

ALIENATED CITIZENS IN SEARCH OF A STATE

By

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For my grandparents

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
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ALIENATED CITIZENS IN SEARCH OF A STATE

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One of the most important questions in the anthropology of the state today is whether or not the state is weakening. To interrogate this idea, I look to how loyal new citizens are being formed in the African state of Senegal. Knowing the primary point of interaction between the state and the child is the state education system, I consider how well the state draws young people into this system and whether this system does in fact produce loyal new citizens.

Both internationally and within Senegal itself, education is perceived of as a “right.” Unable to fulfill its obligations to individuals within its borders, the state is producing a population of alienated citizens who are removing themselves mentally and/or physically from the Senegalese state. Children who are unable to participate in the state education system are pushed onto the streets, into NGOs, or move into the diaspora. Young people who *are* able to acquire an education, struggle to find employment that makes use of the schooling they receive.

I suggest that the production of an alienated class of citizens is, rather than a weakening of the state, causing a renegotiation of state power. NGOs and other non-state agencies are beginning to gain the loyalty (or perhaps citizenship) of young people for whom they provide succor—whether this aid focuses on education, health, or employment. As young people are displaced from the educational system and seek alternate paths to economic security, non-state organizations are rising in popularity. Senegalese business people have eagerly responded by

spawning a number of organizations (both those of an opportunistic nature and questionable reputation, as well as those whose efforts are valiantly realized) to address these new concerns. Addressing the immense growth in NGOs and foreign development programs in the postcolonial era James Ferguson suggests that, organizations intervening in the social life of a community can often bring about unintended affects and alter power relations among their subject populations. Ferguson's thesis may prove particularly apt when considering the implications of the implementation and formation of aid programs in Senegal

Rather than preventing children from pursuing these alternative strategies, the official state website actually provides links to various NGOs, international programs, and various non-state agencies. Unable to provide the rights their citizens expect, Senegal continues to promote decentralization and encourages their young people to take advantage of the benefits gained by affiliating with extra-state agencies. Instead of perceiving organizations who gain the loyalty of individuals within the state, it seems Senegal is renegotiating its social contract and acknowledging an economic reality in which they are unable to keep up with the expanding needs of its population.

## CHAPTER 1 A NEW APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF YOUTH

Combining violence, madness, and pleasure, sex and the temptations of religious chastity, the desire for autochthony and the impulse to rip themselves away from the continent and to erase all attachment to history and place, young Africans symbolize the uneven trajectory of an Africa in search of its rhythm and its identity—Diouf 2003: 10.

In Africa today we must move beyond the notion that the family functions as the preeminent means of socialization to recognize the powerful role played by the state and non-state agencies. In a similar sense, one must recognize the void that is left when states do *not* fully realize their responsibilities to youth or meet the expectations individuals hold for the state. My research questions what happens to youth when the state fails to fulfill certain social obligations and provide particular services. In relationships between the child and the state, education emerges as the primary locus of interaction between the state and child—an arena in which, allied with the larger state project of a mandated curriculum, educators reproduce state ideology and attempt to generate a new and loyal national citizenry. My research will examine how the bureaucratization of childhood by the Senegalese state, as seen through the lens of education, plays out within the lives of children.<sup>1</sup>

By first examining the structure of the education system and its official rhetoric, then outlining the constraints placed on children by the family and state, and finally discussing the “on-the-ground” reality experienced by children within these structures and constraints, a complex picture of an uncaptured citizenry within Senegal emerges. The current system prevents the inclusion of all children in the state education system and reproduces socio-economic class by limiting scholastic opportunities to the wealthiest and brightest.<sup>2</sup> Today’s

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<sup>1</sup> In their discussion of democratic reforms during the 2001 presidential election, Vengroff and Magala point towards the growing bureaucratization of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the Senegalese government becomes increasingly decentralized. (Vengroff and Magala 2001: 129-132)

youth have become highly disillusioned with education as a secure path to economic success and are necessarily pursuing alternative socio-economic strategies outside the purview of the state (e.g. participation in informal and shadow economies).<sup>3</sup> If the primary venue for the education of the citizen and the creation of nationalist fervor is the education system, and that system *fails* to fully capture the youthful population as ever increasing numbers of children are pushed from the classroom, what is the character of new Senegalese citizens today? As children are displaced from the state education system, one must question where they are going, what they are doing there, and who and what is influencing them in those environments.

It is to these effects of the current Senegalese education system that this paper primarily speaks. As children show a precocious awareness of their educational and economic reality and express a growing ability to control their own lives, my research explores the ways young people are coping with disjunctures between the state's educational ideology and the lived reality within which they find themselves.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Although Senegal strives to provide free primary school education to students, in reality children must still pay for many of their own supplies. Further, because of the strict limits set on entrance exams for secondary school education, many students must either move to a private school or retake the exams until they pass. It is in this sense that the brightest children and those wealthy enough to afford non-state schooling are promoted under the current state education structure.

<sup>3</sup> In a survey conducted in 2000 it was found that only 30% of Senegal's poorest children attended primary schools. Among the wealthier echelons of Senegalese youth the statistics, 70% of young people were enrolled in primary school. Of those who are enrolled, only 46% of poorer children and 64% of children from wealthier families actually complete their primary school education. (UNICEF 2004: Standard Tables for Senegal: for MICS Draft Report from Senegal)

<sup>4</sup> During the colonial period education was a privilege, not a right. There, while there are greater numbers of children enrolled in the state educational system than there were during the colonial period, there is now an *expectation* that this social right should be provided to children. It is the states failure to fulfill these expectations that has caused the alienation of young people today.

## **A Brief History of Senegal**

Senegal is highly diverse with over eight major ethnic groups (Gellar 1982: 1). Current resources also calculate that, within the territorial borders of Senegal, there are thirty-six living languages including French, Wolof, Pular, and Serer (Ethnologue 2007). Despite the diversity of peoples and languages, there has been a unified governing presence in parts of Senegal since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The first of Senegal's precolonial governments, the Tekrur, emerged during this period of time. The Tekrur, or the Tukolor people, not only unified the peoples in Senegal's river valley, but were the first to widely adopt the Islamic religion and culture. Following the decline of this kingdom in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Djolof Empire (the first of a series of Wolof kingdoms) was established under the leadership of Ndiadiane N'Diaye. The Wolof claimed an even larger territory than had the Tukolor, bringing the kingdoms of Serer, Sine, and Saloum under its aegis. Although the empire fell apart during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Senegal's precolonial "state structures and social patterns were comparatively stable by the end of the sixteenth century. Most of Senegal's people's lived in highly stratified societies based primarily on blood relationships" (Gellar 1982: 2-5).

As the European presence increased during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, Senegal emerged as one of the economic "plums" of Western Africa. France eagerly pushed its way into Senegal, gaining a firm presence there by the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. As competition for markets and resources became more intense, France finally initiated the expansion of their colonial project in the mid-1800s.

Among France's African colonies, Senegal remained unique in its experience of assimilationist ideals. Not only were individuals born in Senegal's major cities (Dakar, Saint Louis, Goree, and Rufisque) granted full French citizenship, but a place was also created for a Senegalese representative in the French Chamber of Deputies in Paris. In addition to these

measures, colonial authorities established a territorial assembly within Senegal called the *Conseil General*, as well as a variety of municipal bodies. (Gellar 1882: 10-17)

From these assimilationist policies emerged a privileging of the urban space and a subjugation of rural areas to the cities. Gellar states, “This meant that male African ‘citizens’ from the ‘Four Communes’ could participate in modern electoral politics, hold political offices (if they met certain educational qualifications), and escape the servitude imposed on their less fortunate countrymen in the interior.” (1882: 9). It is interesting to note here the emphasis on the educational requirements necessary to participate in government during the colonial period. While certainly these restrictions have loosened somewhat in the intervening years,<sup>5</sup> the privilege and prestige accorded to individuals with educational credentials remains a feature of Senegalese society.

Senegal formally gained its independence from France with the passage of its constitution in 1960 and has since emerged as one of Africa’s most stable democracies. Regardless of whether this stability is due to the legacy of France’s assimilationist policies in the region, or the leadership of Senegal’s first president Leopold Sedar Senghor, this country experienced a vigorous new optimism for the emergence of an independent African state in the initial postcolonial era. Forming its immediate postcolonial administration under the aegis of Senghor, the disparate peoples of this West African nation struggled to bind themselves into a national whole, utilizing among their state-building tools the colonial education system to inculcate notions of civic pride and responsibility within the younger generations.

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<sup>5</sup> An interview with Jamba Bathily Diallo, the mayor of Ouakame, was conducted June 26, 2004.

During his interview, the Mayor of this residential suburb of Dakar claimed to have little formal schooling beyond that of secondary school.

## **A Brief History of Education in Senegal**

As in the colonial period, the educational system today remains the pre-eminent point of contact between the state and the child. For this reason I sketch here a brief outline of the history of the Senegalese education system. Following this history I have included a critique of the nationalist educational system utilized by both colonial and post-colonial governments.

As Sheldon Gellar points out, “It would be a mistake to regard the emergence of a Senegalese intelligentsia solely as a by-product of French colonial rule and exposure to Western education” as Muslim scholars studying law, grammar, poetry, philosophy, and the Koran abounded throughout the region prior to colonization (1982: 92). Indeed some form of systematic education has existed in Senegal since the introduction of Islam into the region in the 11th century. Catholic missionaries also played a role in the formation of a Senegalese intelligentsia with the proliferation of mission projects in the late 17th century. (Jones 1980: 324-325) and (Gellar 1982: 92)

With the expansion of French influence into Senegal’s interior in the 1850s however, a need for a more formal, state-based education system emerged. Tracy Snipe’s characterization of schooling before the 1903 founding of the *Ecole Normale* William Ponty in Saint-Louis (an institution focusing on producing primary school teachers for Senegal’s urban environs) is instructive, “In the past, teaching was done in the local districts and in the missions ‘by middle rank military men during their spare time or by missionaries...very rarely by European professional primary school teachers’.” (1998: 27) Snipe goes on to point out that this transition to a centrally organized education system was due to the emphasis on assimilationist policies among the French. In fact, despite the influence of Western clothing, religion, militarism, and language, this education system is identified by some as the “primary route to assimilation” during the colonial period (Snipe 1998: 27).

The founding of the *Ecole Normale* William Ponty was a turning point in the establishment of the colonial educational system. In 1900 French West Africa possessed only 70 schools with a total of 2500 students. By 1935 French West Africa claimed a total of approximately 62,300 students in various primary schools throughout the region. The William Ponty school alone claimed roughly 2200 students between the years of 1906-1947 from which both Senegal's future leaders and teachers were to emerge. Among its graduates were the first prime minister of Senegal, the first president of the Ivory Coast, and the first President of Burkina Faso. (Snipe 1998: 28-29)

As the state educational system in Senegal developed, so too did the assimilationist methods of the French. The 1930s and 40s witnessed the birth of contemporary Senegalese theater as students were encouraged to adapt "African traditions," songs, and dances into French and whose "sole motivation was to please the colonial authorities—or as Diop says "theater in support of colonialism" (Snipe 1998: 30). By 1960 the colonial educational system was well in place and the leaders emerging from its confines were to shape both the post-independence educational system and Senegal as a whole.

Leopold Senghor is widely known not only as the first president of independent Senegal, but also a French poet and intellectual of the first order. Educated in a Catholic mission school before completing his schooling in Paris, Senghor was one of the primary opponents of the "denigration of African culture." Focusing on a move towards a "universal civilization," Senghor focused on developing a philosophy of African Socialism which combined the "African communitarian values" with the traditional socialist thought he was exposed to in Paris schools. (Geller 1982: 92-93)

Despite being a strong proponent of African cultures however, Senghor is criticized for (among other things) maintaining state structures developed by the French and for his insistence that French remain the official language of instruction and governance.

Reformers rather than revolutionaries, Senegal's national leaders did not wish to dismantle the state structures they had inherited. Instead they sought to Africanize them and to make the postcolonial state an instrument for promoting national rather than metropolitan goals and priorities. [Gellar 1982: 39]

Similarly, Abdou Sylla claims that in the immediate post-colonial period it was a "habit, at that time, of seeing the Senegalese school system as an appendage of the French school system" (1993: 373). Senegalese scholars today however, argue that children should be instructed (at least in primary grades) in their native languages (Gellar 1982: 94). The impact of Senghor's educational policies cannot be over-emphasized. During his twenty-year tenure in office Senghor consistently spent over a quarter of the state's budget establishing and embellishing a colonial inspired education system—one designed to assimilate Senegalese individuals into a central state program (Snipe 1998: 58-59).

The state's emphasis on education encouraged the growth of a substantial population of educated and skilled citizens. Unfortunately, as the decades passed, Senegal found itself weighted with a surplus of talent and a lack of employment and funding through which it might deploy these individuals to create their idealized nation-state and citizen. Understanding of Senegal's history to an educated urban elite and the limitations which children face in their educational and socio-economic climb within Senegalese society today, contextualizes the growing alienation of youth from the state (Gellar 1982).

According to continuing state rhetoric, the path to success is through education, dedication, and an industrious commitment to building a national infrastructure (Gellar 1982: 45). Faced with an inability to walk this path, young people experience a disconnect with the state. This

alienation, this “servitude” to an educated urban elite who rules and regulates the uneducated masses, has its roots in assimilationist colonial policies, practices, and systems. At independence Senegalese officials made the choice to maintain many of these practices and has, like the colonial power before it, managed to create deep inequities in opportunities available to various socio-economic classes. (Fatton 1986: 730-731)

In recognition of these inequities, leaders today show a renewed awareness of the importance of mass education. Not only does the banner for “Universal Education” wave wildly over the airwaves and within the speeches of Senegalese politicians, but the current president of Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade, reaffirmed this position in a letter written to preface a 2004 report to United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) regarding the situation of children in Senegal claiming that,

The establishment of a Objectives Review Committee on childhood presided over by the Secretary-general of the Presidency of the Republic, charged with the mandate of supervising and directing the implementation of childhood programs, well illustrating the engagement of the Government with this vulnerable group.<sup>6</sup> [UNICEF 2004]

Numerous other examples of the attention given to the situation of Senegalese youth abound: a radio advertisement brings the voices of children, rich with requests for support and aid, to the French-speaking public of Dakar; a Children’s Parliament, organized to provide a venue through which the country’s youth might articulate their needs to the government, is focused on the differential access to schooling due to socio-economic and gendered factors; and finally, the establishment of government day care centers called “House of the Very Young”<sup>7</sup> has caught the

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<sup>6</sup> La création d’un Comité de Suivi des Objectifs sur l’enfance présidé par le Secrétaire Général de la Présidence de la République, chargé de l’impulsion, du suivi et du contrôle de la bonne mise en oeuvre des programmes sur l’enfance, illustre bien l’engagement du Government en faveur de ce group vulnerable.

<sup>7</sup> *Case des Touts Petits*

imagination and support of the populace as copy-cat, private day-cares reach for a piece of the educational pie.

Despite the recent attention it has garnered, Senegalese leaders are having difficulty ameliorating tensions that developed during the past four decades of educational unrest. While French officials in the colonial period had created a comprehensive educational system that, at the time, fulfilled many of the administrative needs of the colonial regime, Senegalese officials in the post-colonial period failed to sufficiently modernize the educational system to meet the changing needs of its population.

Progress in the educational system had not kept pace with profound social and political changes since independence. The system's aims were therefore no longer attuned to such new requirements of the development process as suitability, efficiency, profitability, social welfare and individual advancement. [Sylla 1993: 374]

Beginning in 1971 a number of reform initiatives were undertaken as tensions between youth, teachers, and the state escalated. The first of these reforms was the National Educational orientation Act, No. 71-036. While this act generated a positive response from teachers, students, and officials, it was not enforced (Sylla 1993: 376). Other reform attempts continued under the aegis of the newly created National Commission on Educational and Training Reform which was founded in 1981. After spending four years generating a series of recommendations in regards to the state educational system, it was finally concluded that few if any of the reforms could be made as "the fundamental problem facing the educational system is a problem of resources" (Sylla 1993: 380). All strategies for reform since this period have focused on obtaining the necessary resources to institute system wide changes.

Despite some small gains in the realm of pre-school education, substantive changes have not been seen in primary and secondary education. In the period between 1979 and 1980 that brought a peak in tensions between educators, students, and the state and saw 70% of teaching

professionals on strike. The related expression of alienation among Senegalese youth clearly emerges in the Set/Setal movement of the 1980s—a movement whose origins were firmly rooted in the strikes of 1979 and 1980.<sup>8</sup> Set/Setal was a “...social movement and more particularly of youth (pupils, students, the young unemployed, members or not of political parties) who have violently altered the Senegalese political field in the course of the decade of the 80s” (Diouf 1992: 41).<sup>9</sup> Reacting to the “crises” surrounding the transition to a democratic government, struggling under the dictates of structural adjustment, and finally conceived as a response to the degradation of their environment, the youth of Senegal vigorously voiced their frustrations. By taking to the streets, cleaning up their neighborhoods and synthesizing traditional religious symbols, urban Wolof language, and elements of popular culture in a visual commentary that splashed across the cement enclosures of Dakar, the youth of Senegal made their dissatisfaction with the state abundantly clear; further, they did it *outside* of bureaucratic state structures in which they had little or no voice at that time. In his article, *Fresques murales et écriture de l’histoire: Le Set/Setal à Dakar*, Mamadou Diouf speaks of youth in terms of a “violent reaction,” an “irruption,” a “charge of the political scene” and a “formidable rage of destruction”<sup>10</sup> that spoke eloquently of youthful angst and agency as young people sought a voice within the state. (Diouf 1992: 41-43)

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<sup>8</sup> In addition to problems with the colonial form education, the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) by the World Bank was also one of the key reasons for the escalation in tensions between students, teachers, and the state government. (Gellar

<sup>9</sup> “...mouvements sociaux et plus particulièrement des jeunes (élèves, étudiants, jeunes chômeurs, membres ou non de parties politique) qui ont violemment secoué le champ politique senegalais au cours de la decennie 80” (Diouf 1992: 41)

<sup>10</sup> “violente reaction...irruption...de charge sur la scene politique...formidable rage de détriure.” ( Diouf 1992: 41-43)

The uprising of alienated youth did not go unnoticed by politicians. Abdoulaye Wade, head of the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS), tapped into these tides of dissatisfaction with the state and rode a wave of young votes into office in 2000. While one might suppose this popularly declared president would ameliorate the tensions between youth and state by giving young people a voice at last, the lack of substantive change within the country in regards to education and the economy since the 2000 election has done little to bring young people back to the fold. A fascinating question and answer session with Abdoulaye Wade appeared on the news service hosted by [www.http:\\allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com) . In response to questions regarding university students protesting Wade's regime and its inability to fulfill election promises, the president had this to say,

Which electoral promises... What did I promise... I did not make any promises to the youth... Everyone here knows that... I did not make any election campaign promises. I did not say I was going to create a thousand, twenty thousand, thirty thousand jobs. You never heard that. The phrase that you heard me repeating over and over again was "With you, I'm going to build Senegal". I never promised anything. [Quist-Acrton 2001]

Despite the president's inability to "create a thousand" new jobs, the outrage of the 80s has not resurfaced. However, one does hear isolated murmurings among college students along the lines of "Senegal would be better off if France had never left."<sup>11</sup> One must wonder if such an "irruption" [ibid] and such "rage" is necessary before the state recognizes that youth needs are not being met. Further, in the light that such needs have *still* been ignored following such a "formidable rage of destruction," one must wonder if such protests are affective at all.

### **Problems with Senegal's Nationalist Approach to Education**

As is apparent from this discussion, education is hardly apolitical, either in Senegal or abroad. "[T]he educational system is not an island unto itself. Its existence is conditioned by

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<sup>11</sup> This comment was made to me by a graduate student studying at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop during an informal interview on June 24, 2004.

other sectors, and dominated by the economic and social health of the nation (Sylla 1993: 402).” Inheriting and making few changes to an educational system of French colonizers that had “the specific purpose: to serve the interests of the colonial power,” they have (like the French before them) been attempting to produce students loyal to the hegemonic, “national” elite (Sylla 1993: 372). In various (unrealized) educational reforms drafted by the Senegalese state, the stated objective of the reform was to “train youths useful to the nation” (Sylla 1993: 374).

In *Education: Its History and Historiography*, Geraldine Clifford is concerned with nationalism in education claiming that, “A nationalist educational theory envisions education as inducting youth into a cohesive nation-state” (Clifford 1976: 220). This nationalist educational approach is clearly what Senegal, both in colonial and post-colonial times, has followed (Sylla 1993: 371-372). Clifford goes on to show how Wolters in 1975 used this nationalistic theory of education to understand the black American student protests of the 1920s, “Wolters (1975) contrasted black campus rebels of the 1920s with later alienated cultural nationalists and found that earlier dissidents, well socialized as Americans, protested their second-class citizenship but not against American culture.” (Clifford 1976: 220) Wolters and Clifford point to the alienation of students from the state, *not* from American culture as a whole.

It is in this same vein that I consider Senegalese youth today. The state education system, while promoting an alienation within its students similar to that felt by “second-class” citizens in 1920s America, does not affect the pride Senegalese students feel in their nation, their culture, or their heritage. Indeed I found that young people today, like their elders, maintain a strong sense of loyalty to their people and their homelands. It is therefore important when considering the relationship between the state and the child to make a distinction between the state as a

governmental and bureaucratic body, and the nation as the people, culture, and history of a region.

When examining the ways in which the state and the child interact, the educational system emerges as the primary arena through which the state gains access to the child. It is here that the government has the opportunity to mold young Senegalese into the type of individual, the type of *citizen*, they wish to produce. According to officials with whom I was granted interviews, Senegal's Ministry of Civic Education coordinates programs to employ youth in projects contributing to their nationalist agenda as well as mandating the inclusion of civic training in the classroom. A brochure distributed in a ministry building in downtown Dakar was entitled *Service Civique National Du Senegal* and described one the Senegal's primary objectives as "To contribute to the development of the civic spirit and the culture and citizenship among youth, in scholastics, outside scholastics, and in civil society."<sup>12</sup>

These programs are quite likely a legacy of the Senghor era. During his presidency Senghor strongly supported arts and cultural programs which supported the legitimacy of the state. Grouping together both educational and cultural programs under aegis of the Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, and Communications branch of government in his "Third Plan", theater, art, and "cultural" projects thrived in the postcolonial period. Tracy Snipe claims that, "the sheer number of state and cultural activities and the clear visibility of cultural programming during his presidency were two of the key ingredients in Senghor's success as a policy maker" (1998: 58).

Regardless of the attempt to produce citizens loyal to the Senegalese state, there remains a disjuncture between state ideologies and the reality of a nation experiencing a drought of

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<sup>12</sup> Contribuer à développer l'esprit civique et la culture de la citoyenneté en milieu jeune, dans le scolaire, l'extra scolaire et dans la société civile.

employment opportunities. Rather than producing citizens content to be ruled by a central, French-inspired state, young people are increasingly voicing their dissatisfaction both with education as the ultimate path to economic success, as well as the state which provides it. Abdou Sylla says of the state that, “[d]espite their talk of reform, few real changes have occurred in the Senegalese educational system in the postcolonial period. The curriculum, the format, and the ideology behind the educational system remains largely French in nature” (Sylla 1993: 372).

While the Senegalese state recognizes its failure to bring about Universal Education among youth, it seems it has not fully acknowledged its failure in providing adequate venues for economic advancement (UNICEF 2004: xii). Instead, they transfer the blame onto the shoulders of Senegal’s youth and teachers, berating school children for their lack of motivation as test scores fall, and deriding instructors as “*only being there for the money*.”<sup>13</sup> This perception of the state crystallizes in a statement made by Mousse Narou Mbengue, Inspector of National Education and Director of the Division of Exams and Testing, “*The biggest problem among youth and with education is [a] lack of citizenship.*”

### **Methodology**

Studies of children in general and street children in particular tend to rely on adults’ assumptions about how children feel and what they must need. Children themselves are rarely asked about their lives. Instead, researchers ask parents, teachers or staff of institutions. If they ask children directly they seldom pay much attention to making questionnaires and interview schedules relevant to children’s experiences, interests or use of language. [Ennew 2003: 1]

Traditional youth studies relegate children to the background relying heavily on the perceptions of guardians, educators, and development officials for insight into the life situations of children. Departing from this traditional format, my research relies heavily on interviews and

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<sup>13</sup> This comment was made by numerous individuals during interviews including Mousse Narou Mbengue, Director of the Division of Exams and Testing, Jamba Bathily Diallo, Mayor of Ouakame, Madick Diange, a radio journalist specializing in youth issues, and Alioume Gaye, Director of a public elementary school in Pikine.

focus groups drawn directly from the population this research addresses—young people from the ages of four to sixteen. With the limited time span of two months I focused on identifying the ways in which the Senegalese government, faced with such an enormous exodus of its most highly trained individuals to foreign countries, attempted through state and developmental agency education programs to develop ideas of citizenship and civic responsibility at home—and more particularly the ways in which children reacted to the state’s agenda and the unstable economic environment motivating individuals to move into the diaspora.

To facilitate this research, I participated in a six-week internship during the summer of 2004 with a local NGO, Association pour les Femmes, Enfants, et Environnement (AFEE) in Dakar and in rural villages of the Fatick region, followed by an additional six week period of independent research in the Dakar area. AFEE, a relatively young organization founded only in the mid-1990s, proved not only a valuable source of information, but provided me with contacts at all levels of the Senegalese bureaucracy.

During these months of fieldwork, I conducted over fifty individual and group interviews with children, parents, teachers, NGO officers, and government and local officials. This data was collected through a series of semi-structured interviews and observation (the observation occurring primarily in conjunction with group interviews among Senegalese school children) and mediated by the services of a local translator.<sup>14</sup> While my interviews were generally videotaped, due to a lack of electricity in rural areas and the occasional reticence of an individual I was unable to capture every conversation; instead, responses to questions in untapped interviews were recorded using the age-old technology of pen and ink. Following my work with these various groups, the data video segments were labeled and stored, while a list of the questions and

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<sup>14</sup> Interview questions are in Appendices B-E

main points of conversations were preserved in a spreadsheet. Various questions raised in these conversations centered around issues of education, citizenship, and economics as they related to the lives of Senegalese children.

My time with AFEE was divided into three complementary periods of research and analysis: an initial three week period of research and inquiry among staff members, organization patrons, and urban children's groups; a second period of roughly two weeks spent conducting interviews and focus groups in several Serer and Wolof villages in the rural regions of Fatick; and a final week-long period of research in Dakar spent pursuing interviews with government officials and urban school teachers and children. My contacts among these various groups were gained primarily from interactions with AFEE staff and volunteers, although some persuasion on my part was necessary in gaining interviews with various government officials here in Dakar. During my final month in Senegal, I spent time in urban schools and working with children on the streets of Dakar.

Conclusions drawn from this research relate primarily to the children and youth of Dakar and the rural region of Fatick. I will however suggest that, based on conversations with natives and scholars of other regions in Dakar, these findings may be loosely applied to Senegal as a whole. While regional variations are bound to occur, this study purposely focuses on the broader forces affecting youth throughout Senegal so as to provide an outline from which further inquiries may emerge.

In deference to the methodology outlined above, I would like to take the opportunity to briefly introduce the children with whom I worked during the course of my research. While each of these children's stories will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Four, it is vital to have

some context in which to place the theories introduced in the second and third chapters of this thesis.

My first contacts with children came through the NGO with whom I worked. They had a Saturday program for young people in Pikine and I had the opportunity not only to speak closely with them, but also to simply play with them—and oh what a variety of games they had! From there I moved to rural areas, interviewing young people in schools and villages. While I perhaps did not have the luxury of extensive play periods with these children, I nevertheless was able to spend a good deal of time speaking with them both under the supervision of the parents and teachers, as well as without. Finally, I spent time working with urban youth. From interviews within the private school of Nolivé, to wandering the streets and beaches of Dakar looking for *talibes*, street children, and urban child workers, these young people presented a uniquely diverse group from which to draw my data.

In rural areas, I worked primarily among large groups of children. Londior and Somb, while not the only villages I visited, provided me with the most generous allotments of time in which to speak to their children. Energetic and lacking in inhibitions, the youngest among these children offered me an eager reception that belied the reserve of their older compatriots. Surrounded by two to eight year olds, I was welcomed by an enthusiastic dancing and a vigorous singing of verses composed for the delight of the NGO with whom I worked. While the older children evinced more restraint, I was impressed with their awareness of their socio-economic environment and their dedication to promoting their own and their family's welfare. One particular story will be recounted in which a young boy actively seeks my (and the NGOs patronage) for his further studies and yet another in which young girls sought to find employment as my maid in the city—a rather impossible situation as you might imagine.

In comparison, urban youth had a harder sort of sophistication. Some teenage girls with whom I worked in Pikine spoke continually of the businesses they wanted to participate in, while others whispered of “uncles” (not actual kin but rather older sexual partners), who provided them with gifts and money<sup>15</sup>. There was also a much higher incidence in urban areas of children whose parents worked in the diaspora. These children were visibly upset in discussions of their parents work habits and claimed only that they wished they could join them in their travels.

My experiences of street children were quite different. These were perhaps the most difficult young people with whom to work. Speaking with a group of boys on the street proved to be an undertaking in creativity and patience—a direct approach to these individuals caused them to perceive me as a threat (or a convenient pocket to pick). Instead I found it necessary to choose a highly visible, public space (such as a beach or the central square of Dakar) and surround myself with drawing supplies and candy.

Upon finding myself sufficiently mobbed, my translator had his hands full in continually inserting my questions into the conversations of the children sitting with us. There was a wariness, sometimes a shifty calculation, and a most certainly a reticence in many of these children. In their enjoyment of drawing, in their desire for sweets, they were similar to the other young people whom I interviewed. However, there was a self-sufficiency, an edge to them that was lacking in the other groups of children I worked with. Because of this, the interviews I conducted with these children were perhaps the most challenging.

Despite the theory and history that weights the initial chapters of this thesis, it is my intent to bring the stories of the children themselves into the spotlight. I spoke with an incredibly diverse number of individuals in the course of my research. Overwhelmingly the impression I

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<sup>15</sup> This was a comment heard by my translator in a whispered conversation. Asking the instructor for the NGO if girls were finding sexual partners at this young age, she admitted that that was indeed the case.

carry with me from these interviews is one of a strong of will. Without consideration for their socio-economic standing, their geographic orientation, or their sex, each of these children impressed on me their desire to achieve some kind of success for themselves and/or their family...regardless of the obstacles.

## CHAPTER 2 THE CHILD AND THE STATE

### Theory

#### The State, the Nation, and the Citizen

At this juncture it becomes necessary to define more fully the terms “state,” “nation,” and “citizen.” Defining these terms is hardly a straightforward task. Castle and Davidson define the state as “a political system based on secular (and usually democratic) principles, capable of regulating economic and political relations and change” (2000: 7). In this definition the state is seen as an entity that governs a particular group of peoples within a set territory through rules and regulations implemented by a professional administration (or bureaucracy). As such, states are ideological constructs in which the private individual is left behind and the political individual becomes a citizen of a larger whole—or as Marx says, “The perfected political state is, by its nature, the species-life of man as opposed to his material life” (Forgacs 1978: 33-34).

The state (in its concrete expression), is a structure passed from one generation of professional administrators, bureaucrats and leaders to the next. As the beliefs, philosophy, and history of individuals interacting with this “ideal” change, so too does the state itself. With this statement I draw a clear line between two facets of the state. On the one hand is the abstract ideology, the intangible “idea” of the state. On the other hand is the concrete body of individuals, agencies, bureaucrats, and leaders who enforce the rules of the state and embody its ideals. The state is neither a static nor a purely tangible thing; rather it is the accumulated history of beliefs, philosophy, and governing structures possessed and passed down by peoples within certain territorial and political boundaries. In order to grapple with the ideology of any particular state, it is therefore necessary to analyze the concrete vehicle of that ideology. To understand the role the state plays in the lives of children in the realm of education, it is vital to look at both the

educational “ideology” of the state, as well as the way it is actualized in real life by state agents. (Weber 1958: 159-185)

In opposition to the accultural nature of the ideal state in which the unique, “material” life of an individual is left behind so that one may become a member of a homogenized political construct, the “[n]ation refer[s] to a ‘people’ defined on the basis of both of belonging to the territory of the state and having a common cultural and ethnic background” (Castles and Davidson 2000: 7). In this definition membership is linked not only to dwelling within a particular political territory but to sharing a similar culture as well. The notion of “nation,” is intensely problematic. The idea that one must share a common culture for full recognition within a state has proved particularly difficult for immigrants and minorities. With the globalization of the past decades, large groups whose culture and ethnicity is markedly different from the dominant “national” majority are appearing in states throughout the world. Within these nation-states, minority groups must struggle to secure rights for themselves and their children. (Anderson 1983: 37-45)

In the case of Senegal, I speak directly to the relationship of children with the *state*, removing the question of nationalism from the equation. While there is certainly a sense that one “belongs” or does not “belong” to a state in the same sense as one might belong to a nation, the sense of inclusion is not generated by sharing a similar ethnicity. Children, in the case of the Senegalese state, experience exclusion (primarily) from the state due to socio-economic reasons. They do not necessarily feel excluded from their *nation*.

This love of nation may perhaps (particularly in the case of children) be best seen in the valorization of the Senegalese football team. No where will one see nationalist fervor displayed more clearly than in football stadiums and around televisions as Senegalese proudly wave flags

and vigorously cheer their national team onwards against the players of another nation. It is for this reason that, while I do analyze the feelings of belonging children might have in regards to the state, I set nationalism firmly to the side. The children, as citizens, are alienated from their state and *not* their nation.

Within this accultural ideal state, theorists have claimed that the “citizen” is necessarily “abstracted from cultural characteristics” (Angus 1995: 65). Citizens within state territories possess a homogenous set of privileges, rights and obligations unique to that country.<sup>16</sup> Historically citizens were defined as the “individual whose identity...was supposed to be thrown in with a particular state...shar[ing] a common ‘national’ identity as moored in a shared history and culture” (Painter and Philo 1995: 111-112). Removing for a moment the problematic notion that “a common national identity” must be shared, for the purposes of this thesis I define citizenship as a “shared membership of a political community” in which “citizens are political actors constituting political communities as public spaces.” (1995: 65)

However these are ideal types and it is necessary to understand the ways in which these concepts emerge in reality. The actual citizen is faced with distinct challenges in gaining rights within their state of residence.

[I]n most countries, there are significant groups, usually marked by race, by ethnicity of being indigenous peoples, who are denied full participation as citizens. They may have the right to vote, but social, economic, and cultural exclusion denies them the chance of gaining political representation or of having any real say in the decisions that affect their lives. [Castles and Davidson 2000: 11]

In this quote Castles and Davidson point directly to the ways in which nationalism can cause citizens to struggle for their rights. What must also be realized is that individuals (who are

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<sup>1</sup>Today, with the intervention of supranational and international organizations such as the EU and the UN, this idea of “uniqueness” is giving way to a more universal conceptualization of rights and duties.

clearly part of the ethnic majority) may *also* have difficulties gaining those rights “owed” to them by the state.

Castles and Davidson go on to point out that the traditional perception of the “rights and duties” of the citizen are being joined by the idea of social rights. Or as they put it, “a certain level of social and economic welfare is needed before people can take advantage of formal political rights.” This differential citizenship, or the notion of citizens being alienated from the state due to a deficiency in their social rights, becomes particularly important when considering the education (a social right) of Senegalese children today. If some children are denied the tools with which to fully realize their citizenship, can they be considered full citizens of the state in their maturity? (Castles and Davidson 2000: 11)

Morris Janowitz argues that the last decades of the twentieth century brought with them a distinct emphasis on the rights of citizens obscuring, to some extent, the corresponding obligations acquired by members of particular states.<sup>17</sup> This inadequacy in contemporary analysis omits from definitions of democratic citizenship the idea that membership in a state allows not only for the domination of the individual by the state, but also the involvement of the individual *within* the state. Janowitz’s article forces one to consider not only how effectively the state promotes the education of new citizens, but also whether it facilitates their participation within government. (Janowitz 1980: 2-3) As will become apparent in Senegal, educational opportunities, upon which one’s obligations to the state are predicated, are limited to the most intelligent youth or the wealthiest families. It must be considered that not only is the state inefficient in the creation of new citizens, siphoning off only the upper layers of Senegalese

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<sup>17</sup> The term “obligations” refers to the ability of the individual to participate in the governing of a democratic state. Although the phrase “ability to participate” more clearly encapsulates this notion than does “obligation,” I continue using this less precise term to maintain a certain coherence in this section. Morris Janowitz clearly prefers the term “obligation” in his work.

youth, but it also creates an exclusive environment which reproduces socio-economic inequalities and leads to the growth of dissatisfaction among young people in regards to education and the economy. (Sylla 1993: 370-380)

Recognizing this forces us to subsequently ask, if a state bureaucracy functions so as to prevent a significant part of its citizenry, namely those of lower socio-economic standing, from fulfilling their obligations to the state and in the process restricting their *right* to education, what then is the quality of citizenship individuals are afforded? If it is only among elites that the realization of both obligations owed *to* the state and rights owed *by* the state are realized, can the rest of the populace truly be considered full citizens? As this paper continues it becomes apparent that many Senegalese youth find themselves in the position of the alienated citizen—members of the Senegalese nation, its people and culture, but not of the Senegalese state that governs, “protects,” and controls them through its legislation and bureaucracy. Although surely it is not the only cause behind this alienation, the educational system of Senegal is certainly one of the primary arenas in which youth duly learn the rights and obligations of citizenship and then contradictorily experience extreme limitations in the realization and fulfillment of them. An analysis of how children cope with this disjuncture between the ideological construction of citizenship and their lived experiences within the bureaucracy that reproduces and enacts it, lies at the base of this argument.

If we turn again to standard definitions of citizenship it is also necessary to consider the underlying rhetoric of “us here” versus “them there”—a dialectical framework inciting feelings of “inevitable hostility” towards outsiders (Painter and Philo 1995: 109-112). More obvious moments of hostility are directed towards ethnic outsiders, a keen example of which is seen in the conflict between Mauritania and Senegal in 1989 during which each country suffered ethnic

violence and the removal of “outsiders” from their environs. However, the us-them dialectic may play out in even more subtle ways. As youth become more disillusioned with state rhetoric that education will blaze a path to economic success, as ever increasing numbers of individuals find themselves on the streets or fighting their way into the diaspora, it must be considered if and how youth living “outside” ideological notions of citizenship experience this particular kind of othering—or again, this alienation. While some of these children find themselves within the state and yet outside the system, other young people have also moved outside the state as their inability to participate in the educational system becomes.<sup>18</sup>

Hinted at by this youthful conflict (apparent in the movement of individuals both outside of the system as well as the state) is the current renegotiation of state power that is occurring in the formulation of these ideological constructs. As will be indicated numerous times in this paper, this growing alienation of youth in regards to both the efficacy of the state in meeting their educational as well as their economic needs has led to individuals identifying alternative survival strategies. Included among these strategies are movement into the diaspora, participation in the informal economy, and illegal activities in a “shadow” economy. While not a new phenomenon, the intensification of Senegalese migration (and indeed peoples around the world) into the diaspora has raised questions among scholars regarding the nature of the modern state.

Of primary concern here is the question of whether the state is, in fact, weakening. Has this alienation of youth and the movement of individuals into the diaspora destabilized the Senegalese state? Ahiwa Ong, a native Malaysian and now a United States resident, claims in

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<sup>18</sup>Individuals may remove themselves from the system and the state both physically and mentally. Working within the state and yet outside of the system includes individuals working on the street and (perhaps) might even be extended to those working with non-state organizations. Working outside both the state and the system might include those who go into the diaspora, or even those who participate in illicit activities in a shadow economy.

her book *Flexible Citizenship*, that rather than weakening states are instead *renegotiating* or *rebalancing* their powers to match the reality of international flows of labor and capital.

...[I]f mobile subjects plot and maneuver in relation to capital flows, governments also articulate with global capital and entities in complex ways. I want to problematize the popular view that globalization has weakened state power. While capital, population, and cultural flows have indeed made inroads into state sovereignty, the art of government has been highly responsive to the challenges of transnationality. [Ong 1999: 6-7]

Ong goes on suggest that although “inroads” into state sovereignty have been made due to the escalation in transnational movements, that a certain “graduated sovereignty” has emerged. In this graduated sovereignty the state claims different kinds of control or influence over populations in various geographic, economic, political, and social relations to the territorial nation-state. Ong’s notion of graduated sovereignty seems primarily focused outward. Throughout this work Ong speaks of the economic, cultural, and social relations of the *transnational* individual with the home state. However, one must wonder if these zones of graduated sovereignty might be extended inward to apply to groups within the boundaries of the state, as well as to those outside it in the diaspora. Just as some individuals abroad have placed themselves at a remove from the state, so too do individuals within the national territory who participate in alternative socio-economic practices.

Like individuals in the diaspora, these individuals exist outside the pale of the state’s economic control. Additionally, traditional definitions of citizenship require that states offer a regime of rights and duties to the individuals in question—also a dialogic situation that alienated populations within Senegal, just like those outside Senegal, are unable to participate in due to a variety of factors too lengthy to list here (e.g. lack of sufficient government resources educational needs, insufficient basic health care for children, etc). As we will see in the case of

Senegalese youth, rights guaranteed by the state, namely that of education, are quite clearly not being met.<sup>19</sup>

### **Education and the State**

Children are vitally important to the state as potential citizens—and it is primarily through the educational system that the state has access to this population. However, as the state strives to mold young people into productive citizens through education, it also reproduces inequities between elites and everyday Senegalese citizens. Geller points to this phenomenon saying, "that the priority given to a French-style education has contributed to a sharp social and cultural gap between the Senegalese elite and the masses" (Geller 1982: 94). When considering this reproduction of social class, it is necessary to briefly mention the work of Gramsci and Bourdieu in this area. Like Geller, both point to the ways in which states attempt to utilize the educational system to reproduce social class and generate a consensus to be ruled by a governing body.

Although referring to the Italian state, Antonio Gramsci's argument that education systems reproduces class structure with their system of public and private schooling (discussed later in greater detail) as well as acting as the vehicle through which hegemony is produced, applies equally well to the case of Senegal. While Gramsci's definition of hegemony evolves continuously throughout his work, at base it speaks to the process of generating a consent to be ruled in economics and politics by a dominant class, "This leadership is based on the economically central role of the ruling class but it is secured politically by that class's making economic concessions and sacrifices to its allies" (Forgacs 2000: 422). Robert Fatton points

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<sup>19</sup> In 2000 UNICEF reported that only 35.8% of children in the poorest families and only 73.5% of children in wealth families were actually attending school. Only about half of the children enrolled in the public education system actually graduate from primary school. (UNICEF 2000)

bluntly to the ways in which the Senegalese elite “preserved its domination” in the postcolonial period saying, “Authoritarianism was displaced by the politics of hegemony...” (Fatton 1986: 730). Gramsci further believed that capturing the proletariat, a large class of disenfranchised individuals constrained by and dependent on the state (a statement that could also be applied to children) was vital to the maintenance of authority by any particular group of people (Forgacs 2000: 422).

Pierre Bourdieu takes this argument into the arena of higher education speaking to the control of the university system.

If conflicts regarding education take the form of insuperable antinomies regarding ultimate values, this is because what is at stake in these conflicts, through control over instruments of cultural and social reproduction, is the reproduction of the very foundation of domination, of the existence and the value of the dominants, and of the hierarchy of the principles of domination. [Bourdieu 1996: 166]

Clearly Bourdieu perceived state education systems as the tools used by the ruling class to “enchant” their youth and build consensus and loyalty among the younger generation (Bourdieu 1996 : 125). Whether states *succeed* in producing this sought after "reproduction of domination" within the realm of education however, is questionable. Despite the best efforts of the state, older, highly educated students have a rather more violent reaction to their feelings of alienation from the state and are often at the forefront of groups agitating for change.

This very phenomenon may be seen in Senegal both in the Set/Setal movement as well as the strikes of students and teachers during the 80s (Geller 1982: 32). Momar Coumba Diop speaks to this conflict in an introduction to *Senegal: Essays in Statecraft*, that “[t]he fathers of independence were trying to establish and consolidate a political order. The younger generations were shaking the foundations of that order” (1993: 9) Individuals, *disenchanted* (or alienated) by the state rhetoric that education is the path to economic success, move to fill the employment

vacuum by identifying alternative economic strategies and participating in non-state forms of education (e.g. Koranic school, trade schools, NGO schools, etc) that provide technical skills.

For nearly a decade now, people have been growing increasingly disenchanted with the educational system. That disillusionment, without a doubt, is a consequence of the failure to take linkages between the educational system and society as a whole into account. [Sylla 1993: 402]

In an analysis of Senegal's current socio-economic challenges, Peter Schraeder and Nefertiti Gaye also link high unemployment rates to clashes between youth and the state.

High unemployment rates among a rising urban population constitute one of the driving forces behind sometimes violent confrontations between government forces and heavily politicized student groups and workers unions...rising numbers of increasingly educated yet discouraged Senegalese youth are entering a job market that, in their eyes, offers them nothing but positions as street vendors, maids, and cooks. The concept of a 'sacrificed' generation has become especially poignant. [1997: 489]

### **Children: Emerging Social Actors**

To understand this tension between love of nation and alienation by the state spoken of earlier in the chapter, it is necessary not only to understand the relationship between education and economic opportunities—the project of the vast portion of this paper—but also to consider our changing perception of youth. One must consider why youth today are suddenly making their voices heard. Why are young people becoming important political and social actors?

In social theory a basic definition of “actors” and “agency” may be found in the works of Anthony Giddens. He claims that agency is when an actor “knows how to sustain social encounters with others within a specific community” and “how to produce ‘acceptable’ modes of action, to ‘understand’ both what he himself says and does and what others say and do, and to make judgements about ‘potentially acceptable forms of activity’” (Giddens 2000: 386). While this definition necessitates an individual claiming full responsibility for one's own decisions, children quite clearly must work within particular boundaries. When addressing this idea of structured agency, this paper employs the term of “agency” with the understanding that the

control young people claim over their own lives is growing from a restricted environment governed by external forces they do not control—the family and the state.

The most obvious answer to this question may be found in African demographics. Fifty percent of African populations are currently under the age of eighteen and as researchers we are forced, by sheer numbers, to reevaluate our understanding of youth as important social actors.

With his concept of “worlding” AbdouMaliq Simone provides us with a quite different answer to this question. In his analysis of increasing globalization of the past few decades, Simone claims that “the material deconstruction of existing territorial frameworks leaves more Africans without coherent local and national arenas, a certain “worlding” has been enforced in terms of where they see themselves operating” (Simone 2001). In this “worlding” of the African city, urban centers become the primary venue of resistance and change, firmly locating the future of youth studies in the dynamic nexus of African and Western cultures generated by the increasing flow of information and individuals across borders.<sup>20</sup>

In recognition of this new agency, researchers are revising more traditional approaches to studies of youth—an approach Ennew sums up nicely in her article “Circumstances: Some Reflections on "Street Children" in Africa.”

Traditionally, the main themes in academic research on children in Africa focused not on childhood but on transitions, through the anthropological interest in initiation and puberty rites, studies of socialization and of intergenerational relationships of power. Childhood is seen as status and process, viewed through the prism of adulthood, a stage of becoming rather than a state of being. In many cases, concentration on family structures has left children appearing as attributes of families. [Ennew 2003: 12-13]

Rather than taking this “traditional” approach described by Ennew, a number of researchers are beginning to make children a priority in their inquiries. Two authors who do not consider

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<sup>20</sup> The Set/Setal movement of the 1980s aptly illustrates this concept of worlding. Absorbing the ideals of democracy and universal education that inform the policies of international organizations, young people made their dissatisfaction with the educational system (which did not provide education for all) and economic opportunities quite apparent.

childhood simply as a series of “transitions” or rites of passage, are Donal Cruise O’Brian and Abdou Diouf. These authors focus on the ways in which young people often appear as actors in redetermining the definition and direction of the state. While Diouf speaks pointedly of the Set/Setal movement and the role of youth in agitating for educational change, O’Brian speaks more generally of the violence inherent in relations between the state and young people.

“Violence is a recurrent feature of youth politics. Riot and looting, crime, the ‘daily deconstruction of the state’ are popular under ‘democratic’ regimes (such as Senegal and Mali) as well as under authoritarian ones” (O’Brien 1996: 56).

These authors point not only to the alienation of young people from the state, but the ways in which they react to this alienation. Rather than passively accept their lot, some young people instead strive to make changes to the status quo. Youth today, by precociously claiming an ability to affect their environments in productive ways, are forcing the state to consider children less as faceless attributes of the family and more as important social actors.

This is not simply a concern in Senegal however. Internationally people are recognizing the ability of children to make choices and affect the world around them. As a major player in shoring up Senegal’s educational system, UNICEF is bringing these new perceptions directly to the peoples of Senegal. Additionally, new options are being offered up as the media disseminates information and encourages an early sophistication in children—one has only to glance at modern advertisements focusing on the ability of the child to make choices based on their individual needs and desires to find examples of an evolving notion of children at the popular level.

Governments and academics are also paying homage to the increasing power of the child, as evidenced by Senegal’s creation of a Children’s Parliament. I was fortunate enough to be

working in Dakar during the summer of 2004 during which time two hundred children from schools around the capital were given the opportunity to present their concerns to members of Parliament in a daylong session supported by media coverage. This event was followed by a benefit concert in which street children walked on stage with popular entertainers to perform songs speaking of the plight of impoverished children and hoping to educate the public about the precarious lives young people eke out with little or no assistance. (UNESCO 2004; Diouf 2003)

Mousse Gondy Diop, the director of the private school *Nolive* in Dakar's suburbs, pointed to the state's new recognition of youth in our interview, as well as alluding to the ways in which the international conceptualization of rights (as well as popular culture) has filtered down to the children of Senegal.

The children dress in a European way, they behave in a European way, they think in a European way, because the government makes them conscious now of their rights, the rights they have in society. So now parents cannot beat their children, for example. If you beat your children you may be sent to jail because they have the right not to be beaten. That's why children think in another way. They sometimes don't ask their parents to go outside at night or to go to parties. [Interview, June 15, 2004]<sup>21</sup>

Over the years the Senegalese state has remained in a continual dialogue with the family, negotiating the boundaries of its power over children as it dictates to the parent both their responsibilities and the constraints under which families must function as they seek to educate their children. As is indicated by the statement of Mousse Gondy Diop, the government uses the state education system as well as new communications technologies to communicate to children their rights and duties as citizens.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Translation by Louis Ndiaye

<sup>22</sup> It is perhaps this last influence, that of the media, that has seemingly brought about a new independence, a new range of choices to children today. While it is not possible to fully address this point in the scope of this thesis, it is vitally important to recognize that many individuals within Senegal attribute the changing character among Senegalese youth primarily to the influence of the media. Sembene Ousmane, a premier voice in Senegalese film, speaks directly to this phenomenon when he causes one of his characters to comment in response to the rudeness of her grandchildren, "You belong to the TV generation" (Sembene Ousmane, 2000). In the face of this new familial

Mamadou Diouf and AbdouMaliq Simone go on to identify the possibility of states perceiving this modern, urban, empowered youth as a threat:

Young people now constitute the majority of the African population, and their integration into society, in terms of both civic responsibility and membership, has had enormous economic, cultural, political, and social consequences. At the same time, the condition of young people in Africa, as well as their future, is heavily influenced by the interaction between local and global pressures. [Diouf 2003: 2]

Here Diouf is concerned with the reactions of the state to this newly mobilized segment of the African community. Diouf claims that, “The violent irruption of African youth into the public and domestic spheres seems to have resulted in the construction of their behavior as a threat” (Diouf 2003: 1). This approach to understanding the child certainly is a far cry from the passivity of traditional agency constructions. In the face of this new threat, is it any wonder that the state has become even more preoccupied with educating productive and *loyal* new citizens among its youth?

As this paper continues these are the touchstones around which my discussions circle: the state’s need to inculcate notions of citizenship among its youth, the alienation of young people from the state, the recognition of the agency of children, the reproduction of socio-economic levels through education, and notions that African urban centers act as nodes drawing streams of youth together in socially, economically, and politically important ways. In this way I hope to provide not only a general understanding of the interactions between Senegalese youth and the state, but highlight areas of future research and development.

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distress (concerns which are notably less apparent or even absent in some rural family compounds) it may be that questions regarding children’s agency are only now entering anthropological discourse because of the rapid increase in consumption among Senegalese youth of values and norms alien to their own culture.

## CHAPTER 3 THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF SENEGAL

To understand why education has become a current centerpiece of social, economic, and political debate, it is necessary to investigate the structure of Senegal's education system. Derived from the French system of primary and secondary schooling that culminates in a comprehensive Baccalaureate exam determining college entrance, there exists within Senegal various formal and informal schooling structures to move children through this scholarly rite of passage. Conversations with the Director of Private School Education, the Inspector for Youth Sports in the Department of Private Education, the Inspector of National Education and Director of the Division of Exams and Testing, and a number of teachers and students from Dakar and the rural area of Fatick, provide a fascinating glimpse into the "state" of education in Senegal today.

My goal in this chapter is not to provide an exhaustive look at the Senegalese education system, but rather to offer an orientation to the complexities, contradictions, and difficulties youth face within the system today. Further, it is the education at primary and secondary levels that is of greatest concern to this conversation. Following a brief description of how the educational system is governed (both physically and ideologically), I consider the structure of Senegal's educational system itself. Following a look at formal and non-state educational paths open to youth today, there appears a more detailed discussion looking at if the ways in which choices made by and for children during their early lives affect the relationship between the state and the child, as well as the economic prospects of the individual as they mature.

### **Formal Education**

Before launching into a nuts and bolts description of the actual structure of the educational system within Senegal, it is necessary to give a brief description of how education is regulated and governed by the state. A republic based on French civil law, the Senegalese government is

composed of three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. The president, as the leader of the executive branch, is elected by popular vote every five years. Not only is he responsible for determining policy and guaranteeing the “regular operation of the institutions, national independence and integrity of the territory” but he is empowered to appoint the Prime Minister—the official who manages Senegal’s national and local affairs (Government of Senegal’s website 2007). Senegal’s National Assembly makes up a unicameral, legislative branch. Elected officials have the power to vote bills into law and, if necessary, dissolve the government with a vote of censure. The judicial branch, among its many duties, is given to determine the constitutionality of bills passed by the National Assembly. (CIA website 2007)

To govern specific affairs of the state, forty Ministries have been created within the government—among which is the Ministry of Education<sup>23</sup>. Coming under the direct supervision of the prime minister, it is this Ministry that is responsible for the organization, legislation, and financial management of Senegal’s educational system. *Within* the Ministry of Education, there are over twenty additional “divisions” or “directions” managing everything from teaching, to educational media, to exams<sup>24</sup>. (Government of Senegal’s website 2007)

Each of these divisions is headed by a single individual and their various support staff. Yet the divisions within the governance of the educational system do not end here. The educational

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<sup>23</sup> To further confuse the governance of young people within Senegal, there is also a Ministry of Youth. While this Ministry does not involve itself in educational affairs, it certainly finds topical overlaps with the Ministry of Education, particularly in the area of civism. (Government of Senegal’s website 2007)

<sup>24</sup> Among these divisions are: [Inspection of Daaras](#), [Division of the examinations and contests](#), [Division of the school radio-television](#), [Division of Arab teaching](#), [Division of medical school control](#), [Inspection of the administrative and financial businesses](#), [Division of private teaching](#), [General inspection of National Education](#), [Center national school and professional orientation](#), [Office of Baccalaureat](#), [Office of the follow-up](#) [Unit of Coordination of the projects of education](#), [Direction of the Elimination of illiteracy and the national Languages](#), [Direction of average Teaching and secondary general](#), [Direction of the Stock Exchanges](#) [Direction of elementary Teaching](#), [Direction of the general Administration and the Equipment](#) [Direction of the Higher education](#), and [Direction of the Planning and the Reform of Education](#) [Direction of Pre-school Education](#).

bureaucracy has also been splintered into departments for each of the major regions within Senegal. It is at this level that the actual administration of local schools occurs—the various legislation, ordinances, and ideology of education having trickled through several thick layers of government management. With this irrational welter of departments, divisions, offices, and regions, it is little wonder that Senegal finds itself riddled with inefficiency, corruption, and a lack of resources as it strives to reform its national educational system. (Government of Senegal’s website 2007)

It is this notion of reform that lies at the base of Senegal’s entire educational ideology. Struggling to achieve “universal” education through reform, Senegalese leaders have found the educational bureaucracy is so fragmented that little real progress has been made. While there are certain government approved instructional texts, local regions have found themselves using whatever resources they have available to them. Senegal’s educational ideology is simply that—an abstract ideal. In reality, public school teachers must create whatever learning environment they deem best for their pupils based on what they perceive as the national ideology.<sup>25</sup> (Sylla 1993: 389-392)

### **Public Education**

Formal education in Senegal begins in kindergarten. In 1993 Sylla claims that the kindergarten system was still “embryonic” (383). However, in 2003 President Wade announced the establishment of the *Case des Touts-Petits*<sup>26</sup> in which children would focus on learning their letters and numbers. While in the years since Sylla’s statement strides have been made in bolstering the initial stages of education, these facilities are limited to urban areas.

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<sup>25</sup> A number of the teachers with who I spoke reiterated this idea including: Alioume Gaye, Mamdou Faye, and Cheikh Ndiaye.

<sup>26</sup> The House of the Very Young

After kindergarten, children may enroll in primary school. The national goals for this educational level include: to inspire children and identify their aptitudes; to “ensure the physical, intellectual, moral and civic formation of the child;” to impart basic knowledge that enables children to learn at higher levels; to prepare the child for future participation in “economic and sociocultural mediums;” and finally to enable to children to understand their physical and social and environment (Senegal’s Official Education Website 2007). With these goals the state clearly seeks to impart not only basic literacy and learning among its youth, but to specifically prepare them for participation in social, economic, and *civil* life.

Regardless of these lofty goals for “all” individuals, children may only enroll in “the regular school system, provided there are vacancies” (Sylla 1993: 383). The key here is the phrase “provided there are vacancies.” While theoretically free universal education is available to all children there must be both “vacancies” available for the child in the public education system as well as funding available. Throughout my interviews, parents, teachers, children, government officials, and NGO agents continually pointed to the inability of children to secure the school supplies that would allow them to complete this part of their studies. Mousse Narou Mbengue, Director of the Division of Exams and Testing and an Inspector of National Education, spoke bitterly of interactions with local officials who appropriated monies for school upkeep and supplies. In 1972 Senegal began its efforts to decentralize the educational system, empowering the mayors of each region to regulate and distribute funds for schooling (Sall 2001). A rash of graft and embezzlement ensued and, despite the creation of a national system of inspectors, the 37% of Senegal’s budget that is devoted to education is still whittled away by corrupt local officials. Therefore, although every child receives government funding for a minimum of four textbooks and general supplies, students are often left without the means to

participate in lessons—and by “means” I refer to everything from books and pencils to a schoolhouse to study in. In his analysis of education reforms in the post-colonial period Abdou Sylla points clearly to this situation—“There is a terrible shortage of desks, sundry equipment and textbooks (the national average is .61 book per pupil), and schools are far too few.” (1993: 389)

Alioume Gaye, the director of a public primary school in Pikine, currently manages eleven professional and two volunteer teachers in this crowded Dakar neighborhood. Each of his teachers have between 100 and 120 students split into two classes—sixty children come to school for a lesson one day and the other sixty come the second day to learn the same material. Not only does this put a strain on teachers forced to repetitively teach too many students, but also leaves children of primary school age free to roam the streets during their numerous days off from class. Despite his aggressive search for funding Alioume Gaye, has been unable to expand his school or add to the number of teachers working within it. This focus on multi-shift schooling, despite its shortcomings, remains a feature of Senegalese educational reform.<sup>27</sup>

While I could repeat multiple narratives regarding this lack of funding, perhaps some of the keenest examples of this situation are found in the stories of, individuals like Benjamin Diouf. A bright twelve-year-old boy living in the village of Londior, Benjamin excelled in his classes at a nearby school. Once able to afford money for paper, pens and books, Benjamin’s family fared poorly in the past several rainy seasons and was forced to withdraw their youngest son from school both to save money as well as to gain an extra pair of hands in the field. In the face of insufficient government funding for this school, the non-governmental organization AFEE intervened and provided the money necessary for Benjamin’s school supplies, enabling

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<sup>27</sup> For further information on the detriments of multi-shift schooling may be found and the reasons behind it (Structural Adjustment Programs), see (Bray 1990).

him to continue on with his schooling. Benjamin is now at the top of his class and hoping to continue with his studies at the secondary level—and this is but one of many examples of the inadequacy of government funding for children in primary school.

After these first six years of “free” education, each child must take the CFA (Certificate Fin D’Etudes Elementaire) exam, from which the children with the highest scores are allowed to continue on with their state education. In 2002 the top 32% of scores were permitted to continue on to secondary school, while in 2003 41% were passed.<sup>28</sup> Mousse Narou Mbengue explained the cyclical nature of these percentages where they might raise to as high as 50% and fall again to the 30% level based on the percentage of the government budget devoted to education.

If a child is unable to pass the CFA at government mandated levels, it is virtually impossible for them to continue on with their schooling without financial aid. Outside of state education young people of sufficient wealth do have recourse to private institutions where they may proceed through the traditional levels of education. Quite obviously however, those of lower socio-economic levels are unable to take this route and must either let their children run wild in the streets or move them into the economic sector—a sector in which their labor has been severely devalued. This theme will be further explored in chapter four.

While children are able to take the CFA more than once, individuals are limited by money, time, familial support, and enthusiasm to the number of times they repeat the final year of primary school that will enable them to take the exam once more. I spoke with a number of young people who were unable to move themselves into that class of successful state secondary school entrants and whose family was financially unable to provide them with the resources to pursue a private education. Youth of this group inevitably found themselves in one or several of

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<sup>28</sup> Statistics provided by to me in an interview with The Director of the Division of Exams on July 6, 2004

the following categories: students of NGOs, informal trade education, participants in informal or formal economies (this includes everything from wage labor, to prostitution, to vendors in the marketplace), dependent on their families, or begging on the streets. Again these issues will be more fully explored in chapter four.

For those children continuing on to secondary school, the state strives to “to give the pupils knowledge and aptitudes necessary to the access higher education” and to continue following the ideological guidelines established for elementary school education (Senegal’s Official Education website 2007). Young people enrolled in secondary school may choose to study either “letters” or “sciences.” Subject offerings include [French](#), [mathematics](#), [English](#), [history](#), [geography](#), [Earth and life sciences](#), [physical sciences](#), [economy](#), [philosophy](#), [Arabic](#), [Latin and Greek](#), [Portuguese](#), [German](#), and [Spanish](#). Regardless of the discipline they choose however, it is interesting to note that instruction in civic and state philosophy is explicitly included in the curriculum (Senegal’s Official Education website 2007).

Following these three years of education young people take the BFEM (Breve de Fin d’Etudes Moyen). Unlike the CFA, this test does not limit the further state education of the child; rather it stands as a diploma and aptitude test after which the children may chose to complete their studies or go on to take the French styled BAC allowing matriculation into the university system. The BAC is the final rite of passage for youth and many individuals take it several times before successfully completing it. Again the students are limited by various factors in their ability to retake these university entrance exams.

### **Private Education**

Policed by its own government ministry (and thus still a part of a central state education system), the private education system mirrors the state system in format and ideology. What is

not reproduced, however is the removal of children from the system if they do not pass the CFA at that year's state mandated level. Instead, children automatically move into the secondary schooling system where the education continues until the time of the BFEM and the BAC.

Not only does private education allow children to pursue higher levels of education without “passing” the CFA, but there are also extreme differences in levels of education between children at primary school levels. In the smaller, full-time private schools students acquire more class time and, interestingly for this discussion of the use of education to promote notions of civic responsibility and national solidarity, seem to have a better grasp of the political situation of Senegal. In a discussion with fourth graders at the private school *Nolive*, the children were able to name most of the major parties in Senegal as well as the names of the individuals who lead them. Often their parents held some position in the government, with an NGO, or at a foreign institution abroad—venues within which all students with whom I spoke hoped to pursue their own careers.

Hamidou Nacuzon Sall speaks to this in his article, *Education Pour Tous a l'Oree du Troisieme Millenaire: Perceptions des differents types d'ecole au Senegal*, “In public school there is a major problem, this is the lack of respect for the schedule. The teaching is based on the needs of the state. The anarchy is frequently close to absolute<sup>29</sup>” (Sall 2001: 12). While this is certainly an unforgiving analysis and the author later offers up other, less damning, reviews of the public schooling system, it is also a comment that seems to hold some sway with the general public—parents having the means to do so, will almost always choose to send their children to private rather than public school. This is no doubt also encouraged by the state personnel who,

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<sup>29</sup>“ Dans l’école publique, il y a un probleme majeur, c’est le non respect des horaires. L’enseignement est fonde sur les besoins de l’état. L’anarchie est souvent Presque totale.” (translation) In the public school there is a major problem and this is the disregard for hours. The teaching is based on the needs of the state. The anarchy is close to absolute.

with limited funding and a desire for universal education, no doubt prefer to provide services to children at a lower socio-economic level. In this light, it also becomes a fascinating look at the perpetuation of particular social classes in Senegal.

### **Technical Training Schools**

One further type of state school can be found in the number of specialty training programs that are available to older students. While these courses are aimed at subjects rather more mature than the individuals with whom I primarily spoke, acknowledging the presence and importance of these institutions cannot be overemphasized. Open to individuals at all levels of schooling, technical training schools provide Senegalese with very real skills that may be marketed within both rural and urban areas. It is unfortunate to note however, that of these training schools there are only four that focus on agriculture and animal husbandry—skills of vital importance to rural families—and of these four all are located in urban areas leaving the individuals who need the training most in the proverbial dust.

## **Non-State Education**

### **Koranic Schools**

Known as *daaras*, Koranic schools have become notorious in the literature of development and international rights organizations. Stories of child abuse, exploitation, brainwashing, and enforced poverty can be found with little effort in scholarly and popular forums (Hunt 1993: 510). Yet there are defenses for these institutions too, ranging from religious freedom to the inability of state schools to provide children with the practical skills needed for success in the marketplace. Thomas Park claims that,

[I]n Senegal, the traditional French education system is generally felt to be too literary. Consequently, primary and secondary schools are seen as providing little value for immediate application. Students graduate with few business skills, though most will earn their living by commerce. Thus many parents in Senegal opt to pull their children out of

the government education system and place them in Koranic schools that teach the basics of commercial accounting and Islamic legal principles of commerce. [Park 2003: 601]

Traditionally, *daaras* are run by a single teacher to whom parents send their children (the *talibes* or students), some of whom are as young as six and others who might be as old as fourteen, for instruction in the Koran. Over the period of two to four years young people learn to read and write the Koran as well as committing large tracts (or the entire body) of the Islamic holy book to memory. During this period of education children are required to support both themselves and their teachers through traditional, institutionalized begging on the streets of their cities. Monies collected by the children are given to their instructors who are supposedly responsible for the upkeep of youth during their years within the *daaras*.

Mamadou, a ten-year-old boy from Guinea and titular leader of his little group, had been sent to Senegal to study the Koran and outlined for me his daily schedule during a prolonged interview in Dakar's Independence Square. At seven in the morning he and his classmates (all boys) left their teacher to beg on the streets in Dakar. Without supervision, they roam from corner to corner, collecting money and any food they can find to get them through the long day. At lunchtime he and his friends abandoned the streets in favor of the public beaches where they could not only cool off, but could wash their bodies and clothes as well. Around 4:00pm the boys returned to the bustle of the city streets for a last round of begging before returning to their *daaras* at 9:00pm. From 9:00pm until 1:00am the children then undertook their period of instruction, turning in their "take" to their teachers and perhaps receiving an evening meal.

Not only were these children required to roam the streets unsupervised for long periods of time, but their teacher had set minimum amounts of money his *talibes* were daily forced to collect. Every day these youngsters were required to bring in 500CFA (about one dollar), excepting only Wednesdays at 250 CFA and Saturdays and Sundays at 150 CFA. With this

money the *marabout* allegedly paid for food, tabasie days (days of sacrifice) and clothing— however, as the children were raggedly dressed and stated later that they were forced to beg at restaurants and bakeries for scraps to eat, one must certainly wonder what benefits they actually received from these hard won alms. At Mamadou’s school any child who failed to bring in his required contribution was beaten.

While surely the use of corporal punishment will not hold true for every *daara*, nor the amounts of money the children are required to contribute, it is common enough that several groups of *talibes* I worked with spoke of it. In fact of the dozen or so street children (here I differentiate between the *talibes* who belong to a *daara* and true street children who spend *all* of their time in the streets) I interviewed, half of them proved to be runaways from *daaras* in which beatings were the norm. Three of these street children had made their way from Saint Louis, a large city hundreds of kilometers from Dakar, to escape their Koranic schools. The common claim is that they took to the streets because if they returned home from the *daara* without completing their training their parents would simply send them back to the abusive teacher from whom they had runaway.

The tradition of sending children to the *daara* is still common in Senegal and, particularly in rural areas, children both male and female express a desire to receive this kind of training. Further, as Cheikh “Willie” Ndiaye, the private school teacher at the Nolive school in Dakar pointed out, this instruction in the *daaras* provides children with the fundamental values adult Senegalese today so clearly wish to instill in their children. The challenge faced by the Senegalese state is in instituting some kind of regulation of these institutions that allow for Koranic training while ameliorating the abuse that so often occurs within their walls.

## NGOs Training Centers

Non-governmental organizations are the final educational venues I will examine here. First, it must be understood that I worked with only two NGOs during my time in this country and of these two NGOs I had an in-depth experience with only one of them. The directors with whom I spoke however were quite vocal in their critiques of fellow NGOs, both with words of support and censure regarding the initiative and efficacy of these programs. Regardless of these limitations, the educational goals of these grassroots types of organizations so common to the Senegalese state do, to a certain degree, find expression here.

Primary within the two NGOs I worked with—the *Association pour Femmes, Enfants, et Environnement*<sup>30</sup> (AFEE), and the *Centre Africain de L'Entreprenariat Feminin*<sup>31</sup> (CAEF)—was the education of women and children. Among youth the emphasis is on keeping the child in school, while among adults and school leavers programs focus on providing marketable skills. It is interesting to note that NGOs overwhelmingly seem to concentrate their efforts on females, even among children. Whereas once males were given priority in research and development, females are seemingly assuming this place of privilege in Senegal. Although a number of organizations exist to aid street youth, a predominantly male group in my observation, I found no organizations specifically targeting young male school leavers. When queried, the teachers at AFEE's training center in Pikine claimed they had actually tried offering a computer training course in the late 90s and the program had failed miserably due to a lack of interest. While the girls seem to enjoy learning various skills, teachers had difficulties weaning boys away from their dreams of soccer stardom and lost them to the lure of the playing field. And I can't say

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<sup>30</sup> Association for Women, Children, and the Environment

<sup>31</sup> Center for African Women Entrepreneurs

their explanation was unexpected. In every classroom I visited males overwhelmingly responded to the question “What do you want to be when you get older” with “*Un Footballeur*”—a Soccer player.

NGO training courses in urban areas seem to focus primarily on trades such as sewing, cooking, and embroidery, and in providing the basic math skills women need to function in the marketplace. In addition to these courses, instructors provide general health education and speak to young people about everything from STDs to pregnancy, prostitution, and drugs. AFEE quite closely followed this type of program in its one urban training center, however they seemed to have quite different goals in rural areas.

Rather than working with older children, in the remote villages of Fatick, AFEE instead turned to the youngest individuals of the village—children under the age of six. Creating a copycat version of the *Case des Touts Petits*, AFEE had organized daycares under the name *Espace des Touts Petits*. Seynabou Wade was quite frank in telling me that you had to catch the children at a young age in order to inculcate within them the types of values, the desire for education and the dedication and hard work needed to obtain it, that provides the cornerstone upon which her organization is based. In these classes children learn their alphabet, they learn moral songs that preach sharing, family togetherness, hard work, and (in a fascinating twist) praise the generosity and benevolence of AFEE and its president Seynabou Wade.

### **Discussion**

Regardless of efforts made in recent years, the “state” of Senegal’s educational system continues to show little improvement.

...a look at actual practices and realities on the ground leads to the conclusion that instead of coherent reform process conducted with systematic determination under accurate control, what our educational system has really been going through is a long slide backwards. [Sylla 1993: 403]

A revealing series of tables and statistics were compiled by the Senegalese government for use in a 2004 report to UNICEF regarding this situation of children in Senegal. In these tables, the disparity between children hailing from urban and rural areas as well as the differences found between socio-economic classes, become clear. The table entitled “Percentage of children of primary school age attending primary school, Senegal, 2000” shows that while 73.5% of the wealthiest children attend school, only 35.8% of the poorest children find similar enrollment. As the socio-economic level of the family increases, there is a corresponding increase in the rate of school attendance. When examining urban versus rural areas one sees that 66.5% of school age children attend class in urban areas, whereas only 36.3% of youth in remote areas are enrolled. Not only do these statistics illustrate the disparity found between socio-economic class and geography, they also support the thesis that the current schooling system reproduces existing social inequalities and further illustrate that the educational goals of the state have not yet been achieved. While this is hardly surprising or even unique to Senegal, it is certainly a factor that must be addressed when tackling the questions of citizenship raised in this paper.

Taking a closer look at the goals of the state, I now point to two educational trends that seemingly *contradict* the call for universal education within the Senegal. The first is that, while it is certainly state policy to encourage children in their efforts to obtain higher education, the difficult exit exams students are required to pass in order to move between levels, the lack of funding for basic school supplies, and the insufficient number of scholarship opportunities to facilitate children moving into arenas of higher learning certainly seem to suggest that the state is filtering from its population only the best and brightest, or the wealthiest and well-connected. Secondly, the state has established a number of cheap, informal technical training schools and at least four state funded schools for training in agricultural and animal husbandry seem to be

absorbing some of those students who are pushed out of the public education system for reasons of financing and/or performance. While these schools certainly provide valuable schooling, they are all based in rural areas, effectively excluding rural students who lack sufficient funding to live in the city.

When comparing these two facts it certainly seems to suggest that the state might effectively be moving towards a system which produces fewer highly trained individuals (for which there are limited employment opportunities) and more middle-level technicians and agriculturalists...which is not necessarily a terrible idea. The one catch to this however is that these technical training centers are in urban centers—reflecting the clearly urban bias of the state. As I spoke with individuals in the village I heard time and again people asking for the establishment of one of these schools in their region. While students may attend the school free of charge, quite a bit of money is needed to sustain the student while living in a city.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, for the people who have the most use for this type of training have the least access to it, leaving a large segment of the population to their own devices.

Further, given the trends I will outline in the following chapters regarding the reaction of children to education, the notion that once children are sufficiently educated in this type of trade they will return to the countryside and begin developing their home villages is decidedly off-base according to the interviews I conducted with individuals in rural villages. Although a strategy such as this may have proved a canny one in past generations, the sharp increase in mobility due to the technological advances of the past fifty years have made such an approach extremely optimistic. In a world blitzed by images of wealth, luxury, and the immediate gratification

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<sup>32</sup> Family networks within Senegal are extensive and often young people may find succor with their relatives. To receive the same benefits as their urban counterparts, the state forces rural children to leave their nuclear families to work and live with remote family members.

available in lands abroad, it is hardly sensible to expect children with even a modicum of education and worldliness, to patiently wait for such delights (among which number steady employment) at home. Speaking with one individual who had gone to an agricultural school and reinforced this reality was Idrissa Faye of the village of Mbengan. Idrissa claimed that, of his entire class, only he intended to return to his rural village. Every other student with whom he studied intended to stay in the city and attempt to find work with governmental and non-governmental organizations in which they might have some chance to utilize their new skills.

As I have already stated, the Senegalese government does recognize that the current state education system fails to offer universal education. Eager to provide youth with a state organized instruction, Senegal is working closely with international bodies such as UNICEF and the ILO in its efforts to promote educational reform. It seems however that the state's educational "fixes" are primarily being generated externally or through NGOs and little notice is given to efforts made by the state. As a result, one must question whether the loyalty of citizens is going to NGOs or their own state. As young people are educated in the NGOs, it is a common thing to see them become active in those organizations. Speaking with the director of CAEF, she mentioned several young women who, after completing their training, returned to the NGO to become teachers and administrators. Rather than utilizing their skills in state bureaucracies, their loyalty and energies were quite decidedly to the organization which provided them educational benefits. As extra-state organizations assume more responsibility for the education of Senegal's citizens, it will be fascinating to watch the ways in which the state renegotiates its power over its citizens.

## CHAPTER 4 CONSTRAINT AND CHOICE: BEGGING, BANDITRY, AND WAGE LABOR

If child labor as a mass phenomenon occurred not because of parental selfishness but because of the parents' concern for the household's survival, the popular argument for banning child labor loses much of its force. [Basu and Van 1998: 412]

I have spoken of the bureaucratization of childhood. Bureaucracies are often subjected to the clichés of inefficiency, corruption, and waste, and these characterizations certainly seem to resonate when looking to the condition of the Senegalese state. The inefficiencies inherent in Senegal's bureaucracy become apparent not only through interviews, but in the budgetary allocations for education. Despite the enormous portion of the budget dedicated to education, the primary challenge on which projects since 1985 have focused on is “the gap between educational needs and available resources.” In 1990 and 1991 alone the educational budget was 60,446,802,000.000 FCFA—twice the amount allocated to the military. (Sylla 1993: 381).

Children are placed in the contradictory position of being regulated by state legislation (and the international legislation from which it is derived) and failing to receive the benefits they are promised by the state. State rhetoric insists on education being the path to success and yet children are often unable to attain that ideal. In his work *Civic Education and Participation in Democracy: The German Case* Oppenheim addresses the psychology of this saying, “the earlier a child changes from a ‘sheltered’ view of society, the more intensely realistic (or perhaps skeptical) his outlook will become” (1977: 33). And in the case of Senegalese students, this can often be quite early. Whether attending school, remaining at home with their families, or roaming the streets, children often attempt to bring monies into the household. It is unfortunate that international legislation/ideology prevents the Senegalese state from passing laws that regulate the workplace for children who necessarily work for the welfare of their family.

I find it necessary to clarify the link between economics and education among Senegalese youth. As has been indicated numerous times throughout this paper, families often lack sufficient funds to send their children to school. For this reason, young people often work to supplement the family's income and allow the enrollment of one or all children in local schools. Limitations placed on child labor may provide yet another road block in a child's search for education. When speaking of the alienation of youth from the state, it is important to realize that children are not only disillusioned with the educational system but with the economic system for which their education is supposedly preparing them.

### **International and State Legislation “Constraining” the Child**

The Committee on the Rights of the Child pointed out in a 1995 report on Senegal, that the international community is well-pleased with Senegal's participation in the creation of youth legislation saying “The Committee, noting the long-standing attachment of the State [Senegal] party to international human rights instruments and recalling its active participation in the drafting process of the Convention [on the Rights of the Child], expresses satisfaction at the early ratification of the Convention by Senegal” (CRC report 1995: 1). In the past fifteen years, Senegal ratified not only the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which passed in 1990, but more recently in 2004 and 2003 ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding youth in armed conflict, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding child sex-workers, pornography, and child trafficking (UNCHR Report 2004: 1-9). The US Department of Labor, Bureau of International Affairs reports that Senegal has also committed to the following measures: Convention 138, Convention 182, became an ILO-IPEC member in 1997, established a National Child Labor Action Plan, and created a Sector Action Plan (addressing “commercial sexual exploitation”). (ILO 2006). The ILO commented on these two conventions saying,

By ratifying ILO Convention No. 182, the countries commit themselves to take immediate action to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour. This convention is enjoying the fastest pace of ratifications in the ILO's history since 1919. In parallel, ILO Convention No. 138, setting forth a larger framework for the longer-term objective of the effective abolition of child labour, has also been receiving a surge in ratifications. The increase in ratification of these Conventions clearly demonstrates that support for the movement against child labour is growing very rapidly throughout the world. [ILO website 2006]

Working closely with such organizations as the ILO-IPEC, the World Bank, and UNICEF, Senegal has implemented a number of programs in the last ten years in order to fulfill their obligations to the international community and their citizens. Among these was a 1998 joint program with ILO-IPEC to reduce child labor through working to “strengthen national capacity, raise awareness, and improve national formal and non-formal education opportunities, social and legal protection for children, and working and living conditions.” A 2004 program was created to focus more specifically on the incidence of begging, the domestic employment of young girls, and the involvement of children in hazardous working conditions. In yet a further program Senegal and its fellow West African nations initiated a study on child-trafficking and the incidence of child prostitution. Particularly interesting given the emphasis on education in this thesis is the “10-Year Education and Training Program.” Begun in 2000-2001 this program focuses on providing "Education for All," or “universal enrollment in primary education by 2010," (US department of labor 2003: 1).

This list of the various programs Senegal has implemented within its borders within the past fifteen years is far from complete. Instead I wished to offer a mere sample of the types and intensity of attention being lavished upon youth at the international and national levels. It becomes quite apparent that our current focus on youth issues emphasizes the realms of education and labor. And yet, despite the intense attention given to youth issues today, theorists

argue that rather than protect the children with this legislation, we have in fact made them *more* susceptible to exploitation.<sup>1</sup>

An example of this exploitation may be found in the state's mandate that minors (defined by the CRC as being youth under 15 years of age) are prohibited from participating in certain types of wage labor in the public sector (work with merchants, etc). Conversely, International laws have made other activities such as child-minding, housework, and running errands for parents (forms of labor that receive little or no compensation) among those specific types of work children are permitted to carry out. This situation becomes even more problematic when one realizes that these "acceptable" forms of labor are the very types of salaried labor many individuals will engage in as adults. The labor of the child is thus undervalued. Minors offering the same amount of labor as adults receive little or no compensation for their work. (Gaye and Schrader 1997: 489)

The vital economic role played by youth in Senegal today and the difficulties they face due to the international constraints on the types of labor children may *legally* participate in is captured in a statement made by Seynabou Tall Wade, director and president of the Association for Women Children and the Environment.

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<sup>1</sup> This is quite apparent in the literature of child labor, particularly in critiques of the international community's tendency to simply "ban" the employment of children rather than addressing the socio-economic causes of this phenomenon. Perhaps one of the earliest criticisms of this "ban" comes from Marx. In his "Critique of the Gotha Program" he claims that "[a] general prohibition of child labour is incompatible with the existence of large scale industry and hence an empty, pious wish" (Forgacs 1978: 541). In the tradition of Marx Olga Nieuwenhuys, in "The Paradox of Child Labor and Anthropology," claims that in an effort to protect children from "labor exploitation" individual states and the international community at large have in effect, by denying the agency and contributions of the child, disenfranchised and undervalued young people making them more susceptible to manipulation and dependency on the state. (237-238) Nieuwenhuys goes on to point out that this desire of governments to increase the dependency of children on the state system is not met by their ability to fulfill the needs of this same population. Tens of thousands of children live on the street, poverty runs rampant, and children in these economically untenable situations must necessarily contribute to the income of the household (if they have one) and make decisions affecting their own welfare.

Parents stay in the village. So can you imagine, for example, the parents send their children at the age of twelve, they send their daughter, downtown to Dakar and tell her “you are the sustainer of the family, you should look after the family.” At the age of twelve! They say I am going to send my daughter to Dakar so she can find money and look after the family. That’s what they do. And now can you imagine sending those young people to Dakar, those young children in Dakar, saying that they will sustain the family...And what is happening is that the boys come back to the village crazy [from drugs] and the girls come back to the village pregnant...There is little work for them there.

Thus the state inadvertently contributes to the exploitation of children due to the current dogma enshrined in international youth initiatives by denying them access to protected work environments. This does not mean that the child has no agency—indeed children continually find ways to informally enter themselves into the workplace. Children are often employed as household servants and in various trades as cheap labor. In some ways their labor is preferred *because* there are no laws dictating wage and environment. (Nieuwenhuys 1996:239)

Having said this, I by no means believe that child labor laws are superfluous and ideologically opposed to the best interests of the child. In a perfect world no child would be required to work for their livelihoods. Instead, I wish to point to the idealistic nature of those laws and the need for flexibility in notions of child labor and in the construction of international policy. In a 2004 report to UNICEF which reported statistics addressing the position of the child in everything from education to labor to nutrition, it was shown that 51.2% of Senegal’s poorest children between the ages of five and fourteen are currently employed. Even in the wealthiest families in Senegal, it is reported that 26.1% of children are involved in some kind of labor activity. (UNICEF report 2004: 51) Faced with a reality that is far from perfect it is necessary to ensure children receive fair compensation for their efforts in safe working conditions—in other words, no less than any adult demands.

Even were these constraints placed on children by labor laws loosened, Senegal remains a state in which job opportunities are scarce. I spoke with many educated college graduates who

were still unable to find work after years of searching. This state of affairs is encouraging all individuals with sufficient means (educationally and/or monetarily) to move into the diaspora leaving those at home to compete for precious employment opportunities in a country where it seems that occupying roles in the government and NGOs are the most popular professional achievements. With the increasing demand for job opportunities for young, highly educated Senegalese is it really any wonder that so *many* NGOs have proliferated as adults seek to both aid their communities and create work for their fellows? Is it any wonder that President Wade immediately created new postings in his government for mayors and regional heads and actively courted the Senegalese youth during his campaign? Demographically, it is only common sense.

Mousse Gondy Diop, the director of the Nolive school, candidly reported that the only sure success lay in having a well-connected parent or family member intercede for them in the job hunting process. Children too are quite aware of this situation. When speaking with the Cheikh “Willie” Ndiaye’s fourth graders they, without fail, claimed they would work with family members in their respective institutions both in Dakar and abroad. The only exceptions to this rule being the boys who wished to be soccer stars and the girls who wished to be the majorettes cheering them on.

With its increasingly educated population rapidly outpacing the development of its infrastructure, Senegal is inevitably showing the affects of this uneven growth. High rates of unemployment, herds of street children roaming the city,<sup>2</sup> floods of people moving from rural to urban areas, and finally the exodus of its youth to the four corners of the globe are but several of the many factors in the growing disillusionment of youth with the Senegalese state. In this kind of environment it is no surprise that children poor in family connections, even those that pass the

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<sup>2</sup> According to the NGOs with whom I worked, Dakar alone has almost 100,000 children begging in the streets.

initial state exams leading to free secondary school education, often leave school in the hopes of selling goods in the city or finding work in the households of the wealthy.

### **Familial Constraints**

As will become evident through the course of this chapter, Senegalese parents today have (paradoxically) both the most and the least influence over the development of their children. On the one hand they are the individuals responsible for the early character formation of their offspring, as well as for their emotional and physical support. Further, their socio-economic class and their rural/urban orientation immediately delineates certain parameters within which a child must function until such a time as the child or parent or their kin changes their economic and/or social standing.

At the outset however, it is vital to point to the variations in the experiences of rural and urban youth. Because children in these disparate geographic locations are subject to a wide range of influences in their formative years, there are immediate differences apparent in the ability of the state to constrain the choices of the parent and subsequently those of the child. In the report to UNICEF in 2004, Senegal estimated that while 79.6% of births were registered in urban areas, only 46.4% of children were registered in the rural areas. (UNICEF 2004: xv). Not only does this statistic highlight disparities between urban and rural areas, this figure becomes doubly important when one understands that in order to enter state funded schools, individuals are *required* to have some certificate of identification showing the date of their birth. Further indications of the differences found between rural and urban areas are illustrated by statistics compiled by the Senegalese state showing the number of children involved in economic activities. Whereas the number of young people between the ages of five to fourteen working in urban areas is calculated at 29.8% (reflecting all socio-economic levels), in rural areas it is calculated at 46.6% (including all socio-economic levels).

If one considers the impact of a family's<sup>3</sup> socio-economic level on the life of a child, one finds not only are children affected by their families' rural/urban orientation, but by their financial position as well. Among the poorest levels of Senegalese society, 51.2% of children find themselves employed between the ages of five to fourteen while only 26.1% of children among the richest families seek out similar activities. In the realm of education, only 30.4% of primary school-aged children among the poorest families attend primary school. Comparing this to the 73.5% of young people who attend primary school in the richest homes, one sees how the income level of the family is directly implicated in the level of educational accessibility afforded to youth. Other areas of concern are access to adequate nutrition, health care, and sanitation facilities. (UNICEF report 2004: 10)

When addressing social rather than economic and legislative concerns, rural parents with whom I worked seemed to claim much greater control over the life paths of their children. In interviews with adult caregivers in the rural region of Fatick, many claimed that among those values they instilled were: respect for and obedience to the wishes of their elders, a focus on supporting family, and maintaining their "traditional" African values. While many of the parents in urban areas professed a similar desire to encourage such values in their own children, it was often accompanied by the lament that their children didn't listen or respect their parents as they should. Two parents in the poor urban area of Pikine, Ndeye "Maimouna" Sy and Ndeye Diallo, both claimed that "in my day" I never would have argued with my parent like that.

Both in urban and rural areas parents generally evinced a desire to see their child complete their schooling and, failing that, encouraged their children to occupy themselves in productive trades through which they might help support the family. Maimouna Sy and Ndeye Diallo had

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<sup>3</sup> When using the term "family," I refer not only to the child's parents and siblings, but to the extended family networks of second wives, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.

both encouraged their daughters to participate in the NGO training center (teaching trades like sewing, cooking, etc.) based in Pikine when it became apparent they could not finish their schooling. One caveat to this is that families absorbed in subsistence-based production in the villages generally chose one or more of their children to remain at home to help with the cattle, fields, and/or child rearing while the other child/children were encouraged to finish their schooling. While children have little choice in who remains in the household, I spoke with a large number of rural, uneducated boys who betrayed no desire to overturn the decisions of their parents. In my interviews with young girls, I did receive a slightly different response as many of them wished to go and work for a short time as *bons*, maids, in urban households prior to marriage.

Despite these influences of the parent on the life paths of their progeny, children are pulled from the family at an increasingly early age and deposited in a government funded, or NGO funded, *espace des toutes petites* or *case des touts petits* until, when they are of sufficient age, they are told they must matriculate into the public education system. The influence of the state, particularly with the organization of new government daycares, is beginning at earlier and earlier ages and allows the state and NGOs to instill in youth their own particular values and morality. This becomes abundantly clear during my later discussion of children chanting songs of praise to the founder of “their” NGO. The NGOs I worked with made their desire to seed particular notions in the minds of the youth with whom they worked quite clear—whether these notions covered cleanliness, a work ethic, or behavior befitting of young Senegalese citizens. While these are not necessarily ideas that are harmful or go against the wishes of either the parent, it does illustrate the ways in which specific, non-family based agendas may be realized through the influence of outsiders.

The control of parents is further usurped by the insistence of officials that children must automatically move from daycares into institutions of formal education. Before launching into the next part of this discussion however, I would like to establish that I firmly believe in education. Despite this, I must also point out that in rural areas universally tracking children on the primary-secondary-university path as has become the accepted norm in the Western world, may not necessarily be the wisest choice for all Senegalese youth. As has will be illustrated in the following sections of this chapter, enrolling individuals in a Western style education system is one of the best ways to ensure the movement of a child into urban areas and/or the diaspora. When rural parents claim that children working in the home make greater economic contributions to their family and community (unless they are one of the rare few who somehow goes abroad or wins lucrative employment in the city), it must be considered if the wishes of the parent are being usurped by a state agenda. While currently a large number of individuals migrate between urban and rural areas based on the growing season,<sup>4</sup> Senegal desperately needs youth, trained in agriculture and animal husbandry, to remain in their villages and develop their home communities year round. What they do *not* need more of is people either crowding their overflowing urban centers.

In rural areas, effectively ignored by the state, the socio-economic knowledge of the parent (that the child who stays at home is more likely to become an economic asset for the family) is ignored by NGOs for more accepted international standards. This situation is made all the more difficult because parents actively desire what is best for their children and, whether through the influences of outsiders or the rise of native opinion within themselves, most believe that

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<sup>4</sup> I met one young man who worked for a craftsman in the city during the dry months, and who returned to his village at the onset of the rainy season to help with planting. According to him, this is a common migratory pattern among his friends, family, and village during which wage labor is sought during the unproductive growing season. An extensive literature interrogating this cycle of rural-urban migration is available to researchers. (Makindawiare 2002)

education brings about the fullest development of their child's potential. In the face of this belief the parents have begun balance their desire for "successfully" educated children with the economic necessity of retaining the labor of at least one child in the home. This conundrum also causes no little frustration in rural families as economic realities force parents to work outside of the accepted "education is the path to success" ideology.

In urban centers the majority of parents work long hours simply to provide their families with the bare necessities, and children come home from their day with the state to a house empty of parental authority. While extended family members do generally share a single residence, adults point to the steady decline in the comportment of children and the ability of non-parent elders to discipline them. According to interviews with urban parents, children no longer automatically genuflect to adults, turning their eyes away and speaking softly out of respect for a person's age. No longer do children call older women "mother" and older men "father" when they address them, nor do they respectfully call individuals of the same or greater age as themselves by the terms "uncle" and "aunt." While these comments seem stereotypical at best, they are nevertheless the opinions of the individuals I interviewed. Whether these stereotypes are accurate is debatable of course. What is interesting is the perceived lack of control implied by these statements. Parents feel they have ceded some unquantifiable authority over their children to something else—be it the state or pop culture. Whether these minors spend their time playing in the streets and absorbing their values in that fast and loose atmosphere, or whether they are staying at home with their eyes narrowed to the glare of the television set (or some combination thereof), parents in this scenario are recognizing a dilution of their authority over their children.

Here appears the distinction between families in urban and rural environments. Parents in rural areas potentially have a great deal more influence over the lives of their children. In large part isolated from external employment opportunities, individuals in Senegal's remote villages tend to work either in or close to the home. In the Wolof communities where I worked, traditional activities for women and men focus on the maintenance of the family compound and fields. Millet and peanuts are the staple crops, while in the field of animal husbandry cattle and goats remain the focus. Some families also run small stores from their homes or perhaps even a small building, offering dried goods, tools, and perhaps even medicines to other individuals in their community. This is clearly not an exhaustive list of the economic opportunities in rural areas—teachers, tailors, singers, healers and many others may be found in the villages as well. Regardless of profession however, there is a feeling of self-sufficiency to these rural communities.

The intimate nature of village life and work facilitates interactions between parent and child spatially, socially, and economically. In their isolation from urban living, parents in these circumstances may or may not choose to allow their child to attend public school, effectively cutting off state developmental influences. Children in this scenario are also partially removed from the temptations of a “free” life on the streets. More carefully controlled by the tightly knit communities of Senegal's rural countryside, the choices of children in these areas appear more limited and they may therefore be more likely to accept the dictates of the extended family unit.

Yet rural parents are faced with some regulatory forces by which urban families may not be so directly affected. For, while the government may not have fully accessed the isolated reaches of their state, NGOs and foreign funding agencies are beginning to establish strong bases

in these areas. It is certainly a telling indication that rural inhabitants perceive aid flowing primarily from NGOs, foreign donors, and Catholic missions rather than from the state.

Speaking of missionizing Christians in the same breath as NGOs and foreign aid I feel is a particularly illuminating concept for, while they are hardly *religious* organizations, NGOs and foreign funders certainly preach specific types of habits. From the more innocuous messages of clean yourself to the more loaded call to arms of “Education for All and All for Education,” children in these isolated, non-Senegalese government-related organizations grow up chanting songs of praise to donors and singing hopeful songs of possible future visits from their generous benefactors.

Therefore, when considering whether the parent when in has contact with non-parental authority, is being disenfranchised in the arena of child rearing, the answer is a qualified “yes.” In urban areas children are usurped by the state and media—in rural areas children more commonly struggle with a combination of state and non-state development influences. Yet parents in both geographic regions still can and do mandate the educational and labor activities of their children. Unfortunately, failing the reformatting of the Senegalese education system and the rapid establishment of technical training centers in *rural* areas, it seems quite likely that the future of the parent as the primary vehicle of child development will continue to face competition.

### **Discussion**

In this discussion we are first faced with the question of context—within what context of constraint and choice have Senegalese children been placed. The socio-economic level and the rural/urban orientation of the family into which a child is born automatically refine the field of choice available to young individuals. However, following this initial sifting of opportunities, a child’s choices are affected by both the state and, depending on the strength of the child’s family

ties, their kin. It is within this confusing lattice of state versus family, rural versus urban, and upper versus lower class that yet one more option has evolved—for children to shake off the bonds of family, deny the state exams determining success and failure, and to chase their “independence” in the “real” world. Whether this independence is found in gaining illegal employment as a minor or on the street, it is revealing that this choice is being made by young people from all walks of life. Wealthy or poor, urban or rural, educated or uneducated, the lure of this imagined independence and the disenchantment of the individual with a jobless economy have induced tens of thousands of children to create their own communities on the streets.

Further, these children are from all walks of life. While perhaps the vast majority come from underprivileged echelons of Senegalese society, Willie Ndiaye, a teacher at the private school Nolivé in Pikine, spoke of another type of street child. During his career, Willie had spent a good part of his energies helping students whose parents had difficulty affording tuition find funding for their children. He glanced at me with a bit of bitterness when he contrasted the efforts of some of his most privileged (socio-economically speaking) students who he said didn’t appreciate his instruction. “Some of them stopped coming to school” he said. After their parents formally withdrew them from the institution, Willie had little idea of what happened to these students...although he knew of at least one who had run away.

I have no intention of romanticizing the choices children make when they pursue their success at a remove from the state. Children leave the educational system and/or their families for a variety of reasons and motivations, and not always of their own volition. Runaways from Koranic schools, unemployed child migrants from rural areas, children who have given up on or been forced to leave school...this barely scratches the surface of reasons behind why children might pursue lives on the street or within a “shadow” economy illegally employing youth.

What is key here is that the life outside of the state educational system becomes the best of a bad list of choices...and children are making these choices themselves. Regardless of the histories that brought them there, children at a remove from the educational system live a life of begging, banditry, and/or wage labor outside of the dictates of the state (and sometimes even their family). Forced into a sphere of economic activity at a young age, children are met today with rather more legal resistance than they might have faced in the colonial and initial post-colonial periods following the Senegal's acceptance of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Obviously the course of a child's life is strongly affected by the dictates of the state, economy, and the family. It is how children function within these confines, the choices they make within and around these constraints that allow them to express themselves and exert control over their environments. Not all children exercise their agency with any regularity, but some *do*—particularly in urban areas where the loosening of traditional values (e.g. unswerving respect for elders, dedication to the wishes of their kin, etc.) has provided children with a physical and mental space within which to stretch their boundaries.

## CHAPTER 5 CHILDREN SPEAK: RURAL VOICES

### **Introduction**

As indicated in the methodology section, a large portion of my research was spent working and speaking directly with young people. This chapter details not only my interviews with children, but my observations of their environment and culture as well. Before discussing some of the stories of children with whom I worked however, it is prudent to point to the difficulties one sometimes faces in speaking with youth—particularly among street children and *talibes*. I was very fortunate that my translator, Louis Ndiaye, had worked not only with a Saturday play program for young children in Pikine, but had spent the last ten years working with young people in state organized summer camps. Speaking with children as a foreign woman, an adult, and as one unschooled in their native tongue would have been nearly impossible but for the mediation of Louis. His small stature and easy manner quickly won the confidence of the individuals with whom I spoke.

Therefore, with the aid of my translator, the children I worked among made quite sure their voices were heard. Because of this, I have a great deal of ethnographic information on young people both in urban and rural areas. In an effort to make this information more approachable, my ethnography on youth has been divided into two chapters: one introducing the topic and relating the stories of rural children, and the second relating the stories of urban children and bringing the discussion to a close. As will become apparent, within the section relating to urban youth the variety of situations children find themselves in become more varied. For this reason, Chapter Six has been further divided into the subgroups: Privileged Children, Underprivileged Children, Koranic School Students, and Street Children.

Regardless of their geographic location or socio-economic situation, I asked children a series of questions regarding not only the hopes they had for their own lives, but about their families, politics, and leisure activities as well. In this way I was able to explore the reach of their personal aspirations, as well as some of the challenges they faced in their daily lives. Further, I began establishing for myself the level of awareness these young people had of the Senegalese state—or in other words how well the state was accomplishing its objective of producing loyal new citizens among younger generations.<sup>1</sup>

Yet obtaining an idea of the “loyalty” of new young “citizens” is a distinct challenge. In an effort to gauge citizenship among children I asked a series of questions designed not only to determine whether they were aware of the outward trappings of the state (e.g. what are the colors and meaning of the flag and what is the name of your President) but also posed questions and developed activities designed to discover what organizations or people had the greatest influence over them. This research approach was used by Lewis Aptekar among the street children of Cali to great effect (1988). A perfect example of this line of inquiry comes from the simple question, “What do you want to be when you grow up” or “Draw a picture of someone important to you.”

Whereas uneducated children often drew images of NGO representatives, farmers, hair dressers, or cab drivers in the response to these questions, educated urban youth more often aspired to become government ministers, businessmen in the diaspora, and even (in one particular case) the President of Senegal. The children’s responses reveal a both shocking differentiation in content based on their education, socio-economic status, and urban-rural orientation, as well as delightful similarities in pictures of sports figures and games. Therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> For the list of questions posed to children see Appendix D

while the answers varied, when analyzing their responses some generalizations do emerge among children in particular geographic and socio-economic situations.

### **Children in Rural Areas**

In June of 2004 I spent roughly two weeks in a series of villages located about two hours by horse cart outside of Gossas. During that time I conducted interviews in the villages of Londior (my home base), Diambey, Sakhmack, Mbengan, and Somb I, II, and III. These villages were widely spread over dozens of kilometers and I spent a good deal of time bouncing along in a horse cart between locations. With a large number of both Serer and Wolof households, Somb was the largest village included in my research group and due to its size had been split into three parts to make village administration easier for officials.

As my visit was timed just before the start of the rainy season, my presence didn't interfere with the planting that occurs after the first rain of the summer. Because of this the baked dirt outside the villages seemed harsh and inhospitable, littered only with the low scrub bushes and the baobab trees that could survive the dry weather. After the first rain however, I was assured by my hosts that the region would be green with a temporary flush of growth and that a productive growing season would bring them a crop of millet, groundnuts and mangoes. It is during this planting season as well that feed would be stored for the cows, goats, and chickens that are herded throughout the year.

In the course of my visit to these villages, I found that several of the communities boasted fountains for potable water and small stores in which manufactured goods from urban areas might be purchased. These boutiques could be as large as a small room in a house, or as small as a box kept by an individual entrepreneur. In addition to these smaller commercial businesses, a traveling salesman (a kind of tinker) would occasionally stop by the villages with goods from the

town of Gossas. Dried fish, candies, pasta, and various other assorted small items were brought into the villages in this manner.

In the realm of education, two state primary schools served this region as well as a private Catholic mission school. While some children were fortunate enough to have only a short walk to the schools, youth in other communities were forced to walk several kilometers each way to attend their lessons. The Catholic mission was also several kilometers (about 45 minutes by horse cart) from my home base of Londior; it however boasted a small dormitory in which children whose parents were possessed of sufficient means might stay.

During any free hours the children might have, a number of activities were pursued. Boys of all ages and young children of both sexes often could be found playing football in the village center or loitering near the village fountain. Several games were arranged by the NGO village representatives for the children while I was present including tug of war, a flag capturing game, and assorted dancing and singing circles. I also found some of the older boys riding towards the Catholic mission one afternoon in order to view a football game on the TV installed there.

As you will notice from this description, the young women were markedly absent from many of these activities. The few times I did see girls of teenage years, they were minding much smaller children or helping their kin in individual family compounds. Although I did not directly inquire into their absence during these leisure activities, it was explained to me that because all millet, the dietary staple of these communities, is ground by hand, women and girls must work long hours to prepare the daily meals.<sup>2</sup> Waking early one morning I watched with interest as

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<sup>2</sup> One of the primary requests that individuals made of me during my visits, was to ask the NGO if they would provide for them a grinding machine for the millet.

two girls pounded the meal, making a game of the process by clapping their hands between each stroke of the long pestles.

### **Children of Londior**

Living in the Wolof village of Londior for two weeks gave me the opportunity to spend a good deal of time with the children in the local daycare set up by AFEE. Learning the alphabet, the different regions of Senegal, the colors in the flag, and spending a portion of the day playing, the children were quite fond of their teacher and seemed eager to attend their class every day. Because of the age of these children (between the ages of three and six) interviews with them revolved primarily around what they liked to draw and what the names of their family members were.

Images produced by these children revolved around the immediate influences in their lives. A number of chickens, horses, houses, and small gas burners used to cook food made their way onto the pages placed beneath these youngsters' busy hands. I also received a deluge of drawings showing family members, their teacher, the Senegalese flag, and one aspiring artist drew a lovely picture of myself. When I expressed interest in how children so young were so aware of the flag (particularly when one was not displayed in the classroom) the teacher simply laughed. "Our national football team is *very* popular" he explained and images of the flag are constantly linked to that sport. Here we see the primary influences in the children's lives as being their family, the NGO, and their immediate environment—there was no state presence discernible from the images and conversations of these children.

While the potential for the state to develop citizenship among such young individuals might be small, I have a distinct reason for mentioning my interactions with the Londior children. Every day not only did they play games and dance with their classmates, but they spent a good bit of time singing songs. I was astonished to hear that one of their favorite tunes was a

song praising both the NGO that had established their daycare and the founder of that NGO whom they called “Mother” Seynabou (and I must admit it was a rather catchy tune). At the direction of the teacher employed by AFEE, Gregoire Diouf, they eagerly performed songs they had written about visiting Mother Seynabou in Dakar. The following are the translated texts of four of their songs.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Horses**

The horses that I hear running  
Where are they going. Where are they going.  
They are going down to Dakar, to AFEE.

### **Madame Wade**

Madame Wade if you were sad  
We would wouldn't change you  
We would keep you as a remembrance

### **Membres AFEE**

You members of AFEE  
We wished that you lived with us  
Because your coming here brings nothing but joy

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<sup>3</sup> Although these songs were originally sung in Wolof, I received the translations in French from my interpreter. **Les Cheveux**: Les cheveux que j'entend courir. Ou sont-ils allez. Ou sont-ils allez. Ils vont ou Dakar, ou AFEE. **Madame Wade** : Si tu etais du douleur, Nous ne t'échangerons pas. Nous tu garderons comme souvenir. **Membres AFEE**: Vous membres de AFEE, nous souhaitons que vous haitez avec nous, Car votre venu ici n'apporte que joie. **Anveir des Enfants**: Toi bonne et gentil père, éduque ton enfants et envoi ton fils à l'école, Parce que demain il te servira. Vous père et mère, éduque vos enfants, ne les laissez pas parce que c'est pas bonne.

### **Avenir des Enfants**

You, good and kind father,

Educate your child and send your son to school

Because tomorrow he will serve you

You, father and mother,

Educate your children

Don't leave them

Because that is not good

In “The Horses” we see children hoping to go to the city where AFEE (the NGO) is based. They hear the horses running and think longingly of the wonderful place to which they are going...the city, the NGO. The NGO is the perceived home of Madame Wade, the beneficiary of their next song. In this chant, the children claim that even without the largess of AFEE's founder they would keep her close to their hearts. She has become a symbol to them of aid and kindness. This devotion to “Mother” Seynabou extends to the employees of the NGO...so much so that the teacher in the village has the children singing wistfully of how they wish they could keep the AFEE representatives with them forever because of the “joy,” (or perhaps more correctly, aid) that accompanies them upon each visit. What is particularly interesting here is contrasting this “joy” AFEE brings to the village, to the bitterness and frustration parents evinced when speaking of state officials.

Clearly the children's education is encouraging strong ties of loyalty and devotion to the NGO rather than to the state. The last song in this sequence however, is interesting in the way it resounds with the state and international educational ideology. It is evident that AFEE is

encouraging parents to send their children (or at least the boys) to school. The song clearly points to the trend in the village to keep a number of children at home for various reasons. Whether the lack of schooling is due to funding or whether it is a general disenchantment with the educational system on the part of the parents depends on the unique circumstances of each family. In realizing that the philosophy of the NGO is concurrent with that of the state however, one must wonder children will find themselves alienated by NGO ideology as they are with the state. This question will be discussed in greater depth in the final chapter.

Other songs did appear as part of the class's repertoire with subjects revolving around helping in the home and keeping themselves clean, but I have to admit I was surprised that these anthem like songs should appear in the pre-school attended by the youngest children in the village.

### **Children of Somb**

One of my most important excursions during my stay in Fatick was to the large village of Somb. Split into three different areas known as Somb I, II, and III because of its geographic size, I was able to interview parents and children hailing from the second and third phases of this large village. Waiting in a large central square between visiting the parents of Somb I and Somb II, I had the good luck of being relatively well mobbed by a group of children from the surrounding area. Handing out pieces of candy and providing paper and pens to those who wished to draw, I was soon involved in a lively discussion.

The children were of varied age, sex and educational levels. Unsurprisingly, many of the same images I had seen from the young children in Londior were repeated among the children of Somb. What was interesting about this diverse interview was the way the group divided itself based on school goers and non-school goers—both in mental and physical space. This

separation is a blatant foreshadowing of the ways in which continued education for some, and a *lack* of education for others, will place them in entirely different socio-economic class.

Unanimously, all the children who raised their hands to indicate their presence in the local primary school wished to leave the village and live in Dakar in search of work. Images from these students showed not only the common regime of horses, houses, and cattle, but also geometric figures and images of schools, buses and taxis. Images among this group focused on modes of transportation and the educational system—an interesting development further illustrating the link between education and mobility.

Children who were not being schooled preferred to stay in the village. Images among this group of children focused on prestige items, or luxury goods in the rural areas (e.g. cattle, horses, houses with T.V. antennas, cookware, etc.). I did however, during the course of my conversation, find one young, unschooled girl of teenage years who did show a desire to visit Dakar in search of employment (Rokhy Diop). Having interviewed her individually I will speak of this later.

In addition to dividing along educational lines in regards to their future place of residence and work, the political interests of the children also differed based on their level of education. Those who had attended school felt it was much more important to participate (at some level) in politics. While they seemed rather unclear of what this participation might be outside of voting, there was a distinct interest among these children in matters of the state. Those children who had not attended state schools felt that there was really no reason to worry about political matters—compared to the solemn responses of the school goers, these children evinced what amounted to a blasé disinterest in the whole question.

An adult loitering nearby shook their head and made the comment that politics were “popular” today, with the implication that it was some sort of silly fad generated by various teachers, officials, and parents throughout their community. This idea of politics being “popular right now” was often repeated by parents throughout Somb II and III as well as in other towns I visited during my stay. The difference in Somb however, was that a very intense level of cynicism had developed around the notion of “politics” and the “state—so much so that adults based in the rural areas had turned their backs on the whole notion of citizen participation. Here was see the “us-them” dialectic mentioned in Chapter Two being played out between those individuals involved with the state, and those individuals who are not.

Gregoire Diouf, my host and the teacher of the Londior *espace des touts petits*, explained in a later conversation that this apathy in Somb was likely due to the continual political wrangling the members of two rival parties subjected the community to—apparently there is a representative of each major party, the PDS and the PS, living in Somb. According to Gregoire, these officials had made Somb a veritable battle ground for state and local politics. Frustrated with the lack of any real changes being made by these arguing politicians and quite simply sick of the conflict, many in Somb had decided to close their ears to the entire debate. They were just fed up with the whole world of politics after their experiences.

What is particularly remarkable to note, is that even in the face of this parental disinterest children attending the state primary schools were beginning to express opinions different from that of their parents. This gives us a small hint of the impact the state educational system can and does have and the ways in which parents may find their influence over their children challenged by the state.

## **Rokhy Diop**

During my interview with the children of Somb, I noticed one girl standing off to the side with a young child in a sling around her back. After speaking with the larger group of children, my translator called her over and asked whether we might speak to her for a few minutes. She quite solemnly nodded her head and with a crowd of interested children hovering just in the background sat down with me for a chat.

Claiming to be about fourteen, Rokhy was child of a large family and had several sisters and brothers. While she and her siblings remained at home helping around the house and carrying for the younger children, she told us of one brother who was allowed to attend class at the state funded primary school. Rokhy was frank in her desire to attend school with her sibling, but said that her parents were unable to offer her the same opportunity because they didn't have adequate school supplies for two students.

Unlike many of the children with whom we had just spoken Rokhy, despite her lack of education, expressed a strong desire to live and work in Dakar. It is a common practice in Senegal for young girls to work in the city as housekeepers, saving money for their families and their own trousseaus. Upon the event of her marriage Rokhy said that she would return home and live once more in the village with her new family. "It's too bad" Rokhy mentioned towards the end of the interview "that there is not more employment in the village." Her primary motivation for leaving the village was quite patently an economic one and she showed little desire to make any permanent home within the city.

Her story is quite similar to that of many other girls who make their way to urban areas. During my time in Dakar I stayed with a middle class family in Ouakame. The young housekeeper they employed was, like Rokhy, raised in a rural village and she claimed she would continue to work until her wedding at the end of the summer when she would move back to her

husband's village. Through the course of our conversation, it became clear that one of this young woman's goals was to purchase nice clothing. Though a bit shy, the young housemaid quite proudly showed off the new set of clothing she had worked so hard to buy and each night I watched with interest as she carefully cleaned and pressed these clothes for her evening entertainments with her friends. Though seemingly frivolous, this desire to purchase clothing, particularly western clothing, is a sign of prestige among youth today. Increasingly young people are judging one's level of economic success by the material goods owned by the individual.<sup>4</sup>

### **Cheikh Sene**

Of the children I interviewed in Somb, Cheikh was perhaps the most outspoken...and the one with the highest level of education. At about thirteen years of age, Cheikh was the only child of his family to attend school. He spoke eagerly of his dream to go to Dakar, study languages (particularly French) and obtain his doctorate so that he might travel and teach.

Despite his aspirations however, Cheikh was uncertain whether he would be able to obtain a university degree. Not only are the entrance exams quite difficult, but the cost of attendance would be beyond the small means of his family. During the course of his conversation, I began to suspect that Cheikh was attempting "sell" me on his dreams, saying he wanted to study English and asking pointed questions about educational opportunities in Florida.

This search for patronage is hardly unusual among youth today. Several of the families with whom I interacted only had children in school because of the aid of different NGOs or church groups, and throughout Senegal it seems a common theme that you need to "know"

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<sup>4</sup> A number of authors have addressed the increasing importance of the clothing industry, particularly the second-hand clothing industry, in African states today. One of the best examples of this work may be found in Janet MacGaffey and Remy Basenguissa-Ganga's work, *Congo-Paris*.

someone to obtain employment opportunities; in fact, before leaving the villages I was approached by several young women asking if I needed a *bonne*, or housemaid, in the city. In this case however it was a young boy looking for educational sponsorship rather than menial labor. Cheikh presented his case with subtle skill, taking his future into his own hands and pursuing any opportunities that might come his way—even if they came in the form of a foreign graduate student from Florida.

It becomes quite obvious from this story that children in rural areas have greater difficulties in accessing the state educational system. The few children who *are* captured by this system, Cheikh Sene being my example of choice, wished to move on to an urban center to complete his training. Clearly, the reliance (or “servitude” as Gellar called it) of the rural population on urban elite continues today, with the production of social class through the vehicle of the educational system (Bourdieu 1996 and Forgacs 2000).

### **Cattle Boys**

On my last day in the rural area of Fatick, Gregoire Diouf (the local representative of AFEE and the teacher of the Espace des Touts Petits) brought together for me a group of boys and young men who were responsible for herding their family’s cattle. There was a large group of people gathered for the interview that evening—an inevitable side-effect of meeting in the central square of Londior. While none of the individuals in this group of young men could give me their ages, I learned from AFEE representatives and family members that they ranged from approximately thirteen to eighteen years of age. Despite the number of individuals present however, only the three sitting closest to me really responded to the questions I posed and there was little interest in drawing pictures. One of these boys was from the family compound in which I had been living and it seemed that because of my close proximity to his home during the past two weeks, he had lost much of the reticence shown by the other individuals present.

Shy, suspicious, or some combination thereof, the young men participating in this interview proved to be a fascinating group of people. Adamant in their desire to remain in the village and aid their families, many of them seemed possessed of an entrepreneurial spirit and spoke briefly of the opportunity to make extra money by herding the cattle of families whose own children were enrolled in school. While they seemed a bit embarrassed by their almost complete lack of education on the one hand, they showed a distinct pride in their occupation and in their ability to contribute funds to the family on the other. In fact when speaking with children in some state primary school classes, one of the responses to the type of profession they hoped to one day be involved in was to “follow the cattle,” showing the general level of prestige attached to this occupation.

As in all my interviews, I was quite curious as to the level of knowledge these young people showed in regards to the state. Did they know who the president was? Did they know the capital of Senegal, the colors of the flag, or the continent on which they lived? Did they feel it was important to participate in the political life of the state and becoming active with various political parties when they became adults?

While there was some recognition of the president and the capitol, once we moved on from there, things got a bit sticky. It was only through the asides of one twelve year old, educated in the Catholic mission school and possessed of a very nice level of French, that some of the more politically minded questions were answered. However, I must point again to the reticence of these individuals and emphasize the danger of jumping to any conclusions regarding their levels of knowledge—they were perhaps simply wary of a foreign woman.

Another note of interest is the difference between these uneducated individuals and the individuals with whom I spoke in Somb II and III. These Londior youth felt they should (if it

was possible given their low levels of education) vote in upcoming elections and one boy even expressed an interest in the position of village chief. As may be observed in my interviews in Somb however, the youth there (with the exception of the one boy attending school) felt it was useless for them to participate in the political life of Senegal.

With obvious concern for their work, the boys expressed a keen interest in learning not only how to read should the opportunity be presented to them, but also in attending classes on animal husbandry. One of the comments made by Idrissa Faye, one of those rare individuals who had attended formation training schools for agriculture and animal husbandry and returned to the village rather than working for a development organization, was that although there were schools to train young people in the skills they would need to develop their rural communities, they were all too far away to be of any use to the people who really needed them. The individuals involved in this interview made it clear that they supported these sentiments asking me to send a request to the NGO with whom I was working to implement these types of classes in the local area.

## CHAPTER 6 CHILDREN SPEAK: URBAN VOICES

Included in this chapter are the stories of children from various socio-economic classes—from homeless and poor, to the privileged and rich. In Pikine, a suburb of Dakar, I found a bustling community known for its relatively lower class families and higher levels of crime. The NGO with whom I worked insisted that during my visits I be accompanied by my male translator, and during our walks to the small school located in the center of the suburb he often admonished me to hold my bag tighter and make sure I didn't bring out my cameras. Numbers of small shops lined the white sand pathways crisscrossing this neighborhood including braid shops, furniture shops, small groceries, metal shops, etc. Goats and chickens often roamed freely between buildings, seemingly tracked by some internal system.

Not only did I have the opportunity to explore the streets of Pikine, but I was fortunate enough to be invited into private households as well. I found during interviews with the parents of children participating in AFEE's programs, that several families often lived in a single building and shared a communal area where cooking, praying, and other daily activities took place. Livestock was often penned or wandered throughout this central courtyard and visitors would stop here to inquire after the health of the family and to chat in the evenings.

Moving inwards, closer to the center of Dakar, was the neighborhood of Ouakame. Here there existed a more middle class level of housing as well as several blocks of upscale homes for wealthy Senegalese. This is hardly the only neighborhood boasting middle and upper class residences and it is not the only suburb of this class in which I conducted interviews. It does however typify the environment typical of families with high to moderate incomes.

Oukame's paved streets were, in the middle class areas, lined with small shops and smaller dirt roads branching off into residential areas. Internet cafes, photo shops, fruit and vegetable

stalls, and numerous taxis and buses lined the main thoroughfare as people moved between work and home. Also roaming the streets were groups of *talibes*, begging for their daily alms. A moderately sized market selling foods and a variety of goods was located in the heart of the middle class section, where the houses were closely packed on well-maintained sand paths.

On the more exclusive streets in this area one might find walls covered in bougainvillea surrounding large homes with paved drives, nice cars, and the occasional swimming pool. The streets were quieter here as boutiques were largely absent from these areas and there was subsequently a general reduction in foot traffic. Separated from the middle class section by a single main road, these blocks were in large part the homes of ministers, NGO officials, French expatriates, and various government officials.

My final interviews were conducted in the heart of Dakar in the Place de l'Indépendance as well as on the beaches skirting the urban center. The heart of Dakar is a bustling place packed with cars, buses, taxis, bicycles, and a great deal of foot traffic. In addition to the large markets servicing this area, upscale boutiques, restaurants, hotels, travel agencies, and assorted businesses are open to the public. In this commercial center one finds an intersection of classes where residents and visitors alike act out the business of urban living. It is also in this busy center that one finds hoards of street children and *talibes*—some begging, some thieving, and some working their way towards economic security.

When speaking of the final group, it is important to point to a distinction that may be made between children *of* the streets and children *on* the streets. As Lewis Aptekar points out in his study *Street Children of Cali*, the activities of poor children working *on* the street with vendors, in shops, etc., is remarkably similar to the behavior of children *of* the street—those who can not or will not return to their families for financial and emotional support. Street children fall into

this category of children of the street while *talibes* and poor child workers fall into the category of children on the street. The distinction is a fine one—but one that gives us a better understanding of the presence or absence of the family in a young person’s life. (Aptekar 1988: 40-41).

In this sense the term “street children” is being used in a less traditional sense. One might normally conceive of only beggars and bandits as being part of this definition, however in this thesis street children include wage laborers as well. The street in this sense almost becomes a euphemism for “non-state.” In the category “street-children” I have included interviews from *talibes*, beggars, thieves, and wage laborers whose place of employment is the street itself.

While focusing on street children is not the intent of this paper, as children have found themselves pushed from the state educational system and being “on” or “of” the street (working or living there) it is necessary to investigate this environment. As children find themselves alienated from the state by an ideology and rhetoric that does not fit into their reality, they are finding themselves increasingly in this category of street youth.

### **Privileged Children**

Whereas the children in other categories seem to require a substantial introduction, I feel the idea of “privileged” children speaks for itself. Youth in families with moderate to high incomes and secure access to not only the basic necessities of life (food, shelter, etc) but to education as well through their ability to enroll in private institutions, fall into this category. These children, although they might choose to work during their early teens, are not required to do so to ensure their own or their families well being.

### **Children of Nolivé**

In an upper-middle class suburb of Dakar I was fortunate enough to visit the private school of Nolivé. Following an interview with the director of the school and the teacher Cheikh

“Willie” Ndiaye, I spent an afternoon working and speaking with nine and ten year olds attending class at this institution. Because I had several hours to work with the children, I was able to find out a great deal about each of the twenty or so students in the class. Most of the children came from privileged families and all of the students had at least one parent or extended family member working in the diaspora. From France and Italy, to Germany, Spain, and the USA, the relatives of these children were generally well connected members of government, development, or banking institutions. Because the parents of these children often lived and worked abroad, some of them lived with aunts or uncles while others lived with their grandparents.

Upon meeting these students I, as usual, immediately produced paper and pens, asking students to draw things they wanted, what they wanted to be, and what they thought was important. Oh how astonishing the differences in not only the images they produced, but the way in which they drew! In previous interviews I found both children on the street and children in rural areas drawing small images and using one sheet of paper for multiple pictures. The children in this private school made no attempt to conserve paper, instead making every effort to fill up *all* the available space. Further the pictures in this venue reflected a greater individuality as children drew earrings on women, enhanced their pictures with multiple colors, and offered (in addition to the normal regime of horses, houses, and cars) images of favorite football stars, airplanes, and added personalized notes to myself and my translator. I was surprised to note however that there was not more “state” type imagery associated with their drawings—a fact that will be discussed in further detail in just a moment.

The educational advancement of these children was quite remarkable following my experiences with children of similar ages in rural areas. Not only did they answer my very basic

questions, but the names of all the political parties and all of their primary representatives, in addition to various government ministers. In fact, each of the children was aware of their parent's political affiliation and even seemed to be making some kind of choice between parties where their parents showed a preference for different groups.

When I compared children attending this private school and those attending the public schools in rural and urban areas, the differences in educational levels at similar ages was quite startling. Where the teachers in the other schools (particularly the rural schools) said that some of my questions might be too advanced for their students (example what do the colors in the flag mean and identifying maps), private school children gave the responses with ease. This reflects not on the intelligence or capabilities of the students, but is indicative of the lack of resources and individualized attention given to students in many public schools.

The intense educational program afforded to these students by the financial position of their parents not only increased the children's awareness of the state, but further emphasized pre-existing class differences. Children attending Nolivé spoke casually of attending college and moving into the diaspora to work with a parent or family member—and it is to this influence of family members in the diaspora that I attribute the relative absence of state imagery in their drawings. We see here that even in cases where children firmly entrenched in the local educational system, a disenchantment with the state and the economic opportunities it has cultivated reigns. In following the example of their parents, every member of the class save one claimed they hoped to live and work abroad, returning to Senegal only after they had finished their careers. This one child who claimed she didn't want to work abroad shyly commented, to the amusement of her classmates, that she wanted to be a hairdresser. Although this was a common professional ambition among children of lower classes, it seemed that in this upper

class environment such a career choice was considered by other students as being far from ambitious.

### **Children of Parliament**

As we were seated in a café in downtown Dakar, my translator excitedly showed me an article he was reading regarding a presentation local school children were making in Parliament that day. Hurrying over to the government building in which the presentation was taking place, we attached ourselves to a group of journalists filing into the meeting hall. As we found our seats, I watched with interest as school children from the top schools in Dakar read speeches urging the Parliamentary assembly to: provide free school supplies to all children, prevent violence in the *darras*, ban precocious marriages, bring about universal education, transform *daaras* into academic institutions, offer free health care to all young people, prevent excision, provide playgrounds, prevent child labor, give them the right to speak to officials and share their ideas, reactivate the Children's Parliament, etc. The list was extensive...and informative.

These highly educated public school children had somehow, word for word, reiterated for the Parliament official international and state objectives for youth in Senegal (and I would bet if I'd had the opportunity to interview them individually I would have found state imagery a bit more apparent in their drawings!). One must certainly assume that these children were guided by their instructors in the formation of their presentation—instructors that were produced by and taught within a state educational system. Watching these presentations made clear the influence the state can potentially gain over the ideological formation of young Senegalese through the educational system.

Further, while the children pointed out the incidence of female genital mutilation, child soldiers in the Casamance, lack of school supplies, etc, not a single child came forward who had actually experienced these difficulties and deprivations. Instead the children spoke of the “other”

children, the underprivileged children, who needed their aid. Clearly not only is the current educational system successful in transferring state and international ideology to some students, but it also placed privileged children in a position to gain greater influence, to claim a louder voice, in the state itself. Here we see a fascinating example of both the creation of hegemony and the reproduction class and its attendant privileges. (Forgacs 2000: 422)

In response to this presentation, the Ministers showered the children with praise claiming they were “good citizens” and that the voices of youth were “important” and should always be listened to. The children, called the hope of their country, were told that their concerns were recognized and that the ministers would love to have them back to speak to them in the year 2010.

Considering this last, generous invitation, I find it convenient that not only have officials in this way promoted a sympathy and understanding between youth and the state with these presentations, but they have also recognized young people without promising them anything. By the time the next Assembly comes around, the Parliament will be addressed by a new group of youth without having to answer to the children who came before. This highlights the paradox discussed in Chapter Three regarding the states increasing recognition of the agency of the child as well as its need to make them more dependant on the intervention of the state. By telling children that they have listened to their concerns and the will address those issues brought to them, the initiative taken by children is affectively reappropriated and the children are made dependant on the intervention and aid of state programs. This phenomenon will be discussed in greater detail in the discussion.

### **Underprivileged Children**

I speak of underprivileged children in a direct contrast to privileged children. Youth in this category are raised in families with insufficient means to assure not only the educational benefits

enjoyed by children of other socio-economic classes, but they may also struggle to provide their children with adequate food, clothing, and housing. As reflected by the statistics discussed in Chapter Three, many of these young people will find themselves working on the streets to supplement their family's incomes. State schooling, while available to these children, does not assure educational success due to the difficult regime of exams outlined in Chapter Two. Private academies are out of the financial reach of these youth without the intervention of private donors.

### **AFEE's Pikine Students**

One of AFEE's most well funded programs is a school for young women in the Pikine area. Although most of the girls were unsure of their ages, I was told by the instructor that they were probably between thirteen and eighteen years old—and all of them had been unable to pass the exams that would allow them to continue on with a free secondary school education. Because they were unable to continue with their schooling, they had enrolled in AFEE's program which taught not only health safety, literacy, basic arithmetic, and cooking, but also marketable skills. Each day the girls were instructed in the arts of sewing, macramé, and embroidery with any goods they produced being sold to help support the program.

Following lunch one afternoon, I had the opportunity to speak with a group of about ten girls. At first they were a bit shy, but they soon began to open when speaking of their goals. Some of the girls hoped to have their own shops or stalls where they could sew or sell their embroidery, others hoped to become hair dressers or cooks. They were also quite vocal in their desire to work and live abroad. While none of them claimed high hopes in regards to their ability to live outside of Senegal, each of them spoke wistfully of a family member or friend who worked in the diaspora and the "wonderful" life they had in a foreign city.

Answering my questions regarding the state, each of the girls had a clear idea of who the president was, the location and characteristics of their state (the meaning of the colors in the flag,

the name and party of the president, the name and party of previous presidents, etc), and various other important historical sites throughout Senegal. They did not however feel any need to participate in the political life of their community. There was “no point” in their opinion in becoming active in the state. They were quite perplexed as to what they would gain if they *did* participate at any level. It is unfortunate that I was unable to collect drawings from these girls, but their instructor (with a slight smile) claimed the girls would be “bored” with such an activity. Whether she believed they would think it too juvenile for their tastes or whether she felt it was a simple waste of her class time I could not discern.

The educational goals of these girls were largely met by the NGO whose classes they attended, the sole exception being a lack of instruction in the French language—a remarkable lack given that knowledge of the French language actively aids individuals enhance their business contacts and versatility. The girls were eager to gain a better understanding of the language that was accorded such prestige in the city and believed firmly that it would promote their economic advancement in business. They were a bit embarrassed that they were unable to continue on with their education in state schools, but claimed they were very happy with AFEE’s program—one girl even voiced a desire to become an instructor in the school when she became old enough.

Unlike privileged children in private and state schools, we see in this scenario how the state has failed to both in aiding these young girls in achieving their goals, as well as in generating within them feelings of loyalty to the state. Not only were these young women pushed off the “officially” sanctioned path to economic success, but due to their more positive experiences with the NGO the girls were beginning to devote their time, energy, and aspirations to AFEE. Indeed, learning from and working with the NGO in the future had become the goal

driving one particular young girl to reenroll in AFEE's Pikine program four years in a row. She quite candidly told me she hoped they would see how hard she worked and want her to continue coming there to teach younger girls. This notion of becoming a kind of "citizen" of an NGO will be discussed in greater depth in the final chapter of this thesis.

**Mame Baitryuy, Nafi Seck, Fatou N'Diaye, and Sekhma Awa Dieng**

In the center of Pikine is a public state school with so many students the teachers are forced to split their classes into two different sessions. As the courtyard of this institution was also the area in which AFEE held its Saturday play group, I was invited to interview the director of the school as well as some of its students. Mame, Nafi, Fatou, and Sekhma were chosen by the director because of their excellent academic performance.

Images produced by these children were interesting in that, more than any other group, pictures of families appeared prominently in their drawings. This is no doubt due to, as the girls will explain, the presence of their parents in the diaspora. Having been chosen to speak with me because they were the "best" of their class, the children drew correspondingly impressive images of their futures. Banks, a picture of the university, and images of the Senegalese flag featured prominently in these drawings along with the more common images of cars, houses, and horses.

At first the interview was a bit difficult. Seeing that they were hesitating over answering some of the more scholarly questions, I assured them that no answer would be considered incorrect. Hearing this they became more forthcoming, feeling perhaps that they would not be "graded" on their responses. To the initial questions regarding the flag, the president, etc, they were obviously well versed in basic knowledge of the state. However, when it came to the question of whether they felt it was important to vote, they replied in the negative after another brief hesitation. While it can sometimes be difficult to determine whether this is the child's own or their parents opinion, it certainly gives a bit of insight into the perception among those of the

lower socio-economic classes have regarding the worth of the state and the degree to which their voices might be heard in it.

Each of the children with whom I spoke hoped to go abroad in the future. The girls in the group (Nafi, Fatou, and Sekhma) also had highly ambitious goals that included working with NGOs, being a banker, and being a business woman. Upon further discussion, two of the girls also acknowledged an interest in helping out in the small businesses of their families. Sekhma's aunt owned a small boutique in Mauritania, while Fatou's parents had a small stall in Italy. Not only did this illustrate the children's desire to work in the diaspora, but it also seemed as if there was one appropriate "scholarly" response they were expected to give as bright state school students, and quite a different career goal they perceived as being actually lucrative and helpful to the families.

With both of Fatou's parents living in Italy she is forced to live with her grandparents. Nafi too was living without one of her parents as her father, whom she has never met, lives and works in Mecca. At the end of the interview Nafi started crying saying that she missed her father and wanted to go be with him. This separation from parents due to their place of employment is common in Senegal and the ability of the parent to direct and control the lives of their children are therefore curtailed.

Facing this type of situation, children become aware of the realities of Senegal's economic situation at a very young age. Thinking back to the words of Oppenheim quoted earlier, that the "earlier a child changes from a 'sheltered view of society, the more intensely realistic (or perhaps skeptical) his outlook will become" makes us aware of the affect these early separation has on the child's perception of the state as inadequate to address their own and their parents needs

(1977: 33). Rather than looking to the state for their livelihood students, like their parents, instead are turning their views outward.

### **Koranic School Students**

Also called *talibes* from the Arabic word for student, Koranic school students are a common sight on Senegal's city streets. With an emptied, cleaned tomato can looped around their arms and necks by a piece of string to collect their alms, observers may see many of these young children begging on the streets of Dakar and its suburbs. While *talibes* may be found in rural areas as well, these young students are most visible in urban centers where alms are more easily collected.

By placing these students in the section entitled "Underprivileged Children" I do not mean to indicate that all individuals who attend Koranic schools are underprivileged. Instead, I wish to highlight the circumstances in which I found the *talibes* with whom I had direct experience. There are no doubt a number of privileged children who also experience Koranic school education.

### **The Talibes from Guinea**

Following my stay in the villages, I spent a good deal of time working with children in Senegal's capital. During one of my excursions to the Place de l'Indépendance, Louis Ndiaye and I happened to see a group of children being shooed away from a street corner. My interest piqued, we wandered closer to investigate the disturbance hoping to strike up a conversation with the ragged band of young *talibes*. As Louis began chatting with them, I loudly unwrapped a candy and popped it in my mouth—and suddenly a dozen hands shot forward in an immediate demand for sweets. Unsurprisingly, we suddenly had their complete attention. I gave out a couple of suckers and a pen and then told them I needed to sit down before I could hand out the rest of the candy. Thus began our interview!

In their drawings, the children produced many images of their immediate environment—the central square of Dakar, pictures of cranes used in building projects around town, as well as pictures of themselves with their tomato cans looped around their necks. What was fascinating about this series of drawings, were the representations of popular culture they created. One boy drew a picture of Mickey Mouse, while yet another drew a picture of “50 Cent” (a famous rapper). Also present were pictures of hands and phrases in Arabic. Noticeably absent from these drawings was any representation of the state. Instead, the influences over these children included pop culture icons (Mickey Mouse and 50 Cent) and their Koranic school.

Talking to the children we found they (and their *marabout*) were from Guineau-Bissau. While they were not directly of Senegalese descent, they were certainly embedded in the social life of the country. Further, having come to the country at such a young age their perceptions of reality and the place of the state in it were fully conditioned by their new environment. Apparently the *marabout* had relocated with his entire class of *talibes* to the Dakar area, chasing the richer pickings of this urban West African port city. Every one of the children spoke longingly of Guinea and each hoped to return to the fields and work there with their parents. In fact, the *talibes* claimed they would have run back home long ago if they weren’t sure their parents would send them right back to the rather ungentle grasp of their *marabout*.

Faced with a strict daily regime of begging during the day and studying during the night, these children ranged from about five years of age to about thirteen years of age. Throughout my time in Dakar I had become used to watching children roam the streets, however even I was surprised at the youth of some of these youngsters. As we worked with this group, it became apparent that they functioned by some kind of internal order in which the older *talibes* watched over and cared for the youngest members of their band. We were also told that the older children

had to protect everyone from other street children and *talibes* wandering the streets, as beatings and theft were common.

As was my habit I asked them a series of questions about their goals and their understanding of politics. Despite their desire to return to the fields with their parents and escape the *marabout* with whom they studied, each of the children seemed to desire an education—or at least what they thought of as an education. Beyond basic literacy and arithmetic, they had little idea of what formal schooling entailed, and none of them understood what a university was. In response to my questions regarding the Senegalese state, they knew only the colors of the flag...it was quite prominently displayed behind us as we spoke so I was relatively unsurprised by that knowledge. As for voting, they had little idea of what this activity referred to and couldn't answer my question.

What I find interesting in this discussion, besides the rather extensive information given me in regards to the inner scheduling and working of a *daara*, was the youth and diversity of the *talibes* roaming Dakar. Apparently there were many *marabouts* from many parts of Senegal and surrounding states who made their way to this Western capitol. Also striking was that despite their presence in the urban center of Dakar, they had little to no understanding of Senegal as a political body—they did not even evince an awareness of law keepers like the police. Without an education, they remained unaware of even the most basic manifestations of the state. Dwelling in Senegal today there are large numbers of children with absolutely no contact with any state body.

### **Mamadou**

My conversation with the Koranic school children was fascinating, and I became particularly interested in the way in which they organized themselves to protect each other. Within this group, I was told that Mamadou, the oldest of the boys present, was considered the

second in command to their “chief”—a child who wasn’t currently present. As my interview with the children progressed I watched them discuss each one of their answers together in Pulaar before coming to a consensus and allowing Mamadou to give me the answer in clear and careful Wolof. My translator told me that several times he could see the youngsters editing what they would say to us (as he spoke Pulaar he was actually able to translate everything they said), but leaving the final decision to their leader.

As Mamadou spoke to us he kept an eye open to the activities happening around him, particularly on the youngest, his brother. Apparently he and his younger sibling were all sent to study the Koran with this *marabout* for about three years (or until they had memorized the necessary text) while their older brother stayed home and worked the fields with their parents. Mamadou seemed quite envious of his elder sibling, saying he would run away and return home to join him, but his family would only send him back to Dakar if he did not first finish his religious training. When asked why they sent him in the first place, he explained that he had misbehaved at home and in disgust or resignation his parents had sent him to be with the *marabout*.

Whether Mamadou’s perception of his parent’s reasons for sending him to Koranic school were accurate or not, it seems that many children find themselves in his position. Unable to return home and faced with the hardships of life as a *talibe*, this child’s primary goal was to learn as fast as he could so he could return home to his family.

### **Street Children**

Mansour Sora Wade recently produced a short film titled *Picci Mi*, or Little Bird, in Wolof. In this film a *talibe*, Abdoulaye takes up with a street child, Mamadou, while begging one morning in the streets of Dakar. Throughout the day the two children explore the city, laughing and spying on its inhabitants, receiving food from a woman portrayed as a

bountiful earth mother, and generally enjoying the freedom of youth. At the end of the day, parting from his newfound friend, the *talibe* returns to his *daara*, taking a journey-like walk through a junkyard before arriving at his school to give his alms to a snoozing Koranic teacher. The final clip before the close of the film shows the young *talibe* in a dream. He kneels at the base of a tree, moving his arms in an imitation of flight, mimicking the image of the bird winging away over the horizon that the film opened with.

In this film the director portrays the *talibes* life as a cage from which he longs to escape. After tasting the “freedom” of the street he dreams of flying away to a place where (to his mind) there are no restrictions, where he has escaped the constraints of the *daara* and the wishes of his family, and his only “responsibility” is to play with his peers. With *Picci Mi* the director is clearly speaking of youthful desires and the lure of the “free” streets that children experience in urban Senegal today.

This was a challenging group of individuals with whom to engage in conversation. Because of their distrust of me, the sometimes brief conversations we engaged in, and the environment in which we met it was difficult to gain drawings from this group of children. It is unfortunate that the only children from whom I obtained images were the Shoe Shine Boys who came and sat with me once during one of my forays into the central square of Dakar.

### **Moussa and Ousmane**

Some of the street children with whom I worked claimed stories reminiscent of this film’s narrative. Louis Ndiaye, my translator, and I approached the carts of several vendors a street or so away from the courthouse in downtown Dakar. These men were friends of Louis and obligingly called over two of the street children who commonly loitered around the area—two young boys by the name of Moussa and *Ousmane*. Engaging them in conversation I found that they were runaways from a *daara* in Saint Louis, a city over 200km north of Dakar. Tired of the

beatings they received from their teacher and knowing that their families would simply send them back to the *daara* should they return home, the two boys hitch-hiked, begged and theived their way into Dakar.

Upon their arrival in the capital city, the two boys were taken in by a group of street boys. Wandering the streets during the day, thieving when they could get away with it, and begging when they could not, the two boys would rejoin their families in the evening to sleep at Dakar's central bus (also known as *car rapides*) station. Upon investigation I found derelict vehicles transformed into temporary housing, benches and bus stops teeming with young boys and men, and a wealth of graffiti decorating every square inch of the buses available. When I expressed an interest in taking a photo of the images decorating one bus, my translator Louis gently discouraged me from doing so myself. He took the camera and casually maneuvered us so we might not be observed. Despite his precautions, several individuals sent disapproving looks after Louis took a snapshot of one bus. We left quickly.

This sense of privacy and suspicion was mirrored in our interactions with the two boys for, as Lewis Apteekar says in his psycho-ethnography of street children, "presenting false information...[is] vital to survival" (Apteekar1988: 14). In following with this survival strategy by giving us obviously fictitious names and ages (*Ousmane* claimed to be eighteen while his age mate and companion, Moussa, admitted to being twelve) and elaborating on their lives in Dakar, an older boy of about fifteen or so, hustled over to us, grabbed the arms of the two boys and pulled them aggressively away. According to the vendors who had introduced us to the children, the older boy was the "chief" of the street boys—a chief who was quite patently displeased by Ousmane and Moussa's discussion with us.

Before their departure, I did find out a good bit about the two boys. Ousmane boasted of becoming a thief, claiming that was the only way to live and the only way to succeed—he had no illusions that education would bring him necessary economic opportunities. It was his dream, his ambition, and he expressed no desire to leave the freedom of the streets and return to either his *daara*, become enrolled in the educational system, or to reunite with his family. On the other hand Moussa, a smallish boy with a white film slightly obscuring the vision in one eye, was much quieter and told us he wanted to go to school. Carefully scribing his name on a piece of paper he proudly showed of his skills in Arabic and claimed he one day wanted a real job, off the streets. Despite these claims however, he was adamant in his refusal to return home saying he would never return to Saint Louis and the family he had still living there. Drawn in by *Ousmane* however who likened him to his “tail,” the waving appendage that followed him everywhere, Moussa remained with the street boys, begging and thieving with his mates in order to survive.

### **Badara, Serign, and Mamadou**

Moussa and *Ousmane*, with their different perspectives of life and the street, were not uncommon examples of the different perceptions of street life found among children. Several days later, sitting on a stretch of Dakar’s coastline in search of young people to talk to, I came upon three, uneducated street children who also claimed to be runaways from *daaras*. These children hailed from distant cities of Djourbel, Thies, as well as the more local suburb of Pikine and spoke of being “tortured” in their *daaras* and as well as describing the poor clothes and food provided to them there. The three boys first met in Pout along a stretch of road where individuals coming to or leaving from Dakar could buy mangos for their family and friends. Badara, the oldest boy, Serign, and finally Mamdou the youngest, then made their way to Dakar where they scrounged and begged on the streets, posing as *talibe* students with their red tomato cans on a string across their shoulders. And this is the story of their first meeting.

After only a short time in the city they made their way to a non-profit organization called *Empires des Enfants*, or the Empire of Children. The goal of this organization is to aid children in returning to their families or failing that, provide them with food, shelter, and possibly education. The three boys were returned to their respective homes where they claim they were beaten and immediately returned to the *daaras* from which they had first escaped. Faced with the same deprivations and abuse, they once again made their way to Dakar, separately this time. It was as they loitered in their old haunts upon their arrival in the capitol city that they met for the second time.

The nature of these movements is cyclical—from the home, to the *daara*, to the streets, and back home again before they return once more to the *daaras*. It is little wonder children often refuse to return to their families at all. By the time I met Badara, Serign, and Mamadou however, their street life had seemingly become too much for them and after speaking with them a bit and taking them to a clinic where Mamadou was treated for sores covering his body and hands, the children asked us to sponsor them to reenroll in the *Empire des Enfants*—apparently a necessary step in this organization’s process of family reunification. Unfortunately the day was late, the organization’s offices were closed, and I was forced to arrange a meeting with them for the following day...the boys never showed up. Whether their protestations of a desire to return to their families were real or manufactured for my benefit, their story illuminates the catch-22 in which children find themselves today. Physically, mentally, or economically unable or unwilling to function within constraints placed upon them by various social actors, some children are making the choice to take control of their own lives by moving onto the streets.

### **The Shoe Shiners**

Having spoken of children *of* the street, I’d like to mention one of my brief interactions with children *on* the street. While speaking with the *talibes* in the central square of Dakar,

several older boys wandered up to find out what all the activity was about.<sup>1</sup> Although causing some initial concern among the younger *talibes*, these older boys settled in and were quickly drawing pictures with the rest of the children with whom I was speaking.

The drawings of these boys focused on houses, horses, and family. What I also found interesting, was that there was a great deal of “pretend” writing at the bottom of their drawings. Drawing a square and scribing rows of angular lines across it, these children were frankly wistful that they were unable to write like “educated” children.

Between about thirteen and fifteen years of age (like so many other children I had interviewed they did not know their true ages) these boys were unable to successfully complete their primary education and had taken to the streets to earn some extra cash. These boys were not living on the street, rather they worked as shoe shiners during the day. Canvassing the streets branching away from the *Place de l'Independence*, the boys showed up every day hoping to bring home money for their families.

One of the issues that emerged during the course of my time in Senegal, was overwhelming number of programs for girls and the comparative lack of programs geared specifically towards boys. In the case these shoe shiners, they had recently faced a decline in sales as an NGO had organized a group of female shoe shiners just around the corner from them. “Now everyone wants to get their shoes shined by the girls”, the boys complained bitterly. With the female competition that had sprung up, they were unable to earn enough money to eat.

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<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately I was not able to ascertain the educational level of these boys. Because of their age and their presence on the streets during school hours, I can only assume they were not able to gain entrance to secondary schools. It is possible however, that they may have had some primary school education.

These boys were relatively closed-mouthed about their other activities and beyond offering to shine my shoes, drawing pictures of Senegal's football team, and eating candy they seemed little inclined to participate in any interview.

### **Discussion**

What becomes apparent in this chapter are the ways in which children struggle to obtain secure lives through means other than the officially sanctioned path of education—particularly in the case of *talibes* and street children. It also becomes clear that state and NGO educational systems have made some kind of impact on youth in rural and urban areas. The ways in which children in rural areas were divided by their level of schooling in the ways they responded to questions regarding their rural/urban orientation and their political beliefs, emerged quite clearly in the interviews with the young cattlemen and the children of Somb. In the urban areas, a similar division in opinion was found between different socio-economic classes as well as between those of different schooling levels.

### **Analysis of Drawings**

An analysis of the images drawn by these children also proved fascinating. In rural areas, educated youth tended to draw state inspired images (flags, teachers, and even the President of Senegal), and they also produced images implying mobility (cars and buses). These children, by their drawings and their words, looked eagerly towards moving to urban areas and seemed more inclined to sympathy with the state.

Uneducated youth in rural communities focused primarily images of wealth (horses, cattle, houses, dishes, and farm implements). There was a supremely practical bent to these images and they reflected little evidence that the children were affected by either state or non-state organizations. In contrast to this, children in NGO sponsored schools produced images that clearly showed the influence of the organization. Creating pictures of their NGO sponsored

teacher and other NGO representatives was coupled with their vigorous singing of anthem like songs to the founder of AFEE. Clearly the energies of these students were directed towards not only their local community (as was indicated by the more practical images they produced) but towards the NGO with whom they worked so closely.

While one might expect educated youth in urban areas to produce similar types of drawings to the state educated children in rural areas, such was not the case. Instead, sketches from this group focused most intently on individualism and family members in the diaspora. It is at this juncture, when comparing drawings from educated children in rural and urban environments, that I would like to mention a comment made to me during several of my interviews. A. Mangane (Director of Private School Education in Senegal), Seynabou Tall Wade (Director of the AFEE), and a number of teachers with whom I spoke, made the fascinating comment that most of the politicians came from rural areas—a comment that finds surprising support in my own analysis of the children’s drawings.

Whereas educated children in rural areas evince a great deal of optimism for finding employment at the end of their educational career, urban youth (perhaps because of their exposure to their parent’s own inability to find satisfactory employment in the city) were far less hopeful. It is perhaps this more intense disenchantment with the state and the economy that discourages the educated urban child from constructing goals that incorporate a more active role within the state of Senegal.

Finally uneducated urban children generated pop culture and environmental images in their drawings. Notably absent from these images were any representations of state or NGO actors. Instead, one found representations of their immediate surroundings, scribbled writings (a perhaps wistful cry for education) and the influences of their Koranic school teachings. It is in this

population that one found perhaps the best indication of total alienation from the state. There was little if an indication in their drawings that they had in any way been incorporated as citizens within Senegal.

### **Social Analysis**

Leaving behind us the images produced by these children, I move to an analysis of their actual words and my direct interactions with these groups of young people. For the sake of illustration I currently divide youth into eight different categories, allowing for the inevitable exceptions that fall somewhere within the spectrum this scale provides: urban/highly educated, urban/educated, urban/semi-educated, urban/uneducated and rural/highly educated, rural/educated, rural/semi-educated and rural/uneducated. By highly educated I mean those individuals who are either enrolled in or have graduated from a college or university, by educated I refer to those who attended and/or have finished secondary school, by semi-educated those who have at least attended if not completed primary school, and by uneducated those who have never acquired any kind of formal schooling. The research I have conducted has afforded me with the opportunity to work either directly or indirectly with each of these groups.

In my research I have chosen to focus specifically on the ways in which children represent an edge, a point of resistance and possible change within Senegal. It may first be stated that any child with even a modicum of education evinces a desire to leave their current location for greener pastures further afield. Children in rural areas generally want to go to Dakar, while children in Dakar express the wish to move into the diaspora. Speaking with a group of young women between the ages of fourteen and sixteen in an NGO training center in Pikine, provided a perfect example of this; when asked about their goals the girls resoundingly, and quite loudly, agreed that leaving Senegal to live in another country was their ultimate dream. In opposition to

this, those who are not exposed to more Western modes of thought, through either their education in French-styled state schooling systems or media resources (in other words uneducated rural children), have a much greater desire to stay at home. This was communicated quite clearly to me in an interview with about fifteen boys who worked their families cattle in the rural village of Londior. When asked if they had ever wished to undertake different kinds of work each of them affirmed that they were happy they could stay in the village while their age-mates left for the city. In every session I have conducted with children in Dakar, regardless of outside influences, this phenomenon has remained consistent and in rural areas I found only very isolated exceptions to this rule.

Secondly, the character of educated children in urban and rural areas is characterized by parents and teachers as being quite distinct. Rural youth are said to show a great deal more respect for their elders, are possibly less educationally advanced than their urban counterparts (as a comparison of three classes of 9-10 year olds in urban and rural environments suggested) and are less individually differentiated at similar points in development. In rural areas, many youngsters described with averted eyes their hopes to be a teacher, perhaps a Christian minister, or perhaps a government official in the future—all professions with which they are familiar and have been intimately exposed. In contrast to this, urban children of the same age had developed a wealth of different professional goals from pilot to soccer player, from majorette to banker.

When addressing the group of semi-educated children, one finds perhaps the most commonalities—a result that is not so unusual if this it is the type of citizen the government has geared itself to produce. In this level of education one finds children generally seeking education in technical training centers (both for instruction in the sciences of agricultural and animal husbandry as well as various trade schools) in urban areas. Once this training is completed they

then attempt to find employment with various city-based agencies. Although those with roots in rural areas quite often return to their villages to aid their families during the rainy season and perhaps hope to one day retire to family compound, for the most part job opportunities and the level of political involvement of these individuals is relatively uniform.

Secondly, we come to those children who have not received traditional state education. In rural areas these individuals generally profess a desire to remain in their villages, working with their families in the compounds in fields. However, in this group there is also a second subdivision of children (many young girls among them) who hope to come to the city to find temporary menial labor until the time of marriage.

Unfortunately, many of the urban uneducated youth find themselves in the ranks of street children. With a vast amount of time on their hands and absentee parents, urban uneducated youth may often be found begging in the streets—a phenomenon that can transcend class. I was told of one particular instance where an uneducated child from a wealthy family also made their way on to the streets, following the seeming excitement of a “free” life where no authority may structure their time.

As they become more aware through conversations with peers and observations of the world around them children become increasingly aware that the choices open to them lead only the lucky, rich, or highly talented to economic security. There is no sure way to the prize of financial success and many children today will be forced to rely in their maturity on the generosity of development organizations, state welfare, and/or the benevolence of their kin.

Reflected in this chapter are some stories of youth in Senegal. However, I must point out that this chapter is merely a representation of the type of diversity that might be found among young people in urban and rural areas. Further research in regards to the narratives of child

workers, migrants, sex workers, and students is needed in order to acquire a full understanding of the ways in which the life paths of children are affected by education, socio-economic class, kin, and location.

## CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

### **Introduction**

Through the course of this paper several central issues have emerged as driving forces in the alienation of youth from the state. Among these are the nationalist educational system and its failure to provide universal education, the lack of employment for highly educated individuals which forces youth to pursue alternative economic strategies, the perpetuation of socio-economic class through the education system, the changing values of youth due to a dispersal of the family and the introduction of Western media, and the increasing agency of children in the modern day. In this final chapter I touch on the ways the children's stories give voice to these themes and explore their implications for the state, the family, and the child.

### **Discussion**

As we have seen, one of the primary venues through which the Senegalese state interacts with youth is through the educational system. Among the upper classes and the brightest of Senegal's youth, one sees some success in the state's approach to encouraging nationalism and developing young, active citizens. Children involved in the Children's Parliament evinced high levels of knowledge about the government and were eager not only to present their interests to the Parliament but to become actively involved in the work of "fixing" such issues as child labor, sex work, etc. According to the ministers addressing these youth, these children were chosen for this presentation because they were the "best" and brightest students in Senegal.

While this forum was ostentatiously designed to allow children to express their opinions to the state, to share their concerns for Senegal in the realms of education, health, economics, and morality, in reality the state provide students with a mere illusion of control. Rather than hearing the voices of the children, we saw duplicated in their presentation the political and educational

ideology of the state. This parliament, in the guise of empowering youth, provides instead a forum through which statesmen may reproduce hegemony and control the differential development between socio-economic classes. In this sense, the state has done an excellent job not only of producing active citizens among the young educated elite, but also of (at least temporarily) encouraging hegemony and bolstering the legitimacy of the state.

Yet the production of an active citizen is a double-edged sword. A number of these educated young people discover as they mature that the rhetoric of the state does not fully address their political and socio-economic needs. Despite this devotion of a juvenile educated elite to state ideology, university students in Senegal are among those individuals who are not only highly active in the state, but may also become its primary opponents. Alienation does not simply occur among lower socio-economic classes, and alienation does not imply political inactivity among the educated or uneducated.

Numerous student protests have decorated Senegal's history and the attention Wade gave to the concerns of students during his electoral campaign was indicative of the attention they gave to the governance of their state. Whether they agree or disagree with the state, educated students are making the attempt to make their voices heard. It is in this way that we see (in those young people actually able to complete the program) the short-term success of the nationalist educational system in producing individuals actively pursuing their duties to participate in the state. Yet Donal O'Brien claims that while this massive drive for education "can shore up regime legitimacy" in the short-term, in the long term it has produced exactly the situation we now see in Senegal—too many educated individuals with too few employment opportunities. O'Brien put this quite succinctly when he states, "education produces inequality and privilege, as Louis Brenner remarks, but it has in recent years failed to deliver enough in terms of privilege,

leaving students, who have reached the peak of the educational process, at an impasse in terms of employment” (O’Brien 1996: 65).

It is perhaps for this very reason that we see among the school children of Nolivé a desire to move into the diaspora rather than to gain any kind of employment in the state. While these children certainly had developed ideas of citizenship and politics, they had little (if any) interest in remaining in Senegal. Although these children were not *inactive* citizens in the same sense that disenfranchised, uneducated children were, they were certainly *alienated* citizens in the sense that they had little expectation that their government would be able to shore up a faltering economy and provide employment opportunities for its job-hungry population. Rather than finding their livelihoods in Senegal, the children evinced a deep interest in leaving their country...only to return home upon their retirement.

Due to this disenchantment among its educated elite it has been unsuccessful in producing hegemony, or a “consent” to be ruled. Today the state is therefore forced to negotiate with a young, highly educated, and politically active urban elite. Among the “others,” (the alienated mass of unemployed, and the economically depressed) the state finds potential citizens diverted into NGOs and the diaspora as their energy and loyalty accrues to those organizations from which they receive the most benefit. And this is only one of the challenges the state faces.

As large numbers of individuals alienated from Senegal as a political body during childhood, the state is confronted with concerns regarding its legitimacy. Despite the hefty portion of the budget dedicated to achieving the goal of universal schooling, many children are left either untouched by the state or disillusioned by the state’s inability to secure for them the right to education beyond the primary level. The girls I worked with in Pikine, the children I interviewed in rural areas, and the street children and talibe’s with whom I spoke in the heart of

Dakar, are among the many young people in Senegal today who find themselves as outsiders within their own state.

While class certainly plays a role how alienation develops among young people, it is also interesting to note that this disenchantment with the state cuts across class lines. Among the higher socio-economic classes, dissatisfaction among youth comes primarily from the lack of employment available to them in the state. In the lower socio-economic classes, both issues of employment as well as access to education lie at the base of the alienation within young people. Only about a third of the children among the economically depressed (the brightest) will pass the exams following their primary schooling and actually enter secondary school. Those who are not in the upper 30% of their class, although they are well able intellectually to complete their education, have little hope of doing so with the patronage of a NGO or private donor.

Pushed off the officially sanctioned path to economic success, individuals are exploring alternative means of providing security for themselves. These alternative economic strategies may include anything from an involvement in the informal economy, sex work, illegal activities, or movement into the diaspora. Participating in the state at any level, be it voting or aspiring to work in government, is rare among this alienated group. The children in this category either did not understand the concept of participation or they saw no benefit in bestirring themselves to cast their ballot—after all what benefits did they receive from the state?

Uneducated (or semi-educated) children evinced little understanding of the rights they might receive from the state or the duties they owed to the state. Like the black students Geraldine Clifford refers to in 1920s America, these youth find themselves as “second-class” citizens (Clifford 1976: 220). Prevented from realizing their right to education, blocked by this

lack of education from fulfilling the duties of a citizen, Senegal has within its borders large groups of individuals alienated from the state.

Understanding that the state, intentionally or not, is growing its population of basically educated individuals, knowing that most of these individuals are deprived of the professional incomes afforded to the well-connected and the talented few who claw their way up the educational and organizational ladders, it is fascinating to realize that Senegalese politicians have made a habit of securing the votes of this struggling majority with “gifts” of meal, rice, and even money. By maintaining a large group of basically educated, economically uncertain individuals, Senegalese politicians have assured themselves of an easily mobilized voting block. During my interviews with teachers, agents of NGOs, and individuals in rural areas I began to hear of rallies thrown by local politicians. During these rallies, officials loaded urban people onto a bus, gave them 5000 CFA (about ten dollars) and took them to the lectures of aspiring government officials. In rural areas, people spoke of bags of meal being handed out in their villages.

While I hesitate to say that the politicians “buy” their votes in these cases, for there is no official enforcing the appropriate vote at elections, it is certainly a persuasive means of gaining the support and loyalty of the local people for a brief period of time. As O’Brien points out,

For those who don’t go to school at all, or who drop out, the struggle to acquire the resources necessary for independent adulthood can be all the more difficult. Some youths who are integrated into a well-established trading network, as with the Mouride second-hand clothes merchants of Dakar, can do well enough in superb disregard of educational qualifications....but these are the adepts of clientelism. Those outside such privileged networks may help to make up the urban crowd, a volatile political force, on the fringes of a life of crime. The political impulses of the crowd are economically motivated above all.... [O’Brien 1996: 69]

Continuing with the ramifications of an inadequate state education system, one must consider the consequences of so many children receiving their education in NGO training institutions. If the

state relies on education to create new citizens and if most of an individual's education occurs under the aegis of a *non*-governmental organization, what are the implications for the state?

As we have seen in Chapter Four, NGOs are gaining the loyalty of those individuals and communities whom they aid. In Londior children sang songs of praise to the founder of AFEE. In Pikine, a young girl aspired to gain a position of power in the NGO who trained her, hoping to prolong the benefits she received from the organization as well as to extend them to future generations. In this way NGOs create a loyal local citizenry through their training programs, provide welfare services to those in need, and harness the energy and efforts of their members by acting as economic mediators and advocates.

The NGO in this scenario becomes almost a mini-state, quite separate from the formal Senegalese state. Although one should be wary of taking this analogy too far, when one considers the question posed earlier “If states are not capturing the potential of its youth, who is?” then NGOs and various private donor agencies stand as the primary candidates.

Of her organizational goals, “Mother” Seynabou, (founder and director of the AFEE said this of her organizational goals,

I hope to develop a good citizen for tomorrow. A good citizen is honest, loves their nation, loves their own culture, is independent, open to other cultures, and is a hard worker...I would love to make my villages the Silicon Valley of Senegal.

Noticeably absent from this list is any mention of the state or state actors. Instead, Seynabou Wade emphasizes the nation and culture of Senegal, tapping into the deep loyalties individuals maintain to their home and people, as well as alluding to her sense of ownership over these communities with the comment, “my villages.” As the director of an NGO, Seynabou determines those values she believes prudent to instill in their future members based, not on reinforcing any particular state agenda, but on their own personal beliefs. As it happens AFEE's professed ideology does happen to closely mirror that of the state.

We can say that AFEE is a second family ... We sensitize the parents to their children staying in the villages, keeping them at school. We set up an espace des tous petites that is a space that they set up in the villages to gather all the little children and we are trying at the beginning to inculcate in them all those values—that they should go to school, how it is important for them to go to school.

While AFEE currently has one training center in Dakar's urban neighborhood of Pikine where female teenagers learn basic skills and receive health education, its focus remains the rural countryside and its efforts are aimed at stemming the tide of a perpetual rural exodus. According to Seynabou Tall Wade, the founder and director of AFEE, she feels it is the duty of NGOs to focus on the remote regions of Senegal as state resources are already concentrated in urban areas—in other words, NGOs must focus on populations that the state has failed to adequately harness to the bureaucratic machine. It is revealing that when asked who had the stronger presence, to whom individuals looked to for succor in times of drought, individuals in the village pointed not to the state, foreign donors, Sufi orders, or the nearby Catholic mission school, but to AFEE. Idrissa Faye from the village of Mbengan claimed, “I would not like to see what my village would be like without AFEE...”

As I mentioned in Chapter One, Ahiwa Ong spoke of graduated zones of sovereignty. When analyzing how these zones extend not only outward to address the position of individuals in transnational relations with the Senegalese state, but inward as well, one must wonder if the NGO is stepping into the power vacuum created by the absence of the state in these various, internal zones. Is the presence of the NGO actually encouraging a fragmentation of state power? Are these organizations taking over the role of the state in the changing landscape of power and sovereignty in Senegal today? Ahiwa Ong says of this phenomenon:

Increasingly, the diversity of multi-lateral systems—multi-national companies, religious organizations, UN agencies, and other NGOs—intervene to deal with specific, situated, and practical problems of abused, naked, and flawed bodies. The non-state administration of excluded humanity is an emergent transnational phenomenon, despite its discontinuous, disjointed, and contingent nature. [Ong 2006: 24]

Rather than dissolving it seems rather that the Senegalese state is in a process of renegotiation. One point in this renegotiation is occurring in the realms of citizenship—in the relationship between the state and the citizen. As the state finds itself unable to meet the demands of a rapidly growing population, it seems to actively foster the dependence of its populace on NGOs and other non-state actors.

The gap between the educated elite from whom the leaders of Senegal are drawn, and the alienated masses continues to widen as the state turns to governing the organizations that provide individuals with benefits rather than providing the benefits itself. One must question however if NGOs will face problems similar to those the state is experiencing now—for, regardless of the education they provide, Senegal's economy will still have insufficient jobs to meet the needs of their populace.

The question is a fascinating one and I might speculate endlessly as to its answer. Unburdened by the necessary of providing all the rights (e.g. education), for all its citizens, will the Senegalese state have greater resources to address its faltering economy? Will the state's educated elite become the carriers of the ideological state responsible for enforcing law, regulating trade, and protecting the peoples within their territories while local organizations see to the physical and mental health of their constituents? Or will NGOs somehow become the agents of the state? While I cannot answer these questions, one thing remains certain—the relationship between the citizen and the state is in transition.

Considering the level of fragmentation taking place in Senegalese society forces one to consider not only the changes happening politically, but those happening socially as well. One of the themes that continually reappeared among government officials, parents, and teachers, was the sense that youth today were becoming more unruly. The renowned Senegalese film director

Sembene Ousman provided a commentary on this in his film *Faat Kiné*. Conversations with teachers focused on the increasing incidence of children dressing in western styles and staying out late with friends. Parents bemoaned the fact that children were less respectful of adults and questioned the decisions of their elders...and these are only a few of the many examples of this changing morality that may be identified among Senegalese youth today. One must recognize that children are leaving school not only because their families can not financially afford it, but because they are pursuing their individual choices to follow alternative socio-economic life paths unendorsed by the state (O'Brien 1996: 57-58).

The street children of Dakar are a fascinating example of this. Rather than stay in the *daaras* where their families placed them, Moussa, Ousmane, Badara, Serign, and Mamadou had taken to the streets. Moussa claimed to be a thief in training while the other youngsters seemed more focused on begging and looking for work in the informal economy. Each of these children refused to return to their families, feeling they had more freedom to express themselves on the street.

### **Conclusion**

The landscape inhabited by Senegalese youth today is complex and offers an array of research opportunities to anthropologists concerned with the development of youth in Africa. Absent from this study is any discussion of gender, in-depth analyses of the types of labor in which children are involved, a detailed analysis of state funded programs for young people, or an ethnography of the ways in which families interact in an increasingly mobile economy. What is provided by this study however is the understanding that as a population, young people represent an edge, a site of contestation in emerging African nations.

As citizens the majority of children find themselves alienated from the state, as individuals they find themselves disillusioned with the economic opportunities available to them as members

of a developing country. One of the questions I hope to pursue in future research is the ways in which families and children pursue economic opportunities outside of the purview of the state. Many children today are separated from their parents who work in the diaspora. What types of relationships do they develop with the state? How do families maintain their ties with their kin and who is doing the work of raising the next generation? As children enter the diaspora themselves as dependants of their parents, how do they adjust to their host state and what is their relationship with their home?

As anthropology begins to consider children as agents, as individuals, in their own right and less as a faceless attribute of a larger family, the necessity for further research emerges. The purpose of this paper was not only to explore some of difficulties children experience in their changing relationship with the state today, but to highlight areas of future research for myself and my peers.

One must question however the durability of the hegemony, the “consent to be ruled,” that is produced in such a fashion. While the children are encouraged to become active citizens on the one hand, their contributions make little real impact on the state itself. When we realize that the history of Senegal is littered with student protests lead by highly educated young people, one must wonder if, by creating active citizens and yet allowing them no real power to change things, has the Senegalese created an even more intense alienation among the highly educated? Has Senegal backed itself into a corner in its drive to, as per the international ideology, create active citizens on the one hand while trying to maintain the unassailability of the ruling elite on the other?

APPENDIX A  
LIST OF INTERVIEWS

No	Date	Subject	Translator	Location	Position
1	5/17/2004	Louis Ndiaye	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar-Door of the Second Millennium	Volunteer
2	5/19/2004	Khadija Dougoure	No translator	Dakar-CAEF Dakar Office	President, Consultant, teacher
3	5/19/2004	Group of students (all student female)	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar-Pikine - AFEE training center	Participants in AFEE training program
4	5/21/2004	Abibatou Thiaw	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar AFEE central office	Program Coordinator
5	5/22/2004	Group of participants - 5 to 12 years of age	Louis Ndiaye	Pikine - school recreation area	Participants in AFEE weekend program
6	5/24/2004		No translator	Dakar Pouponiere - Catholic program	Director of program
7	5/25/2004	Aminata Wade	Louis Ndiaye	Pikine - AFEE training center	Program Coordinator
8	5/25/2004	Marianne Faye	Louis Ndiaye	Pikine - AFEE training center	Coordinator-Teacher of Girls Center in Pikine
9	5/25/2004	Ndeye Sy "Maimouna"	Louis Ndiaye	Pikine - AFEE training center	Aunt
10	5/25/2004	Ndeye Diallo	Louis Ndiaye	Pikine - AFEE training center	Parent
11	5/26/2004	Sokhna Seck	Louis Ndiaye	Pikine - President of women's group's house	Parent
12	5/26/2004	Coumba Mbengue	Louis Ndiaye	Pikine - President of women's group's house	Parent

No	Date	Subject	Translator	Location	Position
13	5/26/2004	Awa Diack	Louis Ndiaye	Pikine - President of women's group's house	Parent
14	5/27/2004	Seynabou Wade	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar AFEE central office	President
15	5/28/2004	Oumy Wade	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar AFEE central office	Vice President - Program Coordinator
16	5/29/2004	Group of participants - 8 to 16	Louis Ndiaye	Pikine - school recreation area	Participants in AFEE weekend program
17	6/2/2004	Group of students from espace des toutes petites - ages 3-8	Adama Tall	Londior	Participants in AFEE espace des toutes petites program
18	6/3/2004	Gregoire Diouf	Adama Tall	Londior	Teacher of Espace des Toutes Petities - parent
19	6/3/2004	Michelle Diouf (Michelle is his nickname)	Adama Tall	Londior	Our host in Londior - Parent of educated and non-educated boys
20	6/4/2004	Koumakh Ndiaye	Adama Tall	Londior	Chief de Village
21	6/5/2004		Adama Tall	Diambey	Parent
22	6/5/2004		Adama Tall	Diambey	Parent
23	6/6/2004	Mamdou Faye	Adama Tall	Diambey	Teacher of Espace des Toutes Petities - parent
24	6/6/2004	Group of students from espace des toutes petites - ages 3-14	Adama Tall	Diambey	Parent
25	6/7/2004	Ebra Ndiaye	Adama Tall	Sakhmack	
26	6/7/2004	Suleiman Diouf	Adama Tall	Sakhmack	
27	6/7/2004	Group of students from Ebra's class	Adama Tall	Sakhmack	

No	Date	Subject	Translator	Location	Position
28	6/7/2004	Group of students from Suleiman's class	Adama Tall	Sakhmack	
29	6/8/2004	Meeting of women's network to discuss loan for cattle purchase	Adama Tall	Londior	
30	6/9/2004		Adama Tall	Mbengan	Teacher
31	6/9/2004	Group of students from Mbengan	Adama Tall	Mbengan	
32	6/9/2004	Ndoubel Faye	Adama Tall	Mbengan	President of Parents group for the Sakhmack public school
33	6/11/2004	Meeting women of the community	Adama Tall	Somb 2	Group of women who are interested in having an Espace des Toutes Petites in Somb One
34	6/11/2004	Meeting women of the community	Adama Tall	R-Somb 3	Group of women who are interested in having an Espace des Toutes Petites in Somb Two
35	6/11/2004	Group of children	Adama Tall	Somb 2	Village children gathered to watch the meeting
36	6/11/2004	Cheikh Sene	Adama Tall	Somb 2	An educated boy in Somb

No	Date	Subject	Translator	Location	Position
37	6/11/2004	Rokhy Diop	Adama Tall	Somb 2	An uneducated child in Somb
38	6/12/2004	Cattle boys	Adama Tall	Londior	A large group of boys and young men who worked with the cattle
39	6/15/2004	Cheikh Ndaiye, "Willie"	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar	Teacher of 9-10 year olds in the Nolive Private School
40	6/15/2004	Mousse Gondy Diop	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar	Head Master of the Nolive Private School
41	6/15/2004	Group of students from Willie's class	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar	
42	6/26/2004	Jamba Bathily Diallo	Magatte Dia	Dakar	Mayor of Ouakame
43	7/5/2004	Madick Diange	Louis Ndiaye	Sacre Coeur	Radio Journalist
44	7/6/2004	Alioume Gaye	Louis Ndiaye	Pikine	Director of School in Pikine
45	7/6/2004	Mame Baitryuy - boy Nafi Seck - girl Fatou N'Diaye - girl Sekhma Awa Dieng	Louis Ndiaye	Pikine	Children at the top of their classes in Pikine

No	Date	Subject	Translator	Location	Position
46	7/6/2004	Mangane	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar -Ministry of Private Education	Director of Private School Education. Director of Holiday Camps
47	7/6/2004	Cheikh Ahmed Tidiane Sarr	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar -Ministry of Private Education	Inspector of Youth Sports in the Department of Private Education
48	7/7/2004	Moussa	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar	Street kid - runaway talibe
49	7/7/2004	Oussman	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar	Street kid - runaway talibe
50	7/7/2004	Talibes	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar - Place de l'Independence	Talibe from Guinea Bissau
51	7/7/2004	Mamadou	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar - Place de l'Independence	Talibe from Guinea Bissau
52	7/7/2004	Shoe Shine Boys	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar - Place de l'Independence	Shoe shiner from Dakar
53	7/8/2004	Group presentation of Deputies de l'Ecoute des Enfants	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar - Parliament Building	Group of students presenting youth issues to the parliament

No	Date	Subject	Translator	Location	Position
54	7/8/2004	Mousse Narou Mbengue	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar - Ministry of Education, Testing	Inspector of National Education and Director of the Division of Exams and Testing
55	7/11/2004	Badara Serign (oldest) The youngest who cried and ran away	Louis Ndiaye	Dakar, beach behind the Door of the Third Millennium (beach of Kussum)	Street children

APPENDIX B  
NGO STAFF MEMBER INTERVIEW

- Is it possible for you to give me history of your previous education and how you began working here at the AFEE?
- What are the current programs of this organization and where do you see this organization in the future? What are your goals for AFEE? Why is it important to work with AFEE?
- What kind of programs do you hope to create in the future.
- What kinds of support do you receive for this organization?
- Does the Senegalese government provide any aid for your programs. Would you like to see more attention given to these issues by the Senegalese government?
- Does the state have particular guidelines you need to follow in regards to the education of children?
- Are there specific types of criterion you must meet to receive support from different partners?
- What kind of controls does the government have on NGOs? Who is the NGO answerable to?
- What do you see as the most important contribution of this organization?
- Can you describe the types of children you work with? Do you primarily work with girls or boys? How long do girls and boys stay with the program? I have heard that the boys leave the program earlier than do the girls.
- What are the challenges you face in the course of your work with these children?
- What are your goals for these children?
- What other programs exist in Senegal that address the situation of children
- What are the roles of the different people in the organization? What is your role?
- What is the importance of working with children in Senegal today.
- What are the major challenges facing children?
- What are the differences between working with poor children and working with street children?
- Can you describe the situation of street children?

- Are there any particular stories (of either successful interventions with children or otherwise) you remember?
- What is your ideal for these children—what would you wish for them if there were no limits?
- Have you seen the character of interests of children change because of their involvement with AFEE?
- Have the ways in which individuals parents changed because of their own or their children's interactions with AFEE?
- What changes do you personally hope to engender within your students?
- What is your idea of Senegalese citizenship?
- Do you attempt to inculcate these ideas in children and if so how do you do this?
- What are the major influences you see on the development of children today?
- Do you feel as if AFEE acts as a second family for these children?

## APPENDIX C PARENT INTERVIEWS

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your family? What kind of schooling did you receive, where is your family from, how many people are in your family, etc?
- How did you first hear about AFEE?
- Is it important for your children to work with AFEE? Why?
- What did your children do during the day before they began attending AFEE programs?
- Can you describe a typical day for both yourself and your child?
- Do all of your children attend AFEE programs? If not, what do they do during the day?
- How do you feel about the other programs your children might participate in? How do they compare to AFEE?
- What are the greatest challenges your children face?
- What are the greatest challenges you face as a parent?
- What kinds of characteristics, what kinds of morals do you hope to instill in your child?
- Have you seen a change in the characters of children because of their participation in AFEE programs? If so what are they?
- How do you see your child's future—what are your goals for you child?
- If you had to give your children one piece of advise what would it be?
- Would you like to see different programs offered by AFEE? Is there anything about current programs you would like to see changed?
- What responsibilities do your children have around the house—day to day chores?
- What responsibilities do you now and your child in the future have as Senegalese citizens?
- What do you think about the public education system here?
- What do you think the government should be doing for your children that they aren't already doing now?
- If there was something you could change about your children's lives, what would it be?

- Is the environment children grow up in today different from the environment you yourself grew up in? How? What has changed? Are things better or worse now?
- What do you see as being the primary influences on the development of your child?

APPENDIX D  
RURAL CHILDREN INTERVIEW

- What are your names?
- What are your ages?
- What is your typical day like? What are your responsibilities?
- I have spoken with some individuals who were able to earn money watching other peoples cattle. Is this something you do?
- If so, do you have any particular plans for the money you earn? Do you give it to your family or are you saving it for any other particular reason?
- Were you able to go to school?
- Do you regret not going to school?
- Who decided you should stay home?
- Do you have brothers and sisters in school?
- If there was a school for agricultural or animal husbandry training here in the countryside, would you be interested in attending?
- Would you have time to attend?
- If there was a school for literacy training here in the village would you go?
- Would you have time to attend?
- Would you like to live here in Londior all your life?
- Would you like to live in Dakar?
- Do you think activity in the political life of Senegal is important?
- Do any of you have political aspirations?

At the end of the interview the following questions are asked in order to make comparisons between the knowledge base of educated and non-educated students:

- What is the capitol of Senegal?
- Who is the current president of Senegal?

- Who was the past president of Senegal?
- Did or do you plan to vote in elections?
- What are the colors of the flag?
- What are their meanings?
- What is the name of the village head?

APPENDIX E  
CHILD INTERVIEWS

- What is your name? How old are you?
- Can you tell me about your family? How many brothers and sisters do you have. Where do your mother and father work? Where do you live and where does the rest of your family live?
- If they have a family member in the diaspora, how often do you hear from them? Do they visit often?
- What do you do during the day?
- What do you wish you could do during the day?
- If you had three wishes, what would you wish for?
- What do you want to be in the future?
- Do you want to get married?
- Where do you want to live?
- Do you like school?
- Do you like coming to these spaces?
- Do you have family members who come to these spaces?
- Have you been coming here long?
- Do your friends come here with you? If not, what do they do?
- What would you like to learn here?
- If you could do anything in the world, what would it be?
- What do you think it is important for you to do every day and throughout the year
- What do you think your teachers and parents think is important for you to do every day and throughout the year.
- What would you like to see change in your village?

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Graduating with a B.A. in anthropology and a double minor in English and linguistics from the University of Florida, Laura Jervis spent two years following her graduation working with an NGO arranging cultural exchanges. In 2002 Laura entered UF's Anthropology program to pursue her interests in both language and culture, focusing her studies on the West African state of Senegal. Recipient of the Foreign Language Area Studies fellowship in 2003-2006, she studied both Arabic and Wolof in an effort to improve her understanding not only of Senegal, but of Northern Africa as a whole. Fortunate to have secured an internship in Senegal during the summer of 2004, Laura was able to put her language training to good use as she spent two months living and working in Dakar, Senegal's capital city. During her time there she conducted an intense period of research on which this paper is based.