus there are legitimate questions concerning the links between these different plans, and their coordination.

If we look at the projects presented for funding when Senegal appeared before the Paris Consultative Group, we can see that the Plan promotes a "concrete mixer" approach with its prioritization of infrastructure. It is true that Senegal, like many other African countries, suffers from a glaring shortage of communication infrastructure and major and infrastructural investment. One may question the relevance of these choices bearing in mind that most of the obstacles to be overcome to place the country on the path of emergence are of a social or cultural nature: a culture of discipline and good organization, a new civic awareness, growth in human capital, educated and skilled human resources, an exemplary political elite, and so on. The need to invest and to introduce reforms in the vital sectors of education, health or housing is emphasized in the Plan, but it restricts itself to a financial evaluation of the new universities to be built, the hospitals to be set up and equipped, the schools to be constructed. There is no examination of the shifts which are needed, for example, to create a viable, effective and efficient education system to support the process of emergence. How, specifically, to build a knowledge-based society for an emerging Senegal?

The implementation of the Plan demands huge financial resources, whose mobilization will depend on public funds and foreign capital. The recent initiatives of the authorities to find sources of funds for priority projects under the Plan reflect this outward-looking approach. Does this not amount to perpetuation of the recourse to debt, which continues to cripple the country's development? The Plan seeks to enhance the country's integration in the flows of globalization, but as a poor, dominated nation, ill equipped to benefit from globalization's advantages. These advantages are minimal for a country which is not an exporter of goods and services or a financial centre. The countries which have joined the emerging group have been able to count on the advantages of exporting manufactured goods (China, which has become the world's workshop) or high-value-added goods (Brazil) and the financialization of the economy to boost their approach towards emergence. At the same time this demonstrates its fragility. From this viewpoint, the Plan is no more than a "tropicalized" and updated version of the old neoliberal formulas which have hitherto underpinned public policies. This weakness is increased by the fact that the Plan was drafted by a consulting firm which tends to follow an approach based on "ready to use" policies, cutting and pasting among the plans of the different countries which have sought their expertise. These formulas involve creating a sufficiently attractive environment for foreign corporations in particular (at the expense of social welfare systems and local companies?), making systematic use of public-private partnerships (a way of subsidizing private companies with public money?) and weakening the State.

Specialists in development have been shouting themselves hoarse for five decades, repeating that Senegal will be saved economically and socially through the emergence of a broad fabric of small and medium-sized enterprises, at the urban and rural level, diversified, competitive and linked to a domestic market, and not through fanatical support for exports. One of the key conditions for overthrowing the current economic system will be to break with the excessively outward-looking character of modes of consumption, particularly on the part of well-off urban classes and administrative, political and religious elites. The country has little to gain in this race to export advocated by the Plan, which is by no means focused on endogenous dynamics that are capable of supporting the processes that bring the majority of the population out of poverty.

Conclusion

In Senegal, emergence has become a marketing concept, a political slogan and a key idea in governmental phrase-making. It has succeeded in focusing the attention of the political elites. Macky Sall, who seeks to present himself as the “President of emergence”, has clearly chosen to brand his term of office with this concept. Although the concept had already featured in statements by the administration since the 1990s, it is his government which, using the media hype around the *Plan Sénégal Émergent*, has managed to make emergence a key concept in current institutional language.

We have outlined the origins of this concept, and the different meanings that have been attributed to it. After describing the paths taken as it evolved, we performed a critical reading of the *Plan Sénégal Émergent* in the light of past and current debates in the sociology of development. To place it in this debate, and given the content attributed to the process of emergence, emergence seems to correspond to take-off in Rostow’s theory on the stages of economic growth (1963). This is a period in which the scale of productive economic activity reaches a critical level and produces qualitative changes which lead to a massive and progressive structural transformation of the economy and society.

The Plan seeks to stimulate social changes on the basis of stronger economic growth through enhanced integration in the global market. Understood in this way, emergence is more a “technical formula” than truly an alternative model of development. It forms part of a neoliberal view of African societies and falls within the continuum of approaches to development policies encountered to date. The concept does not possess a theoretical fecundity which is capable of placing it as an alternative approach or model in the field of the social sciences of development. In fact it merely allows a refocusing of the reference models in the drawing up of development policies. Where the Western model ruled supreme over four decades in terms of the standard for measuring development, with the success of the concept of emergence, it is countries like China, Brazil or South Africa which serve as new models and mirrors for today’s political elites. From this viewpoint, emergence simply means the insertion of an intermediate category in the path towards development. Emergence is not a new paradigm or a new development strategy. It merely uses a marketing approach to insert cosmetic changes in the public policies of the countries dubbed “underdeveloped”.