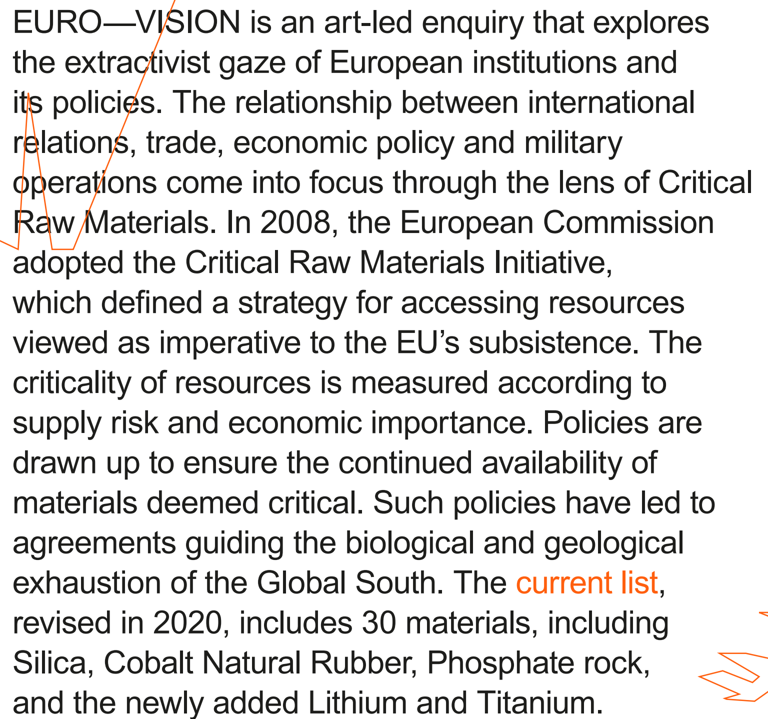
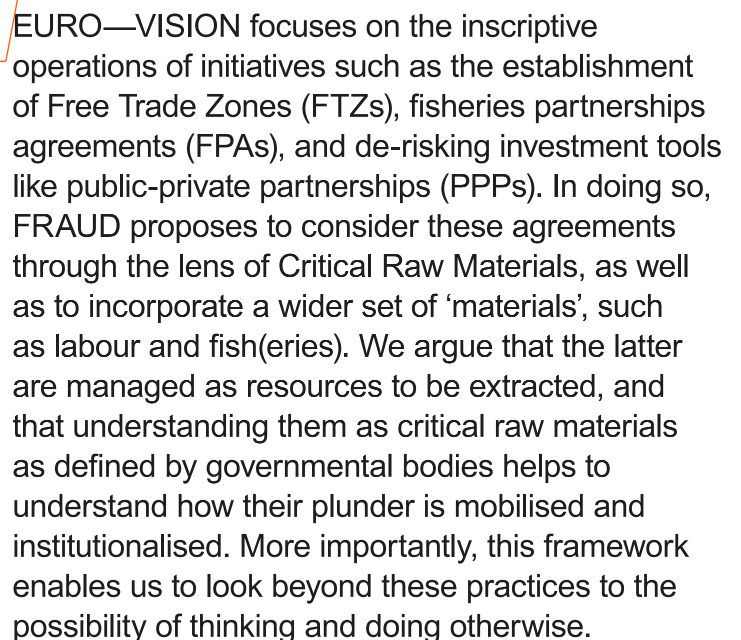
COLONIAL CURRENCIES A CONVERSATION WITH NDONGO SAMBA SYLLA



EURO—VISION is an art-led enquiry that explores the extractivist gaze of European institutions and its policies. The relationship between international relations, trade, economic policy and military operations come into focus through the lens of Critical Raw Materials. In 2008, the European Commission adopted the Critical Raw Materials Initiative, which defined a strategy for accessing resources viewed as imperative to the EU's subsistence. The criticality of resources is measured according to supply risk and economic importance. Policies are drawn up to ensure the continued availability of materials deemed critical. Such policies have led to agreements guiding the biological and geological exhaustion of the Global South. The current list, revised in 2020, includes 30 materials, including Silica, Cobalt Natural Rubber, Phosphate rock, and the newly added Lithium and Titanium.

HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND EXTRACTION BEYOND THE REMOVAL AND DISPLACEMENT OF MINERALS—TO ENCOMPASS POLICIES, INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND REGULATIONS THAT IMPOSE CONTROVERSIAL FORMS OF STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL RESOURCES ON COMMUNITIES?



EURO—VISION focuses on the inscriptive operations of initiatives such as the establishment of Free Trade Zones (FTZs), fisheries partnerships agreements (FPAs), and de-risking investment tools like public-private partnerships (PPPs). In doing so, FRAUD proposes to consider these agreements through the lens of Critical Raw Materials, as well as to incorporate a wider set of 'materials', such as labour and fish(eries). We argue that the latter are managed as resources to be extracted, and that understanding them as critical raw materials as defined by governmental bodies helps to understand how their plunder is mobilised and institutionalised. More importantly, this framework enables us to look beyond these practices to the possibility of thinking and doing otherwise.

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The following text is based on a conversation with Ndongo Samba Sylla in the EURO—VISION podcast series.

After developing an understanding of the Berlin Conference's implications, of the concept of Eurafrica, and of how the European Integration project was truly founded, we wanted to understand more about how these structures have continued, and how they have been transformed and institutionalised in contemporary international relations. One fundamental example of this is the Franc of the Financial Community of Africa. We invited Ndongo Samba Sylla, a Senegalese development economist at the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Dakar, who recently co-authored *Africa's Last Colonial Currency: The CFA Franc Story* with Fanny Pigeaud (published by Pluto Press), onto the podcast to discuss these issues with us.[1]

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FRAUD In your book, *L'arme invisible de la Françafrique, une histoire du franc CFA*, you describe how the CFA currency of the (mostly) former French colonies in Africa has enabled France (and now Europe), to maintain an economic, and to a certain extent political, control over the countries which operate with this currency.[2] Could you explain how the CFA franc has maintained structures of extractivism in the Franc Zone?[3] Could you explain how aspects such as 'pegging to the euro', the exchange rate, and devaluation contribute to maintain conditions of extractivism? And also, how this continues with the new Eco currency?

DR SYLLA Thank you very much for this invitation. I am very happy to be part of this podcast and to have the opportunity to speak about the CFA franc. The CFA franc, as you introduced, is a colonial currency. It was created in 1945, just after the Second World War. It was created at a time when the French economy was in ruins. There were a lot of food shortages, it was difficult for the French government to buy imports, and there was a high level of inflation. In the colonial empire, there were a number of currencies circulating, in Africa, Asia and so on. All those currencies were the French currency, but in disguised forms. You would have exotic bank notes and so on. And so there was one decision that had to be taken: should we have the same rate of devaluation of the franc throughout the French Empire? To do so would mean that the French franc would continue to circulate in a disguised form in the whole French Empire. But at the time the impacts of the war had been much more devastating in the metropolis than in the colonies. Thus, having the same rate of devaluation of the French franc would not have been a sound economic measure. Therefore, it was decided that there would be different rates of devaluation from the French franc. This decision automatically implied that new currencies would be created. The CFA franc was born in that context, out of a devaluation of the French franc.

There was another currency that was created, the Pacific franc that was circulated in the Pacific. Those were called the colonial francs. They were born out of the devaluation of the French franc. Nonetheless, what happened was incredible. When the CFA franc was created (by the French treasury, at that time within a provisional government), it was decided by the treasury in secret, without even letting the Minister of Colonies know. When it came to the matter of finance, the finance guys always keep things secret. The Minister of Colonies was only implied at the signature stage, meaning at the end of the process, because it was a secret decision. When this decision was taken, the decree was signed by General de Gaulle on the 25th of December 1945. The following day, the 26th of December, the CFA franc was declared at the IMF, the International Monetary Fund, which had just been created. The CFA franc acquired an international status at that time, the 26th of December 1945.

When it was created and declared at the IMF, 1.00 CFA franc was worth 1.70 French francs. That means that it was as if the colonies have a higher economic level, or higher living standards compared to the metropolis. In the case of Britain you will see that the pound sterling had a higher exchange rate value compared to the currencies of the British colonies. That made sense because Europe had a higher level of purchasing power compared to the colonies, despite the devastations of the war. However, this higher exchange rate was somehow instrumental for France in its desire to reconquer the lost market shares during the War. This is because during the War, the colonies' ties with the metropolis were broken and the colonies had started to diversify their trade relationships with other parts of the world—Latin America and so on. Therefore, the French had lost significant market shares in their own colonies.

What were the advantages of having an overvalued currency for the African colonies? The

[1] Pigeaud and Sylla, *Africa's Last Colonial Currency*.
[2] Pigeaud and Sylla, *L'Arme Invisible de la Françafrique*.
[3] Countries in the Franc zone are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Cameroon, Central Africa, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Chad.

first consequence was that the African colonies could no longer sell their products abroad. They couldn't because they had an overvalued currency. They could therefore not compete with other producers in the world at that time. They were thus obliged to turn back to the metropolis. From the point of view of the metropolis, at that time it did not have the necessary vigour to face international competition, because the economy was broken. It did however critically need to have access to raw materials, and also have access to outlets for its industrial production. However the industrial production of the metropolis was not competitive, so it could not be sold abroad.

When you have an overvalued currency, that means that you can buy imports easily, but you cannot export abroad. And so, with this overvalued currency the colonies had a certain purchasing power, allowing them to buy metropolitan products, and at the same time, the metropolis had now reconquered the trade with the French African Empire. This currency was therefore really important for France after the Second World War to reconstruct its economy by having access to critical raw materials, but also having access to critical outlets, which it could not have otherwise accessed because of its lost vigour, and the devastations of the war. The CFA franc was born in that particular context.

When it was created, it was a single currency for the Sub-Saharan part of the French Empire: West Africa, Central Africa, Madagascar and the Comoros. During the transition through the decolonisation process, many African countries said that they wanted to have their independence. In 1957, Ghana took its independence. Two years earlier, we saw that Morocco and also Tunisia, which were protectorates, started demanding to have their own independence which they acquired in 1956. Decolonisation was inevitable in Africa.

Nonetheless, France tried to circumvent this process. How? Most of the African leaders were trained in France, and some of them even had high up positions in the French institutions. Some of them were, for example, Members of Parliament in France. They were trained in French culture, and were promoters of French interests, even in the colonies, and so France had a deal with them. 'We're going to grant you independence, but it will be independence without sovereignty. You will have your flag, you will have your anthem etcetera, but no actual sovereignty. If you want to sell your raw materials, you have to ask if we want to buy it first. If we don't want you to export your raw materials, you won't export it. We will also have military bases in your country. Your educational system will be defined by us. Your currency system, that means how your currency is managed, it will depend on us. You will have to stick with the CFA franc, and your foreign exchange reserves, that means your international means of payment'. If, for example Côte d'Ivoire, sells cacao abroad, or Mali sells its cotton abroad, the foreign exchange reserves will be deposited to the French treasury in France. All these things were written in formal documents called the Cooperation Agreements.

This occurred while other African countries really decolonised in the sense that they had their flag and so on, and broke up progressively with the former metropolises, and also started to issue their own currency. This was not the case with the francophone countries south of the Sahara because they signed Cooperation Agreements with France, which was a form of independence, but not sovereignty. Only one country escaped that. It was Guinea in 1958. Why Guinea? I think Guinea escaped because Sékou Touré, who was the Guinean leader at that time, was different from the rest of African leaders (like Senegal's leader, Senghor, for example). Sékou Touré was a trade unionist, he was engaged with grassroots movements, the labour movement, etcetera. He was not a bureaucrat. Sékou Touré said to France in 1958 'I don't want to be part of the community'. France was proposing that they be part of the community, that means everything is shared but France is sovereign on the sovereign matters such as finance, defence, education and so on. Guinea said no. There was a referendum that year, in 1958, and all the other countries said 'yes, we want to stay with France, within the community'. Guinea said 'no, we want independence'. They got their independence, in 1958, and two years later they decided to issue their own currency.

Then what happened was that the French Secret Services, as a form of reprisal, inundated the Guinean economy with false bank notes. This has been written in documents by those who performed that act of sabotage, and they say it disrupted this economy. This was a clear message to Sékou Touré and to other African countries that if they want to break the ties with France, they will encounter a strong reprisal. And that's what happened. They disrupted the Guinean economy. Since then the Guinean economy is not working well, though over time this is less and less to do with this act of sabotage and is mainly because they don't have control of their raw materials. If you have your own currency and you do not have control over your economy, over your resources, your natural resources, your currency will continually lose value. That's what happens in many African countries, that they don't have control over their resources. In the case of the francophone countries using the CFA franc, they don't have control of their currencies, and they don't have control over their resources. That's the story we have been living here for six decades.

FRAUD You have very clearly explained how this process of valuation is instrumental in maintaining these colonial structures, how it's basically directing the trade through the European metropoles, and how it completely discourages trade, even between African states such that things must actually go through Europe. This means that often African states are selling their raw materials to then be repurchased in a processed form. It's of course really interesting to hear how instrumental the currency is in maintaining this. We know that because of this the CFA franc has been very controversial for decades, and it's also important that you underline that there have been various political strong-holdings, sabotage acts, and also several coups that you detail in your book, that have kept this currency in place. I wonder if you could say something about how the Eco currency in Senegal has replaced this much disliked French franc, and yet how it's much of the same.

DR SYLLA Thank you for that question. In fact, there is an issue with the so-called Eco. Why? Eco is short for ECOWAS, and ECOWAS means Economic Community of West African States. The ECOWAS gathers 15 countries of West Africa; the eight countries using the West African CFA franc, plus seven other countries. Five of them are Anglophone countries, such as Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. However, ECOWAS has a single currency project, which has been an ambition since 1983. This project has been delayed due to various reasons. But two years ago, in 2019, they said 'we want to finally launch our single currency in 2020 and we will give it the name Eco'. Then France, allied with Côte d'Ivoire, tried to hijack this project by saying 'we know there is a lot of criticism against the CFA franc, so now we, France, and Côte d'Ivoire, are going to rename the CFA franc to Eco'. And that is what they did. Recently their parliament accepted the law which will mark the transition from the CFA franc to the Eco. However, this reform is just cosmetic; the fundamentals of the CFA franc are still there. They are just changing the name.

In the CFA franc system there are a number of pillars. The first pillar is the fixed peg to the French currency (previously to the French franc, and from 1999 to the euro). Thus now, the CFA franc is pegged to the euro. Why is it pegged? This eliminates what is called exchange rate risk. If the CFA franc was not pegged to the euro, an investor coming from the Eurozone would find variations between the euro and the CFA franc, which could complicate their economic calculus. When the exchange rate is fixed, they could convert easily the euro into CFA franc and vice-versa with no exchange rate risk. They liked the CFA franc for this. This peg to the euro has been maintained. It has been criticised a lot by African economists, including myself. This will not change.

The second thing that will not change is what is called the free transferability. The free transferability, or free transfer, means that French investors can easily invest and disinvest, and at the same time they can also repatriate their incomes freely (their profits, dividends, etcetera). This also hasn't changed.

There is a third thing called the unlimited convertibility guarantee. That is a very pompous term, but it's really simple to understand. The so-called unlimited convertibility guarantee is a promise from the French treasury to lend its currency (previously the French franc, now euros) to the Central Bank of West Africa (BCEAO). If ever the Central Bank is devoid of any foreign exchange reserve, for example, if the Central Bank of West Africa is in a situation of 0.00 euro, 0.00 dollar, 0.00 yen, etcetera, 0.00 foreign currency, the central bank would ask the French treasury to lend it the desired amount of money. As a counterpart to that, the Central Bank of West Africa has been obliged to deposit 50% of all of its foreign exchange reserves—all of its means of international payments—at the French treasury. At the time of independence, it was 100%, and from 1973 to 2005, it was 65%. This has to be deposited with the French treasury in special accounts. The relationship is not between the Central Bank of Western Africa and the Bank of France. No. It's a relationship between the French treasury, and the Central Bank. It's a promise of lending. What actually happened though, across six decades, is that the BCEAO was lending money to the French treasury. Why? The BCEAO accumulated foreign exchange reserves, and each time 50% was deposited with the French treasury. The BCEAO was rarely in a situation where they were devoid of any foreign exchange reserves because the French had their representatives in the organs of the BCEAO. So that means that the French are in charge of the monetary policy of the BCEAO and exchange rate policy. For example, if their level of foreign exchange reserves had declined, the French would be there saying 'you have to change your monetary policy so that you will replenish your foreign exchange reserves'. No need to borrow from the French treasury. That's how it works. In other words, Africans had been

mostly funding the French treasury. There was only one period when the French treasury financed the Central Bank. It was during the 1980s. At that time there was this famous debt crisis, during which most foreign investors anticipated that the CFA franc would be devalued. They thus wanted to repatriate their capitals and their incomes. Following this, France lent money to the BCEAO to allow this financial bleeding. That was the only time. Hence, over six decades, you would find five decades, half a century, where Africans were funding France.

FRAUD And without interest, no?

DR SYLLA There had been interest, but what is interesting about the interest is that those have been mostly negative. You have to understand that for example, if you deposit your money at your bank, and your bank offers you for example 3% in annual interest rates, while the inflation rate (the increase in prices) is 4%, that means that every year you are losing 1% of purchasing power. That is what is called real interest rates. For example, France could have given 3% annual interest rate to the BCEAO for its reserves, but the inflation rate was 4%. That means on real terms, they were losing their money. This has been the story of the CFA franc.

What is also interesting is that when we look at trade relationships, African countries who somehow were and are still complementary with the French economy. In other words the French economy is a developed, industrial economy producing high-value products and so on. They need critical raw materials, and those raw materials are produced in Africa. They expect African countries to specialise in producing raw materials which could be accessed cheaply by France. The CFA franc is really instrumental in that. Why? Because France is a junior imperial power, unlike the United States. The United States had the world reserve currency, and most of the trade is in US dollars. So if you want to buy let's say cotton, oil, etcetera, those are invoiced in US dollars. But in the case of France, France does not need US dollars to buy cacao, to buy cotton, or to buy oil, etc. [in Africa]. France will just put numbers in bank accounts in French francs, its own currency. That means that through the CFA franc, France can access African raw materials in its own currency. No need for US dollars, no need for pound sterling [no need to exchange currency and incur a loss in doing so]. That's how it works. There is an economist called Joseph Tchundjang Pouemi who wrote a powerful book in 1980.[4] He was a former economist at the IMF but he resigned from the IMF because he didn't agree with IMF policies. He was talking about draining wealth through accounting—*le drainage par l'écriture* in French. Draining wealth through electronic writing. You just credit bank accounts in French francs and that's it. France had unlimited access to all the goods and services produced in the country using the CFA franc, and no financial limit.

FRAUD This is wild!

DR SYLLA Yes! And you see at the same time, France had a current account surplus that means that when we see all the financial payments between France and African countries, African countries give more to France than France gives to them. France has a financial surplus from African countries. At the same time, African countries had a financial surplus vis-à-vis the other countries of the world. When African countries have a surplus vis-à-vis other countries of the world, that means that they are accumulating foreign exchange reserves, and half of those foreign exchange reserves were deposited with the French treasury. The French treasury used those reserves to defend the value of the franc, which was a very weak currency.

FRAUD It's amazing to hear how explicitly the backbone of this currency is the extraction of raw materials. The more you talk about it, the clearer it becomes that, in order to extract the raw materials in its own currency, this now applies to the whole union (because of equivalence, and because of it now being pegged to the euro). Therefore, this extraction continues through the European Union, correct?

DR SYLLA Yes, when France got rid of the franc for the benefit of the euro, the same system still persisted, because what is important for France is the possibility to have access to African raw materials in its own currency, and using a credit system. When I say a credit system, this means that France does not need to have US dollars to have access to African raw materials through the

[4] Tchundjang Pouemi, *Monnaie, servitude et liberté*. Joseph Tchundjang Pouemi died under mysterious circumstances in 1984.

accounts of the Central Bank of West Africa at the French treasury. France could just say 'I want to buy cacao', so the price of cacao will be now converted in French francs or euros, and will be credited. Just numbers. That's how it works. And no use for US dollars, because if you want to have US dollars you have to own it, or at least someone has to lend in US dollars. For a junior imperialist power like France, it is a really exorbitant privilege, and at the same time, it's a political device because they are monitoring all of the financial transactions of African countries.

FRAUD Absolutely. There is something also that you were discussing earlier that I would like to come back to, this idea that the currency is also a form of de-risking. It's something that you talk about in the book, and that the CFA and now the Eco, is a way for investors to invest without risk in African states that use these currencies. You've also written extensively about more contemporary forms of de-risking tools such as PPPs, or private-public partnerships.[5] It would be interesting if you could explain a little bit about how these forms of de-risking have expanded from the currency into other types of investment tools such as the private-public partnerships, and explain a little bit how these work, also in terms of extraction.

DR SYLLA In fact the concept of de-risking refers to the elimination of various forms of risk that might be incurred by foreign investors. This is a topic which has been studied a lot by one of my collaborators and friends, Daniela Gabor, who is a professor of macro-finance. We have been recently working on a piece on this topic, de-risking, through the public-private partnerships. Public-private partnerships are long-term contractual agreements through which the international private sector commits to finance and to manage public services. For example, hospitals, toll roads, energy projects, housing, etcetera. Many development projects which take the form of public services are now financed and managed by the international private sector, and, the international private sector has some rules. They will say that 'Africa is really too risky for us. So we don't want to invest in Africa, unless we are provided the appropriate guarantees'. Normally the capitalist system rewards those who take risks. Yet those who have money, those who accumulate billions in financial assets, say that they don't want to take any risk. Thus, developing countries have to guarantee them profits. This is how contemporary capitalism works under financialisation.

So, what are the types of risk? There is first the currency risk that we discussed. For example, you are using the US dollar and you want to invest in a CFA franc country. You know that the value of the CFA franc will fluctuate, in relation to the dollar. This fluctuation could cause uncertainty. If it fluctuates negatively, this could affect the profitability of the project's finance by the international private sector. Thus, financiers will say to African countries 'we're going to agree with a given exchange rate, and when we have accumulated our profits in CFA francs, your central banks will find the foreign exchange reserve necessary to allow us to repatriate our profits at the previously agreed exchange rate'. Somehow the CFA franc has functioned like that historically for the French capital, which means that they could invest and invest, repatriate their incomes with no exchange rate risk.

There is another type of risk, demand risk. When we say demand risk, for any project to be successful there has to be a given level of demand. That means for example if the hospital, or if the toll road is to be financially viable, you have to have a given level of demand. Investors now are willing to fund projects for which people are ready to pay. For example African countries need to build infrastructure, roads, etcetera. Normally those roads should be used freely by African citizens. However now, they say 'if there's a citizen who wants to use the roads, they have to pay a fee'. Paying a fee guarantees a minimum in terms of demand and in terms of cash flow. But sometimes this minimum demand is not sufficient. They will say for example 'if the cash flow we anticipate is not obtained, the government will have to compensate for that'. For example, for a given project in which foreign investors anticipate one billion US dollars as a cash flow, if they receive less than that, the government will have to compensate the 20%. That is demand risk. With those kinds of demand risks, how it should be de-risked is also included in the PPP contracts, or public-private partnership contracts.

Then there is political risk. You could have, for example, trade unions saying that 'we want higher wages because there has been inflation' or 'to improve our living conditions'. This obviously will affect the profitability of a project financed by international investors. Against those kinds of risks, the state has to guarantee that the trade unions will not cause harm, etcetera. If ever for example, there is no work due to strikes, and this affects their profitability, the state will have to compensate.

[5] Gabor and Sylla, 'Planting budgetary time bombs in Africa'.

Sometimes if there is an environmental legislation which will affect the profits of a project, this also has to be submitted to compensation by the state. That is how foreign finance, global finance, works currently. Profits with social safety nets, and no risk at all. This agenda is pushed by the World Bank, by most of the development banks, and sometimes they say 'but it's a good thing, Africans need infrastructures, and there are people in the Global North who have billions of assets, financial assets, and they have nothing to do with it. So why not give them the appropriate conditions so that they will help build infrastructures for African countries? It's a win-win situation'. In fact, it's not a win-win situation because the African countries are generally bringing more in terms of finance compared to what the foreign investor brings.

For example, before the launching of the project, African countries will get indebted in foreign currency to provide a subsidy first. From there, the foreign investors will for example be given the right to exploit and manage a project for 30 years, sometimes much more, even 99 years. The contract could stipulate that no income will be given to the state before 20 or 25 years. During this period no taxes are paid, no tax on imports, etcetera. Sometimes even the location of the land is free. In Senegal, for example for a toll road of a distance of 50 kilometres, the annual rate paid by the foreign company was 1.5 euro. Not 1.5 million euro, but 1.5 euro, annually. That's how it works. The assumption that this will help African states finance their infrastructure on easier terms is false. African countries are obliged to get indebted in order to provide subsidies, and they will lose fiscal income and so on. Also, if ever there are risks which have to be compensated, these are budgetary commitments which originally were not planned. This creates another set of problems. In fact, people don't realise that infrastructure projects which are financed in foreign currency will necessarily increase the debt level of African countries. Why? First, they will get indebted to provide a subsidy. How will they pay this subsidy? To pay for this subsidy they have to create foreign income, meaning they have to create exports. Infrastructure projects do not bring foreign income, because the income is realised in local currency.

FRAUD So it's again geared towards the extraction of resources, to be able to create funds, to be able to repay the debt in foreign currency.

DR SYLLA Yes, in fact the infrastructure projects could not pay for themselves because if you want to pay the debt used to build that infrastructure, you have to generate export income in foreign currency, and the income you receive from the infrastructure will be an income in national currency. Meanwhile, you need foreign currency to pay for the debt.

FRAUD My last question is something that we talked about last time, and also that you've written about in your article together with Kai Koddenbrock and Ingrid Kvangraven which is titled 'Beyond Financialisation: The Need for a Longue Durée Understanding of Finance in Imperialism'.[6] In this article, you argue that it is wrong to understand the divorce between finance and production as an emerging tendency: when looking from a *longue durée* perspective, it becomes clear that it has always been so. It's not an emerging tendency but is actually an inherent property. I would like us to end on these lessons that we may learn from this.

DR SYLLA This paper followed one we did on financialisation in Africa. We wanted to take stock of what is happening in Africa in terms of financialisation. Our first paper was quantitatively oriented. We just looked at quantitative indicators as a first step. In the second step, we used a *longue durée* perspective, meaning to see financial relationships from the perspective of the Global South but using a longer time-frame than the last four or five decades. We find arguments in the literature that there is something unprecedented historically that is happening in the contemporary world, that finance has divorced from legitimate pursuits. Finance is behaving like a dictatorial power, interested only by its quest for self-valorisation, the quest for profits, and ignoring legitimate and social needs. This is something really strange for the perspective of the developing countries in the Global South. What the literature posits to be new in fact is what we have endured as people from the Global South for the last century and a half. From the beginning, finance in developing countries was divorced from the real needs of the people of the Global South, and colonialism has been a clear example of that. Banks were mostly foreign-dominated and would finance only extractive sectors, for example, to allow for the export of raw materials and so on. And they

[6] Koddenbrock, Kvangraven and Sylla, 'Beyond Financialisation'.

would not finance activities that would create a more self-centred economy, or an economy which would meet the needs of the local population. That's how finance regularly works. We wanted to remind people that this is how finance works.

For us, if we situate ourselves from the longer perspective of the Global South, there is nothing new about this divorce between production and finance. What we could at least perceive as new is that now finance is behaving in the Global North as it behaves in the Global South. That means now, even the Global North is becoming a colonial province of global finance. This is an interesting trend. What you could learn from us, the Global South, is that if you want to have an egalitarian society, a well-managed society, finance has to be domesticated. This has been said by Keynes: 'let finance be national'. Finance has to be national. If finance is not national you are limiting the possibility for democratic policies and egalitarian economies, so finance has to be national. However, globalisation means that finance is global and there are no barriers to the free flow of finance. According to what we have seen in the Global South, if we push towards financial liberalisation, we'll see the manifestations of underdevelopment in many parts of the Global North. We have started to see that. We see that for example a large section of working classes in the Global North, their income has declined, their real incomes have declined in the last four decades. That means that pushing the agenda of global finance is a way of pursuing an anti-popular, anti-democratic, and anti-national project. I think this could be a major lesson from the Global South to the Global North.

At the same time, we are in a global world and we are facing similar challenges. It means that we have to tackle global finance collectively, in a way that will help manage the sometimes conflicting interests between the Global North and the Global South. We are internationalists, we are for the solidarity between peoples. Government solidarity is something we don't know about because, as they say, governments have only their interests. I don't like that maxim myself, but I think that people all over the world have the same interests, and sometimes those interests are in conflict with what their governments are doing, because their governments pursue a particular agenda that is of the benefit to a limited number of social categories. Finance is clearly a problem, global finance, but we have to tackle it together.

FRAUD We will finish on this call to nationalise finance, or to bring finance back to to a national level to some degree. Also, with thinking about how we can cooperate as well. This is not a populist nationalism of course, so it's important to think about it the cooperative way. Ndongo, thank you so much for your generosity and also for your research. It's been fascinating for us to learn about the financial tools that have perpetuated the extractivist model, also to think about how we can think otherwise, and so to renationalise finance would also be to look away from the extractive model of extracting out towards the metropole. This is something that we will think consider in more depth. Thank you.

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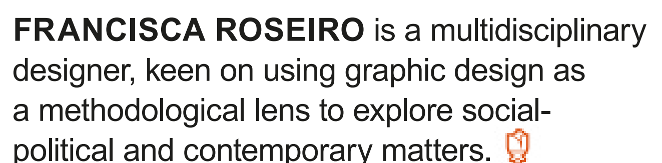
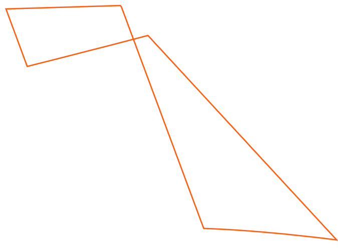
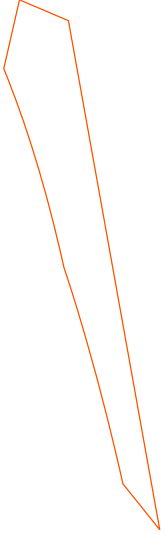
FRAUD (Audrey Samson & Francisco Gallardo) is a London-based duo of artist/researchers which develop modes of art-led enquiry that examine the extractive gaze of the European Union's institutions and policies. Through their practice, FRAUD cultivate critical spatial literacy and cosmogony building. @la_fraud

FRANCISCA ROSEIRO is a multidisciplinary designer, keen on using graphic design as a methodological lens to explore social-political and contemporary matters.







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