

Senegal: The Establishment of a Regional Environmental Trailblazer. A constructivist approach to the factors behind the State of Senegal's climate change policies.

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Abstract

The study of International Relations has historically paid little attention to how states in the Global South use environmental policies to assert their leadership regionally and globally. My thesis addresses this lack by examining the intricacies of Senegal's longstanding environmental policy history - including its role in the pan-African Great Green Wall project - as a way of revealing those ideas that determined the interest formation process of Senegal's actions towards climate breakdown. In pursuit of this I used primary source material, including government policies and other communications, as well as secondary sources. International Relations theory was additionally applied to the study with the conclusion that a constructivist approach was the most appropriate theoretical approach. My findings led me to conclude that Senegal sees itself as a trailblazer in environmental change and stability in the region, and that this is an important way for the state to maintain the relative peace of the post-colonial era. The study aims to contribute to the discourse on International Relations in an African context and hopes to add to an understanding of the field as it applies to the Global South.

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Introduction

In 2018 Senegal hosted a celebration of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought under the theme ‘Land is valuable: Invest in it’ in the Mbao Forest, which is known as the ‘lung of Dakar.’¹ This event did not only signify Senegal’s desire to mobilise against the effects of climate breakdown² but also acted as a way of highlighting the state’s prioritising of the need for sustainable forest management and restoration. In the same year Senegal hosted the 21st Session of the United Nations Food and Agriculture African Forestry and Wildlife Commission, under the theme ‘Restoring forests, landscapes and wildlife resources: Unleashing opportunities for sustainable development in Africa.’ This was another powerful signal of the African country’s inclusion in the international community, whilst formulating its own environmental identity and taking a leading role on the continent and in the region. Certainly, Senegal is a stable country in an unsettled region and, in this, it stands out. The West African region has historically faced numerous disruptive events including colonialism, famine, civil wars, and inter-state conflict, yet Senegal has always maintained a level of peace. However, by not paying high-level attention to the environment – including the impact on the land – Senegal’s long-held stability will be threatened.

Within International Relations (IR) very little attention has been given to Senegal as being a trailblazer in its environmental policy. It is touched upon within scientific communities, but there is no debate on Senegal’s status as a leader in the region, in terms of its environmental policies. More generally, Africa is left out of positive discussions in the Western academic world. An applicable understanding of the West for the purpose of this thesis would be defined broadly as ‘to refer to a heritage of social norms, ethical values, traditional customs, belief systems, political systems, and specific artefacts and technologies that have some origin or association with Europe.’³ Scholars within Environmental Studies have examined Senegal since the 1990s, among them Rodney R. White who argues that for solutions to environmental issues to be implemented, an understanding of transcending of national boundaries needs to exist, and for the appropriate management of different ecologies, an extensive continued

¹ “Des experts discutent des Forêts, des paysages et de la faune sauvage,” Le Ministère de l’Environnement et du Développement durable, accessed 3 May 2020, <http://www.environnement.gouv.sn/lesactualites/21eme-session-de-la-commission-des-forêts-et-de-la-faune-sauvage-pour-l’afrique>.

² At certain points in this paper I choose to use the term ‘climate breakdown’ (coined by George Monbiot in 2013) as opposed to ‘climate change’ because along with many scientists, researchers and activists, I believe the term ‘climate change’ to be too neutral. The climate is breaking down – and these changes are so severe that a stronger language is needed to explain what is occurring.

³ ‘Western Culture,’ Science Daily, accessed 10 June 2020, https://www.sciencedaily.com/terms/western_culture.htm.

international co-operation is needed.⁴ One of these projects based on international co-operation is the Great Green Wall (GGW) which will provide one of two case studies in this paper. White's understanding of environmental solutions can be taken further with the GGW which is underscored by a Pan-African vision that is influenced by post-colonial ideas.

White's paper is important as Senegal, like many other states on the continent, does not fall into Western worldviews on how a state organises itself. Academic debates on the topics discussed when attempting to analyse why Senegal has chosen the path it has are visible but need to be developed.

Approaches that are specific to African IR are therefore important so as to yield adequate insights and conclusions. Rationalist approaches to IR are assumed to be impartial and universal. However, this demands further scrutiny, as rationalists too base their interpretations on a world that is subjective, and socially constructed. This thesis recognises this and debates why this is so. Internal state dynamics such as ideas, identity, values, and the nature of the state itself are identified in this thesis as a way to comprehend the whys and hows of African IR.

In this particular context the aim is to capture the intricacies of Senegal's long environmental policy history. This will also reveal what ideas determined the interest formation process of Senegal's actions towards climate breakdown. Ronald Chipaike & Matarutse H Knowledge argue this point and use a quote by Mo Ibrahim to facilitate it: 'All we hear about Africa in the West is Darfur, Zimbabwe, Congo, Somalia, as if that is all there is. Yet there are 53 countries in Africa, and many of them are doing well'. Kevin C. Dunn in *Africa's Challenge to International Relations* further justifies this point by stating that the assumption that Africa does not have 'meaningful politics ... has marginalised the continent on the world's political stage.'⁵

Providing a starting point for the discussion on African IR is Jason Warner's doctoral dissertation on how African international organisations are utilised for national security interests. Warner argues that African IR cannot be 'pigeonholed' into one theoretical paradigm. Warner's thesis makes the point that the variations of IR theory are often referenced and that 'they are invoked to show the diversity of actions that characterise African state behaviour, rather than to militate for the appropriateness of just one paradigm's exclusive applicability,

⁴ Rodney R White, "Environmental Management and National Sovereignty: Some Issues from Senegal," *International Journal*, 45, no 1 (1990) 106–137.

⁵ Kevin C. Dunn, "Introduction: Africa and International Relations Theory," in *Africa's Challenge to International Relations*, edited by Kevin C. Dunn & Timothy M. Shaw (London: Palgrave, 2001).

even while a renewed focus on realism is an undergirding theme.’⁶ A lack of debate on why this is the case ensues and Warner instead assumes that African IR simply cannot be categorised. Like Warner, Sophie Harman and William Brown argue that indeed African IR is ‘at the core of empirical understandings of international relations,’ but where they differ from Warner is their acknowledgement of how it exists in the ‘periphery of theoretical insight.’ What this means is that these topics within African IR cannot be easily pigeonholed *because* Western insight does not cater to their nuances. Harman and Brown go on to contend that, although this is the case, it does not mean a ‘wholesale rewriting of contemporary international thought’ needs to occur, ‘but does present a challenge to how we use and adapt such theories, and judge their relevance and applicability.’⁷ John. F Clark argues that realism does hold up when discussing African IR in that, unlike many other approaches, it does not have its roots ‘exclusively in Western history, experience, or intellectual discourse.’⁸ Paradoxically, Dunn formulates an argument on why realism fails to elaborate on Africa and argues that its focus on ‘great powers’ leaves no space for analysis of the Global South.⁹ Patrick Chabal’s *The Politics of Suffering and Smiling*, maintains that African IR must be discussed with a focus on social constructs as a determining factor. What he does contend, in light of the previous two scholars mentioned above, is that using a theoretical screen can superficially determine how we ask the questions we do and why we get the answers to those questions. Chabal points out that these biases need to be addressed and that doing so can help to find ‘as sharp an understanding of local realities as can be mustered’.¹⁰

Rajen Harshé reasons that discussions on Africa’s politics, economy and history cannot be undertaken without accounting for the period of ‘anti-colonial and post-colonial realities’ that ‘need to be observed and analysed in continuum.’¹¹ Chabal looks at the other side of this argument noting colonialism in terms of its theoretical basis, and stating that it is not as simple as just racism blinding those in the West but instead ‘it is the very theory they deploy to

⁶ Jason Warner, ‘Multilateral Machinations: The Strategic Utility of African International Organizations in the Pursuit of National Security Interests in West Africa and the Greater Horn (Doctoral Dissertation African, Cambridge 2016), 11.

⁷ Sophie Harman & William Brown, “In from the margins? The changing place of Africa in International Relations,” *International Affairs* 89, No. 1 (January 2013), pp. 69-87.

⁸ John. F Clark, “Realism, Neo-Realism and Africa’s International Relations in the Post Cold War Era,” in *Africa’s Challenge to International Relations*, edited by Kevin C. Dunn & Timothy M. Shaw (London: Palgrave, 2001).

⁹ Kevin C. Dunn, “Introduction: Africa and International Relations Theory,” 2.

¹⁰ Chabal, 172.

¹¹ Rajen Harshé, *Africa in World Affairs*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2019)

conceptualise society and politics.’¹² Both authors pay particular attention to the Western gaze. Chabal contends that it relies on an oversimplification of the continent while Harshé understands it to be an affirmation of Western superiority that absolves it from its existential and epistemological violence against Africa. Finally, where both of these authors categorically agree is in the need to address the assumed universality of Western ideas and perceptions that dominate IR discourse. Since the 1990s the state of play when it comes to the Global South’s role within the international system - and how this relates to global climate breakdown - is often scrutinised through the lens of a lack of commitment towards the norms in place. International Politics professor Harald Fuhr argues that the conventional narrative often posited by postcolonial theorists regarding the Global North being responsible for global warming and therefore the global South needn’t adhere to norms, is problematic. He states that allowing the South to wait and ‘delay reduction efforts until it has achieved higher levels of development, is dangerously overstated’ and that ‘high carbon South’ states are protected from changing their strategy whilst ‘low-carbon South’ will feel the adverse effects exponentially.¹³ Paradoxically, authors Raoni Rajão and Tiago Duarte in their journal article *Performing postcolonial identities at the United Nations’ climate negotiations* argue that this narrative is maintained by those within the Global North. They maintain that, when it comes to the international climate change negotiating process, the North is seen as a ‘promoter of a homogenising myth’ that paints the Global South with a single brush under the term ‘developing nations’. This misrepresentation highlights and emphasises these states’ need for financial and economic assistance and, as a result, helps to further establish a distinctive identity between the South and the North. This myth has thus been ‘instrumentalised by the North to legitimise the ongoing economic and cultural dominance of the South’. Rajão and Duarte go on to argue that it is because of this that ‘postcolonial scholars have striven to expose the fallacies of this Northern myth in order to promote the emancipation and self-determination of the global South.’¹⁴ Rajão and Duarte mobilising of the politics of climate change negotiations resonate with the central arguments of DeLoughrey, Didur, and Carrigan’s *Global Ecologies and the Environmental Humanities* which argues that ‘the history of globalisation and imperialism is integral to understanding

¹² Chabal, 18.

¹³ Harald Fuhr, “The Global South’s contribution to the climate crisis – and its potential solutions,” 20 June 2019, <https://oecd-development-matters.org/2019/06/20/the-global-souths-contribution-to-the-climate-crisis-and-its-potential-solutions/>.

¹⁴ Raoni Rajão & Tiago Duarte, “Performing postcolonial identities at the United Nations’ climate negotiations,” *Postcolonial Studies* 21, no.3 (2018) 364-378, there 365.

contemporary environmental issues', and that 'identifying possibilities for imaginative recuperation that are compatible with anticolonial politics'.¹⁵

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. The first objective is to add to the growing discussions regarding African IR. This will be facilitated by moving away from the dominant approaches within IR and working to display post-colonial and Pan-African worldviews. Additionally, as rationalist avenues reduce a state's capability to a series of assumptions, a constructivist approach will be argued to be the most valuable when addressing the statement of this thesis. Senegal is a state which exists in Africa and thus can have the Western narratives of state attached to it, yet it continues to create its own identity and uses that to stress its success as a state. Thus, applying a universal framework, which is framed by a Western worldview, would negate the intricacies of the State of Senegal including its history, its identity and what motivates it to do what it does. What this highlights are the constructivist's interest 'in ideas as constitutive forces in history, forces that give meaning to historical processes forces that warrant, justify, and license certain forms of action'.¹⁶

The second objective of this thesis is to determine if Senegal is establishing itself as an environmental trailblazer in Africa. This will necessitate shedding light on crucial developments in its environmental policy and projects. The aim is thus to give insight into these so to fill a research gap at a time when the international community looks to the West for solutions to the climate emergency, while the (already in part successful) initiatives of the Pan-African community are unseen or not considered when global solutions are sought. It also aims to emphasise that painting Africa with a single brush is based on generalisations in the European mind, ones that rely on Western supremacy, are ill informed and should be tackled.

The discussion on the state of play above helps us understand where to place Senegal in the greater discussion. The main question that will guide this thesis is: how Senegal's tradition of peace has shaped its environmental policy. Analysis of Senegal's foreign policy by Peter J Schraeder and Nefertiti Gaye point out that traditional explanations comprised 'at best, exaggerations, and at worst, mere caricatures of more complex and dynamic foreign policy processes'.¹⁷ Indeed this thesis is not an assessment of Senegal's foreign policy but this notion

¹⁵ Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Jill Didur, and Anthony Carrigan, "Introduction A Postcolonial Environmental Humanities" in *Global Ecologies and the Environmental Humanities*, edited Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Jill Didur, and Anthony Carrigan, (Oxon: Routledge, 2015).

¹⁶ Christian Reus-Smit, Reading History Through Constructivist Eyes, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 37(2008)2, 395 – 414, there 398.

¹⁷ Peter J Schraeder and Nefertiti Gaye, "Senegal's Foreign Policy: Challenges of Democratization and Marginalization" *African Affairs* 96, No. 385 (Oct., 1997), pp. 485-508, there 486.

seems to be a key component to what comprises' Senegal's foreign policy. Schraeder and Gaye give weight to Senegal's democratic history and how it has shaped it as a state. Adding to this debate is Łukasz Jakubiak who works on a comparative analysis of two Francophone countries - Senegal and The Ivory Coast. Jakubiak argues that although Senegal is ranked well on the Fragile States Index 2015, it still faces many economic and demographic problems.¹⁸

The undertaking of this paper is relevant to the academic discussion for various reasons. Firstly, Africa is often diminished within mainstream IR circles or, at the very least, is painted with a one-dimensional brush. Secondly, the paper will, through an examination of its environmental policies and with the GGW as a case study, illuminate Senegal's exceptionalism that stems from its peaceful transition from colonialism as well as a history of peaceful political practices which have all abetted its state identity.¹⁹ Indeed, as this paper will show, Senegal is, through its actions, amplifying itself on the regional and global stage as a leader in environmental capability and impact, in a context in which it does not have material capabilities to support its state power. Furthermore, although post-colonial practices play a part in Senegal's formation progress, it has not fallen victim to the common "development over any reform" trope that is often determined by the post-colonial gaze. Nevertheless, Senegal is using its post-colonial identity in other ways. In this it also seeks to change international norms.

This thesis will use primary source analysis—press releases from the Senegalese government as well as policy papers. Many of these papers were in French so an extensive level of research was required. It will also use secondary sources as well as International Relations theory. As is noted in an earlier paragraph, constructivism will guide the paper. These methods and approaches will attempt to tie together a deeper understanding of environmental governance and the state of Senegal. It will also aim to amplify the African voice and facilitate further debate. The paper will not be chronological but will highlight the important juncture of the creation of the Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) in 1973 which reinforces the fact that Senegal had a language for the environment before most countries of the Global North did. It will also address Senegal's very clear environmental policy which it can use to prove that it has an effective government structure in place.

¹⁸ Łukasz Jakubiak, "The Systems of Government of Senegal and Ivory Coast: Comparative Analysis," *Politeja* 42, AFRICAN STUDIES (2016), pp. 247-262.

¹⁹ Michael C. Lambert, "Reflections on Senegalese Youth Political Engagement, 1988–2012," *Africa Today* 63, No. 2 (2016), pp. 33-51.

In approaching the research question, the theoretical framework has to be developed. Chapter one will then answer why this framework is appropriate and why mainstream approaches are not - and also establish where it fits within the broader scope of African IR. The second chapter relies on a level of analysis approach to Senegal and what it is comprised of as a state. It will be divided into four areas: the level of individual, with reference to some of its most prominent leaders; the level of identity, ideas, the state and lastly the level of the international system. Chapter Three is a case study which addresses Senegal's environmentalism, and the different kinds of measures it has taken to protect both its society and its ecology. The fourth and final chapter is the second case study that looks at the Great Green Wall (GGW) which has been chosen as it encapsulates everything Pan-Africanism intends, and also tell us what the identity of the state of Senegal stands for. The GGW provides an African-centred, transnational, multi-pronged initiative that improves lives while significantly impacting the effects of climate breakdown globally. The conclusion will be a constructivist- framed summary of the findings as well as an answer to the questions posed. It will also provide a brief reflection on this paper.

1 – Theorising Environmental Policy in Senegal: A Subaltern Constructivist Environment

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will explain the appropriateness of a constructivist approach when considering the paper's research question. An exploration of the contribution that rationalist theories have made regarding global climate change, as well as any misgivings about these theories, will be a necessary provision of the investigation into appropriate theories.²⁰ When examining Senegal as a state a rationalist interpretation is limiting as it has mostly been theorised in the West, meaning it has been formulated by the Eurocentric mind. Senegal has a strong Pan-African and post-colonial identity so applying these limiting frameworks would result in an incorrect conclusion. Indeed, a realist would have a structural explanation on state action whilst a liberalist has an institutional one²¹ – these theories therefore have a number of

²⁰ Urs Luterbacher, *International Relations and Global Climate Change* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001), 43.

²¹ Allen, Michael H, "New Tree, Few Fruit: Constructivism and "African Solutions"." *International Studies Review* 13, no. 4 (2011), 681.

theoretical flaws when explaining the nuances and factors at work in shaping the state of Senegal.

Furthermore, this thesis suggests that Senegal is creating its own identity and establishing itself as a functioning state within the global structure, both regionally and internationally. This continues to be underscored by its post-colonial identity, going hand-in-hand with maintaining a Pan-African collective worldview through environmental structures such as the Great Green Wall (GGW).²² This initiative will be further discussed as a case study in chapter four. This chapter will be broken down into various problems as a critique of rationalist IR theories, after which a constructivist approach for the analysis of Senegal's environmental politics will be developed.

1.2. PROBLEM 1: A limited view of security and the State

A realist theorists' fundamental stance is that international society is anarchical and dominated by states that are individually striving to utilise and maximise their own security and power, mostly through material needs.²³ Neorealists have emerged in the past three decades to further develop the notions of power contained in realist theory. Unlike their realist predecessors, neorealists do argue for cooperation. However this is only on issues regarding the global economy – and the potential of the existence of a single actor with a preponderance of power that can use its power resources to dominate the other states – this is what is referred to as a 'hegemon'.²⁴ In summary then, a neorealist approach to the climate would assume that the 'hegemon' would decide the route of the international response to climate breakdown—and that this response would be driven by a self-centred approach and so would intend to improve the superpower's interest. An example of this would be the United States which pulled out of the Paris Climate Agreement for its own interests. Comparing this to Senegal's prioritising approach to the environment, with concern for city dwellers and indigenous folks, demonstrates the limits of rationalist IR theories when applied to Senegal. In essence, this is a self-interested state approach. The idea of a multi-layered change project that fulfils particular state policies – such as the Great Green Wall (GGW) – would be a challenge within a realist framework.

²² The Great Green Wall takes place primarily in the Sahara and Sahel regions, it is an initiative of the African Union that also involves a set of international partners and funders, including the European Union, Food and Agricultural Organisation of the UN and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. Under the African Union's leadership, countries across the region—from Senegal to Djibouti— have signed up to the initiative. Initially it was just 11 countries, but now more than 20 countries have joined this pan-African movement.

²³ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, (London: Macmillan, 1977)

²⁴ Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton 1984).

This is further supported by the fact that the GGW is intensely optimistic and aims for states to work with their neighbours, not viewing them as the enemy within a zero-sum game. Furthermore, realists have viewed the environment as an asset to be used - whether it is physical territory or the use of strategic materials.

When examining neoliberalism, the fundamental notion that international anarchy determines how a state behaves is again present. The transactional benefits of having climate change policies means that some states have greater motivation than others to do so. This is determined by the 'relative cost of action and inaction and therefore adopt different strategies'.²⁵ Two key neoliberalist thinkers, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, embrace the relational potential of power, in that power can be 'thought of as the ability of an actor to get others to do something they otherwise would not do (and at an acceptable cost to the act).'²⁶ Conversely, although neoliberalists do believe that international anarchy determines how a state will act, and indeed that it is the key actor in the international order, they see the end game as one which is mediated through international institutions based on the notion of cooperation. The use of cooperation through environmental institutions such as United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and its Kyoto Protocol which is based on a transaction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions is an example. However, although these protocols are in place, they do not account for what Senegal is doing on an individual state level. Both neorealism and neoliberalism share an overriding concern with state power and, because of this, lack a foundation to analyse the attempts to mitigate the climate crises in Africa. In addition, both these theories focus on military and economic power as the dominant manifestations of a state's security and power. Thus, although the climate emergency does indeed pose security and economic threats to states, it doesn't account for the distinctive way in which states in the developing world interact with their citizens and the values attached to their identities - and how they fulfil them.

1.3. PROBLEM 2: Western focus

A second point of concern is that rationalist IR is a product of European realities and can consequently hold a bias for the potential for 'sustained and meaningful inter-state cooperation in Africa'; a focus on hegemons or great powers can therefore result in a neglect of important

²⁵ Urs Luterbacher, *International Relations and Global Climate Change* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001).

²⁶ David A Baldwin, "Neoliberalism," in *Power and International Relations: A Conceptual Approach*, (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), 155-72.

dynamics within the global South.²⁷ Rationalist IR theories were developed and researched in the West and are therefore structured around a Western worldview. It is because of this that the social complexities faced by many African countries—both historically and within the present—have been neglected. Rationalist IR theories struggle to account for the persuasive environment policy Senegal pushed forward, decades before it became a priority in the West. These Western-centred theories frequently generalise Africa or paint the continent with a single brush.²⁸ They further neglect to shed light on the peaceful path Senegal has adhered to as a state since its decolonisation.

Indeed, neither neorealism nor neoliberalism account for the nuances within a state—or for questioning why they have made the decisions they have and what led them there. Thus, when it is not an external threat which determines a state's IR decision-making process but is instead domestic—such as the severe drought which the Sahel region of Africa has seen since the 1970s—neither of these theories allows for a proper understanding of a state's actions and the processes behind those actions. They could, in effect, lead to misrepresentations which is a problem for understanding climate breakdown within IR. For example, attempting to understand the meaning behind the 1973 founding of the Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) which saw member countries decide to fight the battle against 'desertification by reducing food insecurity and promoting viable domestic energy strategies'²⁹ would be lost. Both these rationalist schools of thought assume protection from external aggression to be the primary interest of a state—and that this is either achieved through engaging in international cooperation or maximising international power. Once these areas of thought are applied to Africa their state-centric conclusion often leads African states to be viewed as 'failed,' or 'weak,' further leading to the risk of generalisation. Thus 'such portrayals point to an essential epistemological shortcoming of realist and neo-liberal institutionalist approaches which continue to treat the state as the unproblematic starting point of analysis rather than a variable in itself'.³⁰

Therefore, applying a rationalist framework to countries that are creating their own path away from a Western-centric one and are aiming to write their own African environmental governance in IR from an African perspective is inappropriate. Neither of these approaches account for states like Senegal which are motivated via a prioritisation of internal issues over

²⁷ Benedikt Franke, *Security Cooperation in Africa : A Reappraisal*. (FirstForumPress, 2009),15.

²⁸ Patrick Chabal, *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling*, (London/New York 2009),179.

²⁹ Sall, *Climate Change, Adaptation Strategies and Mobility: Evidence from Four Settlements in Senegal*, 5.

³⁰ Franke, *Security Cooperation in Africa : A Reappraisal*, page 18.

external ones, whilst valuing Pan-Africanism. To provide a definition of Pan-Africanism one would underline it as a discourse emerging from the Global South, which offers a counter 'worldview to the dominant hegemonic Eurocentric one. Pan-Africanism recognises, forums and international political economy. defines and interprets the current modern international system as a racially hierarchized, patriarchal, imperial, colonial, heteronormative and capitalist global social order.'³¹ This important value sharing process is not accounted for, or at the very least downplayed, in rationalist approaches.

1.4. Constructivism in the African context

Constructivism emerged after the Cold War as a challenge to the accepted traditional IR theories. The 'modern resurgence of civil society as a social entity with decisive influence on the political transformation of modern polities'³² further influenced the thinking behind this approach. It held that a dominant focus on the state missed the opportunity to address the distinctions between states, such as the agency of individuals.³³ Furthermore, neither concepts nor material objects have any necessary meaning, rather their meanings are constructed through social interaction.³⁴ Hence, unlike traditional IR theories, constructivism is sceptical of a universal reality and is indeed more flexible and allows one to see the world as socially constructed and consisting of multiple identities. It also does not place power within its focal point, unlike rationalist IR theories. This theory allows us to look at how the structure of the international system has come about and thus understand what states believe about climate breakdown in light of past collective experience.³⁵

In this way constructivism is an essential tool when studying African International Relations. Internal dynamics that shape state decision-making can be explored through this theoretical framework, and working with post-colonial theory we can try to understand the complexities of these states within the context of IR. Another important and distinctive example is the 1972 Senegal introduction of the Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du fleuve Sénégal (the OMVS, or Senegal River valley development organisation) which was intended

³¹ Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Pan-Africanism and the International System', in: Tim Murithi, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Africa's International Relations* (New York, 2014), 21-29. There 21.

³² Chabal, *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling*, 9.

³³ Sarina Theys, 'Introducing Constructivism in International Relations Theory,' February 23 2018, <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/02/23/introducing-constructivism-in-international-relations-theory/>.

³⁴ Mingst, *Essentials Of International Relations*, 92.

³⁵ Tim Pfefferle, "Climate Change Politics Through A Constructivist Prism," *E-International Relations*, 18 June 2014, <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/06/18/climate-change-politics-through-a-constructivist-prism/>.

for the coordinated management of the Senegal River basin³⁶, showing that environmental management is no new occurrence. This is not to suggest that states like Senegal aren't concerned with establishing themselves within the dominant international system: however it is how they are doing this that is important. Furthermore, the pursuit of hegemonic power contradicts the Pan-African ideals out of which most African states act.³⁷ The structured aspects of traditional theories fail to capture important African 'realities such as the importance of Pan-African ideology and the emergence of shared norms. As a result, they misinterpret many of the motivations inducing African states to look into each other's' direction and begin to cooperate on increasingly complex matters.'³⁸ Moreover, Senegal has engendered a discourse on environmental governance before the hegemonic forces within the global order—not necessarily because it wanted to but because it needed to. It has also worked in a Pan-African mode, co-operating with other nations within the Sahel, so as to amplify and lead the way on a different approach to Africa's International Relations.

1.5 Conclusion

When taking into account the International Relations of Africa even the word 'theory,' is problematic. In *Africa: Politics of Suffering and Smiling*, Patrick Chabal reiterates the limits of a rationalist theoretical base when studying Africa. Chabal argues that it is a way of explaining things that derive from a Western convention of 'rationality and scientific endeavour.'³⁹ Senegal has a substantial pastoral community demographic, the members of which rely on the land for their survival and in turn contribute to the economic prosperity of the country. With rationalist study being intrinsically self-interested, using it to understand why the Senegalese government is concerned with preserving its environment and protecting its communities would be difficult. As Christian Reus-Smit puts it 'if one sees all human agents as rational egoists (atomistic, self-interested, and strategic), and if one imagines these agents as animated by a universal form of means–ends rationality, then the stuff of history drops out.'⁴⁰ Constructivism is a multi-dimensional approach which helps theorise the complexities of a state like Senegal which is motivated on various levels of practice from its inter-African

³⁶ Sall, *Climate Change, Adaptation Strategies and Mobility: Evidence from Four Settlements in Senegal*, 5.

³⁷ Thomas Kwasi Tieku, 'Theoretical approaches to Africa's international relations', in: Tim Murithi, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Africa's International Relations* (New York, 2014), 11-20.

³⁸ Franke, *Security Cooperation in Africa : A Reappraisal*, 38.

³⁹ Chabal, *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling*, 3.

⁴⁰ Christian Reus-Smit, 'Constructivism', in: Scott Burchill et al, eds. *Theories of International Relations* (New York 2005), 395.

cooperation to its decentralised community approach. Finally; ‘contrary to realism and neo-liberal institutionalism, constructivism can take account of Africa-specific phenomena like the unifying potential of Pan-Africanism’ and the ‘the thirst for continental self-emancipation.’⁴¹

2 – Level of Analysis: Through The Individual level, Identities, The State and The International System

2.1.Introduction

A level of analysis approach and a constructivist lens are both useful theoretical tools when considering Senegal and the research proposed in this paper. This is because, on the level of the individual, this research includes Senegal’s president Macky Sall but also its formidable post-colonial President Leopold Sedar Senghor. It also allows us to view individuals as creating an identity within the state, drawn from education, socialisation and culture, one that is often close to nature.

This following chapter investigates Senegal, and how the African state, early on, created a discourse around environmental governance from an African perspective—foreshadowing nations within the Western world. Therefore, using subaltern studies—defined as ‘subverting the mental and intellectual categories of Eurocentric scholarship, it seeks to uncover a more authentic indigenous history,’⁴² —these pages will uncover ideas which underly Senegal’s environmental policy and governance and why its peaceful legacy has played a role in this. Environmental security has challenged the discipline of International Relations as it is not considered a security threat within the realms of traditional IR security. A succinct definition of Environment Security, for the purpose of this paper, would be the study of threats to states and its individuals presented by environment occurrences and how this may or may not affect nations. Many scholars have argued for it to exist in the IR debate: already in 1983, International Relations’ scholar Richard Ullman was arguing for a redefinition of security to include raw material shortages as well as natural disasters.⁴³

⁴¹ Franke, *Security Cooperation in Africa : A Reappraisal*, 32.

⁴² Phillip Darby and A. J. Paolini, "Bridging International Relations and Postcolonialism." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 19, no. 3 (1994): 371-97.

⁴³ Richard H Ullman, “Redefining Security”, *International Security* 8, no. 1 (1983): 129-53. Page 19.

This multi-dimensional theoretical approach is valid because Senegal has experienced a significantly more peaceful transition out of colonialism after 1960—and since then individuals within the state have worked towards fostering a peaceful yet proactive political environment.⁴⁴ Two tiers under a constructivist point of view are the state and the international system which are both looked at as socially constructed through discourse.⁴⁵ Firstly, the desertification and rising sea-levels have prompted the country to increase its environment policy making. A second factor in policy-making is Senegal's overburdened plastic filled oceans (Senegal has about 700 km of coast line). President Sall has stated that he will continue with – and also increase–his prioritisation of environmental issues under his second term.⁴⁶ Another aspect to note is that the power of grassroots knowledge is being depended on by leaders in the Sahel countries as integral to improving the region's degrading climate. This is a tool of power – the power of ideas – something another theoretical approach, a rationalist perspective, does not account for.⁴⁷

2.2 The Level of the Individual

Unlike most of Africa, Senegal had a peaceful and democratic transition from its (French) colonial power in 1960. Since then, Senegal has maintained stability and democracy in a region afflicted by military coups, civil wars and ethnic conflicts. In this way, it is considered to be an exception in West Africa. Scholar Christian Reus Smit believes humans *are* able to influence political decision making and the political agent's behaviour can be understood through understanding the values, beliefs, and ideas, which shape the political agent's identity.⁴⁸ Therefore the former structuralists thinking results in an inapplicable approach that it impedes our understanding on human agency and state nuance. Applying this approach would deem a history of Senegal's leaders' or individual agency—which is central to its environmental strategy making – as unimportant.

The guidance of socialist poet, and former President Leopold Sedar Senghor, was powerful and focused on adopting a transformative constitution under Senegal's tripartite political system. However, Senghor's influence was long-lasting, far beyond his time as

⁴⁴ Karen Mingst, *Essentials Of International Relations*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2017), 95.

⁴⁵ Mingst, *Essentials Of International Relations*.

⁴⁶ Sofia Christensen, "Senegal President Pledges Action On Environment During Second Term", *Reuters*, 2 April 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-senegal-election/senegal-president-pledges-action-on-environment-during-second-term-idUSKCN1RE1PU>.

⁴⁷ Mingst, *Essentials Of International Relations*, 94.

⁴⁸ Christian Reus-Smit, Reading History Through Constructivist Eyes, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 37(2008)2,395-414, there 400.

political leader. He played an important part by becoming a remarkable influence on how Senegal conducts itself as a state. Leading up to his 1951 election, he campaigned all over Senegal and travelled many kilometres to meet traditional village and religious leaders.⁴⁹ An authentic concern for Senegal's rural communities is imperative to the ideas which have shaped the state's processes both generally and environmentally. The identity of Senghor was a meeting of his artistic nature, conventional economic politics and an 'astute' understanding of the local farmers that were important for political success in the country.⁵⁰ The hinterlands of Senegal are greatly influenced by Sufi religious leaders and this has influenced Senegal's state leaders and their decision-making process. In line with this, since 1996 Senegal has moved towards a decentralised approach to climate change allowing for local and regional authorities to share competences with the state government. In this way an emphasis on grassroots identities and their relationship to the country's ecology is fostered.⁵¹ Under a secular state, the country is an almost homogenous 94% Muslim – thus the Sufi sect dominates most aspects of society. Sufiis are considered Islamic mystics who seek divine love and knowledge.⁵² Additionally, the country has been ranked as the most peaceful Islamic country in the world.⁵³ A rationalist explanation will not take this into account as it would only look at this peaceful transition in terms of egotistic power and materialistic concerns. However, what is demonstrated is how Senghor had a clear focus on power, shaped by his humanistic and societal ideas. Therefore a pillar for Senegal's stability can lay claim to relying on its Sufi Islam. And more specifically reiterating an identity of peace and stability.

African socialism continued to determine the country's governance after Senghor's rule. And on January 1, 1981 he wilfully stepped down after twenty years in power. This was an unprecedented move for a post-colonial African leader, and a demonstration of the 'solidarity' of the new constitution and the 'efficacy' of his politics.⁵⁴ Following Senghor's rule was his protégé Minister Abdou Diouf from the Socialist Party, who introduced unlimited pluralism–recognising all political parties and transforming the country from a tripartite

⁴⁹ Alfred Stepan, 'Stateness, Democracy, and Respect: Senegal in Comparative Perspective' in *Tolerance, Democracy, and Sufis in Senegal* edited by Mamadou Diouf, (Columbia University Press:2013), 215.

⁵⁰ Chabal, *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling*, 5.

⁵¹ "Climate Change Legislation in Senegal", LSE, accessed 27 May 2020, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/SENEGAL.pdf>.

⁵² Mara Leichtman, "The exception: behind Senegal's history of stability," *The Conversation*, 14 March 2019, <https://theconversation.com/the-exception-behind-senegals-history-of-stability-113198>.

⁵³ Stepan, 'Stateness, Democracy, and Respect: Senegal in Comparative Perspective,' 205.

⁵⁴ Robert Fatton, Jr, 'The Democratization of Senegal (1976-1983): "Passive Revolution" and the Democratic Limits of Liberal Democracy,' *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Fall, 1986) :279-312.

democracy to a full liberal one.⁵⁵ This progression was encompassed via the idea of *laïcité*. A concept created in France to enforce secularism, *laïcité* was reinterpreted by Senegalese Francophones under the purpose of ‘respect’, and took into consideration the Sufi hegemony and its emphasis on harmony. This idea emphasises the priority of peace held by its individuals. *Laïcité* was emphasised in Diof’s campaign which explained it as:

Laïcité in itself is a manifestation of respect of others. It acts in this way if it is laïcité well understood and properly practiced. Such laïcité cannot be anti-religious, but neither if it is a true laïcité can it become a state religion....Laïcité is the consequence of this respect for the other, and the condition of our harmony.

With this in mind, the fact that Senegalese’s individuals have always considered themselves to be within harmony with the ecology is clear. Having an extensive pastoral and fishing community has meant that protecting it is logical as many people rely on it to survive. The next section will continue this thought process with a discussion on what it means to be Senegalese.

2.3 The Level of Identity

An important feature of Senegal’s identity was the post-colonial idea of *Négritude*, coined by Senghor,⁵⁶ and colleagues, and encountered in an evolving Senegalese identity. These post-colonial points of views are needed to understand the complexities of Senegal and its relationship to nature. In *Postcolonial Environments: Nature, Culture and the Contemporary Indian Novel* Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee argues for the existence of a ‘greening’ of post-colonial studies—stating that academics behind post-colonial writing could not have missed the importance of the issues of ‘land, water, forests, crops, rivers, the sea – in other words the centrality of the environment to the continuing struggle of decolonisation’.⁵⁷ *Négritude* emphasised the human connection with this ecology and thus ‘being’ was seen as being constituted by a dynamic relationship with the non-human material universe’.⁵⁸ Senghor’s work in the ethnic dignity of the colonised Africans lay claim to their capability to exist ‘harmoniously with the non-human world and the universe.’⁵⁹ To quote Senghor himself in an attempt to stress this deeper connection to nature and the African’s surroundings:

⁵⁵ Fatton, Jr, ‘The Democratization of Senegal (1976-1983): "Passive Revolution" and the Democratic Limits of Liberal Democracy,’ 286.

⁵⁶ With Aimé Césaire and Leon Gontran Damas.

⁵⁷ Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee, *Postcolonial Environments*, (United Kingdom :Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 46.

⁵⁸ Mukherjee, *Postcolonial Environments*, 47.

⁵⁹ Chabal, *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling*, 117.

So, for the African, living according to the moral law means living according to his nature, composed as it is of contradictory elements but complementary life forces. Thus he gives stuff to the stuff of the universe and tightens the threads of the tissue of life. Thus he transcends the contradictions of the elements and works toward making the life forces complementary to one another: in himself first of all, as Man, but also in the whole of human society.’⁶⁰

Senghor’s rejection of colonialism, however, did not mean a rejection of French values or culture but it was the local nuances he wanted to nurture. This idea has helped to overcome social divides within Senegal and has added to it pursuit of a focused maintenance of peace on every level of society, including its non-human form. It has also emphasised the urge by Senegalese individuals to articulate their own discourse on imperative global issues. In essence, the prestige of being a peace-bearer within the region has allowed for the appropriation of the country’s identity: as a state Senegal is not often criticised and considers itself an exception internally as well as externally. This can be emphasised through its state identity as a post-colonial state and how it has affected how it views climate breakdown.

Patrick Chabal posits various discussions on agency; however he argues for the ability of Africans to adapt to, and to process, modernity for their own purposes and in their own ways. Agency therefore derives from what is often dismissed as ‘tradition’. In establishing its policies, Senegal has done just this and using the idea of agency points us in a direction away from the Western structure of *why* Africa has not developed but instead towards the remarkable ways it *has* developed. Senegal’s leadership under Senghor and up until the present president Macky Sall is clear. Senegal has never been under military rule, has been strident in its environment policy and maintains peaceful relations. In this, the identities forged by the individual is mirrored from society. States in the Global South are led to be deemed inefficient, or often ‘failed’ by those in the Global North, a belief that there is something wrong with non-Western states because they have developed different paths to them. This creates a pessimistic viewpoint. Although Senegal has never been declared a ‘failed state’, it still exists within Africa and so is open to be viewed within this rationalist state-centric Westernised paradigm of thinking. It is worth pointing out the state in itself is a Western Rationalist construct so trying to fit the African state into the theoretical constructs applied to the state can cause a negative view by those in the Global North.

In this, Chabal further argues that ‘all concepts are historically and contextually generated and, therefore, bounded by the historical circumstances in which they appear,’; this

⁶⁰ Léopold Sédar Senghor, “Negritude: A Humanism of the twentieth century,” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed Patrick Williams, Laura Chrisman, (New York: Routledge, 1993), 31.

is because ‘there can be no undisputed universal concepts.’⁶¹ Going against the grain of Western thoughts of universality and looking at agency and identity means emphasising the local nuance of concepts. For example, while in many states identity can be a challenge to compartmentalise, as Senegal is such a homogenous society, it is clearly visible. As is mentioned in the above section, Muslim Suufiism is important, and so is *laïcité* as elements resulting in cohesiveness in identity in Senegal.

The research shows that the Senegalese have, from the outset, been willing to build a state that features both secular and spiritual powers as engendering a dynamic cooperation intended for everyone. Senghor himself notes that; ‘it is significant that in Wolof, the main language of Senegal, there are at least three words to translate the word 'spirit': *xel*, *sago*, or *dega*.’⁶² In 2000 president Diouf lost a re-election to opposition party (Parti Democratique Senegalese, PDS) president Abdoulaye Wade and Senegal transitioned to from a socialist state to a democratic one. Wade began the process of reforming the constitution which, from 2001, has continued to be the country’s constitution.⁶³ Again, this change of power was not accompanied by unrest (unlike Senegal’s Francophone sister, the Ivory Coast, to which it is often compared.) Successful democratic transitions have become a part of Senegal’s identity and a significant part of this is due to its individual leaders but also in part due to how the identity of the country has shaped the political values of these leaders.

The de-emphasis of the role of ideas in rational theories results in a neglect of important themes within a country’s society. Tying together the idea of individuals and ideas, Kwasi Tieku argues that ‘ideas that actors hold affect how they define their interests in the first place; ideas are also known to provide guidelines for human action and behaviour.’⁶⁴

Pan-Africanism, along with one of its mechanisms *Négritude*, is another fundamental key when trying to analyse identity within Africa and the state of Senegal. This quote by Kwasi Tieku encapsulates the Pan-Africanist worldview within a Constructionist framework: ‘In African societies, and by extension Africa’s IR, actors such as persons and states are not independent entities; rather they are “integral members of a group animated by a spirit of solidarity.”’⁶⁵ Inhabitants of West Africa have grown their knowledge of water, plants, animals

⁶¹ Chabal, *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling*, 117.

⁶² Léopold Sédar Senghor, “Negritude: A Humanism of the twentieth century,” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed Patrick Williams, Laura Chrisman, (New York: Routledge, 1993), 31.

⁶³ Łukas, Akubiak, “The Systems of Government of Senegal and Ivory Coast: Comparative Analysis,” *Politeja*, no.42 (2016): 247-62. there 250.

⁶⁴ Thomas Kwasi Tieku, ‘Theoretical approaches to Africa’s international relations’, in: Tim Murithi, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Africa’s International Relations* (New York, 2014), 11-20, there 4.

⁶⁵ Thomas Kwasi Tieku, ‘Theoretical approaches to Africa’s international relations’, 8.

and mineral resources and more and this is foundational in the region. Respect for rural communities and their knowledge of the land is imperative when understanding how Senegal aims to shape its discourse and role as a leading environmental policy-maker, attuned to the distinctions of its citizens' identities.

When President Sall came into office in April 2012 he was one of the continent's strongest voices for sustainable management in Africa.⁶⁶ For instance, Sall has put a lot of effort into turning the country into a plastic free one, as Senegal's coastline is infamous for its plastic waste. Although this is not a climate policy, it still maintains the importance of a clean environment - indeed the health of the oceans is important for a country that relies on fishing for its food security. Sall has also put efforts into rehabilitating one of the country's biggest landfills into a composting centre.⁶⁷ Conclusively, Senegal's Action Plan (2006 - 2020) for the Implementation of the National Framework for Climate Services (NFSC) underlines the role of communities as well as the responsibility of the government to protect them:

The challenge of improving the resilience of communities in the face of climate-related vulnerabilities, risks and disasters occupies a prominent place in the strategies developed and solutions envisaged by the State. While the answer seems to be measured by the existence of dedicated structures with an organisational system... end-users at both the national level (national sectoral planners and decision-makers) and the community level (farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolk and other communities vulnerable to climate-related risks) come as the final rings in the national product chain. However, it is advocated that the needs of the latter serve as the guiding thread for the CNSC initiative.⁶⁸

2.4 The Level of The State

Senegal has worked at creating an ideology of *Négritude* which has shaped its identity for the effective management of the environment. In this it has established itself as a regional trailblazer. As the previous two sections have argued, working through the mutual avenues of identity and individuals, the trajectory of the Senegalese state has become clear. Using a

⁶⁶ "Senegal: Africa's New Waste Warrior?" *Sustainability Times*, August 12, 2019, <https://www.sustainability-times.com/environmental-protection/senegal-africas-new-waste-warrior/>.

⁶⁷ Boris Ngounou, "Senegal: Macky Sall Orders Rehabilitation of Mbeubeuss landfill site," January 20 2020, <https://www.afrik21.africa/en/senegal-macky-sall-orders-rehabilitation-of-mbeubeuss-landfill-site/>.

⁶⁸ Le Ministre du Tourisme et des Transports aériens, 'PLAN D' ACTIONS DU SENEGAL (2006- 2020) POUR LA MISE EN PLACE DU CADRE NATIONAL POUR LES SERVICES CLIMATOLOGIQUES (CNSC),' May 2016, https://gfcs.wmo.int/sites/default/files/Senegal_Plan%20d%27Action_Cadre%20National%20des%20Services%20Climatiques_validé.pdf.

constructivist lens has allowed for the reader to gain an understanding of its complex post-colonial position. Rationalist concepts would have seemed misleading when examining such a complex, deeply spiritual and peace-valuing society. The reductionist viewpoint of rationalism understands states to be concerned with economic and military power; constructivism, however, does not reject the role of material concerns but also does not see these as the primary concern of why states do what they do. Thus, the previous sections have argued that Senegal's state identity is characterised by the idea of peace in the historical period since decolonisation, and these values have been embedded by Senegalese leaders which are in turn driven by a post-Colonial worldview.

One of the ways Senegal has done this has been establishing itself as the renewable energy leader within the West African region and introducing solar power nationwide. Senegal has also introduced various renewable energy decrees in its executive portfolio.⁶⁹ Thus for the government to approach two key state priorities—poverty and development—it cannot neglect climate change. Senegal depends heavily on agriculture—this sector employs about 70% of its population. In this, it is not possible to reduce poverty and promote economic growth without taking climate change into account. The interconnectedness of the human-environmental system is key to understand the Senegalese state, and how it does things. The state has therefore prioritised overcoming the adverse effects of climate breakdown, which has in turn become one of the key issues of national policy—and it has done this through its notable stability as a state.

2.5 The Level of The International System

The first sections argued that an important element of the state of Senegal's identity is the idea of *Négritude* and peace. Furthermore, personal beliefs of her leaders became deep-rooted in the country's environmental policy as a result of the interconnecting of internal dynamics and personal interests in the countries climate mitigation process. Constructivism concedes this process.

As climate breakdown has become an important global issue it has also become institutionalised within the international system. This has led to a growth in climate financing⁷⁰: considering that a lot of developing countries do not have the financing to adapt to changes

⁶⁹ Thomas Hedley, "Senegal: A regional renewable leader," *Africa Oil & Power*, May 20 2020, <https://www.africaoilandpower.com/2020/05/20/senegal-a-regional-renewable-leader/>.

⁷⁰ Climate financing is the funding from organisations within the international system such as the UN, FAO and the EU.

themselves this financing can help them achieve the mitigation process. Much existing research points out that countries in the Global South are mostly interested in acquiring this financial leverage in exchange for (often) doing very little for their environments. Regime effectiveness and compliance due to a lack of ideological commitment by states in the Global South is apparent in their disregard for international norms such as the Paris agreement and is often under scholarly scrutiny. Indeed much of this scrutiny is on the ‘emerging powers’ such as India and China whom collectively account for 60% of the Global South’s emissions.⁷¹

However, the Senegalese case is changing this international norm. Constructivism looks at how the international system is socially constructed, and therefore Senegal changing this discourse, as a result of its own individual identity, would not make sense in a realist world. Thus, in order for Senegal to be considered a credible advocate for African climate breakdown internationally and locally, it has to present itself as the appropriate state to do so. First of all it has done this by leveraging its reputation as a stable country in its region. And secondly, it has used its voice to create a language on the environment, away from the Westernised one. Pan-Africanist theorist Kwame Nkrumah, has emphasised the need for Africa to ‘speak by using its own voice.’⁷² Chapter three will deal with the regional and international system further and will go into detail on what position Senegal has taken with its agreements in the international system. Still this level of analysis seeks to highlight how Senegal is working towards responsibly changing the traditional discourse determined by those in the West.

Senegal’s attitude toward climate breakdown and how it deals with it as a state as well as the identity attached to it is important. Of course climate breakdown is a global commons issue, its effects are man-made and its impacts are distributed and felt globally—although at different levels. Also, concepts of ‘historical responsibility’ and ‘right to development’ are regularly used in the debates surrounding climate change.’⁷³ In light of this, Africa’s position within the international system is often viewed as having a marginal interest in climate change, yet Senegal has chosen its own path which in turn can work to change these international norms that are in place. President Sall has represented Senegal and Africa at global events like the United Nations General Assembly in 2016 where he stated: ‘... let us rather see Africa not as a land of humanitarian emergencies and a recipient of public aid for development but as a

⁷¹ Harald Fuhr, “The Global South’s contribution to the climate crisis – and its potential solutions,” 20 June 2019, <https://oecd-development-matters.org/2019/06/20/the-global-souths-contribution-to-the-climate-crisis-and-its-potential-solutions/>.

⁷² Willem Fourie, “Four Concepts of Africa : Original Research.” *Hts : Theological Studies* 71, no.3 (2015): 1–10.

⁷³ Gustavo Sosa-Nunez and Ed Atkins, “Climate Change and International Relations,” 11 April 2016, <https://www.e-ir.info/2016/04/11/climate-change-and-international-relations/>.

continent on the build, a pole on the cusp of progress.’⁷⁴ This plays its part within the bigger picture of north-south relations in that it reconfigures how these are traditionally viewed within the international system. The international negotiating process has been rigorous between the north and the south, and indeed could be understood in realist terms in its relation to negotiating power and maintaining the status quo. However, what this shows us, is that the international system does not account for smaller but effective countries like Senegal. Nor does it account for the nuanced identities as a fundamental process in how they’ve handled themselves within the system.

2.6 Conclusion

There are a four important levels which determine the interest formation process in how Senegal views the environment: its identities, its individuals, the state and the international system. The ideas discussed under these four tiers are intrinsically linked in their insight and have sustained each other over time. Furthermore, as Senegal is a country that is deeply concerned with its development and internal dynamics, a Western modelled rationalism obscures important ingredients within the way Senegal positions itself. Therefore constructivism is still fundamental when theorising these levels of analysis. Finally, as Senegal does lack in ‘structural and material power’, it has resorted instead to ‘ideas and norms to construct world politics.’⁷⁵ Certainly, the state power and influence is evident in its advocacy for its people and its environment, under the ideals of *Négritude*.

3 – A Postcolonial and a Pan African Environmentalism: Case Study

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will look at Senegal’s contribution to Environmentalism and aims to show how these structures flow from its post-colonial identity as a starting point. The case study will aim to show Senegal’s identity as a post-colonial state and how this has affected its approach to

⁷⁴ “At UN podium, Senegal’s leader urges massive investment and fair development for Africa,” United Nations, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/09/539712-un-podium-senegals-leader-urges-massive-investment-and-fair-development-africa>, 21 September 2016.

⁷⁵ Zachariah Mampilly, “India’s sojourn to Africa,” in *Handbook of African International Relations*, ed Tim Murithi, (Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 363.

climate breakdown. Climate change from the position of the Global South, when looked at through a postcolonial and pan-Africanist lens, brings up various concerns and contradictions. This is because, on the one hand, the history of globalisation and colonialism are key to understanding the current challenges to the environment, as this change is intertwined ‘with the narratives, histories, and material practices of colonialism and globalisation.’⁷⁶ Yet, on the other hand, states in the Global South have all linked environmental issues with development and argue that environmental policies that disregard their right to development cannot be put in place.⁷⁷ Additionally, the Global North has been criticised as commonly using a ‘technocratic’ approach, and therefore neglecting the productivity of local ecological knowledge, and adaptation strategies, as well as the historical and cultural nuances.⁷⁸ Indeed, as this research aims to show, Senegal has been unequivocal in its governance around environmental issues, which amplifies its self-determination and gives credit to its discourse and position in this area of IR. Africa is considered to be the continent that is the most susceptible to the effects of climate breakdown, and Senegal is the West African region’s most susceptible target.⁷⁹ However because of its history of being a clear and determined solution orientated state, it is indeed adept at coping with it. This desire to give importance to a dynamic state of Senegal is clearly sustained through the roadmap of Senegalese political leaders. From this perspective, Senegal has taken on-board the realities of the country and its environmental challenges—challenges which are also shared by other African countries. It was President Sall who highlighted that achieving development was prioritised ‘through African integration and more strongly-anchored pan-Africanism.’⁸⁰

3.2 Environmental Policy

Firstly, if the state of Senegal is to be viewed within rationalist paradigms, the prioritising of the factors below would be seen as simply being as a result of international anarchy, and state survival. Although this rings true, it is not the only defining factor and pulls into question the universality of these paradigms. Yes, Senegal does rely on state survival; however, this is

⁷⁶ Elizabeth DeLoughrey, “Global ecologies and the environmental humanities post-colonial approaches,” (New York: Routledge, 2015), 2.

⁷⁷ Raoni Rajão & Tiago Duarte, “Performing postcolonial identities at the United Nations’ climate negotiations,” *Postcolonial Studies* 21, no.3 (2018) 364-378, there 365.

⁷⁸ Elizabeth DeLoughrey, “Global ecologies and the Environmental Humanities Post-Colonial Approaches,” 16.

⁷⁹ Elena Lioubimtseva, “Africa and Global Climate Change” in *Handbook of Africa's International Relations* ed Tim Murithi, (Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 226.

⁸⁰ Presidency of Senegal, “Focus: International Relations in Senegal,” January 5 2018, http://www.presidence.sn/en/newsroom/focus-international-relations-in-senegal_1277.

shaped by how it views the environment and aims to protect it is a result of its peaceful and stable statehood. This is not accounted for in a rationalist theoretical approach. It is important to note that while Senegal exists in the Global South and deals with poverty and slow development, it still holds itself accountable to the environment and the issues around it, alongside its individual post-colonial viewpoint. Many legislative tools exist in regard to the environment, particularly in the field of environment and natural resources, and are relatively robust. Senegal's environment code was achieved in 1983, which included the provision of (Chapter V) making the assessment of environmental impacts mandatory: 'Any development project or activity likely to harm the environment, as well as policies, plans, programs, regional and sectoral studies must be subject to an environmental assessment.'⁸¹ It is against this background that we can understand its identity forged by maintaining peace. As Senegalese scholar Paul Ndiaye states in *La société sénégalaise entre le local et le global*: 'Although the discourse mainly concerns actions and results, over the last three of four decades efforts to combat desertification have emerged as the emblematic strategy whose most eloquent expression is Senegal's participation in sub-regional organisations like the Interstate Committee for Draught Control in the Sahel (CILSS).'⁸² The relevance of this study in African IR is clearly held within the above statement.

Already in 1968 The Organisation of Senegal River States (OERS) was established by President Senghor so as to improve the River Basin and to work with Senegal's neighbouring countries in doing so.⁸³ More recently, the state of Senegal has developed three levels of climate breakdown strategy which it has implemented successfully. Firstly, on the institutional level, it signed up to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in June 1992, and went on to ratify it in June 1994. On the local institutional level it has created the Comité national sur les Changements climatiques (COMNACC) which was presented by decree in 2011 as an advisory body under the supervision of the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development to support the implementation of Senegal's climate policy.⁸⁴ Under this the government implemented the Les comités régionaux changements climatiques

⁸¹ Adaptation aux changements climatiques et à l'augmentation du niveau de la mer en zones côtières, "4.6 Sénégal : Adaptation au changement climatique en zone côtière" last accessed: 28 May 2020, http://www8.umoncton.ca/umcm-climat/uved/grain/4_6_senegal_adaptation_au_changement_climatique_en_zone_cotiere.

⁸² Diop Ndiaye, *La société sénégalaise entre le local et le global*, (Paris :Karthala),2002, pp. 87-107, there 101.

⁸³ Ronald, Bornstein, "The Organisation of Senegal River States." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 10, no. 2 (1972): 267-83.

⁸⁴Ministere De L'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature, "DECRET n° 2011-1689 Rapport De Presentation," 3 October 2011, <http://www.jo.gouv.sn/spip.php?article9403>.

(COMRECC) at the local level. And thirdly, at the strategic and national levels, several initiatives have also been implemented such as the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (SPNAB), the National Wetlands Management Policy (PNZH), and the New Forest Policy (2005- 2025).⁸⁵ At a presentation of the formation of the COMNACC this quote is particularly enlightening:

The complexity of the emerging challenges caused by the adverse effects of climate change has required the establishment of a strong institutional framework for the coordination, integration, monitoring and evaluation of climate change interventions at both the national and local levels.⁸⁶

Another notable mechanism from the state is the introduction of National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) in 2006. NAPA is a leading state apparatus used for strategy and planning. It focuses on areas deemed most vulnerable to climate change and ‘also highlights the importance of regional and international cooperation and the mainstreaming of climate change efforts into all relevant national ministries, institutions, and policies, in order to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize resources and results.’⁸⁷

Dakar had policies and initiatives before the discourse on environmental governance even existed at a macro level globally, such as the introduction of the Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du fleuve Sénégal in 1973. It also became a key member in the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) in the same year. At a time when the term ‘climate change’ was far from being commonly used in scientific and environmental discourse, Senegal was already an active member of this regional body. It is important to note that the strategies deployed by the Senegalese government have consistently taken into account local inter-relationships – an important aspect of policy as often climate breakdown is viewed as an approaching calamity by governments, or as an after-thought by others. Yet, Senegal has shown that, through local government organisations and community-based initiatives, climate breakdown can be seen as an opportunity which can be seized for the good of its citizens as well as carrying a Pan-African agenda in the way that it works with other countries in the region for the greater good. This can be seen as putting a constructivist approach to power in place, from the ground up. A speech by the president of Senegal, Macky

⁸⁵ Ministère de L’Environnement Et Du Développement Durable, “Contribution Prevue Determinee Au Niveau National (CPDN),” September 2015, page 16, http://www.denv.gouv.sn/images/stories/changementclim/CPDN_Senegal.pdf.

⁸⁶ Ministère De L’Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature, “DECRET n° 2011-1689 Rapport De Presentation.”

⁸⁷ “Climate Change Adaption in Senegal,” USAID, last accessed 28 May 2020, https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/senegal_adaptation_fact_sheet_jan2012.pdf.

Sall, reiterates the government's position. A press release by the *Conseil Des Ministres*, issued on the 24 July 2019, states: 'he invited the Government to ensure urgent and adequate funding for these major programmes by ensuring the significant involvement of local and regional authorities, decentralized administrative authorities, grassroots community organizations and populations.'⁸⁸

Stemming from its membership in the CILSS, Senegal has continued to place decelerating desertification firmly on its permanent strategic agendas. Senegal has also furthered the decentralised approach, working with local governments and organisations, such as working with Decentralising Climate Funds (DCF), and local governments to disperse climate funds and then invest these funds directly into communities affected by climate breakdown, working with the locals to develop strategies.⁸⁹

Article 25.2 of Senegal's constitution highlights the importance of environment governance for its people and the holding of this by the public authorities:

Everyone has the right to a healthy environment. The defence, preservation and improvement of the environment is the responsibility of the public authorities.⁹⁰

Article 25.3 reiterates this duality between the individual and nature:

Every citizen has a duty to preserve the country's natural resources and environment and to work towards sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations.

Together with the Ministère de l'environnement et du Développement Durable and The Centre de Suivi Écologique (CSE), mechanisms are being put in place to give effect to these aspects of the constitution. Another mechanism—the d'Action National de Lutte Contre la Désertification (PAN/LCD)—has been established which is based on a participatory and a decentralised approach.⁹¹

Senegal was also one of the first countries to ratify the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) – and this was implemented locally via the National Action

⁸⁸ Gouvernement du Sénégal, "Le Président de la République, Son Excellence Monsieur Macky SALL, a présidé ce mercredi 24 juillet 2019, le Conseil des ministres," 24 July 2019, <https://www.sec.gouv.sn/actualite/conseil-des-ministres-du-24-juillet-2019>.

⁸⁹ "Decentralising Climate Funds in Mali and Senegal," IIED, last accessed: 28 May 2020, <https://www.iied.org/decentralising-climate-funds-mali-senegal>.

⁹⁰ Gouvernement du Sénégal, "Constitution du Sénégal," 23 May 2019, page 5, <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/59426/111008/F1002378662/SEN-59426.pdf>.

⁹¹ Ministère de L'Environnement Et De La Protection de la Nature, "Rapport Sur L'état de L'environnement au Senegal," Edition 2020, 103, https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/9101/-Rapport%20sur%20l%27état%20de%20l%27environnement%20au%20Sénégal-2010Rapport_Etat_Envi_2010.pdf?sequence=3&BisAllowed=.

Programme (NAP).⁹² Indeed, this statement posits that the government has been focused on including grassroot level and governmental level policy with regards to preserving the country's environment and impeding desertification for several decades. Senegal has also ratified other significant international conventions as well as signed international protocols aimed at reducing climatic breakdown on various levels. This has had the effect of solidifying Senegal as a viable state within the international organisational arena and highlighting its clear understanding of environmental management on an international level. These include:

- the Abidjan Convention on cooperation in protecting and developing coastal areas, and its protocol on cooperation in combating pollution in critical situations, which came into force in 1984;
- the Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer, which were ratified in 1993;
- the Convention on Biological Diversity, ratified in June 1994;
- the International Convention to Combat Desertification in countries experiencing severe drought and/or desertification (CCD);
- the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), ratified in 1994;
- the Kyoto Protocol in 2001.⁹³

More recently, in January 2020, in another *Conseil Des Ministres* the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development spoke about the functioning of the National Agency for Reforestation and the Great Green Wall.⁹⁴ The President has also made sure to mention numerous times in press briefing that he has requested that the Minister of Finance and Budget takes the correct measures to assign seed funds to operationalise environmental programmes. This he sees as making sure the activities of the Senegalese Agency for Reforestation and the

⁹² Gouvernement du Sénégal, "Programme D'Action National De Lutte Contre La Desertification, 1998, 7, <https://knowledge.unccd.int/sites/default/files/naps/senegal-fre2000.pdf>.

⁹³ International Institute for Environment and Development, "Climate change, adaptation strategies and mobility: evidence," November 2011, 28, <https://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/10598IIED.pdf>.

⁹⁴ Gouvernement du Sénégal, "Le Président de la République, Son Excellence Monsieur Macky SALL, a présidé le Conseil des ministres, le jeudi 23 janvier 2020, au Palais de la République," 23 January 2020, <https://www.sec.gouv.sn/actualité/conseil-des-ministres-du-23-janvier-2020>.

Great Green Wall are rapid and effective.⁹⁵ The *Handbook of Africa's International Relations* makes this clear: 'Evidence from around the world suggests that development and implementation of adaptation strategies and policies are successful only when they are driven by the interests of stakeholders — groups of individuals and communities vulnerable to the risks of climate change.... Communities rarely face only one effect or risk of climate change at a time and the interaction of multiple vulnerabilities often can lead to the amplification of risks.'⁹⁶

Within the African continent the African Union (AU) has maintained its Pan-African climate consensus and in 2013 the African Union (AU) held a symposium on Climate Change, Pan Africanism and African Renaissance. The symposium placed an emphasis on a Pan-African motivation towards climate solutions. In a key speech Dr.Tewolde-Berhan Gebre-Egziabher highlighted the African common position, by declaring that 'Africa's path towards economic development as one which will minimize atmospheric pollution with greenhouse gases.'⁹⁷ This fundamental point of development whilst maintaining a green trajectory is important because it reiterates the constructivist viewpoint that 'identities, beliefs, norms, values, etc. – are context specific; they don't form the kind of trans-historical, trans-cultural regularities that can sustain law-like generalisations about international relations.'⁹⁸ Furthermore, Africa has indeed formulated a unified position under the coordinating auspices of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC).⁹⁹

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at how post-colonialism has shaped the way in which Senegal has viewed climate breakdown. It has also been facilitated successfully as a result of Senegal's state identity – one that is shaped by *Négritude*, stability and a peaceful history. However, although the problems with colonialism and its hampering of development within the global South exist and are criticised, Senegal has not let this stop itself from creating its own discourse

⁹⁵ Gouvernement du Sénégal, "Le Président de la République, Son Excellence Monsieur Macky SALL, a présidé le Conseil des ministres, ce jeudi 12 septembre 2019 à 10 heures, au Palais de la République," 12 September 2019, <https://www.sec.gouv.sn/actualite/conseil-des-ministres-du-12-septembre-2019>.

⁹⁶ Elena Lioubimtseva, "Africa and Global Climate Change" in *Handbook of Africa's International Relations* ed Tim Murithi, (Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 226.

⁹⁷ "Draft African Union Strategy on Climate Change," United Nations, May 2014, 5, https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/cap_draft_aclimatestrategy_2015.pdf.

⁹⁸ Christian Reus-Smit, *Reading History Through Constructivist Eyes*, 398.

⁹⁹ United Nations, "Draft African Union Strategy on Climate Change."

around climate breakdown and desertification adaption. This is because it is not something imaginary but a reality many of its citizens encounter: indeed the economy relies on small land holders - and if they are not safe then neither is the country's development. Of course, it is a developing country, and one that faces many of the challenges of other developing countries. However what makes Senegal different is its identification with peace in the region and stability; the state is clear in the importance of protecting its peoples as well as its ecosystems. It is a nation with both a coastal and an inland area, and so has concerns for all these environmental areas. Listing some of its key mechanisms reiterates that, although development is a foremost concern, this needs to take place within a green trajectory. The Pan-African unifying ideology is an underlying factor underpinning all of the state's environmental mechanisms and is highlighted through the African Union's declaration of a common position.

4 – The Great Green Wall a Pan-African project working to fight breakdown in the Sahel

4.1. Introduction

The president of Senegal, Macky Sall is quoted as saying he wants to '*bâtir un Sénégal Vert*' (build a Green Senegal).¹⁰⁰ The state is achieving that through its pan-African environmentalism which includes various governmental mechanisms listed in this thesis. It is also doing this through its undiluted support for, and facilitation of, the Great Green Wall (GGW) or the *La Grande Muraille Verte*. The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative is a pan-African programme with a strong focus on reforestation as a way to halt desertification.

The reason behind including this case study in the greater argument for African inclusion in IR is important for a number of reasons. First of all, it furthers the argument that understanding initiatives such as the GGW within International Relations would not be possible through a rational theorist lens and that a constructivist one allows for a deeper exploration of this Pan-African project. This is because a realist would not account for internal dynamics as an assisting element in the state's interest formation. A realist account can create a theoretical screen which can superficially establish certain facets and point us to a certain bias. However, by addressing this bias we can sharpen our understanding of indigenous experiences. Secondly,

¹⁰⁰Morgane Signoret, "La Grande Muraille Verte : cette audacieuse initiative continentale - Brève revue du cas Sénégalais," 9 September 2019, <https://www.mediaterre.org/actu,20190909070113,11.html>.

it encapsulates the importance of what Chabal notes as an oversimplification of the continent which can be transformed through a move from looking at what Africa hasn't done to what it has. This is a commendable project which has not received much exposure in Western media or study. Undeniably, so few climate mitigating projects occur on the level of the state, the regional level and the local level as the GGW does, motivating for its inclusion. Third, it emphasises how organisations around climate change flow from the identity of Négritude as a starting point. Lastly, The GGW is important because it represents a new way of looking at climate resilience—one that is not organised under Western paradigms and is therefore influenced and shaped by the states involved, their ideas and their individuals. This also helps to shift international norms on how global climate breakdown should be managed.

The GGW is a project which has and will continue to 'intelligently gather and centralize pre-existing interdisciplinary knowledge, generate new knowledge, and integrate knowledge systems to appropriately navigate future uncertainties of the diverse social-ecological systems along its path.'¹⁰¹ The following two sections will address desertification and why it is such an important issue in Senegal and West Africa alike, and the second section will dig into Senegal's overt leadership or 'trailblazing' role.

4.2 Desertification

Desertification as defined by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) as 'land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors including climatic variation and human activity.'¹⁰² Drought and thus desertification has been endemic to the Sahel region for the past 30 years. It is estimated that by 2045 some 135 million people may be displaced as a result of desertification.¹⁰³ Undeniably, 'there have been various interventions to improve conditions in the Sahel at different scales, but many of them focused on specific aspects of degradation, without paying attention to the intricate connections and feedbacks in the system as a whole.'¹⁰⁴ The GGW, however, is

¹⁰¹ Deborah Goffner, Hannah Sinare, and Line J. Gordon, "The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative as an opportunity to enhance resilience in Sahelian landscapes and livelihoods," *Regional Environmental Change* 19, (2019), 1417–1428.

¹⁰² Thierno Ibrahima Wade, Ousmane Ndiaye, Margaux Mauclaire, Babacar Mbaye, Maurice Sagna, Aliou Guissé & Deborah Goffner, "Biodiversity field trials to inform reforestation and natural resource management strategies along the African Great Green Wall in Senega," *New Forests* 49, (2018), 341–362.

¹⁰³ "World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 17 June," United Nations, last accessed: 1 June 2020, <https://www.un.org/en/events/desertificationday/>.

¹⁰⁴ Deborah Goffner, Hannah Sinare, and Line J. Gordon, "The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative as an opportunity to enhance resilience in Sahelian landscapes and livelihoods."

changing this narrative with African countries in the Sahel and Sahara shaping their own account of climate solutions and, as a result, reshaping norms within the international system.

Certainly, the last 50 years have seen a significant number of development interventions to combat the social and ecological challenges in the Sahel region.¹⁰⁵ However, a lot of these initiatives have usually taken place on the global institutional level, yet not enough attention has been given to projects that have taken place on the local levels – an important juncture as it is these agrarian communities which are battling climate breakdown and its effects in real time. Before the effects of climate change, the populations within the Sahel region would migrate to other more hospitable areas where resources were more abundant. However, with the ever increasing desertification taking place in the Sahel, the countries that it crosses have had to become intrinsically policy driven and innovative, as has been detailed throughout this thesis.

Although the GGW has evolved into a multi-levelled project which is regionally specific it does still rely on tree planting. Research in the journal *Science* underscores the impact that growing trees can have on the climate and ‘estimates planting more than 2 billion acres of trees could remove two-thirds of all the emissions that human activity has pumped into the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution.’¹⁰⁶ Overall though, an improvement of human lives is what underlines this initiative. The earth will always survive, but it is helping humans survive with the earth that is important and is the motivation behind the GGW.

4.3 Senegal: A leader

Although Senegal has ratified all of the international climate treaties, the country has not adopted a complacent approach. Instead, Senegal has actively pushed for continent, regional and nationally-based policy and programmes. Its Pan-Africanism, underscored by *Négritude*, is foundational to how Senegal views its position, policies and practice within the GGW. This is supported by the fact that ‘in Africa a strong vision of what made the continent different’¹⁰⁷ has always been important to the state. It is also foreshadowed by once president and father of *Négritude* Senghor who ‘was able to combine a commitment to a modern notion of economic development and an astute understanding of the local factors that were relevant to political success in Senegal’.¹⁰⁸ Chérif Ndianor the chair of the Supervisory Board of the National

¹⁰⁵ Deborah Goffner, Hannah Sinare, and Line J. Gordon.

¹⁰⁶ Aryn Baker, “Can a 4,815-Mile Wall of Trees Help Curb Climate Change in Africa?” *Time*, 12 September 2019, <https://time.com/5669033/great-green-wall-africa/>.

¹⁰⁷ Chabal, *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling*, 5.

¹⁰⁸ Chabal, 5.

Agency for the Great Green Wall in Senegal highlights how the state of Senegal is using its democratic stability to be key player in this project both amongst its African peers and on the international institutional level:

We are fortunate to be spared these risks and to be a democratically stable country, with alternations going on without problems. We also have recognised experts around the world. I also see it when I go to international summits; Senegalese experts are at the head of several structures. It is an undeniable asset.¹⁰⁹

Senegal has been a strong proponent of the GGW since its inception, and has always expressed its position as a leader in climate breakdown administration. Ex-president Abdoulaye Wade is quoted as saying ‘faced with the deadlines of 2030, when the African population would reach 1.7 billion, we no longer have the right to watch, powerless, the destruction of our heritage.’¹¹⁰ This quote encapsulates Senegal’s strategy completely: it has never been complacent when it comes to the protection of its environment and connects the level of the individual in creating a discourse on the environment..

Further, President Macky Sall has boasted that Senegal has already planted over 12 million trees (mostly acacia which is adaptable to arid climates) and restored 25 000 ha of degraded land. It also spends \$200 million a year on planting and caring for its section of the wall, which has aided in the improvement of the country’s food stocks, energy, water and economic security.¹¹¹

On June 17, 2010, the Pan-African agency for the Great Green Wall was created in Ndjamen in Chad.¹¹² Although the GGW does involve international partners and funders, including the European Union, Food and Agricultural Organisation of the UN and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the project is driven regionally but also across borders and aims to give local communities the means to fight against desertification.

Ndianor has emphasised Senegal’s identity tied to its ‘strong political will,’ and that before the Pan-African agency for the GGW was formed in 2010, as is mentioned above,

¹⁰⁹ Pierre Gilbert, “Quelles Nouvelles De La Grande Muraille Verte? Entretien Avec Cheric Ndianor.”

¹¹⁰ Abdourahmane Samour et al, “Pérenniser la Grande Muraille Verte par l’occupation adéquate des sols” In: *Le projet majeur africain de la Grande Muraille Verte: Concepts et mise en œuvre*, (Marseille: IRD Éditions, 2010).

¹¹¹ “World Leaders Renew Commitment to Strengthen Climate Resilience Through Africa’s Great Green Wall,” UNCCD, 2 December 2012, <https://www.unccd.int/news-events/world-leaders-renew-commitment-strengthen-climate-resilience-through-africas-great>.

¹¹² Pierre Gilbert, “Quelles Nouvelles De La Grande Muraille Verte? Entretien Avec Cheric Ndianor,” *La Vent Se Leve*, 13 March 2019, <https://lvsl.fr/quelles-nouvelles-de-la-grande-muraille-verte-entretien-avec-cherif-ndianor/>.

Senegal had already created its own National Agency for the Great Green Wall in 2008.¹¹³ Moreover, in 2016 the State signed a performance contract between the National Agency for the Great Green Wall of Senegal and the State of Senegal. On the level of the state it becomes clear that the State of Senegal is making a big effort to facilitate this project and that their commitment continues to increase.

The Senegalese state has made sure to approach the wall on a multi-dimensional level so as to improve the lives of the ecology and its inhabitants. For example, women in the Mbar Toubab Senegal area are able to earn money planting saplings over the six week planting period. This circular economy includes using some of the fees to build solar panels to power schools which have been built, as well as dormitories for children who live far from the school.¹¹⁴ A project of this scale needs to be durable and therefore has developed from the initial idea of a band of trees, into a mosaic of diverse landscape actions designed for their regions. All the actions are designed to create sustained solutions for the enhancement of the environment and the socio-economic circumstances in the region. In addition, multipurpose gardens have been introduced and run by the women in the regions which also allows animal breeders to diversify their activities and limit the effects of overgrazing.¹¹⁵ Other efforts by Senegal include the creation of firewalls to impede bush fires, reintroducing wildlife and the protection of returning wildlife such as including turtles in the Koyli Alpha community nature reserve.

All of these go hand-in-hand with Senegal's reverence for peace. Senegal has all the ingredients to be a leader in mitigating climate breakdown in the region; however taking a post-colonial and pan-African approach it holds a very particular view of how it does that. Senegal has realised that no country, taken individually, has the technical, human and financial means to cope with these major constraints, hence the need for a united, integrated and unifying approach. Africa has so often been labelled as 'weak' but it is initiatives like the GGW that need to be studied more within International Relations. This notion is intrinsic in Chabal's *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling*, and his argument for the ability of Africans to adapt to, and to process, modernity for their own purposes and in their own ways.

¹¹³ Marion Guénard, "La Grande Muraille verte trace doucement son chemin au Sénégal," *Le Monde*, 15 April 2016, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2016/04/19/la-grande-muraille-verte-trace-doucement-son-chemin-au-senegal_4904682_3212.html.

¹¹⁴ Aryn Baker, "Can a 4,815-Mile Wall of Trees Help Curb Climate Change in Africa?"

¹¹⁵ Marion Guénard, "La Grande Muraille verte trace doucement son chemin au Sénégal."

4.4 Conclusion

The Great Green Wall is a valuable case study when addressing the state of Senegal and its environmental and climate breakdown contributions. Not only is it a multi-level approach, it is also one cemented by Pan-Africanism. This stems from Senegal's undeniably potent history; forming its identity and therefore interest process through *Négritude*. This post-colonial gaze has therefore determined how Senegal has behaved. The GGW has also helps make a case for the constructivist point of view that allows us to look at non-Western states, for traditional IR would maintain the importance of material gains. Senegal has been a fundamental player in the organisation of the GGW in that it had already established a National Agency for the Great Green Wall in 2008, two years prior to the Pan-African agency for the Great Green Wall. Senegal has indeed forged an identity of becoming a 'green' country. Understanding this cross-border approach to stopping desertification within an International Relations framework is possible through a constructivist lens framed by a post-colonial worldview because it allows us to delve into the nuances of Senegal as a state. It also allows us to move from the Western structure of *why* Africa has not developed but instead towards the remarkable ways it *has* developed. Senegal exists within the Global South and so is indeed developmentally behind a lot of the global hegemons. For it to develop it needs to protect its society and so the protection of the socio-environment relationship is imperative to its development, its citizens and its environmental security.

Conclusion

This thesis attempted to determine if Senegal is an environmental trailblazer in the West African region and was guided by the question: has Senegal's tradition of peace has shaped its environmental policy? By giving a detailed response to this question, through examples and two case studies, the thesis has served its purpose in answering that it is. This thesis has also endeavoured to examine well-known IR theories, more particularly realism and liberalism. Both theories provide the dominant discourse for IR scholars and academics. Students of IR are taught these theories most prominently, highlighting the importance they hold within IR, especially in the West. Additionally, students across the globe are becoming more and more diverse and so, an inclusion of their voices and their worldviews needs to be disseminated. The high importance afforded to these theories means the discourse around them is distributed globally and thus shapes the way the majority of global politics and international relations are

observed and framed. It is important to note that these two dominant theories are not always inappropriate, and indeed can be utilised to understand certain players at certain points within the international system. However, they are lacking as distinct ways to analyse states in the Global South. These theories maintain certain theoretical demarcations which are inflexible and can create insufficient conclusions when attempting to understand a state's course of interest formation. The de-emphasis of the role of ideas can therefore result in an inattention to important themes within a society.

Examining Africa as a region in IR is important as it broadens discussions on IR on the continent, which overall remain limited. Based on the above, the drawbacks of textbook IR is made clear as it requires the drawing of conclusions in a particular way – a way that is often neglectful of non-Western voices. But it also aims to add to a critical assessment of these Western theories. Furthermore, this thesis aims – hopes - to contribute to the discourse on African IR by exposing the fallacies maintained in much Global North rhetoric. This is in order to pay attention to the promotion and self-determination of the Global South as well as to dismantle the near-universality of rationalist IR theory. In light of this, the often marginalised continent of Africa can be included in discussions on meaningful politics, including the ever-growing field of climate breakdown.

In order to correctly understand this process a theoretical framework was laid out to determine what shaped Senegal's attitude towards its environmentalism. These include the mutual relationship between its beliefs, its values and its norms. The literature has shown that Senegal's beliefs are formed by its somewhat unique adherence to peaceful politics throughout its decolonisation period. A focused maintenance of peace exists on every level of Senegalese society. Further, this identity is able to benefit Senegal within the international system and on the international stage as it provides the state with credibility in the international community. Aside from its unique history, identity is also linked to this process, and is amplified through the legacy of its previous leader Senghor through his contribution to *Négritude*. This important worldview has an affinity to nature, both on a physical and a metaphysical level.

This paper has analysed rationalist and constructivist theories and compares them at certain junctures. In doing so, in the second chapter it became evident that Senegal's interest in maintaining a sustainable environment is sustained through its *ideas* - which are signified through its political actors and how these play out on the state level and the international level. Although Senegal maintains a Pan-African identity, its seat at the international table is still valuable when challenging the Western worldview. Thus, the ideas of Pan-Africanism, post-colonialism and stability have cemented Senegal as a regional trailblazer on the

environmentalism stage. It was argued in the third chapter that Senegal has adhered to a multi-level approach to improve the lives of its citizens and the ecology. This has been maintained on a regional/Pan-Africanist level, the state level, the international level and through a decentralised localised level. The chapter also pointed out that Western argument, which maintains that non-Western countries are only concerned with getting financial compensation from countries in the West, is hollow. Countries in the Global South - and especially in Africa - are the first to comprehend the impact of climate breakdown as they experience it first-hand.

Chapter four deals with the regional situation and the international system, and reiterates how the world is looking at the West for climate change mitigation solutions but is often being faced with inaction, whilst non-Western states are changing this norm in their current actions. As evidence of this is the fact that Senegal set up its own local section of the Great Green Wall – which provides the second case study of this thesis - two years prior to the international agency for the GGW. The literature provides examples on how strident the state has been, in implementing the many approaches it undertakes. This thesis has listed many plans which Senegal has approved and maintains. It has also shown how the state reasons from a post-colonial and international perspective, which do not fit easily into a rationalist perspectives. Therefore, African post-colonial diplomacy in Senegal's IR strategy indeed gives better insight into its approach to environmentalism than realism or liberalism. It also underlines the traditional bias emerging from the Global North that posits that there is something amiss in non-Western states because they have developed different paths to them. This case study forcefully disproves this.

To answer the research question: Senegal sees itself as a trailblazer for environmental change and stability in the region. Although this is the case, Senegal holds a particular view in how it achieves this which is not informed by a realist, egoic point of view which is determined by hegemony and understood in a Eurocentric manner. Instead it is maintained through a Pan-Africanist worldview. Hence, a deconstruction on what it means to be a leader in a region needed to be ascertained, and what factors shaped Senegal to interpret its position in this way. Moreover, given Senegal's position as an exception in the region, it can draw from that to lead the way on how it mitigates climate breakdown and desertification. Lastly, the use of the world trailblazer is appropriate as this thesis has shown that Senegal is not seen as maintaining the status quo in order to lead but instead takes bold steps to be a leader amongst equals.

It is important to note that the findings of this thesis were limited by language barriers with all the primary sources written in French. Indeed certain language nuances can be lost but the author tried to maintain a neutral and thorough examination of these texts. In light of this,

it is worth pointing out that this thesis did involve a broad scope of issues, however centred around one specific theme – the environment. This proved challenging when attempting to give each subtheme the appropriate attention. A study which will add to the work done here might define one specific area of research which could have the effect of providing a deeper insight into the topic.

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PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

Fraud and Plagiarism

Scientific integrity is the foundation of academic life. Utrecht University considers any form of scientific deception to be an extremely serious infraction. Utrecht University therefore expects every student to be aware of, and to abide by, the norms and values regarding scientific integrity.

The most important forms of deception that affect this integrity are fraud and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement, and it is a form of fraud. The following is a detailed explanation of what is considered to be fraud and plagiarism, with a few concrete examples. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list!

If fraud or plagiarism is detected, the study programme's Examination Committee may decide to impose sanctions. The most serious sanction that the committee can impose is to submit a request to the Executive Board of the University to expel the student from the study programme.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the copying of another person's documents, ideas or lines of thought and presenting it as one's own work. You must always accurately indicate from whom you obtained ideas and insights, and you must constantly be aware of the difference between citing, paraphrasing and plagiarising. Students and staff must be very careful in citing sources; this concerns not only printed sources, but also information obtained from the Internet.

The following issues will always be considered to be plagiarism:

- cutting and pasting text from digital sources, such as an encyclopaedia or digital periodicals, without quotation marks and footnotes;
- cutting and pasting text from the Internet without quotation marks and footnotes;
- copying printed materials, such as books, magazines or encyclopaedias, without quotation marks or footnotes;
- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;
- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
- copying the work of another student and presenting it as one's own work. If this is done with the consent of the other student, then he or she is also complicit in the plagiarism;
- when one of the authors of a group paper commits plagiarism, then the other co-authors are also complicit in plagiarism if they could or should have known that the person was committing plagiarism;
- submitting papers acquired from a commercial institution, such as an Internet site with summaries or papers, that were written by another person, whether or not that other person received payment for the work.

The rules for plagiarism also apply to rough drafts of papers or (parts of) theses sent to a lecturer for feedback, to the extent that submitting rough drafts for feedback is mentioned in the course handbook or the thesis regulations.

The Education and Examination Regulations (Article 5.15) describe the formal procedure in case of suspicion of fraud and/or plagiarism, and the sanctions that can be imposed.

Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse. Each individual is responsible for their own behaviour. Utrecht University assumes that each student or staff member knows what fraud and plagiarism



entail. For its part, Utrecht University works to ensure that students are informed of the principles of scientific practice, which are taught as early as possible in the curriculum, and that students are informed of the institution's criteria for fraud and plagiarism, so that every student knows which norms they must abide by.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.

Name: **Jami Gavin**

Student number: **6817939**

Date and signature:

15 June 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jami Gavin', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Submit this form to your supervisor when you begin writing your Bachelor's final paper or your Master's thesis.

Failure to submit or sign this form does not mean that no sanctions can be imposed if it appears that plagiarism has been committed in the paper.