

From a Specialized Tourist Resort to a Multifunctional Tourist-Residential Territory: Residentialization and Territorial Transformation in Saly (Senegal)

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Abstract

Saly was created as a seaside resort, yet part of its recent development is now tied to people who stay for several months each year or who have settled there more permanently. This article examines how these residential practices have contributed to the transformation of a destination originally planned around tourism. The analysis draws on material collected during doctoral fieldwork between 2021 and 2024, including semi structured interviews with European residents, local inhabitants, tourism professionals, health workers and institutional actors, together with direct observation, documentary sources and spatial evidence. The trajectories described by residents show that settlement generally followed earlier tourist experience of Saly. Repeated visits provided familiarity with the destination before longer stays, housing rental and, in some cases, property ownership became part of everyday life. The effects extend beyond individual residential choices. Field observations and interviews point to the spread of villas and residential areas, changes in land use, greater demand for services used throughout the year and new concerns for local institutions. Health care is particularly revealing because ageing residents staying for long periods have needs that differ from those associated with short tourist visits. These changes have not displaced tourism, which remains central to Saly's economy and identity. Tourism and residence are now present in the same territory and shape its use in different ways. We use residentialization to describe

this gradual increase in residential use and the changes observed around it. In Saly, the result is not the end of the resort model, but a place where tourism continues while residential life has become a durable part of local organization.

Keywords

Residentialization, Territorial Change, Tourism Urbanization, Residential Tourism, Lifestyle Migration, Mature Destination, Saly, Senegal

1. Introduction

Tourist places do not remain unchanged once they have been established. Visitor numbers and profiles shift, investment moves into new activities, mobility patterns change, and public decisions reshape the territory over time. [Butler's \(1980\)](#) Tourism Area Life Cycle is still a useful reference point, less for the fixed sequence it proposes than for a simpler reminder: a destination has a history, and what it does at one stage is not necessarily what it will do at the next. [Mullins \(1991\)](#) looked at this from a different angle. Tourism, in his account, is a force of urbanization, an urban development process organized largely around leisure production and consumption. This fits Saly reasonably well. Tourism there did not simply add visitors to an existing settlement; it produced a new spatial and economic organization where little had previously existed.

However, new spatial and social dynamics emerge as a resort matures. Roads, services and amenities built for holidaymakers can also make destinations attractive to those seeking longer-term residence. Research has approached this shift through second-home ownership and property acquisition ([Williams & Hall, 2000](#); [O'Reilly, 2003](#); [Benson & O'Reilly, 2009](#); [Hall & Müller, 2004](#)), lifestyle migration ([Benson & O'Reilly, 2009](#); [Benson & O'Reilly, 2016](#)), and international retirement migration, where ties to the country of origin often persist ([King et al., 2000](#); [Gustafson, 2001](#); [Casado-Díaz, 2006](#)). These strands overlap but they do not really ask the same question. Their effects, in any case, are not confined to the people who move. New residents shape housing demand, land prices, construction, services and relations with local institutions ([Janoschka & Haas, 2013](#); [Croucher, 2012](#)). Most of what has been written on this concerns Southern Europe, North America, Latin America and parts of Asia. African cases are thinner on the ground, limited mainly to work on land access in Costa Rica ([van Noorloos, 2011](#); [van Noorloos, 2013](#)), on urban land debates across the Global South more broadly ([Steel et al., 2017](#)), and on second homes in South Africa ([Visser, 2004](#); [Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2010](#); [Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2011](#)). West African coastal destinations barely appear at all, which is worth pausing on given how much land regimes, planning capacity, infrastructure and colonial histories can vary from one region to the next.

Saly sits on Senegal's Petite Côte and offers a useful setting to look at these ques-

tions more closely. It was developed as a planned seaside resort from the closing decades of the twentieth century and became one of Senegal's leading international tourism destinations; hotels, holiday villages, restaurants and leisure facilities were initially built with temporary visitors in mind. Over time villas, second homes and longer stays became part of the picture too, and the doctoral research this article draws on research showing that many European residents had known Saly as tourists well before they extended their stays or bought property there. None of this has pushed tourism aside. Hotels keep operating, short-stay visitors remain part of the local economy, but the territory now also has to answer to the needs of people living there day to day. Health care makes the shift particularly visible: ageing European residents tend to need routine consultations, medication, diagnostic tests and follow-up care that a short holiday simply does not require, and that alone signals that Saly has moved beyond the functions of a conventional resort.

Taken separately, none of the frameworks above quite covers what the fieldwork in Saly shows. [Butler \(1980\)](#) places the resort within a longer tourism history but has little to say about former visitors turning into residents. [Mullins \(1991\)](#) is useful for reading the urban form tourism has produced, while work on lifestyle and residential migration leans more toward individual motivations and housing choices. The material gathered in Saly also points to changes in services, land use and local institutions, and that is really why residentialization is the term used here. It refers to what happens once staying in Saly becomes, for a growing number of former visitors, simply part of ordinary life. Property is one visible piece of that, but the interviews point to more than property: shopping, local travel, medical appointments, and the practical arrangements that recur over several months and end up changing how the resort functions outside the short holiday window.

From this follows the research question: how does residentialization contribute to the transformation of a specialized tourist resort into a multifunctional tourist-residential territory? Three things are at stake in answering it. First, what happens once a tourism-oriented urban system is established and starts supporting more durable forms of occupation. Second, treating residentialization as more than a property matter, bringing housing, services and institutions into a single analysis rather than three separate ones. Third, documenting all of this in a West African coastal setting that the literature has largely passed over.

The argument, in short, is that Saly did not move from tourism to residence along some tidy sequence. Tourism built the infrastructure, accessibility and visibility that later made longer settlement possible, and residential uses grew inside that space once it existed. What Saly has today is a territory where tourism and residence sit side by side and jointly shape the demand for land, services and public action.

The analysis first approaches residentialization as a dynamic of territorial re-composition at the intersection of destination evolution, tourism urbanization and lifestyle migration, before presenting the study area, the research design and the findings according to the stages of Saly's transformation, and finally discussing

their implications and drawing out the study's limitations and broader relevance.

2. Literature Review

The literature on destination change provides the historical starting point for the analysis. **Butler (1980)** showed that tourist areas pass through different moments of development and that maturity can lead to more than one outcome. For Saly, this perspective is useful because the resort was planned, expanded and consolidated before the residential practices examined here became prominent. The model is less informative, however, about the territorial consequences of people remaining in the destination for much longer periods.

Mullins (1991) approached the issue from another direction by examining tourism as a force of urbanization. Resorts can grow rapidly around leisure consumption, with land, services and employment organized around visitors. This description fits an important part of Saly's early development. It does not by itself explain the later spread of villas, longer stays and services used throughout the year. Those developments require attention to residence as well as tourism.

Research on second homes and residential tourism provides another part of the explanation. When visitors return frequently, purchase property or occupy a destination for several months, the tourist and resident categories begin to overlap (**Hall & Müller, 2004**). Property development is central to this literature. In Saly, however, the effects observed in the field extend beyond housing to commerce, health services, infrastructure and local institutions. This is why residentialization is used here as the broader analytical term. **Table 1** summarizes the conceptual distinctions used in the study and clarifies the specific analytical role assigned to residentialization.

Table 1. Conceptual distinctions used in this study.

Concept	Main focus	Main limitation	Contribution of this article
Destination life cycle (Butler, 1980)	Stages of growth, consolidation, decline/rejuvenation	Limited attention to residential settlement as a distinct trajectory	Positions residentialization as an additional, under-theorized trajectory
Tourism urbanization (Mullins, 1991)	Production of an urban form oriented towards leisure	Focuses on tourism-led growth, not later habitation	Extends the concept to the subsequent residential phase of the same territory
Residential tourism (Hall & Müller, 2004)	Second homes, property investment, recurrent occupation	Emphasis on real estate; leaves aside services and institutions	Distinguishes housing from the broader territorial process it triggers
Lifestyle migration (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Benson & O'Reilly, 2016)	Individual motivations for relocation in search of a better life	Analysis centred on the individual/household scale	Links individual trajectories to their cumulative territorial effects
Residentialization (this study)	Territorial transformation through the accumulation of residential settlement	Analytical framework applied here to the Saly case	Central analytical framework of the article

Lifestyle migration adds the motives and resources behind these residential choices. It concerns comparatively privileged mobility in search of a preferred way of life (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Benson & O'Reilly, 2016; Croucher, 2012). Retirement migration narrows the focus to older people whose move may remain transnational because family, administrative and medical ties continue across countries (King et al., 2000; Gustafson, 2001; Casado-Díaz, 2006; Warnes & Williams, 2006). Work from Latin America has linked these movements to gentrification and gated residential development (Janoschka & Haas, 2013), and to the socio-spatial exclusion that can accompany relatively affluent lifestyle migration into lower-income destinations (Hayes, 2018). Fleuret and Jouault (2019) also show, in Cancún and the Riviera Maya, why tourism and health need to be considered together. For Saly, health becomes important not because the destination specializes in medical tourism, but because some foreign residents are ageing in place.

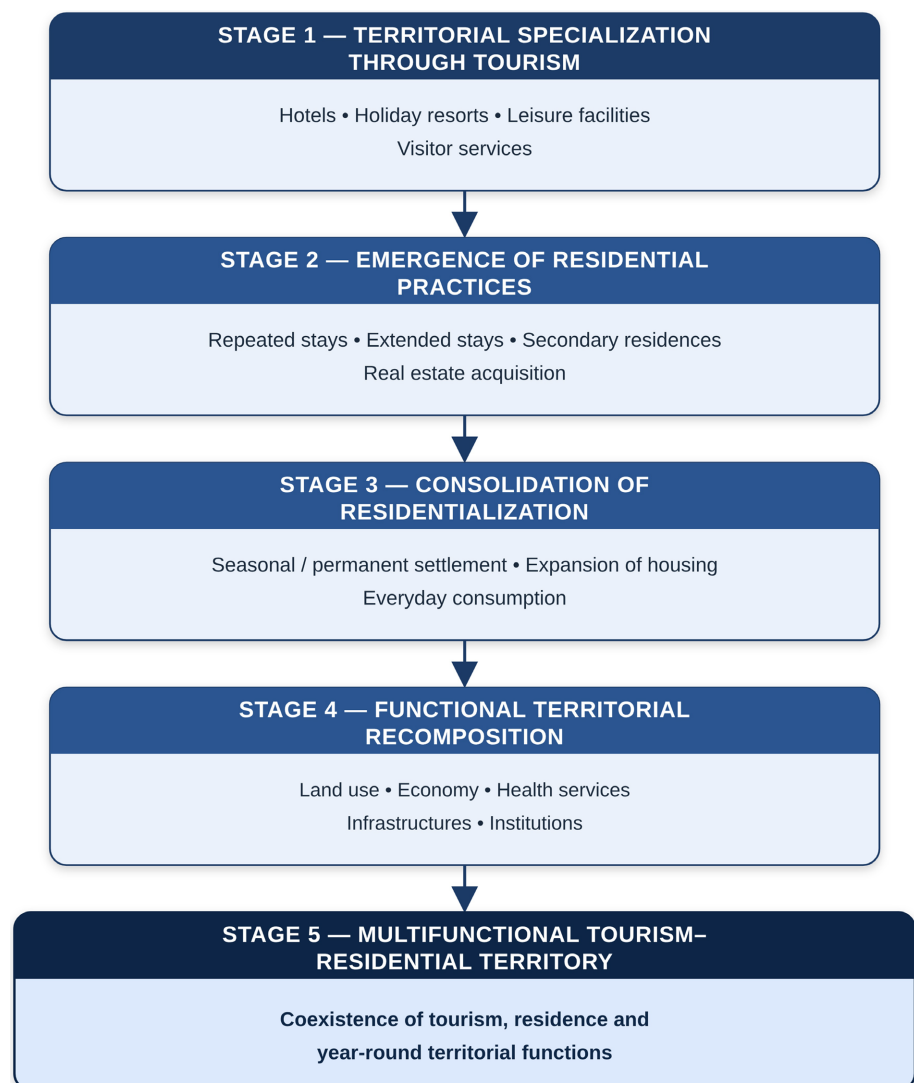


Figure 1. Analytical framework of the tourist-residential transition.

In this study, residentialization is identified through five criteria considered together: recurrent or extended stay; regular use of housing, everyday consumption and activities, repeated use of local services, and observable changes in housing, land use or institutional provision. Second home use or property ownership alone is not considered sufficient evidence. Lifestyle migration primarily describes the motives and trajectories of mobile individuals, while mixed land use describes the coexistence of functions in space. Residentialization, as used here, refers to the cumulative territorial effects that become visible when durable residential practices, everyday service use and institutional responses occur together and persist over time.

For the analysis, the process is read through four moments. The first is the establishment of Saly as a specialized tourist resort. The second appears when repeated visitors begin to use the destination residentially, notably through longer stays and property acquisition. A third moment is visible when this presence becomes more durable and affects housing and daily consumption. The final moment concerns changes in land use, services and institutional responsibilities. These moments overlap in the field and should not be understood as rigid stages. **Figure 1** shows how these overlapping moments are organized within the analytical framework, from tourism specialization to a multifunctional tourist-residential territory.

The analysis of Saly accordingly focuses on three relationships: the role of tourism development in producing the initial specialized territory, the practices through which residential settlement emerged within it, and the effects of residentialization on housing, land use, services and local institutions.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design and Secondary Analysis

Saly is examined here as a qualitative case study (Yin, 2018). The material was originally gathered for doctoral research dealing with tourism planning, ageing European residents and access to health care. No new interviews or observations were added for this article. Instead, the existing corpus was read again with a different question in mind: what does it reveal about the growing residential use of a territory created primarily for tourism? The secondary analysis (Heaton, 2004) concentrated on settlement trajectories, housing, land use, everyday services and institutional responses. Health professionals make up the largest single category of respondents in the corpus, a legacy of the doctoral project's original focus on ageing and access to care; for the present analysis, their accounts remained directly useful because they were often best placed to describe how the everyday needs of long-term residents, and the resulting demand on housing, commerce and local institutions, differed from those of short-stay visitors.

3.2. Study Area

Saly is located on the Petite Côte, roughly 80 km south of Dakar, in the Mbour

department. The area forms part of one of the country's leading coastal tourist regions. Its accessibility from Dakar, its seaside setting, its warm climate and its concentration of tourism infrastructure have all contributed to its national and international appeal. **Figure 2** shows the location of Saly on Senegal's Petite Côte, while **Figure 3** identifies the three study sectors used to distinguish tourist, residential and local areas.

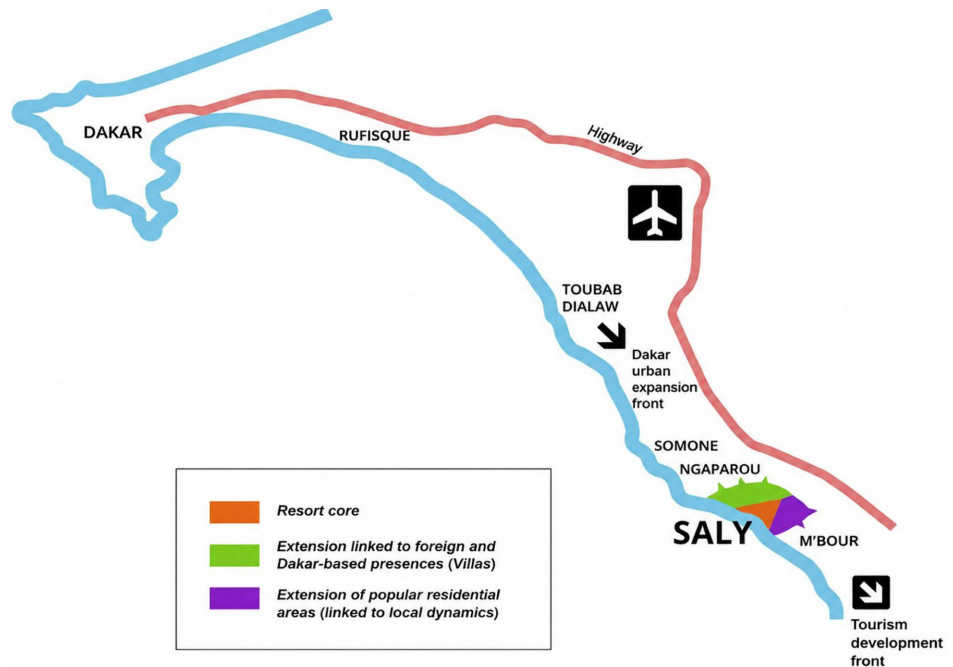


Figure 2. Location of the study area on Senegal's Petite Côte. Source: Fleuret, Lessault & Sakho (Fleuret et al., 2023), field mapping.

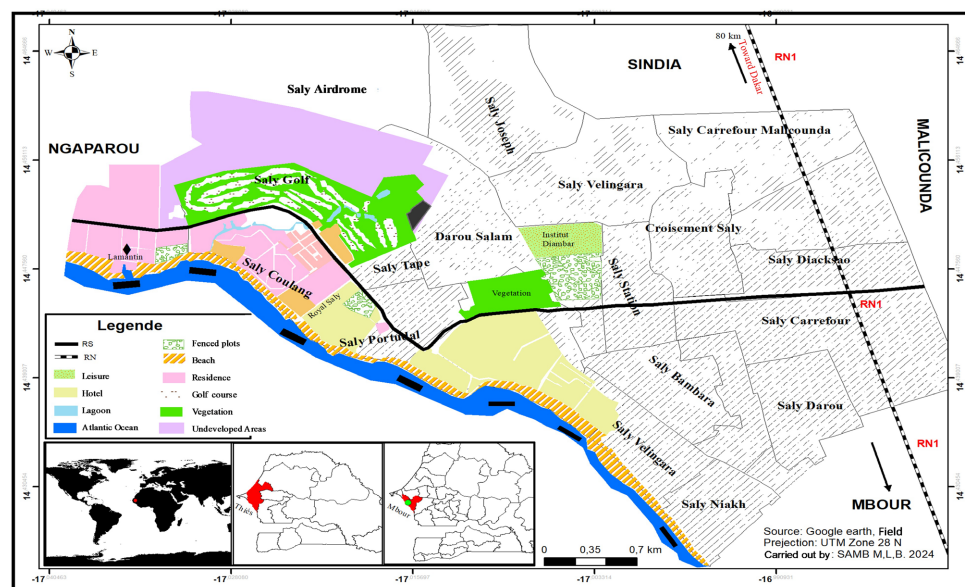


Figure 3. The three study sectors within Saly, used to sample tourist, residential and local areas. Source: doctoral thesis (Samb, M.L.B.), field mapping.

Before tourism expanded, fishing, agriculture and other coastal activities occupied an important place in the local economy (Ciss, 1983; Ciss, 1989). From the late twentieth century onward, tourism policy and private investment changed the physical and economic organization of Saly. Hotels, holiday villages, restaurants and leisure facilities developed along the coast and increasingly connected the area to international tourism markets.

The available evidence points to two broad and overlapping periods. The earlier tourism-oriented development of Saly is reconstructed primarily from documentary sources on the emergence and organization of tourism on the Little Coast (Ciss, 1983; Ciss, 1989). Ciss (1983) documents the development of tourism on the Little Coast, while Ciss (1989) specifically examines Saly-Portudal in relation to the expansion of international tourism. These documentary sources are complemented by retrospective accounts from respondents with long-term knowledge of Saly. On this basis, the 1980s are treated as an interpretive marker for a period in which Saly's development was primarily structured around planned seaside tourism.

The later visibility of villas, second homes and longer residential stays is supported by the discussion of Saly's recent transformation provided by Fleuret et al. (2023), together with field observations and respondents' accounts of their own residential trajectories. This evidence points to a growing articulation between tourism and residential uses, particularly from the 2000s onward. The 2000s are therefore treated as an interpretive marker for a period in which residential practices became increasingly visible alongside tourism. These dates should not be understood as precise chronological boundaries: tourism and residential uses overlap, and the transition occurred progressively rather than through a single identifiable break.

These periods overlap. Residence did not replace tourism, and hotels and leisure activities continue to attract temporary visitors. The interest of Saly lies precisely in this coexistence of tourism, residential and ordinary urban uses.

The contemporary territory comprises several categories of users:

- long-established Senegalese residents;
- internal migrants drawn by employment and trading opportunities;
- tourism workers;
- regional and international migrants;
- short-stay tourists;
- second-home owners;
- seasonal European residents;
- longer-term foreign residents, retirees in particular.

The fieldwork showed quite different ways of using Saly. Hotel guests were concentrated in areas designed for short stays. Villa owners and tenants were encountered more often in residential sectors, while Senegalese households followed another pattern of everyday occupation. Interviews alone did not show these spatial differences clearly, which is why observations and mapping were used alongside them.

3.3. Empirical Material and Sampling

The empirical corpus combines interviews with six groups: ageing European residents, elected officials and public institutions, health professionals, associations, tourism and hospitality actors, and members of the local population. Interviews with European residents covered their first contact with Saly, housing situation, length of stay, motivations and everyday practices. Other interviews addressed planning, employment, infrastructure, housing development and the effects attributed to foreign settlement.

Observation and photographic records were used alongside the interviews. We also consulted planning documents, institutional reports, demographic material and press sources. Each source answered a different part of the research question. Interviews documented trajectories and perceptions, observation showed how activities and housing were distributed, and documentary material helped reconstruct the earlier tourism development of the resort.

Participants were selected purposively because they had direct experience of the changes under study. The sample varied by length of presence, residential status and institutional role. Institutional contacts and direct approaches were used alongside snowball recruitment, which was particularly useful for reaching European residents who were not systematically listed in administrative records. Interviews continued until the main themes were recurring and additional material no longer changed the interpretation in a substantial way (Guest et al., 2006; Hennink et al., 2017).

Fieldwork took place during several missions between May 2021 and October 2024. It included an exploratory phase in March and April 2022, a pilot survey in October 2022, complementary visits in February 2023 and October 2024, and a six month intensive phase from 5 March to 11 August 2023. Interviews were conducted in French and were normally recorded and transcribed in full. A small number of informal exchanges were documented through handwritten notes when recording could have compromised confidentiality. Coding was carried out manually. **Table 2** presents the distribution of the 57 semi-structured interviews by category of actor.

Table 2. Distribution of semi-structured interviews by category of actor.

Category of actor	Number of interviews
Ageing European residents (owners, tenants, seasonal or permanent)	16
Local elected officials and public institutions (municipality, decentralized services, planning)	4
Health professionals (public health posts, private clinics, pharmacies)	28
Local associations and collectives	2
Hospitality and tourism-sector actors	2
Members of the local population (residents, workers, traders)	5
Total	57

Note: Source: compiled from Samb, M. (2025), **Table 2**, doctoral thesis, p. 44. The “health professionals” and “associations” categories in the present table respectively group together public health posts, private clinics and pharmacies (28 interviews) and migrant-support organizations (2 interviews), which are recorded separately in the thesis.

3.4. Data Analysis and Validity

Data collection and analysis developed together. The exploratory work helped identify relevant actors and refine the interview guides. For the present secondary analysis, the corpus was reread using meaning-bearing passages as the working unit of coding. Deductive codes came from the analytical framework and covered duration and recurrence of stay, housing status, everyday consumption, service use, land and built-form change, and institutional response. Inductive codes were retained when recurrent issues emerged from the interviews and field material, including the role of earlier tourist stays in decisions to settle, transnational health practices, the spread of villas and private residential complexes, and perceived inequalities in land and infrastructure. Manual coding was informed by the qualitative analysis approach discussed by Paillé and Mucchielli (2016). Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2021) then brought these two sets of codes together. The original health-focused material was therefore not treated as a new territorial survey. It was recoded only where interview passages, observations or documents contained information relevant to the present territorial question, and the resulting themes were compared across time, space and source type.

Several forms of triangulation were used. Accounts from European residents were compared with those of public officials, health professionals, tourism actors, associations and local residents, and interviews were checked against observations, photographs and documents. The composition of the corpus required particular caution. Health professionals account for 28 of the 57 interviews, whereas the sample includes 5 members of the local population and 2 tourism and hospitality actors. Health professionals were therefore used primarily for evidence on care, ageing and recurring service needs, not as substitutes for tourism-sector or territory-wide evidence. Claims about housing, land use, infrastructure and governance were retained only when they were supported by the actor groups directly concerned and, where available, by field observation or documentary material. Contradictory views were retained rather than treated as errors. Europeans remain a numerical minority in the wider urban area, and the analysis does not assume that residentialization affects all parts of Saly in the same way.

3.5. Ethical Considerations and Limitations

Participation was voluntary. Names are not used in the article. Respondents are identified only through information needed to understand their position in the field, for example their professional role, age group or duration of residence. The quotations retained here reflect situations that appeared repeatedly in the interviews. We omitted details that could make a person recognizable within a small professional or residential circle.

Several limits must be kept in mind. The purposive sample does not provide a statistical picture of all European residents in Saly, and the findings cannot simply be transferred to every mature resort. The interview distribution is also uneven because the original doctoral project focused strongly on ageing and health care.

With 28 health professionals among 57 respondents, compared with 5 members of the local population and 2 tourism actors, the corpus is better suited to identifying mechanisms and experiences than to measuring territory-wide change. Counting the foreign residential population is itself difficult because many people move seasonally and do not share the same administrative status. Property transactions, land prices, urban growth and tourism-sector restructuring were not measured through a dedicated quantitative dataset. Accordingly, statements about these issues are presented as triangulated qualitative observations or respondent perceptions, not as estimates of magnitude, prevalence or causality.

4. Results

4.1. Tourism Development as the Foundation of Territorial Specialization

Saly's present form reflects tourism policies introduced from the late twentieth century onward. A coastal economy once strongly associated with fishing, agriculture and small trade was progressively reorganized around an international seaside resort. Public investment and private capital supported hotels, leisure facilities and services intended largely for visitors.

Hotels, holiday villages, restaurants and recreational facilities concentrated along the coast. Transport and commercial services followed. This development gave tourism a major role in local employment and income and produced a spatial organization in which the most visible facilities were directed toward visitor use.

People who had known Saly for many years generally remembered an earlier period dominated by the resort economy. Hotels, holiday villages and visitor services occupied a central place in both employment and the physical organization of the area. Residential uses were already present, but respondents did not describe them as having the visibility they have today.

Tourism also made Saly known to people who might later consider living there. Several residents had already visited the resort before they thought about renting or buying a home. Familiarity mattered. They knew how to reach Saly, had experience of local services and had begun to form social contacts. In that sense, the tourism period created more than infrastructure. It also reduced the uncertainty associated with a later residential move.

The interviews contain many versions of the same trajectory, although individual circumstances differ. A first holiday was followed by another visit, then by longer periods in Saly. During these stays, respondents learned what daily life cost, how transport and services worked and whether the climate suited them over more than a short vacation. For some, renting a villa came next. Property purchase occurred later in a smaller number of trajectories.

The residential use of Saly thus developed within a setting already shaped by tourism. Roads, services, international connections and the resort's reputation had been created for visitors. They also made it easier for former tourists to remain for several months or to settle after retirement. This later use was not the

original purpose of those investments, but it became one of their consequences.

4.2. From Repeated Tourism to Residential Settlement

Few interviewees said that they had arrived in Saly already intending to settle. Their first experience was usually a holiday. The idea of living there came later, after they had returned enough times to know the place beyond the conditions of a short visit.

For most respondents, the move toward residence was progressive. One stay led to another, and the duration often increased. Some moved from hotel accommodation to a rented villa before considering a purchase. Others never bought property and continued to rent. What matters in these accounts is precisely this gradual passage, which makes a strict separation between tourist and permanent migrant difficult to sustain.

Housing was only one part of becoming familiar with Saly. Through repeated stays, respondents learned where to buy what they needed, who could help with a practical problem and how routine matters were handled locally. Social contacts developed as well. In several interviews, this knowledge of everyday life was presented as one of the reasons why remaining longer eventually seemed possible.

Buying a villa or apartment often marked a further change. Housing was no longer simply part of a holiday. Ownership gave respondents a fixed base and, for several of them, encouraged longer annual stays or plans to remain in Saly after retirement.

One long-established resident, who has run a small business in the resort centre for several years, situates her own purchase within this wider pattern: in the development where she lives, ownership rather than rental has become the norm, and it was precisely this prospect of settling on a lasting basis, rather than passing through as a tourist, that persuaded her to buy.

Other residents link this choice to more practical considerations: "Life here is far cheaper than in France. With my pension, I can enjoy the good life Saly offers, without worrying about the cost of living." (European resident, 66, 5 years' residence, interviewed at his villa)

The interviews do not point to a single moment at which tourism became migration. Instead, residential settlement developed through repeated visits, familiarity and, for some households, property investment.

Retirement often made this transition easier. Once professional obligations ended, respondents could spend several months each year in Senegal or remain there for longer periods. In these accounts, retirement did not create the attachment to Saly, but it gave people more time to act on an attachment already formed through earlier visits.

Many nevertheless maintained lives across two countries. Family ties, administrative obligations and medical follow up often remained in Europe. Residence in Saly was therefore frequently seasonal or circulatory rather than a complete and permanent move.

As one long-standing European property owner in Saly explains:

“I bought a villa here, with a garden and a pool, for the price of a small apartment in Europe. It changed my life, I never imagined I could live in a space like this.”

European resident, 68, near-permanent resident in Saly

These arrangements show why permanent migration alone is too narrow a measure of residentialization. Recurrent long stays and seasonal residence also increase the demand for housing and everyday services within the destination.

4.3. Residentialization and the Recomposition of Housing Forms and Land Use

Changes in the built environment are among the easiest effects to see in the field. Villas, apartment buildings and private residential compounds now stand alongside accommodation associated with the original resort. Interviews and documentary sources confirm that this residential stock has grown over time, although the available data do not allow a complete count.

Villas are especially visible in the newer residential extensions. Some are occupied for only part of the year, while others support much longer stays. Construction has consequently moved beyond accommodation intended for conventional holiday use. The spread of these properties has also extended the built area beyond the older concentration of hotels and holiday villages.

Observation confirmed the coexistence of several forms of accommodation:

- hotels and holiday villages;
- tourist residences;
- individual villas;
- apartment buildings;
- secure gated communities;
- locally occupied housing.

Respondents linked part of the change in the property market to European residential demand. In some sectors, they reported rising land values and new residential development, while estate agencies, construction companies and property managers were described as adapting to this market. These accounts do not establish that foreign residents were the sole or dominant cause. Domestic demand, internal migration, tourism investment and the wider urban growth of the Mbour area may also contribute to construction and land-price pressure. The interviews are therefore used here to identify one perceived component of a broader transformation rather than to assign a quantified causal share to foreign settlement. A pharmacist who has worked in Saly for eighteen years described a movement from gated residences toward individually built villas along the area known locally as the “billionaires’ track”:

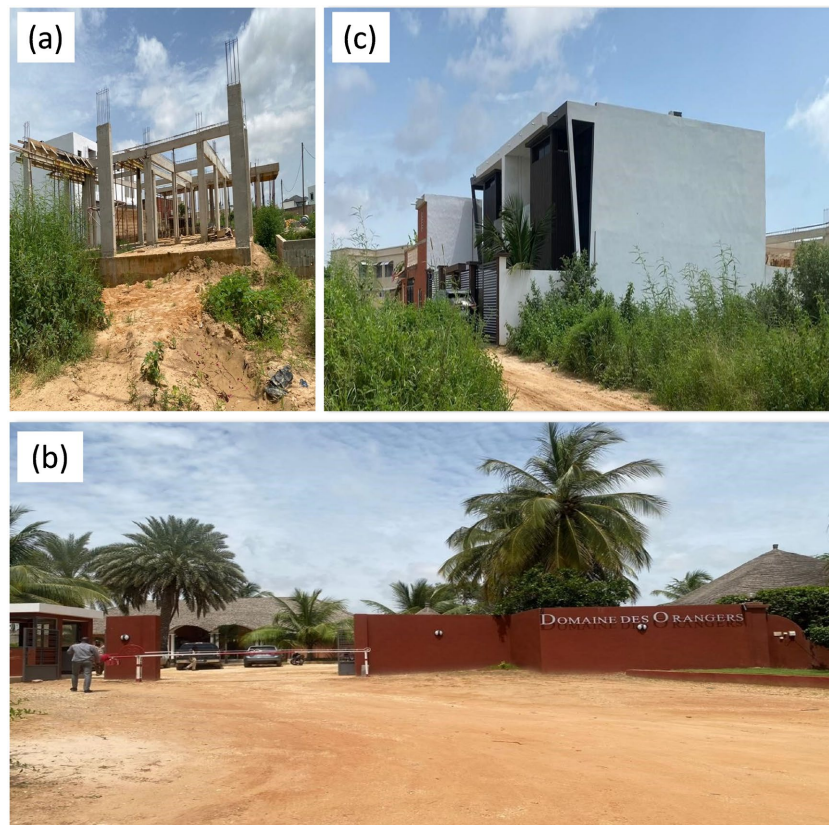
“At first, migrants generally lived in gated communities to protect themselves against theft and assault, but over time they move out of these communities to buy land and build their own villa.”

Pharmacy owner, 18 years' experience, Saly

The change in housing is also a change in the use of land. Residential construction has entered areas once more clearly associated with tourism and has extended into spaces that were less urbanized. This does not mean that every new building results from foreign settlement, but interviews with local actors repeatedly linked part of the expansion to demand for villas and residential property.

Field visits also showed differences in the physical organization of these residential spaces. Gardens, walls, private security and internal roads are common in several compounds and villa areas. Such features are designed for domestic occupation and maintenance over long periods. They contrast with accommodation whose main function is to receive successive groups of short stay visitors.

Fleuret et al. (2023) report French retirees living in about ten secured collective residences in southern Saly before the more recent spread of individual villa estates, notably along the “billionaires’ track”. The field material used here points in the same direction. Longer residential occupation also changes the rhythm of these areas because properties may remain occupied, supervised or maintained outside the main tourism season.



Note: Source: doctoral thesis (Samb, M.L.B.), field photographs.

Figure 4. The evolving residential fabric of Saly. (a) Villa construction along the “billionaires’ track”. (b) Entrance to a secure gated community. (c) Individual villa in a residential extension linked to foreign settlement. Photographic plate illustrating the diversification of residential typologies described in Section 4.3.

Hotels nevertheless remain present alongside these residential developments. The spatial change observed in Saly is therefore one of coexistence, not the replacement of tourism by housing. **Figure 4** illustrates this diversification of the residential fabric through villa construction, a gated community and an individual villa in a residential extension.

4.4. Service Diversification and the Emergence of Year-Round Territorial Functions

Longer residence has also changed the kinds of services used in Saly. A short stay visitor mainly needs accommodation, food and leisure services. Someone living there for several months also depends on shops, banking, transport, maintenance, security and health care as part of everyday life.

Interviewees associated longer residential presence with the use of supermarkets, pharmacies, banking services, domestic maintenance, security, transport and property management throughout the year. The study does not attribute the growth of these activities to foreign residents alone. They also respond to Senegalese household demand, internal migration, tourism activity and the wider urban expansion of Saly and Mbour. The evidence supports a more limited conclusion: long-stay residents constitute an additional clientele whose needs extend beyond the main holiday periods.

Health care makes this difference particularly visible. Older residents may need routine consultations, prescription medicines, chronic disease follow up, laboratory tests and emergency care. Health professionals interviewed in Saly reported that European residents form part of the clientele supporting private health services in the resort.

The local offer now includes public health posts, private clinics, pharmacies, laboratories and ambulance services. Specialist care is more limited, and some patients still travel to Dakar when particular expertise or equipment is required. European respondents generally considered local care adequate for common conditions but continued to use Europe, and sometimes Dakar, for more specialized follow up. Their health practices are therefore partly local and partly transnational.

Health care offers a concrete example of the difference between visiting Saly and living there for part of the year. A short stay may involve an occasional consultation. Several months of residence can require prescription renewals, laboratory tests, regular appointments or monitoring of a chronic condition. Older residents and health professionals spoke about these recurring needs during the interviews.

Comparable changes appear in other parts of daily life. Interviewees mentioned supermarkets, pharmacies, hardware shops, banks and other services they used while living in Saly. These businesses also serve Senegalese residents and tourists, so their development cannot be attributed to foreigners alone. Longer residential stays nevertheless add customers who are present beyond the main holiday periods.

For this reason, the evidence for residentialization is not confined to the number of villas. It also appears in the ordinary activities that make prolonged residence possible.

4.5. Institutional Adaptation and the Transformation of Territorial Governance

The effects extend to local governance. Authorities and service providers now deal with a territory used by tourists, permanent residents and seasonal foreign residents, groups whose needs do not always coincide.

Respondents identified growing needs in relation to:

- road infrastructure;
- water and electricity supply;
- waste management;
- public safety;
- health services;
- administrative procedures;
- environmental management.

European interviewees often compared local services with those available in their country of origin, particularly for health care, sanitation and urban maintenance. The development of tourism also generated infrastructure requirements, including wastewater management, as illustrated by the rehabilitation study of the Saly-Portudal wastewater treatment plant (Sy & Tall, 2003). **Figure 5** shows sanitation equipment operated by SAPCO within the resort perimeter and provides a concrete illustration of these infrastructure responsibilities.



Figure 5. Sanitation equipment operated by the tourism development agency (SAPCO) within the resort perimeter. Source: doctoral thesis (Samb, M.L.B.), field photograph.

Local government has had to respond to this growth with limited resources. The professionals interviewed also pointed to needs that remain difficult to meet locally, especially specialist treatment and some forms of emergency referral. Ageing adds to these concerns because a longer period of residence can involve repeated care rather than a single medical episode.

Associations sometimes fill practical gaps. Interviewees described them as places where newcomers obtain information or where residents seek help when they encounter a local difficulty. They may also put people in contact with a service provider or an institution. Their intervention remains informal, however, and should not be confused with a public support system.

The fieldwork did not show the same level of adaptation everywhere. Roads, security and private services appeared more developed in some tourism and residential sectors than in neighboring districts, a contrast also raised in institutional interviews. A regional official responsible for land use associated part of the pressure on land with foreign residential demand. This testimony is treated as an institutional perception rather than as proof of a single causal mechanism, since domestic demand, internal migration, tourism investment and wider urban growth may also influence land values and peripheral expansion.

“With rising demand for residential land, we are seeing land become inaccessible to local populations. The market is completely dominated by foreign investors, and this is creating unprecedented pressure on land. Many people are being forced to settle on the outskirts, in low-income neighbourhoods, unable to keep up with rising prices.”

Official, regional planning department, land-use section, Mbour

What emerged from the interviews was not a uniformly positive or negative picture. Residents and local actors mentioned new investment, more services and activity extending beyond the main tourist season. They also spoke about land becoming more expensive and about marked differences in infrastructure between parts of Saly. For local planning, these issues now overlap: decisions about tourism affect housing and land, while residential growth creates demands for services that were not central to the original resort.

4.6. From a Specialized Tourist Destination to a Multifunctional Tourist-Residential Territory

Viewed together, the findings show a sequence of changes rather than a single break with Saly’s tourism past.

Tourism came first as the main organizing activity. Planning and investment produced accommodation, infrastructure and services for temporary visitors.

A second use of the resort gradually appeared through return visits, retirement and property ownership. Tourism did not stop during this period. What changed was the amount of time some former visitors spent in Saly and the place that residence began to occupy in the same urban space.

As longer residence became more visible, the field material also recorded changes beyond individual households. Residential construction, year-round service use

and new institutional concerns appeared alongside these trajectories. The qualitative design does not establish how much of each change was caused by residentialization. Rather, the convergence of interviews, observations and documentary evidence shows that residential practices formed one component of a wider transformation also shaped by domestic demand, internal migration, tourism investment and urban growth.

Saly consequently cannot be described only through its hotels and visitor economy. It is still a major tourist destination, but parts of the resort also function as residential neighborhoods. Seasonal owners, longer term foreign residents and local households use many of the same roads, shops and services. This coexistence is what gives the present territorial configuration its particular character.

Tourism is still central to the local economy. Residentialization has nevertheless broadened the way the territory is occupied and used by adding residential and everyday urban functions to the existing tourism system.

The Saly case therefore supports the use of residentialization to describe the process through which a specialized resort acquires a more multifunctional territorial organization. **Table 3** summarizes the successive but overlapping processes identified in Saly's tourist-residential trajectory and their main territorial effects.

Table 3. Summary of Saly's tourist-residential trajectory.

Phase	Main process	Main territorial effect
Tourism-driven specialization	Public/private investment in hotels, resorts and visitor services	Specialized tourist territory
Emergence of residential practices	Repeated visits, extended stays, second-home acquisition	Blurring of the tourist/resident boundary
Consolidation of residentialization	Property construction, seasonal/permanent settlement	Expansion of housing and land use
Functional recomposition	Diversification of commerce, health care, security, transport	Multifunctional, year-round service base
Institutional adaptation	Public/private response to new demand; persisting disparities	Multifunctional but socio-spatially fragmented territory

5. Discussion

5.1. From the Tourism Life Cycle to Territorial Recomposition: Residentialization as a Trajectory of Transformation

Butler's life cycle remains useful for placing Saly within a history of tourism development (Butler, 1980), but the evidence does not fit neatly into a choice between decline and renewal. The resort acquired additional functions because some of the conditions created for tourism later supported longer residence. Former visitors became seasonal residents or property owners while tourism activity continued.

The Saly case also cautions against assigning a single outcome to destination

maturity. Infrastructure, accessibility and reputation were built through tourism, but they later became assets for people wishing to remain for longer periods. Their presence can keep some activities going outside peak tourist months. At the same time, interviews and field observations point to pressure on land and infrastructure. The same process can therefore produce opportunities in one part of the territory and constraints in another.

What happened in Saly is difficult to reduce to either decline or rejuvenation. Tourism continued, while residential use became more important within the same destination. We describe this coexistence as tourism and residential recomposition. The expression is intended to characterize the trajectory observed in Saly. It is not presented as an additional mandatory stage in Butler's model.

This reading also extends Mullins's tourism urbanization framework (Mullins, 1991). Roads, services and accessibility created for visitors can later support residents. Villas appear alongside hotels, while supermarkets, pharmacies and clinics complement leisure services. Urban growth may then be driven partly by housing demand rather than hotel capacity. In Saly, this change remains spatially uneven and is most visible in already attractive and well serviced sectors.

5.2. From Individual Mobility to Uneven Territorial Appropriation

Williams and Hall (2000) describe the close relationship between tourism and migration. Saly provides a concrete example because many residential trajectories began with holidays and repeated stays. The territorial effect appears when this pattern is repeated across households. Individual decisions to stay longer or buy property accumulate into demand for housing, services and infrastructure. Residentialization is the term used here for that connection between individual mobility and wider territorial change.

The motives reported by respondents also resemble those discussed in lifestyle migration research, including climate, affordability and quality of life (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). Yet the ability to act on these preferences is uneven. European pensions, savings and stronger currencies give some residents access to villas, private services and paid domestic work. Their settlement is therefore shaped by economic differences as well as personal preference. In a North South setting such as Saly, these inequalities need to remain part of the analysis. Hayes (2018) describes a comparable dynamic in Cuenca, Ecuador, where North American retirees' relative purchasing power reshapes local housing markets and produces forms of spatial exclusion that echo, in a different setting, the pressures on land access described by the regional planning official interviewed in Saly.

Institutional interviews add another perspective. A tourism planning official linked the growth of residences and villas to a change in public policy toward the resort. A regional land use officer described a less favorable consequence, namely higher prices and the movement of some local households toward peripheral areas. Read together, these accounts show that residentialization is not simply the

sum of private migration decisions. It is also connected with planning choices and with the distribution of access to land. Similar concerns appear in work by Visser (2004) and by Janoschka and Haas (2013), although the institutional setting in Saly is different.

5.3. Housing and Health as Material Anchors of Functional Recomposition

Housing is one of the clearest material anchors of the transition. A tourist stay can end without leaving a durable residential trace, whereas buying property ties a household more firmly to the destination. It also creates continuing demand for construction, maintenance, security and other services. The Saly findings therefore support second home research (Hall & Müller, 2004) while showing that the consequences of property acquisition extend into the wider local economy and planning system.

Health care reveals another part of the same change. Short stay tourism can be served largely through emergency and occasional care. Ageing residents need continuity, medication, chronic disease monitoring and referral when specialist treatment is unavailable. Fleuret and Jouault (2019) observed a comparable gap between tourism development and health planning in Cancún and the Riviera Maya. In Saly, respondents described a mixed arrangement in which routine care is often obtained locally, while some specialist treatment is sought in Dakar or Europe. The capacity to use this transnational system varies with insurance, income and mobility.

5.4. Multifunctionality Does Not Eliminate Socio-Spatial Fragmentation

Multifunctionality can reduce dependence on seasonal tourism because residents sustain demand for goods and services throughout the year. The Saly evidence also shows its limits. Better equipped tourist residential sectors coexist with neighboring areas where infrastructure and public services are weaker. New functions are therefore not distributed evenly across the territory.

For that reason, multifunctionality should not be treated as evidence of more inclusive or sustainable development. The planning issue is not only to accommodate new residential functions, but also to consider where investment and services are located and who can access them.

6. Conclusion

Saly has not simply changed from a tourist resort into a residential town. The field evidence shows a more gradual accumulation of functions. Tourism established the resort, and longer residence later developed within the same space.

The two processes overlap. Tourism produced hotels, transport links, services and international visibility. Some visitors then returned more often, rented or bought housing and spent longer periods locally, while retirement gave several

respondents more time to remain in Saly. These trajectories coincided with the spread of villas, residential complexes and year-round service use. The evidence does not permit these wider changes to be attributed to former tourists alone, because domestic housing demand, internal migration, tourism investment and broader urban growth also contribute to Saly's transformation.

Tourism remains central. What has changed is the range of uses that Saly now has to support. The territory accommodates short stay visitors, seasonal residents and people living there for much of the year. This coexistence is the basis for describing Saly as multifunctional, although the benefits and services associated with it remain unevenly distributed.

For the Saly case, the term residentialization is useful because it directs attention to the place receiving these residents. Lifestyle migration helps explain individual choices, and residential tourism describes repeated stays and property practices. Our field material adds the territorial side of the story. Housing changes, new commercial routines, health care needs and planning questions appeared in the same study area as longer residence became more common. Whether the same combination occurs elsewhere remains an empirical question.

The planning issue is already concrete in Saly. Residential demand affects housing, land and the use of services, so it cannot be considered only as a secondary effect of tourism. Decisions concerning tourism development need to be discussed together with land use, housing and health provision. Better information on seasonal and longer term residents would also help. Administrative categories do not always indicate how many months people are actually present or which local services they use.

These findings must remain within the limits of the material collected. The qualitative sample cannot tell us how many foreign residents live in Saly or provide a demographic profile of that population. Such counting is also complicated by seasonal mobility and differing administrative situations. Moreover, the doctoral research concentrated mainly on ageing and access to care, while property transactions and urban governance received less systematic attention. The results should therefore be read as evidence of processes observed in the field, not as estimates of their frequency.

Further research could test these findings in other coastal destinations in Senegal, West Africa and elsewhere in the Global South. Satellite imagery and GIS could document land use change over time, while quantitative surveys could provide firmer estimates of length of stay, housing occupancy and expenditure. Comparative work would also help determine when residentialization leads mainly to service diversification and when it intensifies enclave development or territorial inequality.

The main lesson from Saly is that a mature tourist destination must also be studied as a place where people live. Visitor numbers and hotel capacity describe only part of its evolution. The residential practices that develop around tourism can gradually change the territory itself.

Author Contributions

Mohamadou Lamine Bara Samb: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Writing—original draft, Writing—review & editing. Mamadou Samb: Methodology, Supervision, Writing—review & editing.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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