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**CLOTHES TALK:
YOUTH MODERNITIES AND COMMODITY CONSUMPTION
IN DAKAR, SENEGAL**

by

SUZANNE SCHELD 

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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16 Sept. 2003

Date

Les D. Low
Chair of Examining Committee

16 Sept. 2003

Date

Les D. Low
Executive Officer

Setha M. Low

Jane Schneider

Deborah Pellow

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

**CLOTHES TALK, CLOTHES WALK:
YOUTH MODERNITIES AND COMMODITY CONSUMPTION
IN DAKAR, SENEGAL**

By

Suzanne Scheld

Adviser: Professor Louise Lennihan

Based on twelve months of fieldwork in Dakar, Senegal and funded by the Wenner Gren Foundation, this thesis examines how in the context of contemporary globalization, increased volumes of luxury commodities shape the modern consciousness of individuals in a developing African city. This project specifically examines this phenomenon through a study of youth clothing consumption. Dakar is a consumer society with particular consumer dynamics. In addition to class, patron-clientage and kinship are central to understanding contemporary patterns of consumption in Dakar. Clothing is a commodity that has been radically altered by urbanization and the globalization of manufacturing processes and advertising. Clothing is also a realm of cultural expression that has particular importance to Dakarois and it is the focus of many urban consumption competitions. In this study, the cultural dynamics of clothing consumption are examined through an integrated lens of the “private” and “public” dimensions of commodities. A balanced examination of the symbolic meanings and

patterns of circulation and exchange reveals how youth are critical to an understanding of Dakar clothing practices and Senegalese consumption competitions in general. It illuminates how youth are liberated and oppressed by clothing consumption in the current context of globalization.

The data for this dissertation was collected using a combination of traditional and non-traditional research methods. In addition to participant observation, household surveys and semi-structured interviews, youth participants produced teen fashion magazines based on their own photography and writings, and authored a street language dictionary. The collaborative research methods adopted in this study demonstrate how anthropology is an additional “external” force shaping clothing consumption along with transnational migration, media and decentralized production. Dakarais’ intense interest and awareness of clothing commodities and competitions are not “pure” outcomes of globalization or Senegalese cultural life. Rather, they are the result of local and global phenomena intersecting with one another while shaping the relationships between people and things.

For My Son, Khadim Rassoul Diaw

(August 23, 2003-)

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INTRODUCTION

In Western countries, outlet stores and sprawling megamalls have made “shopping”--interacting with mass-produced goods--a new way of life (Shields 1992; Swatterthwaite 2000). New patterns of globalization, such as an increased flexibility in mass-production, have fostered conditions where shoppers confront higher volumes of goods, make more choices about goods, and enter into and experience more “consumption sites” (Shields 1992). In cities in developing African countries--Dakar, Senegal, is one example--shops and traditional marketplaces also overflow with diverse goods. Shopping malls and other new forms of market spaces are opening too. Dakarais spend much time and energy investigating the new array of mass-produced goods while exploring the range of markets in the city. Many western observers think of African cities as poor and under-resourced, yet when it comes to clothing, cars, electronics, and appliances, there is much to stimulate the shopper’s fantasies in the marketplaces of Dakar.

In the eyes of one material culture scholar, Daniel Miller, “to be a consumer is to possess consciousness that one is living through objects and images not of one’s own creation” (1995a: 1). It is theorized that before the industrial revolution, close ties existed between producers, products, and consumers (Carrier 1990; Marx 1971[1887]). Personal aspects of the artisan were strongly associated with the craft he or she produced, and selling commodities created social ties within a community. As production processes changed, producers became distanced from their creations and the communities that consumed their products. Eventually, consuming commodities that one had not produced became a key part of modern life, and according to Miller (1995a), a means of expressing oneself and making sense of the world.

Possessing commodities became a way of buoying oneself within a rapidly changing world. The growth of consumption in the industrial period stimulated

production. Some refer to this trend as a Fordist regime of accumulation (Harvey 1989), a dynamic where workers were disciplined by productive assembly lines while earning wages that enabled them to consume. Workers' consumption thereby contributed to perpetuating production. In the postwar period (between the 1960's and 1970's) international competition forced companies to restructure production regimes in order to increase profits. Decentralized production methods and arrangements, or "flexible accumulation" (Harvey 1989), has fostered deindustrialization and the increased mobility of capital and labor. As a result, flexible mass production and consumption combined to drive up both the need for some to consume and the ability of some suppliers to produce more commodities than others. It has also intensified a "race to the bottom." In other words, some consumers and producers are increasingly incapable of keeping up with new trends and market competitions.

Consumption studies have noted a rise in luxury consumption in the new context of globalization (Cross 2000; Frank 1999; Shor and Holt 2000; Twitchell 2002). Excessive or "luxury" consumption is discussed in the context of developed countries, and it is viewed in a variety of ways: as a predictable outcome of capitalism (eg. Campbell 1989; Frank 1999; Shor 1998; Weber 1905) as a means of reproducing social inequalities (eg. Bourdieu 1984; duCille 1996; Holt 1999; Veblen 1973 [1899]), and as a detriment to society (eg. Barber 1995; Giroux 1999; Ritzer 1993 and Tomlinson 1999a, 1999b who synthesizes work related to consumption in the context of globalization). It is also viewed as a liberating experience (eg. Fiske 1989; Twitchell 1999, 2002) and as a new opportunity to develop alternatives to the consumer society (see Elgin 1993 and Lasn 1999 as cited in Shor and Holt 2000).

If luxury consumption in developed contexts is an outcome of globalization, how may consumption be described in developing contexts? How do the dynamics between people, things and imaginations operate in "transitional" cities--places that are considered the "terminus" of production (Comaroff 1993) but are also "consumer societies"? How

have the greater volumes of goods altered the composition of the material world in developing contexts, and how do “Third World” consumers think through the new language of commodities? In the context of contemporary globalization, how does the great volume of commodities, and the accent on luxury consumption, shape the modern consciousness of individuals in developing cities?

This project examines these questions through a study of youth clothing consumption in Dakar, Senegal. Clothing is a commodity that has been radically altered by the globalization of manufacturing processes and advertising. It is also a realm of cultural expression that has particular importance to Dakarais. This study of the intersection of “local” and “global” phenomena is based on fieldwork I conducted from March 1999 to June 2000. I also made a brief visit to Dakar in 2002, which, although not for research purposes, afforded me additional observations which I include.

Background to the Study

Dakar is flooded by alluring goods, above all the myriad articles of clothing that shape one’s public appearance. An interest in clothing consumption and a preoccupation with one’s public appearance are Senegalese cultural practices with long histories. In the current context of globalization, the importance of dressing up and consuming clothing is accentuated by increased volumes of imported manufactured goods in addition to the expansion of local artisan clothing production. Trade liberalization policies, permeable state borders, and cheap labor costs in the apparel and footwear industries contribute to the rising volumes of both new, brand-name knockoffs and second-hand goods entering Dakar. A lack of economic development over the past two decades, a renewed appreciation of “traditional” dress, and the emergence of new market opportunities for Senegalese-tailored clothing in Africa reinvigorated local production in the informal sectors. Since the late 1980’s, shops that tailor “traditional” and “modern” clothing have popped up all over Dakar. Hair braiding salons have opened up in every neighborhood.

Peddlers pushing handmade and manufactured accoutrements for the body operate in virtually every corner of the city.

The city's growth in population over the past decade goes hand-in-hand with the new presence and alluring power of consumable clothing. Like many capital cities in Africa, Dakar has experienced a significant rise in population. Dakar's expansion is due to the combined effects of limited rural development, frequent periods of drought, and the city's role as a portal for transnational emigration. Two million inhabitants currently tax the city's infrastructure which was designed for a population less than half its present size.

An expanding population requires more consumer goods. But as the city expands, it also diversifies, changing its social group dynamics. Distinguishing oneself through clothing has become a primary way that individuals and groups position themselves in the complex urban milieu.

In addition to overall population growth, the disproportionate growth of the youth population plays a role in shaping the presence and power of apparel and footwear. Dakar is becoming a city where the majority of inhabitants are young people. By the 1990's more than half of the city's population was under the age of 20 (Sy, Ba and Ndiaye 1992: 115). The majority of new migrants to Dakar at the end of the 1980's, were youth between the ages of 15-24 (Antoine 1992: 287). As a result, youth comprise a significant portion of the active urban consumer population. The validity of this observation is supported by the advertising objectives of McCann-Erickson, a powerful transnational media agency. The company's website highlights the goals of their mission in Africa. They target youth as the primary money-makers and therefore the most significant consumers in African markets (McCann-Erickson 2001).

The intensification and diversification of advertising efforts, such as those launched by McCann-Erickson, increase exposure to and desire for clothing commodities in Dakar. McCann-Erickson promotes school notebooks for youth which feature glossy

images of “Positive Black Soul,” local rap stars who wear Hip Hop styled clothing, and “Tyson,” a local “traditional” wrestler who wears brand name athletic footwear. Images of these celebrities drive interest in notebooks while simultaneously educating youth audiences about contemporary clothing styles. Television offers more channels than it did twenty years ago, and manufacturers have taken advantage of television’s reach by mounting elaborate “infomercials.” Meche Linda, a fifteen minute wig and hair weave infomercial, is one example of the new commercial that introduces the virtues of beauty products to consumers.

Billboards, life-sized advertisements, and ambulant salespeople positioned within some of the most populated and intimate places of the city are some other means used to advertise such commodities as body products, food, bottled water, cigarettes, and new electronics. These new advertising strategies bring apparel and footwear goods sharply into focus. Knowledge of these products and interest in them are an inescapable part of the consumer’s daily life.

Changing patterns of transnational migration also contribute to Dakarois’ understanding of apparel and footwear. In the past twenty years, transurban migration patterns have diversified, exposing Senegalese emigrants to a broader range of products than those available in Dakar markets. Emigrants who show off their new acquisitions act as informal product advertising. Many bring home new apparel and footwear as evidence of their experience abroad. Others profit from their trips back to Dakar by importing small volumes of commodities in suitcases for sale. Transmigration is not only about labor and cultural exchange; it increases Dakarois contact with new clothing commodities, and it develops their interest in consumption.

In short, numerous social and economic forces enhance the presence and value of clothing commodities in the eyes of Dakar consumers. Mass apparel and footwear production, transnational advertising, and urban expansion and migration have all intensified and diversified. These global trends affect people as consumers in the ways

they relate to goods and, through goods, relate to one another. This dissertation focuses on how consumers confront the intensified presence and aura of fashion goods and how they mediate the new circumstances of such commodities in order to make sense of the contemporary world in which they live.

Literature Review: Consumption Perspectives

Ideally, an understanding of Dakar consumerism and contemporary Dakarois identities would draw on studies of consumers in Western and non-Western societies. However, studies focusing on Western “consumer societies,” their rise, development, and operations (Ewen 1976; Campbell 1989; McCracken 1990; Mukerji 1983; Shields 1992; Shor and Holt 2000; Slater 1997; Williams 1982) outweigh the information on contemporary consumers in non-Western contexts (for a few alternative examples see Appadurai 1986; Burke 1999; Hoskins 1998; Miller 1997, 1998; Tranberg-Hansen 1994; 1999; Wilk 1984;).

This imbalance exists for several reasons. One is the manner in which early anthropological perspectives of Western and non-Western societies shaped the way consumption studies developed. Non-Western societies were initially viewed as small-scale, pre-capitalist, agricultural societies where gift rather than commodity exchange dominates the economic system (Appadurai 1986). In these contexts, anthropologists and others examined the dynamics of gift exchange as well as the transition of gift to commodity exchange (Gregory 1980; 1982; Wilks 1984). Marcel Mauss’s ([1950] 1990) theories of the gift have often been used to describe consumption dynamics in non-Western contexts. Mauss notes that as gifts are passed through various hands within a community, the histories and identities of particular givers are inscribed within the objects. Through gift exchange, personal ties are created, and society’s acknowledgement of the giver creates the reputation and value of the gift in exchange.

Anthropologists and others often assumed that the small-scale, rural characteristics of pre-industrial, non-Western societies enhanced the personal dimensions of gift exchange. The social systems of large-scale, urban, Western societies were viewed differently. The processes of industrialization disrupted the relationships that objects created between producers and consumers in small-scale, pre-industrial communities. Through the alienating processes of mass-production, commodities no longer bore the personal "signature" of their makers.

Theorists of the Frankfurt School took Marx's notion of how labor is alienated by industrialization, and related it to objects, the products of mass-manufacturing. They viewed mass-produced goods as alienated, "depersonalized," and devoid of the humanistic and creative properties of goods associated with artisan production. In the 1940's, these writers were greatly influenced by the development of capitalism at the time and the rise to power of Nazism. They had observed that under Hitler's leadership, mass-produced goods were used to deceive consumers and to promote nation-state propaganda. Adorno and Horkheimer (1979) argued that the capitalist system needs submissive workers, who in turn make passive consumers. These attributes led Adorno and Horkheimer to view mass-produced goods as deceptive and banal. Their mere circulation erodes culture as they direct people to take pleasure in homogenized, alienated objects (Adorno and Horkheimer 1979; Marcuse 1964). Adorno and Horkheimer cynically acknowledge, however, that mass-produced goods are functional. In their superficial appeal to large numbers of consumers, mass-produced goods ultimately perpetuate the expansion of capitalism.

The view that commodity consumption functions to perpetuate mass-production was also taken up by theorists who relate consumption to the reproduction of social inequalities. These theorists approach commodities as "communicators," but their message is not about their maker, rather it is about their consumer and his/her social position. Thorstein Veblen (1899) wrote during a time when a class of *nouveaux riches*

emerged in industrialized Western societies and luxury consumption reached a new level. He observed that the wealthiest consumed in great amounts, and in the process, modeled new fashion trends which the lower classes attempted to imitate. Conspicuous consumption, therefore, expresses an upper class pride in having secured a privileged social position. In imitating these practices, persons of lower status reveal both their desire and the limits of their ability to join the upper class. This early approach to consumption takes a critical view of the effects of commodities. Commodities are anti-personal. They dupe consumers. They create unjust inequalities. In excess, they are detrimental to society.

Pierre Bourdieu (1984), who is part of a subsequent wave of theorists writing in the 1970's and 80's, argues that "taste" is a complex dimension of consumption which elite segments intentionally use to distinguish themselves from each other as well as from lower classes. Through an examination of French society, Bourdieu defines consumer tastes as based on "symbolic capital," which is determined by a variety of factors including one's economic resources (economic capital); relationships, networks and family upbringing (social capital); and one's skills, knowledge and practices (cultural capital). Cultural capital, the most abstract form of capital, resides within cultural objects and is expressed by official degrees, diplomas, and other forms of sanctioned certifications (see Shor and Holt 2000: 216). Consuming commodities therefore signifies both the ability to purchase goods and a lifestyle as well. The upper classes consume to distinguish their economic status and to block others from joining their ranks.

Additional symbolic approaches to consumption developed in the 1970's and 80's, when many writers began to highlight the ways that consumers use objects to reflect their cultural identities. Some of this work was conducted in non-Western contexts and shows that commodities do not dupe consumers. Instead, consumers assign goods culturally specific meanings and uses (Douglas and Isherwood 1979; Miller 1995b, 1995c). The bulk of this work, however, once again focuses on Western contexts

(Baudrillard 1981,1983; Ewen 1976, 1988; Featherstone 1991; Hebdige 1979, 1989; Morris 1988; Slater 1997; Twitchell 1999, 2002).

The Birmingham School writers carve out much of the territory of the symbolic approach. Their analysis of consumption became an influential model in the field and their work contributed to founding the Cultural Studies discipline (Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979; Willis 1977). Through studies of the everyday practices of Western youth subcultures, these analysts argue that consumers are selective rather than passive when it comes to consumption. Consumers decide what to consume and how to use commodities to mark their cultural identity. In this light, commodities articulate the underlying social structures that operate across a society. Commodity consumption illuminates how social groups reproduce cultural identities and relate to other social groups in the process.

Whether commodity consumption is a source of control or creativity, it has generally been examined within the context of a well-defined Western consumer society. In the emerging examples of non-Western consumption, the repressive or creative aspects of commodities are generally highlighted to show how non-Western people wish to emulate, incorporate, resist or respond in some way to the imported models of Western consumption that arrive at their doorstep (Comaroff 1991; Miller 1994). Many of these studies of Western and non-Western contexts limit their value in failing to consider alternative "Southern" sources of commodities and southern models of consumption (for examples see Abu-Lughod 1995; Bestor 2001; Larkin 1997). As a result of this bias, non-Western contexts are not generally considered as consumer societies in their own right.

The work of Brian Larkin (1997) is helpful to making this point clear. Through a study of Indian films in Nigeria and their popularity among Kano youth writing authoring romance novels, he illustrates how non-Western people consume to create unique and original worlds and cultural identities. Prior to Larkin's work, analysts asserted that in the context of globalization, communities in the "peripheries" exhibited agency through

responding to external forces. Transnational migration and other global “flows” provided groups in the peripheries with the means to move from a position of dependency to form new “alternative modernities,” or identities (Appadurai 1996). The concept of “parallel modernities,” however, improves upon the “alternatives” argument because the creation of cultural identities is not conceived as a response to oppositional forces, which would make it dependent on a pre-existing dynamics. Instead, identities are developed in tandem with existing forces; they are created within their own spaces and on their own terms. The concept of parallel modernities, therefore, enables the conceptualization of an African consumer society as a phenomenon parallel to Western and other non-Western examples of consumer societies. This perspective helps to point research in the right direction to fill the gap in knowledge of African consumerism, and to improve the balance of research on Western and non-Western consumer societies.

Commodity chain analyses comprise a particular genre of consumption perspectives that look at the production and consumption of commodities as functioning to tie people and places together around the world. Similar to Veblen and Bourdieu’s concern that consumption reproduces social inequalities, commodity chain analyses illustrate the uneven distribution of wealth at a global level. Through their travels, commodities create the political, economic and social relationships among and between widely dispersed producers and consumers. In colonial times and still today, the need for sugar, coffee, and tuna in parts of the developed world, for instance, created long-lasting but uneven ties with parts of the developing world while it reorganized the structures and cultural practices of societies at both ends of the chain (Bestor 2001; Meyer and Geschiere 1999; Mintz 1985; Roseberry 1996;).

Researchers examining African contexts offer commodity chain perspectives as one way to understand the place of African societies within the context of globalization (MacGaffery and Baenguissa-Ganga 2000; Meyer and Geschiere 1999; Ribot 1998; Tranberg-Hansen 1999). African countries, perhaps more than all other territories on the

globe, have been obscured in many analyses of globalization. So convinced is he by the power of production in the fields of information finance and technology, that Manuel Castells (1996) theorizes that most parts of Africa are “structurally irrelevant.” Yet when globalization is viewed through consumption and commodity chains, as in the work cited above, African societies provide markets for goods such as secondhand clothing and surplus knockoffs which enable production cycles to keep on spinning (MacGaffery and Baenguissa-Ganga 2000; Tranberg-Hansen 1999). They provide the natural resources and the labor that make First World countries dependent on the periphery (Ribot 1998). Illuminating the reorganization of communities and changing cultural practices brought about by commodity chains, this perspective brings into view the cultural dimensions of global networks.

Although this dissertation is not an elaborated commodity chain study, it uses that perspective to identify the global links that Dakar youth create through clothing consumption. This illustration helps to make the case that African youth consumers are an integral part of globalization processes.

In addition to the lack of non-Western consumer society examples and the exclusion of African contexts from consumption and globalization studies, the consumption literature is divided in yet another way. Consumption specialist James Carrier (1990) explains how the Birmingham School and other cultural study approaches emphasize the “public” dimensions of commodity consumption. To examine the symbolic properties of commodities is to view them in terms of their “sign-value” (Baudrillard 1981). People manipulate goods as a means of relocating themselves or to effect change within an existing social order. Therefore, commodities and their acknowledged sign-value reflect the public structures of society. Viewing commodities in terms of their public dimensions, Carrier points out, is a distinct approach from the Maussian view of gifts. Gifts, in contrast with commodities in exchange, create personal ties as they are passed on from one individual to another within a community. As gifts

exchange numerous hands, their “travels” outline the hidden or “private” structures of society.

Carrier highlights this divide in order to argue that the processes that gave rise to alienated objects and sign-value are taken for granted in Western contexts, but closely studied in non-Western, non-industrial contexts where commodity exchanges are assumed to be a new phenomenon. When examining economic transitions in England, Carrier finds that the boundaries between private and public structures of society are blurred. Early in the 1800s, food and clothing were generally exchanged through personal and durable relationships. By the end of the nineteenth century, the middle class procured goods in anonymous, impersonal shops, while the rich and the poor continued to procure goods from personal contacts with traders and neighborhood shops where merchants sold the goods they made. In short, Carrier’s analysis shows that the transition to alienated forms of exchange was not monolithic, and that it occurred within a context that continued to embrace the private structures of society.

Carrier’s study is useful in questioning the assumption that gift exchange entails private structures while commodity exchange involves public structures. Moreover, it leads one to question assumptions about commodity exchange dynamics in Western and non-Western contexts. For example, if commodity exchange in Western contexts can entail private structures, the role of private structures in commodity exchange in African contexts may not necessarily represent a transitional hybrid form of exchange. Moreover, if it is not valid to view exchange in Western and non-Western social systems dichotomously, how are the so-called public and private dimensions of commodity exchange distinct from one another? Assuming the sign-value of commodities is based on structures that are beneath the surface of an object, can one argue that the consumption of “alienated” objects has no private or personal dimensions to it?

It is now argued that shopping is an intimate ritual where browsing enables consumers to personalize commodities and to develop social ties with others in the

process (Carrier 1993; Miller 1987; 1994; 1995a, 1995b, 1995c; Shields 1992).

Appropriating alienated commodities is a way to introduce personal meanings and to develop personal relationships. In thinking about gift exchange, one could also question the assumption that gift-giving only reveals private structures if the value and meaning of gifts depends on society's acknowledgement of the giver. A public must be involved in the "birth" of a gift's social life, and in this light gift exchange entails private and public dimensions. In short, while describing the often overlooked phenomenon of contemporary commodity consumption in an African city, this dissertation explores a host of common constructs that have been used to describe the dynamics of exchange in particular social systems. Specifically, it highlights the strengths and limitations of viewing commodity consumption in terms of its private and public dimensions.

Urban societies are generally key sites for studying patterns of consumption. In African studies, the concept of a consumer city carries distinct meaning and is based on a biased view of non-industrial urban centers. In early studies of the city, the consumer city is generally contrasted with the "pre-industrial," "economic," or generative city. It is cast as a "parasitic" or non-productive urban center dominated by aristocrats and military families that live off the labor of others. The ruling classes encourage the circulation of commodities and they depend upon a large population to satisfy their needs for services (see Conquery-Vidrovitch, 1991:12). Sorting urban centers into "productive" and "non-productive" categories, and then labeling non-productive sites as "parasitic," reflects a biased understanding of urban dynamics. It is as if economic productivity were the criterion for social legitimacy, consumption being degenerate, unconstructive, and supportive of an illegitimate urban space.

It is overlooked that economic production is intertwined with the processes of consumption, and that urban military power is intertwined with economic schemes. Placing the accent on economics and production as generative urban models is problematic; it implies that growth is value and that Western urban centers are more

progressive than non-Western and pre-industrial cities. Categorizing cities in this manner is based on reified and partial understandings of a larger process. Such labels are inadequate.

The consumption of clothing commodities is specifically discussed in a few works that focus on urban life in Africa. Early anthropological studies of the city that involve clothing see it as a barometer of urbanization, or of the extent to which “tribesmen” became “townsman” (Epstein 1958; Mayer 1961; Mitchell 1968; Gluckman 1961 as cited in James Ferguson’s overview, 1999: 82-122). Initially, it was assumed that rural migrants did not fully assimilate into the city. In a well-known study of long term Xhosa migrants, it was found that migrants remain “tribesmen in town” but not “of” the town (Mayer 1961). Despite years of living in the city, some Xhosa continued to adopt “traditional” dress including wearing blankets and painting one’s body red. Klyde Mitchell (1968) offers an alternative view of urbanization through an examination of clothing and urban dance performances in the Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia. He studied the Kalela dance which entails Bisa migrants dressed as Western doctors, nurses, and businessmen. They dance to “tribal” rhythms while singing humorous songs that praise their home villages and put down rival ethnic groups. Mitchell argues that although migrants did not entirely give up “tribal” cultural forms, their humorous use of Western clothing reflects a sophisticated knowledge of urban life. In Mitchell’s view, the Kalela performance indicates that Bisa migrants are fully urbanized. In contrast with Mayer’s view of Africans as “tribesmen in town,” Mitchell argues that Africans are of both the country and the city; they select rural, urban or hybrid identities depending on the social dynamics of a particular situation.

Mitchell’s and Mayer’s studies are both preoccupied with cultural dualism. Mayer, however, does not see African migrants as transitioning into an urban identity while Mitchell and others of the Rhodes-Livingston Institute (Epstein 1958; Gluckman 1961) see African migrants switching in and out of urban and rural identities, as if

identities expressed through clothing were themselves garments to be worn or thrown off (Ferguson 1999: 95). These early views of the city and clothing configure cultural identity as a bounded object which may be labeled by one of two discrete constructs (i.e. “of the city” or “of the country”). Clothing commodity consumption, in this case, is a passive window onto African urban life. The approach to clothing in these works, furthermore, reinforces the idea of city and country as distinct, dichotomous cultural systems.

Although new perspectives on the African city emerged in the 1970’s and 1980’s, these works paid little attention to the consumption of ordinary commodities in the context of everyday life. Studies of the African city from this period promote an alternative view of cultural dualism. As discussed in Ferguson’s review (1999: 89), theorists influenced by neo-Marxist historiography and dependency theory argue that rural and urban institutions comprise a single, interrelated social system, and the growth of urban centers depends upon the exploitation of rural labor (as cited by Ferguson 1999: Bundy 1979; Johnstone 1976; Wolpe 1980). This view focuses on questions of “proletarianization,” and on the ways Africans navigate a complex regional system dominated by European capitalist power. There is less theorizing of urbanization and modernization, and less interest in urban material culture and ordinary commodities as key analytical objects.

James Ferguson’s study (1999) of postcolonial copperbelt towns in Zambia reintegrates class issues and commodity consumption. He is surprised that despite proletarianization perspectives and the integration of urban and rural space, it is still possible to view Zambian practices in terms of dualistic categories. The commodities that people consume and the behaviors and values that accompany these practices often suggest that some laborers identify strongly with an urban lifestyle and others with life in the country. Clothing consumption suggests to Ferguson an analytical framework for rethinking cultural dualism. Drawing on theories from cultural studies, Ferguson

proposes that modes of living are performative styles, not hard and fast reflections of distinct rural and urban cultural differences. With the concept of performative style, competency plays a role in one's ability to carry off a particular image. Thus, styles are "identities in progress," or identities that fall between rural and urban constructs instead of within one of the two categories.

Ferguson's approach to adopting style as a tool for rethinking cultural dualism is creative and dynamic. For Mitchell and earlier anthropologists of the Rhodes-Livingston Institute, clothing is taken as a lifeless object, but for Ferguson, clothing is part of a performance; the commodity is the basis for the embodiment and enactment of cultural identity. Clothing has a "life"--one with multiple, complex dimensions.

Clothing Commodities

Clothing is a special commodity category worth examining in detail. In popular discourse, shopping for clothes is often described as a frivolous activity for Westerners obsessed with self-image who have free time and money to spend (Ewen 1988). Clothing and shopping may at times be about having fun; however, clothing consumption also has a serious side. Social processes weave clothing and cloth together in ways that make the meanings fun *and* serious. The combination of moods makes clothing meanings elusive (Wilson 1985). This dissertation sees consuming clothing as a humanistic process, a part of human experience that involves humor and danger among many other predicaments. It is aligned with perspectives that indicate that the light and serious meanings of clothing have real political, economic and cultural consequences for both wearers and producers (Weiner and Schneider 1991).

Clothing consumption has particular cultural and historical significance among Senegalese. Many scholars (Ames 1955; Gamble 1967; Heath 1990; Mustafa 1997) have studied the significance of cloth as a currency in the precolonial period and its role in gift exchanges from the pre-colonial period to the present. Prior to the colonial period,

hierarchical societies rooted in urban centers dominated the Senegambia region. In the Djolof kingdoms of the 16th century, and the Tukur kingdoms that date back to the 11th century, clothing distinguished the royal classes from peasants. Textile production was an important pre-colonial craft and at the time of Independence, Senegalese expected the textile industry to be an engine of economic development (Boone 1992). In the early colonial period, when the French founded “communes”—new urbanized areas within the region—Senegalese residents of these communes desired clothing as a marker of their “modern” and urban social status (Faye 1995). In post-colonial Senegal, ready-made clothing is an important marker of social status and transnational identity. As this dissertation discusses, the ready-made trade is an important business involving many petty, medium and large-scale entrepreneurs; and it is a primary source of employment for Dakar youth.

Clothing is an arena for understanding urban modernities. Joanne Entwistle (2000: 112-139) summarizes how clothing reveals and conceals identities (see also Davis 1992; Finkelstein 1991; Sennett 1977; Wilson 1985). In the context of the urban environment, where identities are anonymous, the emphasis increasingly is on appearance. Clothing may be used to buffer the authentic self against the world. It may be used to invent a unique and outstanding self. Clothing is thus an intriguing tactic of selfhood, a clue to hidden meanings of the authenticity and inventiveness of selves. Featherstone (1991) and Giddens (1991) characterize the contemporary modern consumer as a “reflexive self.” They argue that diets, cosmetic surgery and exercise regimes indicate the increased attention and interventions of the self on its own body. Clothing is generally crucial among these “body projects;” thus it is also a body strategy of late modernity. Discussions in this dissertation join the above perspectives in viewing clothing as a complex expression of the self and as a body tactic that is concerned with the materiality and symbolic presentation and preservation of the self.

Another important aspect summarized by Entwistle is the way in which clothing constrains identities and human interactions. What one wears and how one wears it represents a negotiation between one's desires and one's real social position in the world (2000: 114). Clothing represents at once a desire to belong to and remain outside of a community (Hall and Jefferson 1986; Hebdige 1979; Simmel 1971), and the struggle for status and distinction (Bourdieu 1984). Consuming clothing is not only representational of the individual in relationship to society; it can make or break opportunities. It therefore plays a role in social mobility. This dissertation builds on the notion that clothing is partly representational and partly an agent of changing social dynamics. It joins these sociological perspectives in drawing out the ways clothing commodities are differentially available to social groups and so create social divides.

Clothing commodities may create social divides and they may mediate human expressions, but to overemphasize these aspects is to obscure the reality that they are also products of industries. In the case of Senegal, some clothing comes to Dakar through the production of large-scale global manufacturers and some comes from local artisans, tailors and seamstresses. Anthony Giddens (1991) describes global clothing manufacturing as a highly "reflexive" industry. With the help of marketing specialists (including anthropologists), clothing manufacturers are acutely attuned to particular consumer desires and are able to coordinate production and just-in-time delivery across dispersed geographic spaces. With this flexibility in production, manufacturers simultaneously shape and are shaped by consumer demand. In this view, the global clothing industry operates as a "local-global dialect" (Giddens 1991).

The local artisan clothing industry may also be described in terms of a reflexive dialogue between producer and consumer, although it operates on a smaller scale than global clothing manufacturing. Producers are directly informed of consumers' desires. Once products are out in the market, they suggest to consumers new styles and desires. Locally tailored clothing comes in and out of style at a rapid pace as well. Dakar is full of

artisan clothing makers and therefore the dialogue between artisan producers and consumers is fairly fluid. This project acknowledges differences in the scales of global and local industries, acknowledging a significant role in shaping clothing consumption for both sectors.

The Order of Things

The following narrative is divided into six chapters. The first three are “mapping” chapters that lay out the research setting, the important social hierarchies of Dakar, and research strategies and information about youth consumers. The next two chapters deal with the material and symbolic worlds of youth clothing consumption. The first of these focuses on the meanings that clothing commodities communicate. The second discusses the various pathways that clothing commodities travel in circulation. The final chapter discusses various “optimistic” and “pessimistic” understandings of clothing commodity consumption and offers my conclusions.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CITY

A Swatch

Dakar is an overcrowded city replete with markets that overflow with goods. The volume of mass-produced items for sale is enormous, and commodities spill beyond the boundaries of the boutiques and vending kiosks. Displays of textiles, children's clothing, belts, and men's underwear extend out into the streets. In downtown Dakar, goods for sale hang from murals, parked cars, and tree branches. An enormous and energetic brigade of ambulant vendors transport stacks of items on their heads, layers of merchandise wrapped around their arms, and trays full of goods strapped to their backs and necks. Commodities are sold everywhere--on the streets, through car windows to drivers waiting at traffic lights, in offices and in bedrooms. Commercial goods dominate the city, and they take over the bodies of vendors in the process.

Product advertising is equally pervasive. A giant can of *Signarc* tomato paste propped up on stilts and a bag of *Vitalait* powdered milk the size of a small building fill the sky at a traffic circle outside the neighborhood *Pate d'Or*. Elaborate and entertaining infomercials for *Darling* hair weaves and *Touba Gaz* propane tanks have staked claims to extensive air time in daily television programming. On "educational" television programs for young people such as *Oscar des Vacances* (The Vacation-time Oscars), product promotion is overtly funneled into the minds of teenagers who participate in contests over who knows best how to operate an answering machine, and who can best parrot a new telephone company's advertising jingle. Similar phenomena occur at national beauty pageants. In the 1999 Miss Senegal contest, women's bodies vied for attention with the logo posters prominently displayed on stage. The scene called to mind an approach to advertising found at American racecar rallies where logos cover nearly every visible surface.

Commodities and images are not attention-grabbing enough. Frequent human spectacles add to Dakar's atmosphere as a place where flash and surface appearance matter. A tour of the city offers a range of ordinary and extraordinary spectacles. Everyday spectacles are created by clothing and body adornments. One example is the *sapeur*, a dandy whose clothing is disproportionate to the size of his body. Another is the *drianke*, a woman of largess who wears robes and matching headscarves cut from the latest and most expensive fabrics, and rings so large that they cannot be hidden within the closed palm of her hand. In the residential neighborhoods, entertaining spectacles include the appearance of the *Thiakaba*, a masked being who promenades through the streets on stilts, and of *Simba*, a lion who occasionally appears in a neighborhood and chases young children until they scatter like birds in a frenzy.

Throughout the city there are annual religious spectacles, such as the Murid pilgrimage to Touba and the Tijaniyya pilgrimage to Tivaouane. There are massive gatherings at the airport to welcome home those returning from the global Mecca, in Saudia Arabia. There are also organized political spectacles in the form of student and teacher strikes, which occurred fairly frequently in the course of my stay in Dakar.

Spectacles add an aura of intrigue to otherwise anonymous individuals in the socially heterogeneous city. Accentuating appearances--the way people dress, the way mythical characters materialize in reality, and the way a group behaves in public space--arouses curiosity while it masks individuals' private identities and positions within Dakar.

Architecture in the city gives away clues about hidden identities. It reflects differences in the power of private and public money, and in the lifestyles of those who desire to consume and those who possess the resources to do so. In the center of the city, tall buildings sheathed in reflecting glass stand bunched together next to quaint French colonial terra cotta villas, no-frills cement block buildings, simple-tiled Arabesque mosques, weathered wooden-slatted barracks, and a grandiose Sudanese-Byzantine

cathedral. "Touba Sandaga," the new commercial center located in the heart of the city's commercial district is the latest addition to this fragmented landscape. Touba Sandaga is a privately owned six-story, air-conditioned shopping mall with chic window displays, televisions that animate every floor, and a simulated interior mountainside waterfall four stories high. The mall is close to the public two-story colonial market *halle*, which is surrounded by rows of makeshift kiosks, vending tables, and by ambulant vendors pushing carts through backed up traffic pumping black streams of exhaust into the hot and humid air.

Today, Dakar has approximately 2,000,000 inhabitants. Its population has expanded by nearly 500 percent since Independence in 1961, when the city had 374,000 inhabitants (Sy, Ba and Ndiaye 1992: 117).¹ Senegal's total population is over 8 million², and one in every five persons migrates to the capital city (Antoine 1992: 282). Dakar comprises one-third of Senegal's population and takes up only 0.3 percent of the national territory.³ In this small but rapidly expanding city, neighborhoods reflect sharp divisions of wealth. Those with money, such as the French ex-patriots, Senegalese elite and Lebanese immigrants, reside in well organized and maintained neighborhoods with functioning services. The homes in these neighborhoods are typically freshly painted and fully furnished. They are often adorned with expensive Italian tiles, French lighting fixtures and expensive Japanese and South Korean stereo equipment, gas stoves, and

¹ According to Seck's account (1970:194), there were 443,560 inhabitants in the region of Cape Vert and this doesn't include squatters, but people who could be counted by domicile.

² The new government web site cites 9,000,000 as the population in 2002. This may be based on the latest census that was beginning to get underway at the time of my fieldstay in 2000.

³ This means an average of 4,000 persons per square kilometer (Sy, Ba and Ndiaye 1992: 114).

computers. Residents in these neighborhoods often own new Lexuses, BMWs, or Mitsubishi Pajero four-by-fours. Private security guards watch over their property.

The less wealthy of the city, such as declining middle class families, in-migrating farmers, and Guinean and Malian immigrants, are mainly relegated to the difficult-to-reach suburbs and to the poor squatter settlements sprinkled throughout the city. These neighborhoods have inadequate housing and infrastructure, and a high incidence of crime. Residents often live in rented spaces and have only enough funds to sparsely furnish one room, usually, the living room. Apart from a television, a modest boom box, and an occasional secondhand refrigerator, they have no appliances. For transportation, the residents of these neighborhoods often risk their lives riding the Car Rapid, or “moving coffin,” as it is called. Rides on these bright blue and yellow converted lorries cost the equivalent of 15 cents. Others use horse drawn carts or their own feet in daily journeys of three hours or more.

Dakar does not fit the stereotype of a poor Third World city cut off from the rest of the world, devoid of cosmopolitans and avid shoppers, and populated by picturesque rustics. The many imported commodities and some aspects of the built environment draw comparisons between Dakar and other global cities. At the same time, commodities within Dakar mark and mediate internal social differences. Some inhabitants have access to economic resources and others do not. Particular commodities mark economic privilege, and, as this dissertation more thoroughly describes in its second half, some commodities falsely denote economic privilege for some who have few resources.

Starting from the premise that the uses and meanings of clothing are created within particular political, economic and historical contexts (Weiner and Schneider 1991), this chapter presents Dakar’s historical development from several angles in order to contextualize the meanings and practices of contemporary youth clothing consumption, which are the burden of subsequent chapters. Laying the groundwork for understanding how local and global processes shape Dakarois consumption, it highlights

changes in Dakar's consumer society over time. The chapter puts together a picture of Dakar using three "threads." The first entails a description of the built environment, and its historical development, which contextualizes the play of consumption and the meanings associated with particular commodities. The built environment is not just a passive background that frames consumer behavior. The city's long history of uneven development, its high points and low points, provide differing motives for consumption and differentially influence the messages implicit in clothing.

The second thread is a description of the city's economic history in the context of the political economy of Senegal. Dakar is a consumption site where global and local economic policies have supported the expansion of clothing commodities in the markets. In some instances this has been to the detriment of the city's economy. In other instances it has led to unpredictable outcomes such as the development of artisan clothing production, regional demands for Senegalese tailored clothing, and continuity in "traditional" African dress. Cheap labor in the "global factory" (Rothstein and Blim 1991) and rapid transportation also aid the inundation of the city by cheap imports and encourage commodity consumption. High unemployment leads youth to take up street peddling which promotes clothing consumption and keeps clothing commodities visually present and in Dakarais' minds.

The third thread is a description of this consumer society's cultural character as it has developed over time. Cities are places with particular rhythms, energies and images that result from the development of the built environment and the history of the people who have come to live there. The "life" of the city also shapes the play of consumption and the meanings of commodities. Since the eighteenth century, local and global forces have been interacting to create a consumer society. The development of the city as a center of commerce, the gradual development of Muridism (a Senegalese brand of Islam), and the emergence of the *originnaire* (French-influenced African urbanite of the colonial period) created the conditions for an interplay between a "traditional aristocracy" and an

“ascendant bourgeoisie.” It is this kind of tension that is argued to have created the consumer and fashion revolutions in nineteenth century Europe (Campbell 1989; McCracken 1990; Mukerji 1983; Williams 1982). In the contrasting case of contemporary Dakar, these tensions are created by at least two systems: hierarchies rooted in Dakar that extend to the interior of Senegal and neighboring African countries, and hierarchies within Dakar that extend to other transurban sites including Paris, New York, Rome, Las Palmas and Dubai.

Each thread imparts an image of the city in its material and symbolic dimensions. The total picture tells the story of a particular African consumer society, an intense place of competitive consumption, creativity, and social and cultural diversity. Although it is a stage for the youth clothing consumption described in this dissertation, the city is also an active element in the reproduction of a competitive consumer society. It is an arena where inhabitants learn that to be a part of Dakar is to consume and to develop competencies in creating style and affecting appearances.

Three portraits of the city follow.

First Thread: The Built Environment

Dakar is located on the Cape Vert peninsula at the westernmost point of the African continent. Initially, the peninsula was a forested area, hence the name given it by Portuguese explorers in the fifteenth century. At that time, the peninsula was sparsely populated with Lebu farming and fishing villages. Although these early inhabitants engaged in rural subsistence production, they inhabited the terminus of a region of vigorous commercial networks that connected numerous urbanized areas and hinterlands. As early as the eleventh century, kingdoms in the Senegambia region were linked by trade routes to cities in the Maghreb and on the Eastern coast of the continent. Commerce was well developed, and there was competition between kingdoms for control over routes and territories. The peninsula had developed as a safe haven for individuals attempting to

escape the tyrannical rule of Djolof kings who controlled the region between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the sixteenth century, the peninsula came under control of the local Lebu who sought independence from the *Damel* (king) of Kayor who also sought independence from the Djolof kingdom. By the mid eighteenth century, the Portuguese, Dutch, English and the French had visited Cape Vert as had legions of African traders whose backgrounds are less known. In the historical record, there are conflicting reports as to whether it was the independent Lebu or the Damel of Kayor who sold Cape Vert and the Village of Dakar to the French governor in 1765 (Betts 1985; Diouf 2001).

The governor's initial interest in the peninsula was not to build a town, but to intercept the flow of taxes in the region for French benefit. During the eighteenth century, commercial activity on the peninsula intensified as a result of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Gorée Island⁴, which lies three kilometers offshore, was a major port in the trade, and it drew new business to the coast. Following the abolition of the slave trade in the nineteenth century, there was a lull in commercial activity until the French promoted groundnut production and export as the next money-maker. Between 1819 and 1830, they began experimenting with plantations on the edge of Cape Vert and in the Waalo, the Wolof heartland, and eventual center of the groundnut economy (Diouf 2001: 224; Sinou 1993: 81). Gorée Island was too small for groundnut storage, so the caravans transported the nuts down to Rufisque, where a commercial center and port had already been developed. The residents of Gorée resented being cut out of the profits. Early in the nineteenth century, their governor, Emile Pinet-Laprade, intervened in the tax collection by building a military fort at Dakar, giving them a stronger presence on the peninsula.

According to the historical record, Pinet-Laprade was a bit of a French romantic as well as a power-hungry administrator. Upon building the fort, he began to imagine a

⁴ Gorée Island was originally names "Palm Island" (Diouf 2001: 223).

new and important city rising on the peninsula, and he ordered architectural plans to be drawn before Dakar was officially founded in 1857. In Pinet-Laprade's mind, Dakar would become the commercial center of the French West African empire. Such a city required stately administrative buildings, boulevards evoking Paris, and a grandiose hotel for his own comfort (Sinou 1993: 228). What Pinet-Laprade chose to ignore was that the French administration had already developed a large colonial capital at St. Louis, and two commercial centers at Rufisque and Gorée Island. Funds were limited, and Pinet-Laprade's counterparts in these settlements were against taking on the financial burden of another town. His initial dreams and plans for the city were considered to be unrealistic by everyone but Pinet-Laprade and the residents of Gorée Island, who were crowded onto the small isle and desperately needed space to spread out.

Construction of a town eventually did move ahead, but always at a halting pace and without synchronized financial and political support from France (Betts 1985). So slow was Dakar's development that it did not earn status as one of Senegal's Four Communes (settlement towns) until 1887, when the other three communes of St. Louis, Gorée Island and Rufisque had already been established for several years. Until this time, Dakar's architectural imagination was always greater than its actual development. While administrators boasted of the town, visitors did not share the same view. According to historian Raymond Betts (1985), aside from commercial houses and banks, little effort went into expanding city life. The French business class in Dakar was for the most part a young and transient group of men. Their building priorities were family homes, cafés and other public gathering places. Dakar struck some late-nineteenth century European visitors as an unexciting and sleepy town. One merchant was so unenthused that he described it as an "open air prison" (Betts 1985: 196)⁵.

⁵ This European description of Dakar in the 19th century has special resonance, as in the late 20th and early 21st centuries it is the same way that many Senegalese describe their impressions of Paris and New York.

Once a railroad had been built in the mid-1800's, the groundnut exportation business in Dakar greatly expanded, changing the city's status within the Four Communes. The population increased dramatically from 6,000 inhabitants in 1887 to 18,000 inhabitants in 1904 (Sinou 1993: 239). The large increase posed a challenge for urban planners. Where planners had formerly entertained grandiose ideas that exceeded the needs of the town, they now had to move fast to accommodate the population increase. The money for well-planned development, however, remained inadequate, and urban planners could not keep up with the population growth. In 1914, an outbreak of bubonic plague ravaged the city. The colonial administration was unprepared to deal with the crisis, and they narrowed their priorities to taking care of their own needs (Betts 1971; Curtin 1985).

Until the time of the plague, many Africans lived in residences among Europeans homes that were close to Marché Kermel and the port. Although some were modern houses constructed out of sturdy materials, most were wooden shack-like structures. In 1914, colonial administrators burned down all African residences built of wood on the grounds that they were contaminated by the plague. Africans were given the choice of rebuilding their homes to European standards or be relocated to the *village indigène*. This was a neighborhood on the outskirts of town, three kilometers from the port, where only Africans lived, and which later was called "Medina." In effect, the colonial administrators responded to the health crisis by imposing an informal color bar. In so doing, they turned the crisis into an opportunity to gain control of urban land.

Today, no such overtly color-based law could gain legitimacy in Dakar. Nonetheless, this early urban policy that relegated Africans to Medina and Europeans to the center of town continues to shape the contemporary organization of the built environment and its accompanying cultural and economic divide. Wealthy French expatriots have maintained control over the city center's more expensive real estate, which is called Plateau, while transient rural migrants and other poor African immigrants from

Guinea and Mali seek very modest housing--in some cases, in wooden shacks--in Medina. Some early settlers in Medina were among the first Africans to be incorporated into the colonial administration as civil servants. Some wealthy Senegalese remain in pockets of Medina in comfortable homes they have maintained over the years. Visually, Medina is characterized by one-story, colonial-style houses faced with ceramic tile, an occasional two-story, streamlined home; apartment buildings, wooden barracks, and palm trees.

A disarticulated quality characterized the planning, funding, and development of Dakar throughout the late colonial period into the early decades of Independence (1940's-1960). Exports were the metropole's priority, and investments were allocated to the extent that they would increase profits. Once Senegal became independent in 1960, a highly centralized national government sought to control most economic activity through the creation of public and semi-public enterprises. One such enterprise, a national housing company called S.I.C.A.P. (*Société Immobilière du Cap-Vert*), largely benefited the new and large civil service sector of Senegal, most of which was located in Dakar. Initially, S.I.C.A.P. awarded civil servant families plots of land in neighborhoods located in the center of the city. These included Fann Hok, Derklé and later the Amitié I-III, and eventually, in the 1970's, Liberté I-VI. Public and quasi-public companies were assigned lands to be shared among their communities of workers. Numerous neighborhoods within the city came to bear the names of such companies, for instance, Cité SONATEL (Senegalese telephone company) and Cité ASECNA (*Association Sécurité et Navigation Aérienne*). Although many civil servants built homes in these areas, some used their share of land for speculation.

Despite urban planning, and a high volume of paperwork associated with planning--the Senegalese inherited from the French a love for bureaucratic procedures, stamps of approval and over-documentation--there has never been enough housing in the city. Nor was the inadequate housing stock designed for Senegalese families. European

notions of the family held sway over local architects, greatly affecting residential design. When the center city radically expanded in the 1950's, there was a mad rush to develop suburban housing for the poorer incoming migrants. Pikine is one example. Others include the coastal suburbs of Guediawaye-Golf and Parcelles Assainies, which did not appear until the late 1970s to early 1980's and are now merging with the "first" Pikine.

These suburbs were all haphazardly planned. Little thought was given to the organization of space, and insufficient funds were provided for infrastructure such as paved roads, running water, electrical lines, schools, and health clinics. In Pikine-Guediawaye there is only one public high school, Lycée Limamoulaye. It is as large as a college campus, but has very few books, and a classroom building there is so deteriorated that the students call it "Burundi." In short, not only are the poorest people relegated to these areas of the city, but the lack of public investment there reproduces these communities as the city's poorest.

Adding to the city's lopsided development was a brief period of urban renewal in the 1960's, the immediate post-Independence period. New modernist-styled administrative buildings were constructed, and more money went into trying to keep up with housing demand. The new African administration went on a spending spree, building new stadiums, monuments, and administrative buildings to legitimate its authority. Close ties between state elites and entrepreneurs also supported the development of grand hotels. Dakar already had modern hotels, a reliable airport, and regional commercial networks developed during the colonial period. By the 1960's and 1970's, it had become a big city, one with an attractive face that could draw visitors from around the world. Events in the entertainment industry suggest Dakar's importance as a global city in the 1970's when it hosted such world stars as the Jackson Five, Jimmy Cliff and James Brown. It was one of the first francophone West African cities to hold some of the early international beauty pageants.

In the 1980's, Dakar changed directions. The urban planning of recent decades revealed itself to have been all about surface appearances and less about the continuity of urban structure. The government's coffers were depleted and public investment dried up, a condition that continues today. Numerous public buildings, stadiums and open spaces began to be neglected for lack of adequate maintenance funds. Private and foreign investment, in contrast, has continued to fund construction for profit and state of the art building design that attracts consumers. Like many contemporary cities throughout the world, highly divergent paths created a fragmented built environment and divided social landscape.

How does this picture of uneven development and the built environment shape clothing consumption? Examining photographs helps to draw the connection. On a typical initial visit to Senegalese homes, either in Dakar or in New York, the visitor is invited to examine photo albums. Typically, youth pull from their wardrobes a collection of colorful portraits of themselves posing with objects, embracing partners at a party, and other portraits of close friends and family. A striking element in these photographs, regardless of the year they were taken and the talent of the photographer, is the careful arrangement of subject in relationship to the background. The subject is generally situated to be clearly featured, while background elements are composed to help contextualize the beauty of the subject. For example, images taken in the city often strategically feature subjects casually stepping out of a driver's seat or leaning against an expensive car. A shot against the cityscape will be arranged so as to include impressive buildings while cropping others out of view. In a living room shot, a subject is intentionally positioned in front of an expensive or modern household appliance such as a television, a stereo system, or holding a cell phone against one's ear, as if in conversation at the time of the photo.

I once observed people at a party passing around a cell phone and boom box for each guest to "spontaneously" pose for a photograph with the objects. I have also

observed photo collage to be a popular art among youth. When an impressive backdrop or status objects and individuals are unavailable, youth will use razor blades to crop the undesirable elements of a finished photo, or cut out their image and paste it into a collage of interesting images.

Possessions and material surroundings are extremely important in constructing one's image in a photograph. This ethos of pretension may be extended to one's actual public appearance. Dakarais are conscious of the conditions of their material surroundings, and many take steps to ensure that their physical appearance is enhanced by the material context. In a fragmented city, where some neighborhoods are in far better shape than others, and some shopping areas are more modernized, the built environment both accelerates and retards consumption. Modern shopping areas inspire or discourage consumption depending on one's economic means and the cultural capital one strives to build. A deteriorating physical space may discourage consumption aspirations for those with limited resources. It may also provide a context in which a savvy consumer can easily distinguish him or herself by appearing well put-together against the backdrop of a crumbling cityscape.

Second Thread: Dakar, Consumption and the Political Economy of Senegal

Dakar is flooded by manufactured goods, above all by the myriad articles of clothing that shape one's public appearance. At one level, the story of how this comes to be is very simple. The French colonies were organized around the basic principle of mercantilism: buy raw materials cheap and sell manufactured goods dear. In French West Africa, the relationship of subordinated colonies to the metropole was called the *pacte colonial* (Boone 1992: 32). In Senegal, the French focused primarily on developing groundnuts for export. Until World War I, they allowed numerous parties to import manufactured goods, British, Dutch and Japanese companies included. After the Depression of the 1930's, when French manufacturers had difficulty selling their goods

in many markets, a policy shift occurred. The French would become the sole suppliers to the colonies; by the same token, the colonies would help out France by becoming its best customers.

Catherine Boone (1992) relates that in the 1930's, this arrangement facilitated the importation of French sugar, cotton textiles, clothing, potatoes, shoes and soap into Dakar. In 1929, one fifth of France's external trade involved the colonies. Four years later, the colonies' share had increased to one half (Boone 1992: 32). France erected trade barriers that excluded other foreign companies and used price supports to protect a French monopoly in groundnuts and other colonial exports. In this way, colonial policy and the needs of the metropolitan economy shaped the nature of consumption in Dakar.

The textile industry was a special case of this production and consumption dynamic. By the 1880's, world market conditions in the textile industry were changing, with British and German manufacturers gaining more market share. France's textile industry lagged behind, badly in need of modernization. By the early 1900's, it was in serious trouble, the more so as the United States, India and Japan began replacing French cottons worldwide. Industrialization in China and Latin America further reduced the market for French cottons. At the same time, the post-World War I years brought a boost to groundnut cultivation in Senegal, which produced income in the colony to purchase French textiles. This helped to offset France's losses in the global market, the more so as the monopoly conditions of the Depression years kicked in.

West African peasants became big textile consumers during this time, spending on the order of thirty to forty percent of their income on imported cotton cloth, according to one report (Boone 1992: 35). French trade regulations reinforced this dynamic, making Senegal the largest consumer of French textiles within French West Africa in the years following World War I (Boone 1992: 35-36). World trade conditions bolstered the mercantile dynamic between France and Senegal well into the twentieth century, and it shaped France's drive to create consumers of French goods in the colonies.

Over the years, the *pacte coloniale* stirred debate as to whether or not modern industries should be developed in the colonies. Some argued that such a move would ultimately support French manufacturers of radios, stoves, fans, and other small appliances. Others argued that developing industry in the colonies would ultimately displace French goods. The conservative view prevailed and local initiatives to open small factories were generally discouraged or undermined by the colonial administration. After World War II, however, when France's industries did not readily bounce back, plans to industrialize the colonies resurfaced and eventually were put into effect. In Dakar, groundnut oil refining emerged as the main industry. Textile production was in second position. Foreign traders who had benefited from French protectionist policies were first to establish such factories (Boone 1992). Establishment Schaffer (ICOTAF) is one former French textile importer which became an important Dakar manufacturer. Unfortunately, industrialization did little to benefit the economies of Dakar and Senegal. French business interests prospered, but as a form of economic development, industrial liberalization in Dakar was unsuccessful.

In the transition to Independence in 1960, Senegal's textile industry underwent its last brief period of growth. An increase in the city's population provided more consumers, and its consumer groups also diversified. For example, between 1930 and 1960, the European population in Dakar grew from 6,500 to 30,000, and the Lebanese population grew from 8,000 in 1953 to 30,000 in 1960 (Boone 1992: 59; ft. 73), fueling demand for more products. At the same time, entrepreneurs in Senegal began to experiment with textile manufacture in other parts of Africa. ICOTAF, for example, opened a factory in Ivory Coast. The textile industry's regional expansion and its production of less expensive cloth energized the textile market in West Africa.

This expansion of the textile industry and related patterns of consumption occurred within the context of Senegal's national independence and the new government's effort to develop Senegal as an "entrepreneurial state" with a socialist

slant. Under the direction of Leopold Sédar Senghor, the government adopted the political philosophy of "African socialism." It envisioned the modern African state as an autonomous, harmonious, communal society. Centralizing control over the most important resources and "indigenizing" operations formerly controlled by the French made it appear to the public that Africans were indeed the power holders in the new, superficially socialist nation-state.

In 1966, the groundnut economy accounted for 80 percent of jobs in Senegal, while 20 percent were in the industrial sector (Mbodji 1991: 120). In taking control of the key rural sector of the national economy, the government did several things. It obliged farmers to deal with the state through nationally controlled cooperatives, it created a marketing board to control the prices of imports and exports, and it purchased from the French the major groundnut oil factory in Senegal (Mbodji 1991).⁶

In the 1970's, world markets favored groundnuts and phosphates, a secondary export (Mbodji 1991). The entrepreneurial state duly profited, but quickly converted its gains into an extravagant and counter-productive government spending frenzy. A huge, bloated administration emerged to implement the numerous new government policies and programs. Throughout the 1970's, the public sector expanded until administrative jobs comprised the largest sector of the economy (Bocquier 1996).⁷ Most of these jobs were located in Dakar, the seat of government.

Since government employees were among the primary beneficiaries of the economy's gains and of a state policy of civil service expansion, it became their role to

⁶ Additionally, the government instituted new land laws to reduce the rise of private property. It instituted a new "family code" which required Muslim husbands to treat co-wives fairly (see Diouf 1999a). Feminists argue this law further entrapped women while Islamicists argue state legal code misinterprets religious legal code (see Antoine and Nanitelamio 1996). In either case, the state gained a new control over its citizens.

⁷ In 1971, there were 39,000 jobs. This nearly doubled to 70 jobs in 1983 (Bocquier 1996).

“instruct” compatriots on how to become advanced citizens like themselves. With money in their hands and modernization on their minds, conspicuous consumption became the means to model for others the path to modernity. Senghor went so far as to reinforce this particular role of public servants by instituting a dress code at the Ministries that required men to wear Western suits (Rabine 1997)!⁸

By the mid-1980's, groundnut prices had dropped and the entrepreneurial state was severely weakened. It soon became an “indebted state.” As personal consumption for a majority of the population dropped sharply, the state consumed vast amounts of foreign aid. Dependence and indebtedness were exacerbated by the oil shortages and severe drought of the 1970s, forcing the government to subsidize oil and food imports, and to accumulate ever rising debt in the 1980's.

As the country struggled with food and oil crises, the administration continued its heavy spending and borrowing, further undermining the economy. According to Boone (1992), the collapse of the textile industry exemplified the results of the new government's approach to management. The textile collapse occurred as a result of the close links between state leadership and the business class. As political leaders charged ahead to develop a state apparatus and economy, civil servants depleted the state coffers through expensive planning and research, the setting up of government offices, and personal graft. With regard to the textile industry, state authorities had bent trade rules to facilitate the import of machinery and raw materials, thereby building alliances with entrepreneurs. They then turned to national utilities and industries as new sources of revenue. In the long run, contraband and other corrupt practices undermined textile manufacturers in Dakar.

⁸ During the time of my fieldwork, a dress code requiring women to wear skirts was still in place at the government palace. I was unaware of this policy until I was blocked from entering because I wore dress pants.

In 1980, Senghor resigned from his post as president and Abdou Diouf, a young, budding leader, stepped in to replace him. Senghor handpicked Diouf to carry forward the *Parti Socialiste* (PS). Diouf, however, inherited a handful of complex economic and social problems that needed immediate solutions. Senghor had attempted to create an image of Senegal as a self-sufficient sovereign nation. This image was about to change under Diouf who saw international aid as a means of resolving the brewing economic crisis.

In 1981, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank promoted structural adjustment programs to bail out Senegal. In exchange for aid, Senegal was required to implement severe political and economic reforms. One was reducing the size of the government and its spending. This reform had an immediate impact on Dakar's middle class which was largely comprised of administrators, functionaries and employees of para-public utilities. Without funds to support their lifestyles, consumer dynamics in middle class families changed dramatically. Yet consumption values did not change in tandem. To add to the crisis of the middle class, cost-sharing policies for public services decreased the quality of education and health care institutions which the middle class had helped to build as employees. These symbols of nationalism and modernity were deteriorating before their eyes. Although middle class families faced new difficulties and disappointments, their struggles hardly compared with those of poor families.

A second round of structural adjustment reforms brought a devaluation of the currency in 1983 and again in 1994. As a result of devaluation, by 1985 the prices of rice, sugar and groundnut oil had increased by 500% over what they had been in 1965 (Somerville 1991: 156). Everything in Dakar became expensive. At the same time, the persistent drought caused farmers and the rural poor to flow into Dakar. The burdens on the already stressed city increased as it became more overcrowded. The government was broke and could not provide the infrastructure for housing or basic amenities in new neighborhoods. There were not many factories in Dakar and fewer still were hiring.

Many in Dakar worked for meager earnings in the informal economy or remained unemployed.

Another structural adjustment reform shifted the development of factory employment in Dakar. The government adopted trade liberalization guidelines that enabled foreign goods to enter Senegal more easily. These guidelines coincided with global trends in restructuring manufacturing processes. Particularly in the global apparel and footwear industries, it became possible to sell a variety of cheap apparel and footwear in weaker economies in developing countries. Importers found themselves highly advantaged and were able to increase the volume of cheap manufactured clothing sold to Senegal. Recently, imported secondhand clothing has also seen a dramatic increase. In 1987, eleven-hundred tons of secondhand clothing were imported into Senegal. That amount increased to over eleven *thousand* tons by 1996 (Statistiques Douanieres Commerce 1987: 307; 1996: 243).

The influx of cheap manufactured goods had a negative impact on medium-sized manufacturers in Senegal, who could not compete with the low prices of imports (companies such as local tee-shirt manufacturers and the New Team footwear company, whose products are consumed by youth, were especially affected). Interestingly, imports had a much less negative impact on artisan clothing producers who make “traditional” African robes and some “Western” clothing (Mustafa 1997). Because of the lack of formal employment, new tailors and seamstresses opened shops throughout the city and displayed large amounts of their hand-made clothing. Young traders roamed the city selling the textiles for these outfits as well as imported ready-made clothing. Although the informal sector is difficult to document and is statistically under reported, many social scientists, aware of its growth, have explored its significance (Lubell and Zarour 1990; Mustafa 1997). All told, the emergence of a vibrant artisan clothing manufacturing sector greatly contributed to the circulation of all types of clothing for sale in Dakar.

During the economic crisis of the 1980's, the government experienced a reordering of its relationships with religious leaders. Accepting aid principally from the United States, France and Saudi Arabia required the state to prioritize these relationships at the expense of its relationships with marabouts (religious leaders, discussed more fully in the next section) who control large sectors of rural farming and numerous influential urban businesses (Gellar 1982). As a result, some relationships with local religious leaders fell out of balance, giving rise to Islamic leaders' criticisms of the government. A division within the Islamic world in Senegal emerged. Anti-materialist, fundamentalist groups were particularly critical of marabouts who sought to make deals with the government, and who lived lives of luxury while they collected tithes from their followers living in poverty (Augis 2000). In the context of economic decline and declining political legitimacy, these critiques were persuasive and helped to recruit more members into the fundamentalist ranks. The growth of fundamentalist branches of Islam with a particular appeal to expanding poor populations threatened the government's power.

In the mid 1990's, as a means of coping with continuous debt, the state shifted gears to a "service state" mode. With unemployment at 27 percent and little development in either the rural areas or urban industries, the state committed to the General Agreement on Trade and Service (GATS), a special feature of the Uruguay Round that emphasizes offering services over manufactured commodities to the global market. This program privileges the development of tourism and related industries. Since the early 1990's, Senegal has seen an increase in the numbers of foreigners in Dakar (Direction de la Prevision et de la Statistique 1999). There has been a rise in complementary industries, including new shopping malls, cyber services, and heritage sites. On the darker side, tourism has brought about an increase in male and female prostitution and drug consumption. These service industries have expanded work opportunities, but they have added new dimensions to the host of social crises already at work in Senegal.

Transmigration is another aspect of Senegal's objective in offering services to other states. This trend greatly contributed to the rise of consumerism in Dakar, and it became a significant work aspiration for educated as well as uneducated Senegalese youth. Since the eighteenth century, Senegalese have migrated for labor, predominantly to France. In the twentieth century, they began reaching other areas of Europe, including Spain and Italy (Carter 1997; Mboup 1998). In the mid-1980's, the destinations for Senegalese emigrants further diversified to include the United States (Perry 1997; Stoller 1996). During the 1980's, France tightened its borders due to rising unemployment and racism. At the same time, Italy and Spain had more permeable borders and service sector and factory work to draw African immigrants. In the United States, as financial districts developed and manufacturers in unionized sectors shifted to cheaper sources of labor in Asia and the Caribbean, national borders opened to draw cheap labor into the service sector and into non-unionized factories.

Transmigration shaped consumerism by providing remittances for consumption to Dakar-based families. Emigrants also delivered clothing and other goods as gifts which were used as status builders by individuals wishing to distinguish themselves in the neighborhood. The remittances of transmigrating families created jealousies and divided communities. Semi-rural traders have been favored in recent migration trends as a result of their connections with a Murid network. Through migration and international commerce, Murid traders have emerged as Dakar's nouveau riche. Their rise in status creates conflict with former middle class families who privileged Western education but whose members now find themselves unemployed. During the currency devaluations in 1983 and 1994, gaps in these divisions of wealth widened. Young transnational emigrants could afford to buy new houses and automobiles, and to get married, as foreign currency was favored by the devaluation. Dakarais youth who stayed in Senegal remained unemployed, unable to afford marriage and frustrated at having wasted long years investing in Western education instead of amassing experience in trade.

Third Thread: The “*Originaire*”

Originaire is the label that was given to Senegalese urbanites in the early colonial period. To the French, their Empire was a universe unto itself with the colonies an integral part. In Senegal, like other French colonies, urban inhabitants were given more importance than those in rural regions. The *originaires*, or the native and long-term residents of the cities, were granted special status, and quickly became the African aristocracy of Dakar. The rural people of Senegal, in contrast, were considered to be the subjects of the Empire; a Native Code (*le Code de l'Indigène*) applied to them, but not to the *originaires*. The *originaire* men were granted the right to vote at the turn of the century. In 1914, they elected Blaise Diagne as their representative to the French National Assembly. The *originaires* attended francophone schools, and as a result were called “*évolués*” -- the advanced or civilized people. This was not so for those living in the countryside.

Because *originaires* had the opportunity to master French, many became administrators. In some cases, they acted as handmaidens to the French administrators, often angling for their own power and control over Senegalese and other French West Africans. Some *originaires* were great travelers, making frequent trips between Dakar and Paris. They developed cosmopolitan airs and sensibilities, and they considered Dakar to be “le Petit Paris.” *Originaires* were also prominent intellectuals in various international political and cultural black movements. Blaise Diagne, for example, significantly shaped the early Pan-African movement, and Léopold Sédar Senghor helped to develop “Negritude,” a literary movement with parallels in the francophone Caribbean. The interest in black cultural politics carried over into the postcolonial period as Senegalese urban elites organized the first World Black Arts Festival in 1966. Today, some would say that Senegalese rap groups such as Positive Black Soul (PBS), who appeal mainly to

youth, carry on this tradition. After certain African-American music groups, PBS is one of the most popular rap groups in Europe.

In short, the label *originaire* signifies a modern Senegalese urban identity, one that conjures associations of privilege, intellectualism, global citizenry, a male identity, a black identity, and a certain amount of assimilation within French cultural frameworks. Mamadou Diouf (1999a) makes the case that the *originaire* is a particular, hybrid, Senegalese urban identity with its own history, one not to be confused with the narrative of the detribalized or assimilated African. A more complicated phenomenon than that, the category of *originaire* identity is useful for understanding the contemporary modernities of Dakar youth.

As Diouf (1999a) points out, there is more to the *originaire* than the notion of the assimilation. An interplay of Western and localized Eastern religions also shaped the category. Converting Africans to Catholicism was an objective of the French settlers and Catholic missionaries emphasized the importance of Western education as a means to civilize Senegambians. Catholic values were very influential throughout the francophone territories in shaping notions of development as well as social hierarchies. Catholicism was also influential in St. Louis, the first capital of Senegal, where a much larger population of Portuguese lived in the early colonial period than in Dakar. In Dakar, it was a Muslim population that dominated the religious landscape.

Although the “civilizing mission” was important to the French, in fact, they adapted to the circumstances at hand. French administrators supported the Muslim faith for political advantage in controlling Senegal. Governor Faidherbe installed influential Muslims in the Political Affairs Bureau (opened in 1840 to gather intelligence about the Muslim communities), built mosques, funded koranic schools, and paid for Muslim administrators to make trips to Mecca (Robinson 1988). This and much more was done to strengthen France’s foothold in the Muslim-dominated interior.

Building strong ties with Muslims in the groundnut basin of Senegal was especially important to the French, whose power was based on profits from groundnut production and trade. In particular, French administrators were interested in developing ties with Murids, a group of Muslims who exercised power over peasant labor in this area. The French and Murid mutuality of interests was consequential for the originaire of Dakar.

Muridism is a cultural phenomenon of its own, the Murids being a sect of Sufi Islam that is indigenous to Senegal. Murids do not follow the strictest code of Islam, combining some "Eastern" beliefs with local beliefs and practices. The Qu'ran is translated into Wolof, women are permitted to enter the mosque, and spiritual guides heal the ill with a mixture of Islamic prayer and local traditional medicines. Some in Dakar and beyond Senegal are critical of Muridism which they see as an inappropriate mixture of African and Eastern mysticism. The Murids, of course, disagree.

Muridism was born out of a symbiosis of two simultaneously occurring processes. First, the colonial conquest of local structures and economies brought an opportunity for Muslim practices to gain special meaning. In Senegal, through ties of patron-clientage, the Murid brotherhoods organized landless peasants, many of whom were former slaves. Religious leaders, the marabouts, gave them work in exchange for their patronage and devotion to Islam. The brotherhoods could do so in part because they colluded with colonial administrators engaged in the groundnut economy. Religious leaders aided French administrators to enhance their own power and wealth in the region. Throughout the colonial period, cooperation between the French and Murid marabouts advanced their respective projects. In the case of the Murids, one such project was to enhance the religious community in the Holy City of Touba, located in the region of Diourbel.

The Murids also enjoyed a growing presence in Dakar. As early as the 1930's, marabouts organized neighborhood chapters, built large town houses, and created

commercial networks (Cruise O'Brien 1988). These networks developed in a slow process that culminated in the 1980's with the eventual Murid control of Sandaga, Dakar's largest market. Since then, Murids have increased their commercial and political power, coming to own many significant businesses in Dakar with connections to markets throughout Europe, North America and Asia. According to Diouf (1999a), Murids who were also originaires in the colonial period advanced their own cultural project through the use of Western political-economics without culturally assimilating. In sum, the originaires were a diverse group of enterprising urbanities with a wide range of global linkages and cultural orientations. Their urban Senegalese identity provides a useful historical backdrop for understanding Dakar consumers as they engage in the process of creating modernities.

Tying Three Threads Together

From a review of the consumption literature one could easily conclude that the true consumer societies lie in the West. There are the places inundated by commodities, places that grew from the rise of local industrialization and out of conflict between a traditional aristocracy and ascendant bourgeoisie. Dakar is not located in the West and is only semi-industrialized at best. Yet I would argue that it qualifies as a consumer society, but not one that has developed as the mirror image of Western examples. Rather, Dakar is a unique consumer society, one based on a distinct historical and geographical intersection of local and global ingredients.

First, Dakar's particular urban milieu influences the nature, type, and volume of commodity consumption. The city is where consumers are introduced to new commodities and new sites for commodity exchange such as cybercafes and shopping malls. The city prompts inhabitants and visitors to "look the part" as a means of fitting in. Otherwise, not everyone has the possibility of fulfilling this role successfully. Dakar's shopping areas and neighborhoods where consumers display their acquisitions are lodged

within an unevenly developed city. Some are advantaged in consumption, and others are prohibited from fitting in. In its most passive state, the physical environment is a stage against which consumption competitions are played out. The uneven development of the physical environment, however, may also be seen as a factor in motivating and discouraging consumption desires.

Second, the city hosts a consumer society that has been shaped by overproduction in the “global factory.” Surplus production has encouraged transitional cities, Dakar among them, to welcome into their markets high volumes of cheap manufactured clothing and secondhand clothing. Dakar’s role as a consumer city is critical to worldwide cycles of clothing production and consumption. Its participation in this network informs and encourages local consumption. It promotes the expansion of an artisan sector that rapidly creates, obtains, and distributes clothing commodities. These conditions keep fashion changing at a brisk pace in Dakar. Fashion holds the interest of consumers and keeps many Dakarais in new clothes. The lack of industrial development, ironically, fuels the development of both an import-oriented and artisan-based consumer society that is historically and geographically specific to Dakar.

Third, an ethos of competitive consumption also qualifies Dakar as a consumer society. But again, this ethos is defined within the particular cultural context of Senegal. Murid traders, who comprise one part of the ascendant bourgeoisie, compete with the traditional urban aristocracy for status. Their consumption desires and practices are informed by a mix of African and Islamic cultural principles as well as a desire to get ahead. Although they may adopt Western clothing, it is not necessarily their belief that a Western lifestyle is the most direct path to wealth and power. Clothing and even Western education are strategically consumed as a means to advance. Murid traders combine this strategic consumption with their unique religious and cultural beliefs. The cultural capital acquired by Murid traders through luxury consumption does not indicate that Senegalese

aim to emulate or fully assimilate within Western cultural frameworks. Rather, it points to a Senegalese “parallel modernity” (Larkin 1997).

Finally, Dakarais appear to possess a Bourdieuan awareness that consumption reproduces social hierarchies, and one must consume in order to maintain one’s status in Dakar. In Western consumer societies, the tensions between traditional aristocracy and ascendant bourgeoisie are usually played out among populations within a specific and bounded territory, such as the city of London (Carrier 1990), or the state of France (Bourdieu 1984). In the case of Dakar, at least two overlapping spaces appear to be hosting consumption competitions. Rural to urban migration is the source of consumption competitions among the urbanized and urban newcomers, while recently developing patterns of transurban migration create competition with traditional urbanites and other would-be-migrants in Dakar. The consumption competitions developing in multiple spaces make the dynamics of this consumer society distinct from other examples. This may be due, in part, to inadequate knowledge of the role of transnationalism in the development of Western consumer societies, and therefore of transnationalism’s importance. In any case, transnationalism is prominent in the evolution of Dakar. It plays a distinct role in shaping the city and the consumption desires of its residents. Whatever the importance of transnationalism in other consumer societies, its role in Dakar tells a unique story of Western, Eastern, and African forces giving rise to contemporary luxury consumerism. Nowhere is this more evident than among Dakar youth. In the next chapter, the social hierarchies that mediate these forces are more closely examined.

CHAPTER TWO

YOU ARE WHAT YOU WEAR,--OR YOU ARE NOT: CLOTHING CONSUMPTION AND SOCIAL HIERARCHIES

In the early evening, a group of young women in their early twenties return to Guediawaye from a *ngente* (baby naming ceremony) held in Grand Dakar. As each woman strolls into the inner courtyard of a one-story, cement-block house, it can be seen that one woman is more *sañse* ("dressed up")¹ than the next. Among the group is Astou, who wears a rose colored mbubb with a matching *musoor* (scarf) stacked up high on her head. A black-beaded purse and matching sequined thin-strapped sandals complete her outfit. Miriam wears a light yellow *mbubh* (African robe) with a light blue and white embroidered floral pattern tracing the wide neck of her robe. Instead of a *musoor*, Miriam's head is braided with expensive, thin *Meche Linda* extensions, and is crowned by a pair of reflective designer sunglasses. She wears white open-toed shoes with a metallic heel shaped like an "o." Seynouba is large for her young age, thus people call her "*drianke*," a label used to describe large and elegant adult women. Her robe is a richly dyed orange, decorated with green and white embroidery around the drooping neckline so wide that it shifts from shoulder to shoulder with every movement. Seynouba's gold earrings, rings and necklace draw attention to her outfit. Modest in style and size, and borrowed from her older sister, her jewelry does not quite resonate with the grandeur of her outfit. After a day in the heat and walking in heels through the sandy neighborhoods

¹ *Sañse* is Wolof for the French word "*changer*" (to change, to change one's clothing).

of Guediawaye, it is amazing that each woman's Fashion Fair facial foundation, penciled-in eyebrows and artificial nails remain perfectly in place.

As the young women demurely accommodate themselves in faded plastic chairs in the barren courtyard, other women in the household come out from the indoors to join the conversation and to learn about the highlights of the ceremony. A large part of the conversation focuses on who was there and what was worn. Some of the commentary about clothing centers on the economics and aesthetics of dress. A few women identify the connections particular individuals have with tailors, jewelers, hair stylists and relatives abroad who supply money and goods for impressive outfits. Others depart from clothing to gossip about their rivals' behavior. Some women in the group rumble with laughter as the more animated talkers ridicule the participants at the ceremony one by one. Other women restrain their laughter but hiss when reminded of the unsavory behavior they observed at the event. Some women dwell on the impressive clothing, shoes, jewelry and hair styles, and they make plans to find out where particular items can be found in Dakar.

When people evaluate clothing and appearances of others after a baby-naming ceremony, they are gossiping. But deconstructing other's outfits is also a form of social research. It is one means of finding and uncovering a person's "authentic" identity. In the public realm, the meanings of clothing are ambiguous: clothing can broadcast the private self but it can also hide it (Davis 1992; Entwistle 2000; Wilson 1985). In the city, where life is fast-paced and the population is diverse, clothing is a means of sorting out social heterogeneity and imposing order upon the social landscape. A dresser's "looks" are examined by others as an indicator of his or her social position. Consumers, with varying

degrees of competency, evoke looks to communicate their social status. Gossiping about people and clothing is one way to define whether a consumer's image broadcasts the truth or not. Is one a *patron*? Or, is one “*hari tuturu*” (showing off, fake, a self-important person who pretends to have a lot of titles)? With this information, individuals map out the surrounding social world and locate themselves within it.

What social categories and hierarchies do audiences seek to arrange by analyzing clothing consumption? In Western consumer societies, class is the major framework of social order assumed to be reflected in patterns of consumption. Numerous theorists have examined how consumption reflects and reproduces class structures and creates inequalities (Bourdieu 1984; Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979; Holt 1998 as cited in Short and Holt 2000; McLeod 1995; Veblen 1899; Willis 1977). Class, however, has been a problematic category in the African context, despite a long history of anthropological discussions of certain African societies in class terms. A vast amount of literature in African studies seeks to define the nature of class and its emergence in African contexts. Many have written about pre-colonial state-level societies in Africa. Political and economic hierarchies are viewed as mechanisms for the appropriation of tax and tribute, and the high degree of inequality found within them (Herskovitz 1961; Smith 1960). Many economic historians and others (Cooper 1977, 1979; Curtin 1975; Hogendorn 1976, 1978; Klein 1998; Klein and Robertson 1983; Lennihan 1988, 1982; Lovejoy, 1983; Smith 1955; Wright 1993) have written about systems of acute inequality. Their studies of pre-colonial and early colonial African slavery and its abolition, and the class positions of former masters and slaves, raise many questions about emerging forms of social and economic differentiation in the inter-war years. Economic historians (Berry

1975; Cooper 1977, 1980; Cruise O'Brien 1975; Curtin 1975; Freund 1984a; Hill, 1963; Hogendorn 1979; Hopkins 1973; Lovejoy 1983) have written about the nineteenth century pre-colonial era of legitimate trade, a substitute for the slave trade which was formally if not effectively abolished in 1806 by the British and in 1848 by the French. Various European countries promoted cash crop production (cotton, peanuts, palm kernels, sisal, cocoa, etc.) throughout Africa prior to formal political colonization. Anthropologists, historians, geographers and agricultural economists (Hill 1970; Cruise O'Brien 1971; Smith 1976, 1983; Bernstein 1977; Cooper 1980; Shenton and Lennihan 1981; Lennihan 1982, 1988; Watts 1983, 1994; Guyer 1984; Berry 1985, 1993) have documented and debated the class differentiation that accompanied cash crop production during the colonial period.

There is also a significant literature that takes up class formation in colonial and post-colonial cities. This literature examines the formation of an urban working class (Freund 1984b), tin miners in Nigeria (Freund 1981), prostitutes in Kenya (White 1990), railway workers in Ghana (Jefferies 1978), dockworkers of Mombasa (Cooper 1987), women domestic workers in Senegal (Mackintosh 1989), and many studies of miners in southern Africa (James 1992; Moodie 1994; Worger 1987).

Having referred to the large literature on inequality and class in Africa, it is worthwhile to point out that some of these writers now acknowledge that their studies may have suffered from paying more attention to structure than to human agency, although this is far from a uniform deficit in this literature. Many of these scholars also acknowledge the problems of reifying a European analytical construct. Others would point out that a central concern in their work has been to examine, document and analyze

“actual existing” capitalism in Africa, attempting not to force African systems of social, economic and political inequality into an orthodox Western class template.

In the case of Senegal, “class” is an indigenous label that inhabitants frequently use to evaluate one another’s status. Certain styles of clothing are viewed as projecting an image of “high class,” and individuals who have undergone Western francophone education often think of themselves as part of a distinguished, privileged class. Whether one has or has not completed a francophone high school education, one may be labeled “*baudoolo*,” or peasant in Wolof, because one does not practice particular sets of cultural norms. For some, speaking French well is part of this set of practices. For others, deep knowledge of the Koran or an inability to bargain for goods is another indicator.

The processes of class formation are of course tied to the local specificities of the “actually existing” forms of capitalism in Senegal. Given these specificities, it is not always clear what forms of work produce “high class” individuals, and what forms produce other classes of people. For example, some Murid traders are very wealthy but do not speak French and did not complete francophone educations. At the same time, numerous individuals with university degrees eek out a living through low-paying work in factories or the informal sector. In Senegal, class is a messy, complex domain, insufficient to fully capture the picture of clothing consumption dynamics.

Examining urban clothing consumption in relationship to additional social hierarchies such as patron-clientage and kinship relationships helps to fill in the picture. Using Senegal as a case study, Robert Fatton (1986: 61) argues that patron-client relationships, “are not a substitute for class analysis, nor should they be construed as an independent paradigm of their own. They should be used as complementary and not

contradictory variables to class.” I add kin ties to Fatton’s argument. The salience of patron-client and kin hierarchies as dominant social dynamics is often viewed as a roadblock to modernization and as a sign of “Third Worldness” (O’Brien 1975; Schumacher 1975; Zolberg 1966 as cited in Fatton 1986: 61-63). They suggest the continuity of “tradition” and resistance towards “modernity,” while class is touted as a marker of a “modern,” advanced society (Markovitz 1987). This chapter argues that in addition to class, patron-client and kinship relationships contribute to making Dakar a “modern” consumer society. Their inclusion in discussions of urban consumption broadens the definition of contemporary consumer societies in general

The last chapter demonstrated that Dakar is a consumer society following a path of development that differs from those of Western consumer societies. Early urbanites (the originaries), and later transurbanites (*le venant*, or returned migrant) do not consume fashion simply because local industrialization created and marketed new clothing commodities, or because importers have strategically played to a Senegalese wish to emulate Westerners. Rather, important local dynamics shape Dakarais fashion consumption desires.

In some cases, fashion consumption desires are propelled by familiar class competitions. In Dakar, some individuals have accumulated more resources than others by controlling and profiting from other’s labor, and they demonstrate their elevated position through particular clothing styles and the consumption of particular brands of clothing. In other instances, consumption competitions are propelled by patron-clientage relationships which Senghor ironically referred to as “*la Sénégalité*” (see Fatton 1986:61). Numerous individuals accumulate wealth and power by mobilizing alliances

within the political and religious spheres of Senegal. In Dakar and abroad, one often meets Senegalese political and religious leaders who have not completed Western francophone schooling, but who have accumulated surplus from individuals representing a range of social classes including the highly educated and well-to-do. In addition to expensive clothing, they express their power and wealth by consuming multiple homes, wives, cars, and extensive global travel. Clothing competitions are also propelled by competitions between families and ambitious kin. Dakar is a small city where family names are as powerful as clothing labels, and dress in public appearances is an arena for substantiating the family's power. Similarly, dress is a means for rival kin to "one up" one another.

To summarize, patron-clientage and kinship are two social hierarchies that come into play in clothing consumption in addition to the expected role of class. Clothing consumption aids one's appearance as the "*patron*" (a person of veritable titles, a boss, a leader), "*El Hadji*" (a person of elevated power and prestige as a result of a pilgrimage to Mecca), or *drianke* (woman of largess, status and wealth). Significant fashion consumption contradicts an impression of poverty, dependency, being a "client," a person of lower status, or a person of "thin" social prestige.

This chapter acknowledges the role of class in clothing consumption through a brief discussion of labor migration and dressing up. Patron-client and kin relationships are then discussed as significant social hierarchies that shape clothing consumption in tandem with class. These particular complementary variables render Dakar as a consumer society with distinct features not yet depicted in the urban consumer society literature. It is not the case that patron-clientage and kin dynamics impinge on Dakar's transition to

modernity. Nor should Dakar's uniqueness be reified because it is a "Third World" consumer society. Instead, the significance of patron-client and kin relationships in operation in Dakar suggests that the definition of modern urban consumer dynamics should be broadened. Illustrating the particular consumer dynamics of Dakar serves as a corrective to the overly narrow ethnographic treatment of cosmopolitan consumer cities.

A Preface to Consumption: The Ethnic Composition of Dakar

Before discussing the variety of social hierarchies that shape clothing consumption in Dakar, a brief introduction to the ethnic composition of the city is necessary. Ethnicity is not central to the dynamics of consumption. Without a basic understanding of it, however, descriptions of clothing consumption may be confusing.

It is commonly assumed that ethnicity is among the most relevant forms of social rankings in Africa. Ethnic conflicts in Africa are prominently featured in the media. These images foster the assumption that ethnicity is a primary source of social difference in all contexts on the continent. Ethnicity *can* play a role in defining social hierarchies, but this is not the overwhelming case in Senegal. One reason that ethnicity is not a stronger factor in the social order of Senegal is because a law prohibits political parties and unions from organizing along ethnic lines. Senegal's open border policy contributes to minimizing ethnic conflicts, too. Senegal has attracted numerous immigrants, whose presence has helped to build a positive national image in the eyes of neighbors and to reinforce a strong sense of nationalism within the country. Senegalese strongly identify with their nation, and in many contexts this prompts people to gloss over ethnic differences.

That said, ethnic differences are not entirely insignificant. Because the Wolof comprise a plurality among population of Senegal (44%), and have obtained a substantial amount of political and economic power, minority groups disparage the Wolof. The Wolof only recently gained their extensive power. In the nineteenth century, as a means of staving off African Islamicists and French colonists, the Wolof “pagans” eventually converted to the unique form of Islam called Muridism, noted above. Since then, Wolof religious leaders have dealt with the French by entering into business arrangements that enabled them some degree of control over the groundnut economy. Over the years, Wolof Murids increasingly became savvy long distance traders. Their dominant presence in regional trade spurred the “Wolofization” of Senegal, and Wolof became the lingua franca for the Senegambian region. Holy texts were translated into Wolof and non-Wolof families translated their names into Wolof equivalents. In short, the ways of the Wolof are a hegemonic force in Dakar and throughout Senegal. Some Dakarois, aware of this hegemony, admire the adaptability, innovation and persuasiveness they associate with Wolof cultural practices and norms. Others, in contrast, are critical of the pervasive influence of the Wolof, perceiving them as domineering, aggressive, and threatening to the cultural diversity of Senegal. This is especially so for the Murids from the Baol-Baol region, called the Baol-Baol. Over the years, Baol-Baol traders built extensive trade networks in the important Sandaga market in Dakar, eventually seizing control of it from French-backed Lebanese traders. Family networks and the Senegalese investment in *teranga* (hospitality) played a role in their success. *Teranga* helped to keep overhead down by splitting the costs of lodging and food among many associates while in Dakar (Ebin 1995).

With capital, many small and medium-sized Baol-Baol traders stepped up in scale, some of them traveling to Europe, Asia, Canada, and the U.S. to purchase goods. Despite being only semi-literate in French, the traders had success because they were aggressive, innovative and, through their networks, well informed about the conditions of markets and terms of trade overseas. Moreover, Senegalese émigré communities had been developing in France, Italy, Spain and the U.S. over the years, and in the 1980's, these enclaves provided traders with diverse places to land, means for reducing their overhead, and opportunities to access Senegalese capital invested abroad.

The 1983 devaluation of the currency dramatically boosted the position of the Baol-Baol above that of their competitors in the import business, turning them into the nouveau riche of Dakar. It is they who have opened new businesses and own the most expensive homes in Las Almadies, an expensive beachfront area. Long-term residents of Dakar who invested in education instead of trade look upon these successful Baol-Baol traders with envy and frustration as they endure five to ten years of under- and unemployment. For these reasons, the term "Baol-Baol" is often used by a more fully urbanized person, or Dakar indigène, to derogate a less urbanized but perhaps more enterprising person—whether or not they are actually a Murid from the Baol-Baol region.

Given the dominant presence of the Wolof in the national life of Senegal, it is not surprising that minority groups wish to distinguish themselves from them. In the Southern-most Casamance region, for example, the Diola and Mandinka are currently launching a succession movement, a source of much violence over the past several years. In Dakar, the Peulh and Tukolor, in particular, are often frustrated by the prevalence of the Wolof language and beliefs on Dakar television and the radio. The Peulh are critical

of the Wolof, and active in the promotion of their own language and cultural practices through literacy programs and through restricted marriage practices. At the Northern border of Senegal, Mauritians and Senegalese are in conflict over land. Echoes of these disputes dating back several centuries to a time when Moors raided Senegalese villages for slaves, continue to resonate in the urban context today.

Although these ethnic clashes exist, ethnic distinctions do not comprise a major force that would characterize dress and choice of fashion styles on a daily basis in Dakar. Ethnic differences are acknowledged and even celebrated at festivals and public events, but they are not generally the featured “message” in the clothing worn by Dakarais. Nonetheless, knowledge of Senegal’s ethnic composition is important for understanding patterns of clothing consumption in Dakar. The chart below provides an overview of a number of characteristics associated with Senegal’s principal ethnic groups. These categories include: the percentages of the population, the geographic origins of different groups, general patterns of social structure, and “traditional” forms of work.

General Composition of Ethnicity in Senegal

Ethnic Group	Population in Senegal	Geographic Origins	Social Structure	"Traditional" Forms of Work	Religious Orientation*
Wolof	44%	Groundnut Basin	Hierarchical	Farmers	Murid
Peulh, Fulbe	17.50%	Upper Senegal River, Fuuta	Hierarchical	Herders, Farmers	Tijaniyya, Qadiriyya
Serer	14.80%	Groundnut Basin	Hierarchical	Farmers	Tijaniyya, Qadiriyya, Murid
Tukulor	9%	Upper Senegal River, Fuuta	Hierarchical	Traders, Herders, Farmers	Tijaniyya, Qadiriyya, Murid
Diola	6%	Casamance	Non-hierarchical	Farmers	Catholic
Sarahollé	5%	Upper Senegal River, Fuuta	Hierarchical	Traders, Herders, Farmers, Fishermen	Tijaniyya, Qadiriyya, Murid
Lebu	1%	Cap Vert	Hierarchical	Fishermen, Farmers	Layenne
Others	3%	Diverse	Diverse	Diverse	Diverse

*Religion can not be mapped directly on to ethnicity; nonetheless, this chart indicates general patterns for which there are numerous exceptions.

In addition to diverse ethnic groups, Dakar is inhabited by numerous other *gan* ("strangers" or immigrants). In 1993, a sizeable immigrant population lived in Senegal (approximately 121,321), most of them in Dakar (Direction de la prevision et de la Statistique 1993: 19). Of this total, 37.3 percent were Guineans, 6 percent Malians, 5.9 percent from Guinea-Bissau, 5.1 Gambians, 4.6 percent Mauritanian, and 14.5 percent were European (ibid). These statistics do not include the percentage of Lebanese-Syrians who have lived and worked as traders in Dakar since the nineteenth century.

Class and Labor Migrations: “Boy Town” and “Coming Town”

Labor migration is one phenomenon that makes a social hierarchy partially visible in Dakar that one could label “class.” The need for capital and the interests of rural inhabitants give rise to great flows of laborers moving into the capital. Due to drought and limited rural development, a good deal of migration is unidirectional, causing Dakar to expand in population. At the same time, the desire among “traditional” urbanites to distinguish themselves from newcomers has become more pronounced.

A portion of labor migration in Senegal is cyclical and its impact on the city is noticeable between October and January. During this time, numerous groups flood the city. Among the many migrant groups are Casamance youth who perform an array of low status work. During the migration season, they move into the densely populated neighborhood Naari Telli. Unsupervised by adults, they live together in large groups to economize. At the end of the urban work season, the youth return to their villages taking with them status commodities such as small electronics and clothing, which they use to distinguish themselves from their fellow villagers as members of an “elite” urban class.²

Since the 1970's, many patterns of cyclical migration have broken down as a result of changes in the economy, drought in the interior, and an increased need for training and education for survival. In some instances these phenomena cause migrants to

² The contemporary perception of clothing consumption in rural areas is not a part of my study; nonetheless, it is interesting to note how clothing has played a role in labor migrations in the past. In 1985, reports describe young Diola migrant women returning to their villages wearing outfits cut from the same textile (Cormier 1985). These outfits symbolize their village and age-set solidarity while at the same time mark their distinguished status as urban consumers.

remain in the city instead of returning to their homelands on a regular basis. These interruptions of cyclic migration blur the lines between indigenes and the newly arriving, and between permanent and nomadic residents. Nonetheless, a great deal of movement continues to characterize Dakar, and clothing often marks the distinction made between the urban indigenous and others more recently arrived.

Indigenous young men call themselves the Boy Town, and they label the newcomer the Coming Town. The Boy Town is a person who is *branché*, “plugged in” to the latest trends in the city. He knows how to *gerer* life--to manage all aspects of his social world, including the urban environment, connections with people, and personal finances. He is confident, connected, and cosmopolitan, and he thinks of himself as a person of high social status. The Boy Town aims to express this status through the use of Western brand name clothing that is current in the market.

The Coming Town is the Boy Town’s label for the newcomer to the city, who is considered to be a second class citizen, not “in the know,” naïve. He is someone with limited fluency in French in contexts where French must be spoken³; he also wears out-of-date clothing with frequent repetition of outfits. He lacks knowledge of the latest trends, and he is perceived as having “uncivilized” manners. A Coming Town is someone who “doesn’t know how to talk” in the eyes of the Boy Town. *Kuaw-kuaw*, which in Wolof literally means a person from the countryside, and *ngaka*, which means “backwards,” are other labels that the Boy Town applies to the Coming Town.

³ Urban Senegalese families with economic means often place great emphasis on Western education, yet many do not fluently speak French. Young people who barely master French typically put down adults and others with less ability. French is spoken on television and the radio, by teachers in classrooms and, in some places of formal business

Young women are not generally referred to as Boy Town and Coming Town, although they are often referred to as “boy” in many other contexts.⁴ Indigenous urban young women, like young men, think of themselves as more sophisticated than young women of rural origin. Urban young women cite long hair, lack of familiarity with French, and tentativeness in expressing oneself as the telltale signs of a female rural migrant in Dakar. Many rural migrant women who take jobs as maids for upper class families are ridiculed for their lack of familiarity with urban home furnishings and appliances. Wearing “traditional” outfits in circumstances when “modern” outfits are expected sometimes is another clue to a person’s rural background. Because traditional dress also earns status in particular situations, it is not always a clear marker of a young woman’s geographic background.

Needless to say, newcomers to the city do not share the viewpoint of the Dakarais, the contemporary originaires. Particularly where integration is not on their agenda, they disparage Boy Town youth for forgetting their families’ histories, having loose moral values and no work ethic. Coming Town youth, particularly those from trading families, mock indigenous urbanites for having wasted time studying in Francophone schools, and for drinking Chinese tea for hours at a time while waiting for kin ties to bail them out of unemployment. Rural youth in the city are often highly focused on their objectives and have much less to lose socially in comparison to

such as offices and banks. Relatives who were raised in France also tend to force French-dominant conversations in Dakar.

⁴ Young men refer to young women as “Boy bi.” This is not necessarily a derogatory term, although it can be used put down someone. Young women are less likely to use this terminology to refer to themselves. “Boy” is also a tag attached to many common Wolof words. For example, a youthful term of endearment for mother (Yaay, in Wolof) is “Yaayboy.”

indigenous urbanites. I observed a distinct difference in attitude while surveying Boy Town and Coming Town youth in two different neighborhoods. I found Coming Town youth to be open in talking about their fashion consumption. Many are extremely cooperative and are uninhibited in talking about their consumption of second-hand clothing. In contrast, Boy Town youth are cagey, resistant to sharing, and they openly mock those who wear second-hand clothing. Their attitudes reflect a need to protect threatened social status.

Before the rapid urban expansion in the 1970's and 1980's, the spatial organization of the city separated the residences of newcomers from those of Dakarois. As noted in Chapter One, in-coming migrants gravitated towards African communities in neighborhoods such as Medina and Grand Dakar, and towards suburbs such as Pikine-Guediawaye and Thioraye. Dakarois youth tended to remain isolated in the planned residential neighborhoods of Point E, Zone A and Zone B, coming into contact with migrants only in the markets. In recent years, the accelerated pace of in-migration has made it increasingly difficult to distinguish between the real Boy Town and the Coming Town. As new migrants arrive, earlier newcomers shift into the status of native. The former edges of the city once inhabited by Coming Towns have become central neighborhoods within the brief span of 20-25 years. Rural youth once given secondary status as residents of the urban fringe have become the new class of modest home-owning adults, and the young parents to an up-and-coming urban generation. At the same time, many Dakarois who could not imagine living in a fringe neighborhood, let alone invest in one, have been caught in the snare of economic decline and remain without property of their own, funds for marriage, or the possibility of starting a family.

In short, rapid urbanization is creating a situation where some newcomers to Dakar find new ways to encroach on “traditional” urbanite or Boy Town territory. Boy Town youth are unsettled by the changes occurring around them. They appear to be reacting to change by consuming commodities so as to reclaim their space and power in the city. At the same time, rapid urbanization is limiting the number of Boy Town youth who have the means to be competent consumers. The declining economy leaves some Boy Town youth unable to procure the clothing and other goods that certify their Boy Town status.

Transurban Migrants: The *Venant*

The labor migration that shapes Dakar extends beyond the borders of Senegal. The interests and need for capital of traditional urbanites and some rural newcomers propel many into transurban migration. Individuals who are considered to be part of this particular social class are labeled the *Venant* (the returner). The *Venant* is a major player in shaping clothing consumption competitions in Dakar.

To begin, émigrés are classified as individuals of very high status as a result of their access to money and employment opportunities abroad. The effect of earning money abroad and the reputation of the country of destination are more salient in conferring status than the actual work engaged in while abroad. An individual about to migrate may take an interest, or someone envious of a returned immigrant and looking for a put-down will comment on the work done abroad. Otherwise, few Dakarais are interested in the details of how émigrés make a living abroad. Rarely do parents boast about the work their children do abroad. Rather, they emphasize the city their children have migrated to and

the things they themselves have been able to consume as a result of their children's remittances. Similarly, it is not always the priority of returned emigrants to impart details about their overseas employment. They realize the information is unlikely to raise their status, and if others do not understand their experiences, relaying them could jeopardize the status they enjoy just from having lived abroad.

It is important to remember that Senegalese have traveled for centuries, developing "transnational" communities throughout Africa. During the colonial period, the French sent originaires to francophone cities in the Congo, Mali and the Ivory Coast to provide the administrative support and skilled labor required to build railroads and other public works. Senegalese in Dakar banked social status through travel and work in places beyond the borders of Senegal. Although the "transnational" class of Senegalese arose long before the 1980's, economic changes at that time brought a liberalization of trade that made it easier for Senegalese traders to depart for new labor markets in Paris, Rome, Las Palmas, Toronto and New York. Trade is also conducted in Dubai, where many Senegalese have stores, and Gabon, where Senegalese traders have long had strong connections.

In the eyes of youth in particular, special status is derived from emigration to at least three important places: Italy, the U.S. and France. Although these émigrés include women, men make up the majority. Those who live and work in Italy are called "*V.I.*" (*Venant d'Italie*), those from the U.S are the "*V.A.*" (*Venant d'Amérique*), and those coming from France are called "*V.F.*" (*Venant de France*).

V.I.: Venant d'Italie

The Senegalese community in Italy is the second largest emigrant community in Europe after France. According to Eurostats reported by Mourtala Mboup (2001: 25), there were 25,107 Senegalese living in Italy in 1990. Today, the number must be significantly larger.

Emigrating to Italy brings a great deal of status to the Venant. According to Dakar youth, Italy is a high-status destination because they believe that one can make money rapidly there. Many realize that this money is made largely through street vending and factory work. Those who envy the economic progress of the V.I. raise suspicions as to how their money is made so fast. Some Senegalese journalists have suggested that fast money in Italy is made through drug rings; research on transnational African youth in other parts of Europe suggests there may be some truth to these reports and accusations (MacGaffey 2000).

In addition to being admired for his success, the V.I. is also critiqued for disrupting cultural norms regarding marriage. Emigré men are known to swoop into Dakar for a brief stay, often with the objective of fulfilling a familial obligation to an arranged marriage. New husbands generally return to Italy after a month or so of showing off their wealth. In many cases the young groom lacks the funds to take his wife back to Europe. Or, in the case where his elders imposed the marriage upon him, he may not want to. Thus, young women are left to wait indefinitely for their husbands' return. When the new couple is unable to afford a place of their own, the abandoned wife moves into the household of her in-laws. In the absence of a husband to buffer family politics, the new wife pays a high price for the status that comes with being married to a V.I. Often

she is treated as an extra helping hand in the household, and the question of accessing remittances from her husband becomes a complex issue. She is dependent upon her husband's remittances, but they are closely monitored, if not actually siphoned off by her new in-laws.

“V.A.”: Venant d’Amérique

The V.A. is also assigned high status. In 1997, researchers estimated that approximately 20,000 Senegalese were living in New York City alone, a conservative estimate (Perry 1997). Before the U.S. war against Afghanistan began in 2002, many youth in Dakar saw America as the “top” destination of emigration. Youth aspiring to emigrate considered the U.S. to be a place of choices with plentiful jobs, where one could choose between working and studying. Contrasting the U.S. with France, youth note that in the U.S., Africans are not required to carry working papers on an everyday basis. In their eyes the U.S. is a completely open society. Images of wealthy African American Hip Hop artists and athletes also suggest to Senegalese youth that in the U.S. there is racial equality. Finally, images of entrepreneurs such as Bill Gates have led Senegalese to believe that in the U.S., through hard work, anyone can become a millionaire. Such versions of the American Dream lead many to also see the V.A., Venant d’Amérique, as an estimable person, one who can take care of himself as well as many other people, and who can escape the oppression of neo-colonialism.

“V.F.”: Venant de France

France is another important destination of emigration, especially because of its long history of connections with Dakar. The largest Senegalese community abroad is located in France. According to Eurostats reported by Mboup, more than 45,000 Senegalese were living in France in 1990 (Mboup 2001: 225). The V.F., Venant de France, has a mixed status in Dakar. For reasons having to do with the legacy of colonialism and the discriminatory ways that Africans are treated in France, France is no longer the preferred emigration destination of Senegalese. However, when there are no other options for emigration, France is considered acceptable. The V.F. are viewed as youth with some status because they are able to leave Dakar. Many privileged Senegalese who are hoping to maintain their status seek to study law and other disciplines in France. As individuals with foreign education, the V.F. command a certain amount of prestige.

The Venant: Status and Dress

The Venant who has recently returned to Dakar is often easy to spot. He or she is usually wearing brand-name, Western-style clothing that is not yet available in Dakar's markets. The new clothing commodities draw attention, and in some cases the venant introduces new trends in style. In reality, returned migrants are a divided group of laborers. Some return home empty-handed, while others have developed stable sources of income and are able to consume with relative ease. Regardless of one's situation, the venant dresses to distinguish him or herself. This reinforces the hierarchical dynamics that exist within the family and in relationship to would-be migrants depend on the assistance of émigrés.

The venant is generally viewed as a model of social and financial success. He or she is looked up to and sought after for all types of assistance. Dakar families who wish to marry off their daughters often strategize to give them away to emigrants. A recent popular play in Dakar, treating a phenomenon experienced by many in Dakar, exudes such pro-emigrant hyperbole. The play tells the story of a poor young man who dresses as an emigrant from Italy--so convincingly that a family gives him their daughter's hand in marriage. Eventually, the family discovers he is not an emigrant, and they lose interest. He is left, once again, unable to marry because without the aura of an emigrant, he is viewed as a socially unworthy male.

This play reveals the high value Senegalese place on emigration and the materialism that transnational migration brings. It highlights the serious consequences transnational migration has for Boy Town youth who, as a result of the economic situation, are unable to "grow up." This play reflects a reality in Dakar--there is an emphasis on status gained through migration which renders Boy Town youth as inferior members of the new generation. The clever use of clothing can help to temporarily manipulate how others view one's status. But as the play suggests, clothing consumption has its limitations.

Like all persons of distinguished wealth and power, the "real" venant must negotiate and protect his or her social position. Because new clothing commodities draw attention, the venant, in fact, has much to lose in the competition with Boy Town youth who have not left Dakar. Transurban migrants who have lived abroad for several years at a time may keep in close contact with family and friends by telephone, but many often forget the competitive milieu they have left. Homesick from living abroad, many

romanticize life in Dakar and when they return to the city, they overlook the precautions that they were once trained to take. Upon return, emigrants become vulnerable targets for theft. Many returning emigrants tell stories of falling victim to petty theft by relatives and close friends. Would-be migrants, indeed, are often frustrated by the limited opportunities to obtain travel visas and expensive airfare. Some are intensely jealous of others' success. One way to get even is to speed up the pace of redistribution by helping oneself to a venant's things. Theft is often justified by the attitude that it is the responsibility of the venant to share, and he or she can easily replace missing things upon return abroad. One emigrant who was blocked from returning to New York after a three month sojourn in Dakar related his story to me: from several suitcases of clothing, multiple cell phones and a significant sum of money, he was reduced through petty theft to one outfit, no money, and no cell phone. A call to his missing cell phones verified that at least one of the thieves is a close friend. As a result of this experience, he lost social status and quickly became dependent upon others for aid.

Given that social status is partly defined by patterns of migration, one's social position in the city is never secure. Positions of power must be strategized and defended. Transnationalism has widened the gap in the distribution of resources and increased the competition between the "haves" and the "have nots." It reinforces the need for patrons to consume and to "share" with others. It illuminates new opportunities for dependents to set the terms of exchange and to demand reciprocity.

Patron-Clientage Dynamics

Class is not the only system of difference that shapes clothing consumption. The importance of class to clothing consumption must be put into the context of patron-client relationships. The desire to dress up is driven by the desire to appear as a “patron,” a prestigious person with connections and wealth who commands respect from his or her many dependents, or “clients.” In clothing appearance, a patron expresses his or her status by consuming brand-name labels and African robes made of expensive textiles. Western and African looks are often accompanied by brand-name accoutrements, including chic sunglasses, handbags, cell phones, expensive writing instruments visibly tucked into front pockets, and large and heavy jewelry (for both men and women). Wealth is clearly crucial to the establishment of patron-clientage. Thus, patron-client relationships provide a more nuanced understanding of class.

In sociological terms, which have been applied to numerous historical examples in the literature on West Africa (Berry 1985; Bretton 1971; Crowder and Ikime 1970; Guyer 1984; Hill 1963; Lennihan 1988; Smith 1960, 1978; Watts 1983), patron-clientage entails an exclusive relationship of seemingly mutual benefit that is developed between individuals of unequal status in society. Clients are expected to protect the patron’s interests against rivals, and they are expected to provide services in the form of labor, political or military support, tithes, or material goods. In exchange, patrons grant “gifts” in the form of certain rights, privileges, and acts of protection. They may also redistribute the resources they have accumulated (Smith 1960; Watts 1983 as cited by Tibenderana 1989). Ties are created as unequal individuals enter into a web of continually contested and negotiated rights and obligations.

In Senegal, patron-clientage relationships took on a caste-like quality in the early societies in the northern part of Senegal. Prior to the sixteenth century, much of the north was dominated by hierarchical state-level societies characterized by a basic division between the ruling military classes and the dominated peasantry (Barry 1998: 13-15). Many have written about the occupational hierarchy found in these societies as a caste system (Diop 1985; Irvine 1974; Klein 1998). "Caste" was a term first applied by European travelers and administrators. It was based on a hierarchy of occupations (not religion) dating to the rise of kingdoms from the eleventh through sixteenth centuries. In the Senegambia region, the Wolof, Lebu and Serer, who have related ancestry, as well as the Peulh, Tukolor, Sarahollé, and Mandingo, all practiced one form or another of this system, although Tukolor are cited as having a more rigid structure than the Wolof (Wane 1969). A few Senegambian communities, in particular the Diola and the Serer-Safen,⁵ as well as the small populations predominately located in the south of Senegal, eschewed the verticality of occupational caste.

At a general level, the caste system had three tiers. Free people, including nobles, warriors and peasants; lower-caste artisans including woodworkers, leatherworkers, weavers, silversmiths and *grïots* (praise-sayers and genealogists for the aristocracy); and slaves. Individuals were born into these positions (Diop 1985). One's family name often, but not always, provided a clue to one's caste position.

Patron-client relationships were a key part of this system. "Free" individuals, for example, were served by the lower-caste and slave populations in exchange for compensation, protection, or privilege. The peasantry, and often slaves of the peasantry,

⁵ The Serer-Safen live near Thiès and are highlighted in Maureen Mackintosh's work

provided military manpower. *Ceddo* warriors are one instance. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the ceddo were slaves who were selected to serve the Wolof nobles as militia and in the process acquired land and their freedom. The ceddo, indeed, had a lot of power. They could be useful to the nobles, but they also had the power to overrun them. In the nineteenth century it was ceddo leaders who spied for the French and helped to eventually undermine the Kayor state Barry 1972; Irvine 1974: 65).

Today, the status of the caste system is ambiguous. Clearly, it no longer operates as it did during the times of the great kingdoms which collapsed by the late eighteenth century. The French abolished slavery in 1848. New merchant classes arose with the expansion of trade between Europe and the hinterland and, along with new colonial hierarchies, contributed to the decline of the caste system. One could speculate that the absence of studies examining caste and urbanization in Senegal is testimony to the assumption that caste has disappeared within the urban context.

Using a photo questionnaire, I asked C.E.M. students to identify their heritage by occupational "caste," and to label the caste of a young woman featured in different outfits in two photographs. The majority of youth were uncertain of their family's heritage, but selected "geer" (noble) instead of "don't know" as their answer. The majority also labeled the photo of young woman wearing a grand mbubb as "geer" (noble), and the photo of the young woman wearing shorts and a tube top as "gewel" (commoner). These answers suggest that indeed, although it may have disappeared as a social reality, knowledge of caste meanings remains. For example, few youth willingly identify themselves with a lower caste label if they do not have to. When it comes to

Gender, Class and Rural Transition: Agribusiness and the Food Crises in Senegal (1989).

deconstructing public appearances, many continue to view expensive clothing as a sign of a high caste position, and inexpensive and “indecent” dress with a low caste.

It can be said that caste remains a symbolic reference, not a deep marker of status in Dakar. *Griots* and *griottes* (praise-singers) are one exception. In various neighborhoods one finds griots and griottes who continue to practice their inherited occupation. At family events such as baptisms, weddings, and homecomings from trips to Mecca, they appear as they did for nobles in the past, and their praise-singing is met with a mixture of pleasure and trepidation. Some griots, griottes take patron-client relationships seriously by perfecting their knowledge of a family’s history. Some instruct young members of the family to linger around the edges of the gathering to research small details about the honored family that will help create a more convincing oration. Others, less professional, give more improvised performances.

Many griots are poor and in need of money. They are persistent in squeezing it out of people’s pockets, and skilled at using the threat of negative gossip as leverage. At the same time, some patrons know how to capitalize on giving gifts to griots. At social gatherings, well dressed women and men unabashedly dance their way towards the griot while waving money in the air for all to see. Their gifts, dress, and pride in their public display of fashion consumption signal to others that they are individuals of power and prestige.

During my research, I observed a hybrid form of patron-griot dynamics at several “Hindu” soirées. In Dakar, mostly in the suburbs but also in Medina, there are numerous Hindu dance troupes that study imported Bombay films and choreograph their own dance routines to the music. These Senegalese-Indian dance routines are performed at night in

“underground” soirées. Generally, these events are not widely advertised, and some are only open to relatives and friends of the dance troupes. At these performances, elaborate and romantic, but also energetic dances are performed by youth in full saris and other garb they have recreated based on their viewing of popular Indian films. The audiences who attend these performances are equally fascinating to observe. Many women arrive in gold-threaded saris, others in expensive African robes. Men wear expensive robes and Western suits.

Sitting in the audience at one of these events I visited in Medina, I was surrounded by an enormous amount of wealth. During the performances patrons who are supportive of particular dancers, or who are spontaneously moved to do so, rise from their seats and dance their way to center stage in order to stuff bills inside the performers’ blouses and pants pockets. In some cases this patronage borders on erotic as female patrons give more than money to the male dancers. Medallions, handkerchiefs, kisses and other amorous gestures are planted on the bodies of dancers in mid-performance. The exchange of dance for gifts, which takes place within an environment filled with luxurious clothing, exemplifies a form of patron-client relationship that calls to mind the way patrons give gifts to performers who please them. It also highlights the notion that dressing the part—even if one only can afford to give away 5,000 CFA—persuades an audience of one’s status as a patron.

An important difference is that the patrons and Hindu dancers are not always related in the way griot families are connected to noble families. Nonetheless, a seemingly durable patron-client relationship is developed as a result of public exhibition. The gift-giving at Hindu soirees is not random. Many patrons regularly give to the same

dancers at every performance. Although I asked, I did not learn about the other goods and services that patron-dancers exchanges may entail. But because of the underground nature of the Hindu dance movement and a stigma that is attached to the Hinduphile community, it is rumored that sexual favors may be an element of some of these exchanges.

Patron-Client Relationships, Politics and Clothing

Patron-clientage relations operate within political and religious realms of Senegalese social life and, to different degrees, they shape fashion consumption. As suggested in Chapter One, these relations have become a key part of Senegalese state formation. Liberal voting rights established by the French in the eighteenth century introduced the usefulness of patron-client relationships in the modern political realm (Fatton 1986, Johnson 1972). In the post-colonial period, Senghor consolidated the power of his political machine through the creation of extensive patronage relationships with numerous branches of society including political leaders, labor leaders, ministers, leading entrepreneurs of parastatal companies and local representatives of the PS party (Beck 1997; Boone 1990; 1992). Although regimes have changed, the pool of new leadership in a country of between eight and nine million inhabitants is small, while patrons' desire to retain their power is great. As a result, many patron-client relationships have remained a central dynamic of Senegalese politics.

In terms of clothing and bodily appearance, presidents have played significant roles in dictating styles that signify who is and who is not a patron of the state. As mentioned in Chapter One, Senghor went so far as to pass a law which dictated that

Western suits be worn in the ministries. Diouf reversed the law and encouraged “traditional” outfits. He also prohibited skin bleaching by women ministry employees. During the early years of Diouf’s regime, skin bleaching was viewed as too overtly Westernizing the African body. Skin bleaching is a practice that continues today despite much anti-skin bleaching publicity and the public’s general knowledge that it is harmful to the body.

In the history of the city, clothing has also been used to mark the clients of particular political leaders. As early as 1945, coalitions of women adopted specific textiles to demonstrate their political alliance with certain parties (Faye 2000b:382-384). This practice continues today. During the 2000 Presidential elections, a green and white textile featuring the photographed image of Abdou Diouf was distributed to women’s groups that supported the president. In some cases, gifts of money accompanied the free textiles. In short, clothing and rules about bodily appearance have been used to create and to mark the state’s patrons and clients in the past and they continue to be so used today.

Patron-Client Relationships, Religion and Clothing

Patron-clientage dynamics shape clothing consumption in the religious realm to a greater degree than in Senegalese politics. Patron-clientage dynamics are a key component of Sufi Islamic structures (Fatton 1986) which dominate Senegal and are currently contested by alternative religious groups. Ninety-five percent of Senegal’s population practices Islam, and at least in popular discourse, the Muslim community is a unified one. In actuality the Muslim community in Senegal is very divided, the various

strands competing for new members, and in some cases for the power to shape national politics.

At the broadest level, Islam in Senegal consists of Sufists and Sunnites. Sufism comprises the majority of Senegalese Muslims and has the oldest roots in Dakar, having come to Senegal in the early eleventh century through the Almoravid movement and been disseminated through *confréries* or brotherhoods. The brotherhoods are hierarchically structured “families” led by a *cheikh* or *marabout*, who are followed by *taulibe* or adepts. Leaders are often extremely learned and are fluent in Arabic and Islamic law. They provide their followers with spiritual guidance and mediate social conflicts. In certain areas of Senegal’s interior, cheikhs have the power to apply Islamic law, although in Dakar this power is not typically exercised by religious leaders (Behrman 1970; Cruise O’Brien 1971).

The brotherhoods are organized into sects that profess distinct ways of identifying their origins and the relationship their leaders (*khalifa*) have to Mohammed. Each sect has particular sets of practices that reflect slight differences in their orientation to Islam. For example, the Tijaniyya place an accent on Koranic studies while Murids value agricultural labor as a gesture of religious devotion.

Patron-client relations are common in all of the Sufi brotherhoods in Senegal. The spiritual leaders exact deference or submission from followers. In exchange for spiritual leadership, followers offer tithes, labor and allegiance to their brotherhood’s leader. Some researchers argue that this exchange reveals that these brotherhood structures to be more hierarchical than those in North Africa and other Islamic states (Coulon 1981), and in fact they are modeled along lines of the historically hierarchical Wolof and Manding (Coulon

1981; Linares 1992). Certainly many followers believe that maraboutic power, along with patronage-client ties, entails some redistribution of resources (Linares 1992: 97).

Marabouts are known to draw upon resources given to them in order to provide land, employment, schools and various forms of aid to their followers. Some marabouts invest in businesses that in turn employ numerous followers. Sunnites, however, strongly disagree with this mixture of religion and economics.

In Senegal, one of the most notable characteristics of the brotherhoods is their role in national politics. Each sect arose in a specific political and economic context that gave it opportunities to play a significant role in regional trade and in dealings with the French colonizers. In the twenty-first century patron-client relations between marabouts and taalibe enable the sects to maintain a great deal of power. For example, religious leaders instruct their followers to vote for particular candidates during national and local elections. They subsidize businesses and projects that provide employment in Dakar. Some leaders even facilitate visas and passports for travel abroad, enabling numerous Senegalese access to work and an ability to influence the national economy with remittances. In sum, it is well recognized in Senegal that patron-client relations within the realm of Sufi religion have a far reaching impact on individuals and society. In Senegal, the taalibe of some sects drop to their knees in the presence of their marabout. In New York, they line up outside of the hotel room of a visiting marabout waiting to ask for spiritual advice and to bestow gifts of money, cell phones, arms, cars and other prestigious commodities.

While Dakar is comprised of numerous cultural groups from diverse regions and histories, in the city religious orientation is perhaps the strongest characteristic that

divides the population and is visible in clothing and bodily appearance. In the following pages I describe the forms of dress adopted by youth and adults to signify their membership within one or another of the various religious groups in Dakar.

Islam: Tijaniyya

The majority of Senegalese Muslims belong to the Tijaniyya brotherhood which has approximately 2.5 million followers.⁶ This brotherhood, one of four in Senegal, was established in Fez, Morocco by Ahmad al Tijani, and it arrived in the mid-nineteenth century as a result of the travels and teachings of al Hajj Umar Tal. In Senegal, the Tijaniyya brotherhood has three divisions, associated with three different geographic locations. The historic brotherhood of al Hajj Umar Tal is located in the Fuuta Toro where Islam was first introduced to Senegal and where a majority of Tukolor and Peulh live. A second division is led by the Sy family and is located in Tivaouane (Thies), its influence extending to the Sine-Saloum region where Serer and Wolof live. The Niasse family⁷ leads a third branch in Kaolack, also in the Sine-Saloum region. Tijaniyya strongly emphasize education as an important element of religious practice. In the eyes of other groups such as the Murid, this emphasis is sometimes viewed as religious elitism

⁶ The statistics regarding the Muslim community are quoted from Erin Augis's (2002) study of women and religion, and which relies on statistics from Laborde (1995). These statistics appear low given that the Muslim population of Senegal is at least 7,000,000 and together Tijaniyyi and Muridiyya only account for half of this number while three other brotherhoods that are significantly smaller should account for another 3.5 million persons. At any rate, according to Gellar, in the 1970s, Tijaniyya comprised 52 percent of Senegal's Muslim population (Gellar 1982: 106 footnote 2), which suggests that the demographics of religious communities have changed no doubt affecting the dynamics between sects.

and as an elitism resulting from foreign influence. This perception is based on the fact that Tijaniyya have strong connections with the broader Arab world. In 1975, numerous taalibe from northern Nigeria became followers of Ibrahim Niasse, a Senegalese Tijan marabout. Saddam Hussein, the former Iraqi president, donated more than half a million dollars for the construction of a mosque in Kaolack controlled by Tijan leaders. The Saudis contributed funds for another mosque in Tivaouane (Gellar 1982: 91).

In Dakar, a Tijan often wears kaftans, which all Muslim young men typically wore several years ago. Young Murid men say they are wearing kaftans less these days. Tijans also wear mbubbs similar to those worn by Murids, but their identity is signified above all by a particular type of cap, a red fez. Tijans also carry prayer beads longer than those of any other groups. In Dakar, Tijan men often tend to wear robes and other clothing that vary within a range of rich but natural colors such as tans, greens, browns, whites and creams. It would be unusual to see a Muslim of any orientation wear a solid bright pink robe. That said, this norm of Muslim dress is contrasted by the dress of a principal Tijan leader, Al Hadj Mansour Sy. He frequently appears on television dressed in brightly colored robes with canary yellow and electric blue embroidery and a rounded cap sewn from a patchwork of fabric. His taste in dress has not set a major trend among the Tijan, however, on the occasions that men do wear mbubbs of norm-breaking bright colors, it is usually assumed that they are Tijans.

Many Wolof Murids, who also adopt norm-breaking dress (see below), mock this Tijan leader for his appearance in public. Murids also secretly criticize the Tijaniyya religious practices which include singing at the end of services. This they regard as

⁷ The founder Abdoulaye Niasse was a marabout of blacksmith background (Gellar 1982:

frivolous. The body, they believe, should be used for work, not singing. Tijans, of course, disagree; they feel that the Murids are not very expressive when it comes to their religious practices. Tijan young women are not easily distinguished by their clothing. Additional marks such as ethnic identity, language, family name, and a way of referring to Tivaouane and the Fuuta indicate, when put together with dress, that a woman is of Tijanyyi faith.

Muridiyya

Muridism, with approximately one million followers (Augis 2002),^x is the second largest brotherhood in Senegal. It originated in the groundnut basin where primarily Wolof and Serer reside. Cheikh Amadu Mbacke of Baol, also known as Cheikh Amadu Bamba, founded the brotherhood in the nineteenth century. He elaborated a doctrine of Islam that was attractive to a large population of slaves and peasants in the agricultural region. Where the French attempted to take control of this region, Bamba emerged as a strong resistance leader, contributing to the construction of the mosque of Touba and to the annual “Magal” celebration of the accomplishments of Serigne Touba. On this day, Murids from all over Senegal as well as other parts of the world make a pilgrimage to Touba to pay homage to Bamba. So many pilgrims descend upon the small city that they exhaust its water supply. Air fares to Senegal increase during this time of the year, as many Senegalese return home for the holiday.

90).

^x In 1970, 29 percent of the Senegal population was Murid peasants from the Cape Vert and Diourbel region (Linares 1992: 98).

As previously discussed, the marabouts of the Murid brotherhoods wield a great deal of power. In the colonial period, patron-client relationships with the French colonial administration enabled marabouts to generate profits for their community. In the early postcolonial period, a similar relationship was reconstituted with the independent government. The marabouts accepted money from the Parti Socialiste in exchange for their *ndigal*--that is, directives to the taalibe telling them whom to vote for in presidential elections (Cruise O'Brien 1971). It is argued that in more recent years urbanization and the decline of agriculture have forced the Murid leaders to distance themselves from the government (Beck 1997). Nevertheless, the marabouts continue to have access to new sources of power and wealth through their diaspora communities in Italy and the U.S. It remains to be seen how the balance of power will be played out between Murid leaders and the new government of Abdoulaye Wade, which came into office in 2000.

About fifteen years ago, young Murid men wore three piece mbubbs. Today they wear two piece mbubbs called *haye layhat*, which are distinguished by a crest that is cut into the neckline. It is a style of clothing named after a famous marabout, Serin Abdul Ahad Mbacké. Wide scarves cut from the same fabric imported from Saudia Arabia are worn along with carved leather boxes containing prayers on pendants. Murids also wear striped woolen knit caps and *nafu*, a pendant with a laminated photograph of their marabout. Young men greet each other with a special handshake that involves touching the back of one's hand to the forehead while still gripping the other person's hand. Followers of one Murid leader named Mbacke have a more special way of identifying themselves. Typically Wolof exclaim "*naam!*" (yes!) when being called; followers of Cheikh Moudou Kara Mbacke yell out "Mbacke!" instead.

Most young Murid women do not wear a particular form of dress that gives away their identity. Some exceptions are the women followers of Cheikh Moudou Kara Mbacké who usually wear light blue mbubbs with musoor covered by white veils. Jewelry is unusual. When attending family or neighborhoods gatherings that are not religious in nature, Murid women wear mbubbs of many colors, ostentatious gold and silver jewelry, and indulge in layers of perfectly applied makeup.

Baye Faal Murids

The Baye Faal Murids are followers of Cheikh Ibra Faal (c. 1858-1930), a devout Murid considered by some to take his religious beliefs to an extreme. In some histories of Muridism, Faal put aside religious codes and piety in order to dedicate his life to performing physical labor for Bamba, taking his responsibilities “too seriously.” For example, he used keep others from eating once a fast was over (Savishinsky 1994). For this reason, Bamba gave him permission to abandon some of the basic rules of Islam such as fasting and praying five times a day, and taalibe of Faal follow his example of “extreme” devotion to religious beliefs. In rural contexts, Baye Faal followers give up their material goods, neglect to care for their bodies, and commit themselves to hard agricultural labor as a means of demonstrating their devotion to God. In the urban context, some Baye Faal have radically re-interpreted their work to include begging, stealing and smoking marijuana. Many Murids do not accept that urban Baye Faal are sincere Muslims and instead call them “*Baye Faux*” (false Baye Faal).

Nonetheless, the urban Baye Faal consider themselves a legitimate religious organization. In Dakar, they can be seen traveling in groups, often barefoot, and wearing

jaaxas, mbubbs made from scraps of material. Their matted hair calls to mind a Rastafarian. They carry empty calabashes which they shake in front of tourists and at passengers at the bus stops, begging for money. Today, Baye Faal men have their families in tow. In Dakar it is increasingly common to see young Baye Faal children in a matching mbubbs shaking calabashes and begging for money alongside their parents at bus stops.

Layenism

Layenism, a smaller brotherhood than the Murids, was founded during colonialism in 1880. In contrast to the Tijaniyya and Muridiyya, the Layenne believe their leaders are direct descendents of the Prophet Mohammed. Layennes are predominately located in the Cap Vert region, and Lebu are their primary followers.

These brotherhoods arose in response to conflicts and competition between the Murids, the Tijaniyya, and the French. They offered a new religious option for Lebu who were the “original” inhabitants of Dakar. This helped them to bolster their community and cultural practices as they were slowly losing control of their lands and the integrity of their cultural practices. As the Cap Vert peninsula increasingly attracted “strangers” of diverse cultural backgrounds to the Lebu homeland, religion was used to reassert the community’s presence and authority.

Layenne worship is strongly associated with “unorthodox” Islamic practices and with mystical practices that are informed by Lebu customs. For example, the Layenne were the first Islamic organization in Senegal to allow women to pray in mosques (Augis 2002)--perhaps, it is argued, to temper such historical practices of women as *ndëp* (spirit

possession). Layenne men and women often wear white robes to religious gatherings. Otherwise they are difficult to distinguish, except for men's occasional green scarves. Green is the universal symbolic color of Islam.

Qadiriyya

The oldest but smallest brotherhood in Senegal, Qadiriyya was founded in Mauritania in the late eighteenth century and is estimated to have approximately 75,000 followers (Augis 2002). The majority of its adherents are located in the Dakar-Thiès region and are of diverse ethnic backgrounds (Gellar 1982: 89). Every year the followers make a pilgrimage to their "homeland" in Nimzat, Mauritania. Like the Layenne, Qadiriyya followers believe their founder to be a direct descendent of the Prophet Mohammed. This brotherhood is rarely at the fore of current events, and its members are difficult to distinguish by dress. Qadiriyya presence is strong within the city, however, since the word "Nimzat" is painted on the front of Car Rapids throughout Dakar. Nimzat is painted for Car Rapids for good luck.

Sunnites

Sunnites are a growing Muslim minority in Senegal, their actual numbers at this point being unknown. Sunni groups have been active in Senegal since the 1930's, but in the late 1950's they underwent a shift in Dakar. Youth leaders Cheikh Mohammad Touré and Alioune Diouf were invited for training at the Bin Badis Institute in Constantine and upon their return they formed the *Union Culturelle Musulmane* (UCM), the first center of Sunni activities in Senegal (Augis 2002).

Sunnites are considered to follow more “orthodox” beliefs than Sufi adherents. In theory, they steer away from combining mysticism with religion, although in practice this is sometimes contradicted (Augis 2002). Critical of the patron-client structure of the Sufi brotherhoods, they disparage in particular the marabouts’ use of their followers’ financial contributions for personal and sometimes excessive consumption (Augis 2002). Some of the Sunni groups also oppose the secular state and they promote their anti-state position through political participation. Different Sunni groups have different strategies for overcoming this fundamental contradiction (Augis 2002).

Jama’at Ibad ar-Rahman is the strongest Sunni movement in Senegal. Referred to in Dakar as the movement “Ibadi Rahman,” its adherents are often called “Ibadi.” Alioune Diouf, a former participant in the UCM and a student of religion in Algeria, was the founder and leader until 1988. He promoted religious training in Arabic schools, Qu’rannic literacy, familiarity with the religious communities of North Africa, and the project of challenging maraboutic political and economic power. Since the change of leadership to Sidi Khaly Lo in 1988, the Jama’at has somewhat softened its criticism of the brotherhoods (Augis 2002).

The development of this religious movement stirred controversy in Dakar because several of its orthodox religious practices are considered to be as foreign as the Western-imposed Catholicism. Sunni women veil themselves all day long, for example, whereas other young Muslim women veil themselves only when entering sacred places and on special occasions. Young men, in contrast, are not distinguished by their clothing as they wear many types of Western and African outfits. But they shave their heads and grow long beards. Listening to music, dancing, and having direct contact with members of the

opposite sex, even shaking hands, are prohibited. To non-members, refusing to shake hands is anti-African act, as shaking hands is a strong symbol of African solidarity.

Other Religious Orientations: Catholicism and Animism

Four percent of Senegalese are Catholic and one percent are said to be animist, although the animist communities are hard to locate. Many in Dakar combine the practices of world religions with animist practices, making it impossible to identify the “purely” animist. For example, one Diola friend of mine living in Guediawaye claims to be Catholic, but because his mother is responsible for protecting the community fetish, his family’s home is the site of various community-based “animist” religious rituals. It is not clear that he or his family are actively Catholic, as I never heard anyone talk about this religion--about going to church or participating in neighborhood chapter activities. Possibly they are lapsed or private Catholics.

Thus statistics do not always represent the reality. Moreover, world religions have played a large role in homogenizing populations in Dakar, such that often people label themselves in terms of a world religion for the sake of avoiding further scrutiny. For example, in Dakar it is rare to find anyone who claims to be atheist, although it is certain that many people’s lives evade the principles of both world and local religions. Foreigners who do not identify themselves as either Catholic or Muslim bewilder Dakarois. They look for ways to “fit” individuals who do not identify with a world religion into one of these two categories.

While Catholicism is practiced by four percent of the population in Senegal, a concentration of Catholics live in Dakar, particularly in the planned neighborhoods of

somewhat wealthy families and in Parcelles Assainies where there is a large, modern church. Catholicism is especially associated with the Serer, Diola and other migrants from the Casamance region in the South. Unlike the north of Senegal, the Casamance, was initially populated by numerous small-scale societies with egalitarian orientations. These groups were further distinguished from others in Senegal by their geographic separation from the rest of the country by Gambia, a British colonized territory set inside southern Senegal. Patron-client relations, thus were not as prominent a feature of social dynamics as they were in the North until Islam spread through the region.

The influence of Catholicism in Senegal initially took root through the work of The Holy Ghost Fathers of the French Catholic missionary. They imported Western education, and taught Western values of individualism, independence and freedom. These lessons were attractive to some Africans. Western education created the civil servant class and the allure of government jobs. In the colonial period, St. Louis was the first capital of French West Africa, and thus the seat of Catholicism and Western schooling. When the capital shifted to Dakar in 1902, interest in Catholicism and education shifted too, ensuring that Western education would have a broad effect on the city. Before the end of the colonial period, the first university in francophone West Africa was opened in Dakar, and Africans throughout the colonies as well as others from France and North Africa flocked there to study. Catholic education continues to maintain its relevance to the city. Some of the most prestigious private schools preparing young Muslims and Christians for civil service jobs, for example St. Marie-Hann and St. Michael's, are Catholic and continue in their role of influencing today's religiously diverse privileged classes. In addition to education, heavy recruitment from Casamance, and of Catholics,

into the post-independence civil service contributed to shaping the influence of Catholicism in Dakar. Senghor, a Catholic Southern, brought many friends and relatives from the Casamance into the first administration (Crowder 1967). The disproportionate number of Southern Catholics in early post-independence Dakar helped to underscore the notion that a modern state is oriented towards the West.

In Dakar, a Catholic religious orientation is strongly associated with Western styled clothing and Western ethics. It is not always possible, however, to immediately detect a Catholic, as so many youth in Dakar wear Western-styled clothing. Other marks must come into play such as the appearance of Diola ethnic identity, or long hair on young men. (Muslim youth typically have closely shaved heads). Short skirts can signify a Catholic, as Muslim women are expected to cover their legs. When I asked youth to choose who were likely to be Catholics from an array of photographs featuring Senegalese in diverse clothing styles, the majority selected the photo of a young man in an Italian suit holding a cell phone, and a young woman in a modest pose wearing a knee-length skirt.

Religious Orientation and “Lifestyle Marketing”

Significantly, people signify religious identities through dress, often quite overtly, and read religious commitment in the dress of others. Indeed, the way that dress relates to religious orientation in Dakar calls to mind “lifestyle marketing,” the new way marketers began pitching commodities after the pace of globalization stepped up in the 1960’s and 1970’s. Lifestyle marketing entails the close monitoring of demographic changes among particular segments of the market. “Minute-by-minute” reports on the sociological trends

of a group enable marketers to package their products in relation to lifestyles. Rapid changes in product promotions follow. In Dakar, it is as if the population is engaged in its own study of market niches defined by religious orientations. Although Western clothing commodities are particularly important to consumers, their interest develops within a social milieu that is strongly shaped by religious identifications.

Within and among each religious group, clothing is also used to signify one's position within a patron-client hierarchy. Expensive clothing and unique accoutrements often signify a leader or patron, while "uniforms," such as those worn by Kara taalibe and the Baye Faal, signify the subordinate position of a "client." Emerging Sunni groups, ironically, critique the materialism associated with Sufi patron-client relationships by consuming impressive imported clothing from the Middle East. Others make the same statement through modest, locally-made traditional and Western-styled clothing. Overall, the world of religious dress signifies meaning and is competitive. Whether facilitating or resisting patron-client relationships, clothes shape one's identity and one's place within the competitive field of clothing consumption.

Kinship, Age Relationships and Competitive Consumption

In addition to patron-clientage dynamics, kinship shapes clothing competitions as well. As outlined above, in the distant past many Senegambian societies were organized by a hierarchy of families. This is no longer the case in contemporary Dakar with the exception, perhaps, of griot families. Nonetheless, Senegal is a sociocentric society where the individual is viewed within the context of the family. The way one dresses conveys

the social position of one's family. Thus, dressing up has implications for the family as well as the individuals who are attached to it.

Within families, competitive clothing consumption is also shaped by age hierarchies. When a sibling or relative demonstrates a strong ability to consume clothing and other items of status, rivalrous siblings and relatives are often propelled to outdo or undermine the success of their kin. This competition is developed as a result of the hierarchical nature of families.

In Dakar, urban families tend to be large. Although there are no typical families in Dakar, it is common to grow up in a family where an age hierarchy is in operation (see Diop 1985 for description of Wolof families). Ideally, the older one is, the higher one is in rank and status. Within this model, adults hold all the power and their juniors are expected to defer to them. In Wolof and Muslim families, mothers in particular wield a lot of power, and from a very early age in life children are socialized to revere their biological mother. Respect and love for one's mother is a popular topic of discussion and theme in the poetry writing of school children.¹⁰

In Wolof families, the sisters and brothers of one's mother and father are considered to be additional mothers and fathers. Beyond the confines of the family, seniors practice the right to correct and instruct juniors regarding their behavior. In Dakar, it is still not uncommon to observe adults instructing, admonishing, or commanding in public help from youth whom they do not know. Ideally, the power of adults over youth is further bolstered by the role of aunts, uncles and neighbors. As young people ideally respect and pay heed to elders, in turn, elders ideally provide for

dependents and other juniors who need assistance. Within this model of the family and the rights and status that accompany age, one's ability to provide for many is seen as a sign of social strength. This position resonates with the role and status assigned to a patron, but it is based on kinship.

Within the family, siblings also follow a hierarchy or rank according to age. The eldest brother or sister of a group of siblings often assumes the responsibility of a demi-parent. Adults depend on the first child (*taaw*) to perform this role. In exchange for assuming this responsibility, older siblings receive respect from younger siblings.

In a large family, young people have a wide array of individuals to whom they must defer, and whose orders they must follow. Typically, all but the youngest have a few individuals under them whom they may subject to their authority. The youngest sibling (*chat*) is in the unique position of having no one to direct. This is not the case, however, in a household where one child has been placed within the family by a rural relative. Often relatives outside of Dakar will "give" a child to urban relatives. This may occur because they are desperate to provide a better life for their child, or they feel indebted to the urban family for one reason or another and feel they must give a "gift." These "pawns" are generally assigned the lowest status in the household, and when the heads of households do not wish to accept such a child, but for reasons of family solidarity cannot refuse, they often overwork and mistreat them. The unfair treatment of adopted children is a common theme in Senegalese popular theatre.

A youth's status in the family changes with marriage which in Senegal marks the shift from youth to adulthood. It is a distinct step up in social status, and it comes with a

¹⁰ I observed this while spending time with youth and by attending their school

new set of rights and responsibilities for all parties. Buying new clothing for the bride is among the new responsibilities. At a time when a newly married couple commonly sets up their own household, their new adult status usually requires them also to assume greater responsibility in contributing to their parents' household. This is yet another way for seniors to collect from their dependents. The groom and his family is expected to supply the bride with numerous new outfits to wear during the wedding ceremonies. The expense of this clothing is often a factor that prohibits many young men from pursuing marriage.

Transitions

As the economy of Senegal and Dakar changed in the 1980's, the age hierarchy and dynamics in the family began to change too. Unemployed adults were losing the ability to provide for and control their children. Without stable incomes, men abandoned their wives and children to simplify their troubles. Some mothers who were unable to properly feed their children encouraged them to abandon school and to look for work. Some adults and youth turned to activities commonly regarded as immoral, such as prostitution and theft, as a means of providing for their families. Not all adults but certainly some, desperate to assure their own survival, came to see their offspring as a resource to skim from. In Dakar, it is common to hear stories of adults misappropriating resources that their working children have entrusted them with, or parents extorting wages from their working children. These examples illustrate an abuse of senior status and an increased desperation among adults who are losing power and control.

performances.

Similarly, unemployed elder brothers and sisters are losing their authority over younger family members, as they can no longer set an example of what it means to be a productive and therefore respectable person in society. Meanwhile, when young members of a family live abroad they are expected, and want, to provide assistance to the family in Dakar. For many, it is a great honor and a boost to their status within the family to play this significant role. If younger siblings living abroad send remittances back home, their contributions can trump the status of elder siblings who have remained in Senegal. This can invert the unequal dynamic between siblings. As a result of the declining economy, sibling rivalries have intensified. It is now common to hear people tell stories about trusted siblings who stole from them, or who sabotaged a work opportunity through false gossip. These stories represent dependent siblings' efforts to penalize other siblings in the competition for power and status.

The obligations of kinship are not always welcomed. A popular topic of conversation among émigrés in the U.S. is one's inability to satisfy the needs and requests of one's family in Senegal. Failure to live up to the expectations of kin is threatening and stressful. Over dinner in New York, one émigré related the details of a trip back to his hometown after living abroad for nearly ten years. In one day he dispensed several hundred dollars in small gifts of money (a small gift is between one and ten dollars, or 650 to 6,500 C.F.A.) He described how distant aunts and uncles traveled from small villages to greet him. As an accountant, it is his practice to diligently record his expenses, but after one day he could no longer keep track of the money and the people he gave to.

Another émigré commented that, when traveling to Dakar, he conceals his arrival date from friends and family in Senegal to diminish the number of requests for gifts. A third émigré changed his phone number in New York to prevent people in Dakar from calling him to ask for money for various projects, family celebrations and medicines. Unable to reject requests and to risk forfeiting his status, he found discontinuing his phone number and hiding a more manageable solution to the problem

To summarize, the economic decline is affecting family solidarity. Solidarity is created by the mutual exchanges of unequal family members. But of course, this is an ideal more than a fully practiced reality. Nonetheless, in Senegal the social obligation to share is very strong, especially within the family and among friends. A number of resources that come into the household are considered communal property, among them food, clothing, furniture, space, equipment, certain amounts of money, and labor. Sharing resources is considered honorable, and refusing to share is considered selfish and a justification for spreading negative gossip to sabotage an individual. So great is the obligation to share and to avoid gossip that individuals who have the means to assist others are run ragged in their efforts to keep up with the demand for aid.

One example highlights these dynamics while demonstrating that gossip is a form of social control that even spans the Atlantic. The family of one couple who work in a sweatshop abroad petitioned them for money to pay for the expenses of a younger sibling's son's baptism at home in Dakar. The husband refused since he was barely able to cover his own expenses on his sweatshop paycheck. His honor at stake, the sibling then petitioned his brother's wife. The wife's honor was also at stake for it is her responsibility to be generous to her husband's family. After much agonizing in private,

she went behind her husband's back and supplied her brother-in-law with money for the baptism, risking her own solidarity with her husband. This event severely ruptured the brothers' relationship. It demonstrates that the demand to consume, in the form of expensive baptisms, for example, is so great that people strain and break social ties. It also suggests that at the level of the family, the dynamics of redistribution that foster solidarity may be undergoing change.

The marriageable age in Dakar is rising as a result of the declining economy and young people's inability to afford to marry. This trend prolongs the transition to adulthood, leaving parents and senior siblings with extended obligations to unmarried offspring and junior siblings, respectively.

While the official entry into adulthood may be delayed by the economics of marriage, the transition to parenthood is not prolonged and the rate of premarital pregnancy is on the increase. Motherhood outside of marriage slightly lowers a young woman's status while it does not appear to affect a young man's status; it also does not appear to prevent either parent from eventually marrying. It does suggest, however, that the experiences and responsibilities of dependents have increased in complexity.

Economic decline is causing relations between adults and juniors, and among other family members, to be challenged if not ruptured. Adult authority is waning, and the independence of youth is increasing. *"Ku Weet Xam Sa Bopp"* is a popular rap album which was released at the end of the 1990's. Translated into English, the Wolof title means, "Being alone, you know for yourself." The words suggest that a new form of individualism is emerging as the traditional rights and obligations of kinship come into question.

Kinship and Dress

Given the hierarchies of families and the dynamics between providers and dependents, dress and public presentation has special importance in Dakar. Kinship networks pervade the city, and one commonly runs into extended family members and friends of the family wherever one travels. In these chance meetings, hierarchical kinship dynamics go into operation. Both parties read clothing as an initial signal of rank and power differences. Because the individual is viewed in the context of the family, not only is one's personal reputation at stake in a chance encounter, but the honor of the entire family as well. One's appearance and one's ability to properly perform social graces, including offering proper greetings, gestures of hospitality and generosity, and paying deference to elders, speaks to the reputation of both the family and the individual. Thus, it pays to be well dressed and presentable at all times when in public, as the family's honor is subject to judgement at any moment.

Dressing up is a shaping factor in an individual's success in asking kin for assistance. If by chance one should encounter a relative with abundant resources, it pays to look presentable because the relative may have a lead on a job or travel opportunity. Consuming clothing, therefore, makes one appear as a capable member of a family and community, and someone in whom others will have confidence to invest.

Consuming clothing can be a means of procuring additional resources that enable continuity in consumption and which at some point may be converted into opportunity. Frequent baby-naming ceremonies, weddings and *tuur*, (rotating credit union meetings for women) reinforce the need to frequently dress up and to give money and assistance as

a means of creating possibilities in the future. When one dresses successfully at these events, a positive public reputation is enhanced. Failure to dress well leads to hurtful gossip and the demise of one's reputation. When women have few resources, the pressure is so great that they borrow money from relatives to cover their expenses. When relatives are not available to protect their images, some women go so far as to exchange their dignity for a handout that they then use to buy the new clothes and jewelry that will help them make the right impression.

In sum, the density and quality of kinship networks in Dakar perpetuate the obligation to maintain a positive public image through dress and commodity consumption. Family obligations foster the need to consume and the competitiveness that comes along with it. Family obligations also both foster and limit the availability of the resources required for perfect clothing performances--which, in turn, has consequences for the image of an individual and his or her family.

The Material of Modernity

This chapter gives insight into the principle ways in which Dakarais map out the social world of the city through clothing signifiers. Class, patron and client positions and kin rank shape one's motivation in dressing up and in choosing particular ways to fashion the body. One's "rank" in the hierarchy of labor migrations, one's religious orientation, and one's position vis-à-vis the family in particular are "spoken" by clothing performances.

This chapter also indicates that urbanization and transnationalism raise the stakes in clothing competitions. The returned emigrant must be able to redistribute his/her

wealth adequately or become the target of theft when returning to Dakar. The venant is among the few who can afford to “grow up.” Many Boy Town youth struggle in Dakar to amass enough wealth to purchase the obligatory gift of clothing for a new bride.

Transnationalism and developing patterns of urbanism also intensify kin competitions. Youth can one-up their senior siblings and elders through migration and informal work. Murid traders without francophone education use patron-client relationships to one-up others of different religious orientation and cultural values.

These examples suggest that, as in Western consumer societies, class is often a dominant structure in the play of consumption. This chapter illustrates that indeed class matters; however, patron-client and kinship relationships complement class in the dynamics of clothing consumption in Dakar. Patron-client dynamics visibly shape clothing consumption in the realm of politics, and are especially conspicuous in the realm of religion (spheres that at times, intersect with one another). Kin relationships add another dimension to competitive clothing consumption. Although Dakar is a complex, heterogeneous, modern city, inter- and intra-family competitions mark the social landscape and are expressed through clothing.

Acknowledging patron-client and kin dynamics in Dakar is significant to the study of consumption in general. As a case study, Dakar exemplifies how consumption functions cross-culturally. Patron-clientage and kin relations are social hierarchies often assumed to represent Third World societies. They are viewed as institutions that block Third World societies from entering modernity. In the case of Dakar, however, patron-clientage and kin dynamics are not systems of social inequalities left over from the past;

nor are they the source of underdevelopment. Rather, they undergird contemporary consumer dynamics that keep the city in motion and on the cutting edge of fashion.

Some may think that class is no longer of consequence to consumption in the postmodern era. In fact, although a system in flux, class continues to be important, especially as patron-client relationships and age hierarchies depend on wealth. The example of Dakar illustrates that clothing consumption dynamics must be looked at within a context of intersecting systems of inequality, including patron-clientage, kinship, and class. These are the systems that create and recreate Dakar as a modern and global consumer society, parallel in many respects to examples in the West. These additional systems of hierarchy serve to broaden the definition of cosmopolitan consumer societies in general.

CHAPTER THREE

OVERVIEW AND STRATEGY OF RESEARCH

This chapter describes the methods used to collect data. Typically, research is imagined a process of discovering and uncovering existing truths. It is a process with several distinct stages: posing hypotheses, collecting data, and analyzing data in relationship to initial hypotheses. Because each phase is considered to be discrete, research is often presented as a reflection of the chronological order in which knowledge was discovered. The goals and the approach to a study are generally presented at the beginning of the report. The presentation of methodologies “frames” the fieldwork outcomes for the reader.

In presenting methods in the middle of the narrative, this study takes an untraditional approach. Some of the methods deployed in this project do more than frame knowledge. They are dynamics of producing and consuming cultural knowledge. Therefore, they may be discussed within the narrative and not be reserved for just the beginning.

This chapter discusses the traditional and non-traditional research methods used in this study. It highlights how research participants appropriate the research process for their own objectives. In this case, the participants challenged the researcher’s control over the study, and their involvement shaped the cultural knowledge generated by the research process. The discussion of “non-traditional” collaborative strategies, an approach where researchers intentionally invite participants to share control over the process, highlights how research “subjects” as much as ethnographers give authority to cultural representations, although negotiations for this authority are ongoing during the course of the study. In this light, collaborative anthropological research has a creative dimension. It is an ongoing process of making new meaning, rather than one of uncovering static existing truths. The dynamic role of research in creating cultural productions highlights

the human agency involved in producing and consuming the cultural meanings of ethnographic texts. This same dynamic is at work in the production and consumption of clothing commodities and their cultural meanings.

I. Strategy of Research: Phase One

My research was originally divided into three phases. In the first phase I conducted participant observation, archival research and key informant interviews. I began by mapping the relevant clothing markets in Dakar. My objective was not to do an in-depth study of clothing markets in the way that Gracia Clark (1994) and others have done. Rather, I sought to understand the general directions of commodity flows and the general patterns of distribution of products that youth consider to be important. I focused on particular brands of footwear, jeans, tee-shirts, and textiles used in making “traditional” African robes. I followed a “biography of things” perspective and sought a basic understanding of how traders operate at various levels, and how media images and advertising intersect with the presence of particular products in the market.

Based on my previous visits to Dakar and my observations of the Hip Hop industry, I knew blue jeans, specifically Levis 501s, are a coveted item among youth. Another reason to study blue jeans in Dakar is that I guessed they were a fixture in youth wardrobes, just as they are for many youth around the world (Fiske 1989). Prior to leaving for Dakar, I began archival research in trade magazines posted on the web, at the Fashion Institute of Technology and the Science and Business Library of the New York Public Library. “The field” turned out to be remarkably close!

In Dakar, I spent several months interviewing traders in a variety of clothing markets. I studied how they organize their work, obtain their merchandise, and advertise. A dimension of my initial market fieldwork related to my personal connections with Dakarois. In particular, my research was both facilitated and compromised by the fact that my spouse, a native of Dakar, is a clothing importer to Senegal. During my

fieldwork, he shuttled back and forth from New York. During his absence, my gathering information about the clothing markets often facilitated communication between my spouse and his business liaisons. This experience put me in an unusual position vis-à-vis some of my informants, and in some instances, participation outweighed observation. At times following up with business transactions slowed down my ability to conduct research. At the same time, it taught me about traders' work strategies. That said, assisting my husband while conducting fieldwork afforded me an invaluable first-hand view of the operations of clothing markets.

Phase II: Elaborating Knowledge of Youth Fashion

During the market phase of my research, I mapped a picture of current youth fashion. I noted what was in and out of style, what items comprised popular styles, and the context in which youth wore them. Youth fashion is quite complex and it required a great deal of participant observation to understand the typology and the logic behind it. I quickly shifted into the second phase of the research plan to elaborate my knowledge of fashion. The second phase of research focused on a close examination of youth meanings and practices associated with global clothing commodities. This piece of fieldwork I conducted among youth in two neighborhoods. One was a well-planned sector of a larger neighborhood called S.I.C.A.P. Liberté VI; the other was Notaire, Guediawaye, a semi-planned neighborhood located in the suburbs. The households in Notaire are typically poorer than those of Liberté VI, and Notaire has fewer municipal resources than Liberté VI (a detailed description of these neighborhoods appears in Chapter Four).

In each neighborhood, I collected baseline data on perceptions of clothing consumption and certain other aspects of popular culture. To do this, I surveyed individuals in seventy randomly selected households (Appendix I). Because I worked closely with young people, throughout my fieldwork I was careful to obtain parental and guardian consent before interviewing participants, even when it was not legally required.

Culturally, all individuals of a lesser age than heads of households are considered “minors,” and thus elders have a say over their participation and self-expression. I found that regardless of a participant’s age, elders generally inquired about my intentions and exercised their right to consent. In several cases, the elders did not give their consent, and several youth whom I had approached to participate in the study were not included.

I had considered it important to compare consumption practices among populations of differing levels of wealth and access to opportunity, in the event that these should be strong factors in clothing perceptions and consumption practices. I chose to focus my research in a part of Liberté VI and Notaire through a combination of scientific method and chance. My interest in differing levels of wealth and access to opportunity suggested a sample of one planned neighborhood close to the center of the city, and a suburban neighborhood, by definition less planned, where families move as they are pushed out from the center of town, or upon migrating from peri-urban or rural areas in the interior.

Several chance elements also shaped my eventual selection. Not only did Liberté VI and Notaire meet my criteria, I also found local residents in each who were willing to help me with my research. For both I was able to find maps. The availability of a map, in fact, was a large factor in shaping the selection of Notaire, other neighborhoods in the Guediawaye, also suitable to the study, were without maps. A chance encounter with an individual who runs errands for the housing authorities helped to produce a map of Notaire.

In both neighborhoods, I received the approval to conduct research from the administrative leaders of the communities. Nonetheless, without assistants who are familiar with the neighborhood, it would not have been possible to conduct random household surveys. Understandably, Dakarais mistrust strangers knocking on their doors with questionnaires in hand. In order to gain entry into the communities, I elected to

conduct my research with the help of youth assistants who were introduced to me through relatives and friends of relatives of my spouse.

In Liberté VI I had the good fortune of working with a young man who is a long-term neighborhood resident. At the time he was unemployed and eager to earn money as a research assistant. Without a formal job to report to, his schedule was flexible, which enabled us to accomplish the arduous fieldwork in a relatively short period of time. Because the young man was introduced to me through a relative of mine, it was guaranteed that he would be a reliable partner. In fact, the relative mediated our relationship throughout the research process. With me, he periodically followed up on his friend's performance. With his friend, he checked to see that he received satisfactory compensation for his work.

In Liberté VI, my assistant was extremely helpful. He knew the neighborhood and residents well. He comprehended the concept of random surveying, and he was a competent map-reader. His extensive knowledge of the neighborhood, however, sometimes compromised the objective nature of random surveying. On occasion he would steer us away from households which I expected to visit, explaining that there were no youth in those households to interview. In some instances his explanations were vague and it occurred to me that he did not know the residents nor was he compelled to meet them. I noted that, rather than arbitrarily omitting some households, my assistant had knowledge of or a connection to the residents in nearly every household we visited. At one point, I was able to verify that we had indeed skipped over a few potential participants. But I was never able to verify my assistant's motive for redirecting us. Nor was I able to strike out on my own to strengthen the objectivity of the survey results. In applying his own definition of "random" to the surveying process, my assistant's social relationships became a strong shaping factor in the survey. Because of my dependency on him, in addition to an obligation to take advantage of resources that were offered to me through personal connections (see Chapter Two for an understanding of kin obligations

and related conflicts), I was forced to negotiate rather than to abandon the situation. As a result, the objective dimension of random surveying was greatly influenced by my and my assistant's social relationships.

In Noutaire, I conducted household surveys with an entourage of university students who were also introduced to me through personal connections. Working with a group of four young men and one woman introduced a different set of dynamics into the research process. Three of the four young men are from the interior of Senegal and live in Noutaire with urban relatives while they attend the university. Two others grew up in Dakar. Throughout the process I questioned whether it would have been better to limit the number of assistants I worked with to one or two individuals. It would have been difficult to do so, however. Since I was initially introduced to the group and they adopted me as a member, it would have been impolite to select one or two to work with. As a result, at times the size of our group presented a problem in the interviewing process. Six of us would descend upon one quiet teenager, making the experience uncomfortable for the participant. At other times the group's size turned into an advantage. On several occasions, the household visits evolved into spontaneous mini-focus groups when pairs of siblings would meet up with us and the research assistants would spark discussion by sharing many of their own ideas during the interview.

Owing to occasional school strikes, the assistants were often available as a group, and we were able to cover a lot of terrain. Once school was in session the students' schedules varied, and it was not always possible to keep appointments. But with so many assistants involved, even when research dates were broken, I was always able to find one or two individuals to accompany me in fieldwork. These opportunities allowed the work to progress, and they also allowed me to get to know each of the students individually.

During the course of fieldwork, the students were undergoing an introduction to scientific methods in their university studies. As a result of their knowledge, they approached our work with a great deal of seriousness. In some cases, quite humorously,

their sense of mission in fieldwork reminded me of colonial anthropologists. Some days, the group was relentless in the quest to find subjects. We marched from house to house under the hot sun, and did not hesitate to visit unknown households. On several occasions, we found ourselves in households where residents did not speak French, Wolof, Hal-Pulaar, or Bambara (the languages collectively spoken by the research assistants). Unfortunately, we were not able to effectively communicate in these instances. It is my impression that in an effort to uphold the principles of random surveying and objectivity, the assistants might have attempted to subject their peers to the interview if I had not intervened. The students had high expectations of the participants' responses. They expected their peers to always willingly submit to their requests, and they were often openly disappointed with timid peers who displayed limited French skills. While walking to the next household after an unsuccessful interview, the group would ridicule reluctant youth, complaining that Senegal will never advance with closed-minded and reticent youth in the ranks. I sometimes found the post-interview "gossip" more interesting and revealing than the actual interview itself. While working with a group of assistants may have limited the research process to some extent, informal conversations with the research entourage provided me with an invaluable understanding of neighborhood hierarchies and Ndiaye youth in general.

Interviews, Photo-Questionnaire and Transect Walks

To further elaborate my knowledge of youth fashion, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews on personal clothing histories with twelve volunteer youth in each neighborhood. I collected data on perceptions of clothing styles and identity in each neighborhood, using a photo-questionnaire which I administered to sixty volunteers. I constructed this instrument with input from young people and used photographs that C.E.M. students produced (Appendix 2). I collected more information about knowledge of branded products from thirteen youth in these groups using an inventory data

collection method. Finally, to contextualize my understanding of young people's lives in Liberté VI and Notaire, I conducted three group transect walks in each neighborhood. These transect walks involved touring the neighborhood in pairs and threes. I recorded notes while youth talked about and photographed the places in the neighborhood that were important to them. After the tour and when photographs were developed, participants were asked to discuss their photographs in greater detail.

In all of these exercises, "traditional" researcher-participant dynamics were in operation. I proposed questions and youth participants obliged me with answers that reflected varying degrees of knowledge, interest and self-expression. The dynamics of transect walks were different. In some cases, youth stuck to the program and took telling photographs of such sites such as the tailor's shop, and the coal and foodstuff vendors' stalls in the market. The participants reported that these were places that they frequently visited, and during our visit to the stalls we had a chance to learn more about the neighborhood by talking with the vendors. In some cases, the participants got off task and took pictures of each other while striking funny poses. This version of the transect walk also reveals much about young people, but without intervention, it limited the experience and value of this particular research method.

Supplementary Activities

During the time of my visit, American cultural themes dominated Dakar. Hip Hop clothing was popular. Clothing stores bore the name "Slam Dunk" and "Broadway." Taxi drivers even painted American flags on the outer part of their side mirrors. Because the American theme was so pervasive, I became interested in viewing clothing consumption from an alternative perspective. This led me to become involved in the "Hindou" dance movement. Bombay films have been popular in Dakar for several decades and have inspired many Senegalese fashion statements over the years. During the time of my research, Indian films were featured on national television twice a week and there were a

number of organized dance troupes in the suburbs of Dakar. I began visiting the members, participating in the soirees, and paying close attention to the content of the films aired on television. On a trip back to New York, I also supplied youth vendors with music cassettes and magazines which I purchased in Little India. Becoming involved in the Hindou movement in an Islamic-dominant African nation allowed me to appreciate that diverse Eastern cultural forces shape Dakar in addition to diverse Western cultural forces.

Through my participation in the Hindou dance movement, I meet several educators who were dedicated to youth development. Through these connections, I insinuated myself into a state-funded school for former school leavers called *Centre de Sauvegarde de Cambérène* (CSC). With the help of several teachers at the school and scholars at the university, I worked with a team of interested youth who created their own “youth language” dictionary. As this project evolved, I shared pieces of it with youth in Liberté VI and Notaire, as well as with others in parts of Parcelles Assainies (Units 8, 11 and 13). I reported their commentary and suggestions back to the youth at CSC, who made final decisions about what would and would not be included in the dictionary. My involvement in this project and the Hindou movement supplemented my understanding of diverse youth views, practices, ways of communicating, and of young people’s positions of power within the city. My commentary on these experiences is brief because these activities were supplementary projects which could have turned into separate field studies.

Phase III: Collaborative Research and Youth Fashion Magazines

A large part of my research took place in experimental focus groups organized by C.E.M. students. I was warmly received in Notaire and was cordially received by teachers and staff at Liberté VI. As I lived very close to the Liberté VI school, my sometimes lukewarm relations with teachers did not impede my relationships with

students. Particularly during school strikes and long holidays, of which there are many in Dakar, the students, curious about “Tubabs,” and evidently in need of activities to keep them busy, frequently visited me at my residence. When classes were cancelled we conducted our work from my house.

In Noutaire, I had a very different relationship with the focus group. The students, teachers, and families in the neighborhood quickly befriended me and incorporated me into their various celebrations. In part, I was often invited because many Senegalese are extremely hospitable and are comfortable inviting strangers to their homes. The principal of the school had toured middle and high schools in the U.S. and felt we shared a connection as educators. He therefore welcomed me to conduct research in his school. In part, I was often invited to share with Noutaire students and families because I could provide a resource. For example, the student committee organized a weekend of school-based events for students including *sabar* (“traditional” women’s) dancing, Rap podium and a beauty contest. Since I had a video camera, I was asked to collaborate by filming the events. I was glad to do it. Once back in New York, I also received emails from other students asking that I help them obtain visas for the U.S.

There were 15 youth in each of the two, school-based focus groups. The work of the focus groups was ongoing; there were sessions which involved discussions, drawing, writing and youth-produced photography related to current clothing styles. Through these sessions each group defined typologies of current clothing styles, and they authored a youth fashion magazine using their own photography, writings and drawings. These activities illuminated differences in perception and practice among the young men and women within each neighborhood.

Working on youth fashion magazines is a non-traditional, collaborative approach to research. It is structured so that researchers and participants share decisions and power over the research process. At one level, collaboration intends to address the “colonizing” dynamics that accompany research. Researchers shift from a position of extracting

information from informants, to giving space to participants to determine what is and is not important for the researcher to know and to ask.

At another level, liberating the “colonizing” dynamics of research relationships diminishes the power and control of the researcher. This can threaten the main objective of the research if it is not shared by participants. In fact, in my work with Notaire youth, the research participants took the research program in another direction from that of my objectives. Work on the fashion magazines evolved into peer counseling sessions when a core group of female students scheduled extra meetings and writing assignments that went beyond the scope of our project. One assignment entailed writing “Dear Ann” letters. Each participant came to the group with a Dear Ann letters which was read aloud. Members of the group took turns playing the role of Ann. After Ann gave her advice, the group critiqued it. This turned out to be an impressive session where I learned about many burdensome dilemmas that challenge young women. The youths’ letters explained problems such as mistreatment in the home from mother’s co-wife, the difficulties of migrating to the city, feelings of abandonment when parents live abroad, and coping with hurtful gossip. Each letter revealed a problem more complicated than the one before. I was impressed by the young women’s abilities to analyze these problems from various angles, to listen to each other, and to offer mature advice in the absence of adults.

At first, the shift from writing essays about fashion to personal advice letters made me fearful for my project. What if the participants lose interest in producing a youth fashion magazine? How will this affect my credibility as a foreign researcher? Will the school director and collaborating teachers understand the change in program? Will they label me as another foreign researcher who collects information without “giving back” to the community? At the same time, the shift to Dear Ann letters provided invaluable insights into the experiences and dilemmas of young women, and the dynamics of young women working together in a group. It spoke to youths’ desire to

participate in creative and constructive activities. It also suggested that young people need attention and guidance, and are eager for adult input.

My participation in the Dear Ann letter-writing group posed an additional dilemma for me. Not only was directing the research process moving out of my control, my participation in the group partly made me feel uncomfortable. As the sole adult in the group, the young women often turned to me for my advice about their problems. Advice-giving has a particular cultural context in Senegal. Adults are expected to give direct advice to youth, and they give it freely. A good deal of popular music in Senegal is also delivered in the form of explicit practical advice about how one should conduct one's life.¹ In my own upbringing adults gave advice, but as a philosophy of independence training they avoided giving direct advice, opting to guide youth from a distance in their discovery of the "right" choices on their own.

Given my own cultural background, I felt uncomfortable asserting my authority by giving advice. I also felt that my advice would reflect my cultural values, and was likely to be culturally inappropriate. Participating in the group made me feel uneasy and like an inadequate adult. The young women were writing about complex emotional issues that, in my understanding of their conversations, affected their self esteem and sense of self. I felt it was my responsibility not to ignore their requests for advice, yet I did not want to lead them astray. I sought the help of their teachers whom I thought would be better equipped than myself to address the young writers. I informed several teachers of the group's complex questions and their need for culturally appropriate adult input. The teachers I approached reported that they had no spare time to meet with the group. One who fully comprehended the students' need for guidance downplayed the significance of

¹ For example, Youssou N'Dour, the most popular *mbalax* performer, uses moralistic language to advise his listeners on the attitude that they should take towards their cultural heritage, towards adults, towards maintaining the integrity of the neighborhood, among many other topics. An emerging star, Vivane, advises young women on how to behave in the company of men.

their letter writing. In my view, she made small of the group's work in order to relieve herself of responsibility towards the students. She shrugged her shoulders as if to say that the youths' problems were not her problems.

While the students need for advice was not her or other teachers' "problems," this way of educators distancing themselves from the youth opened my eyes to some of the forces that leave youth to feel abandoned and overlooked in Dakar. Collaborative research afforded me a view of these dynamics between adults and youth, while it also nearly cost me the opportunity to meet my goals of assisting students in constructing a youth fashion magazine. It also prompted me to consider the consequences of youth consuming the researcher's cultural values during the course of the research process.

Another outcome I observed from collaborative research was how it created new freedoms for youth while requiring them to negotiate the limits of their autonomy more often. In terms of new freedoms, the project gave youth a special activity to carry out, special resources to use in the process (youth worked with disposable cameras and video cameras, art supplies). In the case of Liberté VI where the school was not far from my apartment, the students used my apartment as an excuse to get out of their houses, and as a place to go and explore. *As I mentioned earlier, during strikes and vacations the students came to my apartment wanting to review the video recordings of the focus groups.* One particular tape put everyone in stitches because, as one woman, discussing popular styles, plays with a scarf, it moves from her neck, it makes its way to her neighbor's hands and head. By the end of the conversation the scarf has casually traveled through half of the group. In watching the tape, the movement of the scarf is as captivating as the students' commentary.

In terms of new constraints, I observed that youth had to constantly negotiate with jealous peers, neighbors and relatives who wanted to make use of their cameras and who demanded that the participants supply them with copies of the photographs and negatives. On one occasion, youth determined that traditional clothing worn by youth made

important fashion statements. They were then given disposable cameras and set out to photograph peers in the neighborhood wearing traditional clothing. An overwhelming number of youth wound up taking pictures of their mothers and aunts in the neighborhood. When asked why they did not take pictures of youth they simply shrugged their shoulders and stared with blank faces. Since youth frequently wear traditional clothing it is not the case that the photographers were unable to find peers in traditional clothing. More likely, their mothers were on hand and desired their pictures to be taken. If only one student had submitted film of her mother, I might not have given this "error" much consideration. However, several took photos of their parents and were anxious to get copies of the photos so that they could give them to their mothers. This surprising outcome highlights how youth were forced to negotiate their special role and access to resources with others throughout the project. It also illustrates the important role and power of mother's in youths' lives.

On another occasion, collaborative research opened my eyes to how youth behavior is shaped by the expectations of adults and teachers. I was able to persuade several teachers to collaborate as editors of the fashion magazine. In our work together, we had many discussions over the politics of representing youth's ideas in conventional forms without altering the authenticity of their expressions. Nonetheless, some of the editors desired to rewrite the student's essays because they considered their expressions to reflect sub-standard French. In the literature on the philosophy of education, writing is viewed as a source of social empowerment (Freire 1972). Given that some youth used their essays as an opportunity to critique the influences of Western culture on clothing and style, it is evident that at least some youth view writing as their opportunity to shape public opinion. Although it was not clear to me how many Dakarais youth view their work on the fashion magazines as self-empowering, it is certain that their written representations were partially censored and reframed by the pens and ideas of adult editors. To be fair, in some cases editing helped sharpen youth cultural representations.

But overall, adult editors played a large role in shaping their cultural representations and limiting youth voices.

Collaborative research enriched my understanding of life in Dakar, and permitted me to participate in young people's lives in new ways. During the process I discovered that for some of the Liberté VI youth "collaborative" research did not fully re-write the *classic notion that foreign ethnographers exploit their informants*. Despite the fact that the participants were having fun with cameras and were engaged with the projects, several participated with uncertainty. In particular, several did not believe that at the end of the study they would get to keep the photographs they took. Little by little, I discovered several youth pocketed the photographs, thereby diminishing the group's resources for producing the magazine. This experience indicates that there are competing understandings of "collaboration." Youth anxieties over the possibilities of an unequal exchange prompted them to consume resources before they could be consumed by the researcher. This outcome suggests that the concept "collaboration" is flexible. An uncritical view of the concept masks that this non-traditional format is a process of ongoing, sometimes difficult, negotiations between researchers and informants. As I observed it in this case, the terms of negotiations are not always set by the researcher, although it is she or he who has introduced the project to the community.

Reflections on Research Strategies and Processes

Knowledge of youth clothing consumption is brought forth in this study through a number of "traditional" and "non-traditional" research methods. It is generally assumed with traditional methods that researchers maintain control over their research instruments and the processes by which they are deployed. However, examples discussed in this chapter illustrate that fieldwork does not always develop in this manner. My personal relationships with Senegalese presented advantages and disadvantages in conducting fieldwork. As a result of my ties, I was often obliged to negotiate complex relationships

with traders and research assistants instead of abandoning these relationships and adopting less complicated ones. At times this circumstance compromised the “purity” of objective research. At the same time, it opened my eyes to the social dynamics of life in Dakar, and it provided me with an in-depth view of markets and the lives of Dakar youth.

Non-traditional or collaborative research methods encourage participants to exercise agency in the research process. Participants shape the direction of research. They identify and ask the questions, and they take charge of documenting their own community’s clothing consumption. In short, the participants assume as much authority in representing themselves as anthropologists assume in representing the Other. Researcher and participants may not initially share the same goal as they enter the process. For example, Liberté VI youths’ fear of exploitation and pocketing of photos suggests that they did not immediately share the goal of producing a fashion magazine. However, the research process is negotiated in an ongoing manner in collaborative work. Eventually, the participants collaborated with the initial objective

Collaboration changes the “traditional” dynamics of anthropological research. In the eyes of early anthropologists such as E. E. Evans-Pritchard (see Biedelman 1971), research is viewed as a question of “translating” knowledge held by the Other. This paradigm assumes a distance between the subjects, the cultural phenomena that they produce, and the anthropologist who takes up the task of translating foreign cultural phenomena to others. Postmodernists question the reality of this distance. Is there a real boundary between “being there” --the process of learning in the field--and “being here,” at “home,” the process of post-fieldwork reflection using theoretical frameworks (see Clifford 1988; Gudeman and Rivera 1995).

Examples from fieldwork discussed in this chapter indicate that the spaces of “being there” and “being here” in anthropological fieldwork are indeed merged by collaborative research. Research participants are learning about themselves, translating, and representing their self-knowledge in fashion magazines all within a unified space

called “the field.” In this light, the concept of research has shifted from the chronological procedure of uncovering meaning to a spontaneous and haphazard process of creating cultural meaning.

In a study of suburban middle class American youth, Sherry Ortner (1999) argues that ethnographic inquiry and “public culture” or “media” (in its diverse forms of representing actual people; see p. 55) are intertwined. Each enterprise claims to reveal “the truth” about culture while each asserts that they occupy a distinct social space and authority. In reality, anthropologists and journalists (authors, filmmakers and others) co-opt knowledge produced by each other in order to fashion “unique” and distinct cultural representations of youth. Ortner is concerned with the “competition” between cultural industries that ensues as a result of this relationship. In this machination of cultural representations, she assumes that “ethnographic inquiry” is generated by anthropologists alone. This chapter is not primarily concerned with the competition between journalists and ethnographers. Rather, it illustrates that under the paradigm of collaboration, anthropological research is an enterprise constructed by a mix of individuals who are simultaneously subjects and objects. As a result, ethnographic inquiry may be more intricately intertwined with public culture than Ortner assumes. As illustrated by this project, ethnographic inquiry and the production of youth fashion magazines offers youth researchers and participants a space to construct themselves using media to do it. Thus, this is a study that deconstructs the cultural meanings of Dakar youth clothing consumption while Dakar youths are at work constructing these meanings and self-representations.

The next chapter introduces two groups of youth who were the primary constituents of this project. It illustrates in greater detail how youth construct themselves as clothing consumers through a brief tour of youth wardrobes.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEFINING DAKAR YOUTH AND YOUTH WARDROBES

Chapters One and Two describe Dakar as a distinct contemporary consumer society, and Chapter Three highlights the agency of youth in producing cultural representations of themselves as clothing consumers. This chapter continues to describe another facet of clothing consumption in Dakar. As discussed in Chapter One, Dakar is an expanding city rapidly filling with young people. Youth are the majority population of the city, and they are targeted by transnational corporations as the up and coming consumers. What are youth consumers' patterns of consumption? What do their patterns of clothing consumption tell us about this population? What do they tell us about consumerism in an African city?

Consumption acquired a niche in cultural and media studies through numerous examinations of "youth culture." Youth have been chosen for these studies because they are assumed to be a source of special creativity. They possess an ability to innovate cultural practices, styles and perspectives as they assimilate to a larger society (Hebdige 1979; Jefferson and Hall 1976; McRobbie 1991; Willis 1977; 1990). This approach to viewing young people illuminates deeper questions regarding the reproduction of class structures in class-based societies. The studies in question often discuss youth cultural production as a response to a monolithic "public culture."¹ In some cases, youth cultural groups directly reproduce public culture through consumption. In other cases, youth cultural groups resist mainstream public culture; critical views of mainstream ideologies are viewed as "subcultural" youth expressions (Jefferson and Hall 1976; Hebdige 1979; Willis 1977; 1990).

¹ Here, public culture refers to the broad range of cultural products, practices and images that are consumed by a "public" and that are created by a range of cultural "industries" including the media, journalism, anthropology, and the symbolic actions of everyday, ordinary consumers (see Ortner 1999: 55 for similar definition).

In the case of Dakar, a variety of youth groups consume clothing for different reasons. The diversity of clothing consumption practices suggests the presence of diverse public cultures, rather than a single public cultural realm with satellite sub-public cultures emerging in the peripheries. A comparison of consumption patterns between youth of two neighborhoods suggests that at least two distinct realms of public culture are in operation in Dakar. These spheres of particular cultural practices and representations are not necessarily the results of youth cultural assimilation or resistance. Instead, they appear as multiple public cultures co-existing within their own spaces. Rural migration and transurban migration play a role in shaping each sphere. The emergence of multiple public cultures is not so much an outcome of globalization, as an element of the relationships between people and things that anthropologists have brought to the fore through a focus on globalization processes.

Defining Dakar Youth

In this project I define youth as individuals who are old enough to attend Collège Élémentaire Moyen (C.E.M.) (the next level of formal education after six years of primary school) and who are not yet married, given that marriage marks the transition from youth to adulthood in Senegal. Because of economic decline, today marriage is often delayed and the category of youth includes individuals in their early thirties. Because housing is expensive, in many cases marriage does not involve the establishment of an independent household. Traditionally, parenthood accompanied marriage. Increasingly, youth are becoming parents prior to marriage.

Dakar youth—unmarried young people under the age of 30—are the majority population in the city. Approximately a quarter of Dakar's population faces unemployment (Direction de la Prévision de la Statistique 1999). Under these conditions, many young people seek work in the artisan craft sector (e.g. tailors, cloth dyers, blacksmiths, potters,

etc.). Others make a living in other parts of the informal sector peddling clothing in the markets and in public spaces. As well, many are unemployed.

Clothing and Media Consumption Survey: Two Neighborhoods

In order to gather a detailed view of the relationships that youth have with clothing commodities, I figuratively (and on occasion, literally) peeked into wardrobes by conducting random household surveys on clothing and media consumption. I collected a hundred and thirty-eight household surveys and conducted participant observation regarding the consumption patterns of the young men and women of two neighborhoods, Liberté VI and Notaire. The survey posed questions regarding the kinds of clothing items (jeans, tee-shirts, slacks, skirts, mbubbs, kaftans, ndockets, etc.) and quantities youth consume; brand name preferences; and sources and methods of procurement. Additional questions covered popular culture such as music, television programs and advertisement preferences. Having defined youth as unmarried individuals old enough to attend C E M., my samples included a few persons in their early thirties. I also included an interview with a divorced woman who was still a teenager in age. This young woman had been given away in marriage, but because of her young age, she was unable to adjust to her new role as a wife and she had been returned to her parents. Although this young woman fell outside the criteria of my study, I made an exception as she was still a teenager and eager to participate. In my experience in the field, the time of day affected whom I was able to interview within any given household. In the mornings, for example, young women in Notaire run errands in the markets and are not home. In some cases, adults had a keen understanding of my interest and approved. In some instances, my interest in young people and not in adults confounded adults.

Liberté VI

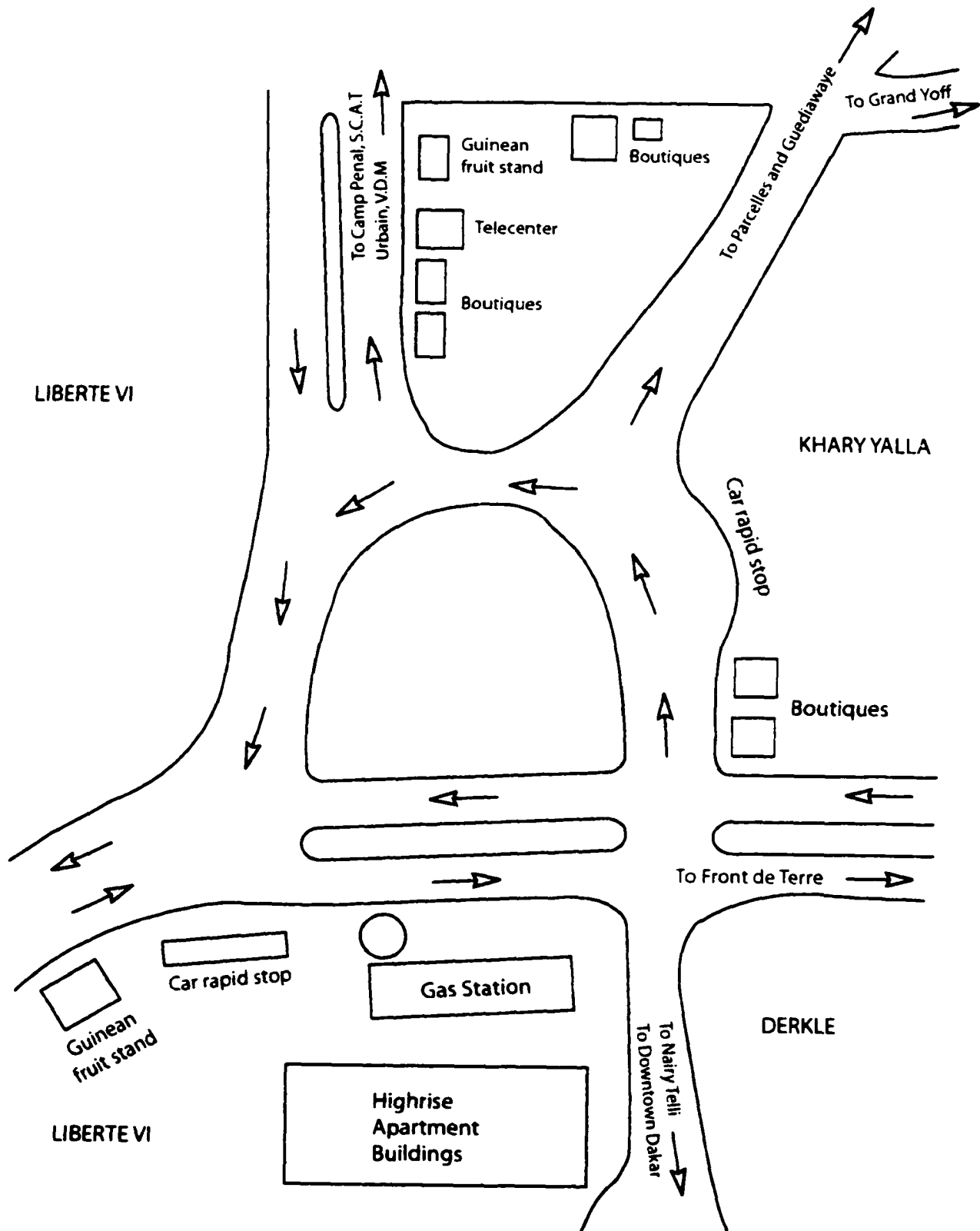
Liberté VI is part of the Société Immobilière Cap Vert (S.I.CAP.), a government housing institution created in 1951, even though the neighborhood itself was not constructed until the mid-1970s. Approximately eleven kilometers from the port, it is close to a roundabout that leads through Grand Yoff, a dense neighborhood with a major bus stop and market dividing the edge of the planned city from the suburbs.

In their entirety, Liberté VI's 1,500 lots of varying size occupy about a square kilometer. I selected the section having a concentration of the largest, and presumably most wealthy homes. Nearby is a central open space, a large mosque, a primary school, and the Collège Élémentaire Moyen David Diop. At the time of my study, squatters from Guinea occupied an open field nearby bordered by bushes; these residents were not part of the sample. The majority of roughly 500 homes in this section of the neighborhood are single household homes; in other parts of Liberté VI one finds a few two-story buildings where two or more households live.

Liberté VI can be accessed by foot along a number of formal roads and by paths that people who know the short cuts have charted for themselves. The residences surround the central open space--a large, sandy soccer field edged by broadleaf trees that provide some shade. A paved road circumscribes the field. One part of it snakes out toward the traffic circle that connects Liberté VI with Grand Yoff; another winds its way to another open space, about twice as large as the one I have described. Passing through the neighborhood is quite confusing, for the roads wind around blocks of houses; someone not intimately familiar with the terrain will wonder where the roads are taking them.

A good portion of Liberté VI and the roads leading into it are paved: around the open space, in front of the schools, by the mosque and into some sectors of the community. Where they are not, taxis and cars must plough through dirt and sand to reach particular homes, or pursue various shortcuts. A small portion of the neighborhood was not planned to be paved; here quaint and narrow stone walkways connect the houses. Altogether, very

ROUND-ABOUT TO LIBERTÉ VI-KHARY YALLA-GRAND YOFF



little traffic passes through the Liberté VI. This is generally a neighborhood where children play ball in the streets, safe from the competition of cars.

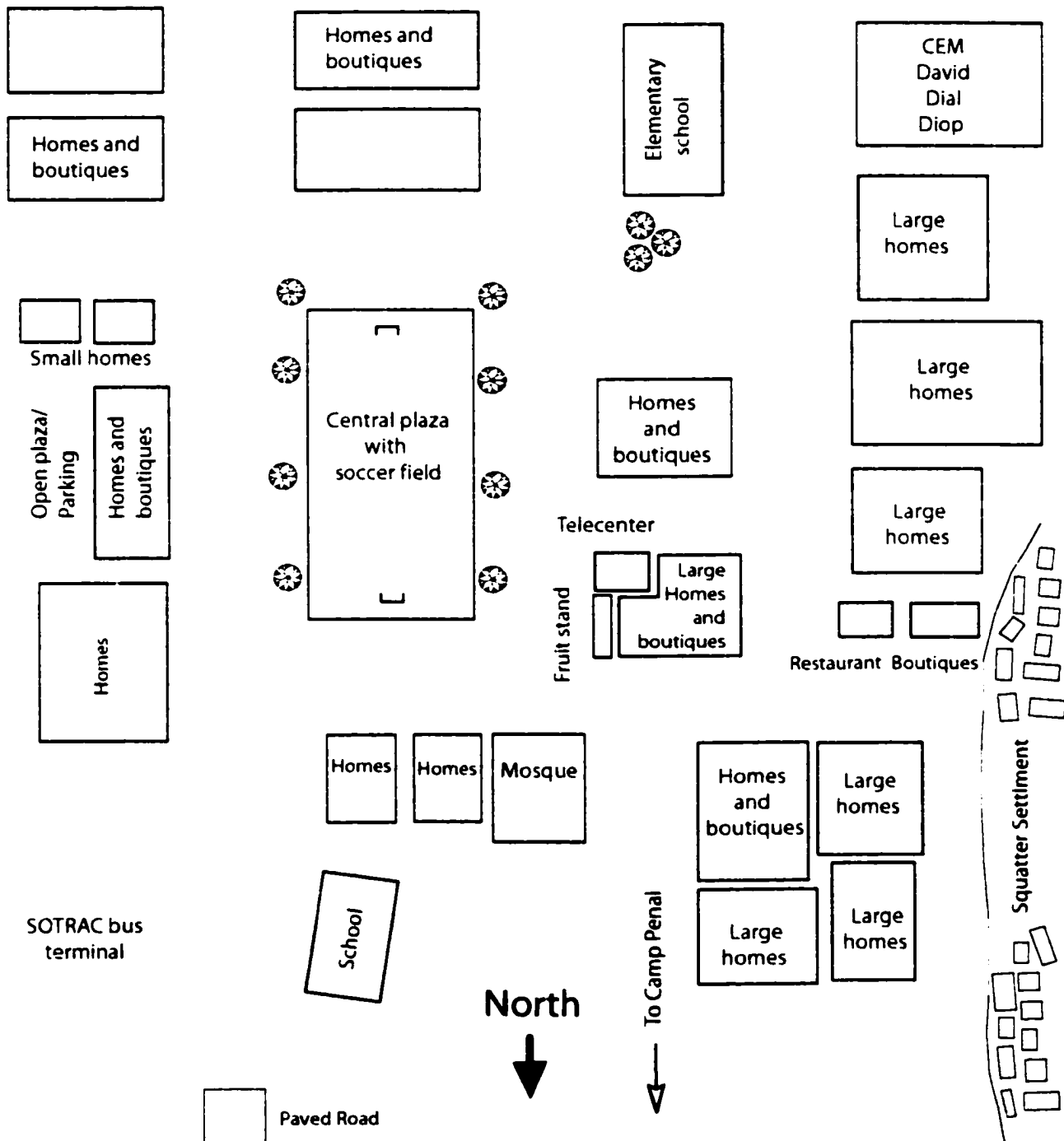
The houses where I concentrated my research are for the most part enclosed by walls, many with deep red and violet bougainvillea spilling over the top. The rich colors of the small flowers contrast with the white and cream colors that families generally paint their walls. From the street, one can see that the homes have spacious courtyards adorned with green shrubbery and plants. In a number of homes I visited, potted plants filled the inner walkways. In some cases, I saw outdoor decorations such as white plaster figurines and attractively fashioned pots. Often the outdoor spaces were tiled, in some cases with a mosaic pattern made from broken tile shards and gray grout.

Institutions within the neighborhood include a mosque with a sky-blue dome, enclosed by a cement wall and decorated with wrought iron. An aging male beggar is generally posted outside the entrance; he requests alms depending on how many times one passes by him in a day. The walls around one of the two primary schools have cartoon figures painted on their white surfaces. There is a public bus terminal. Following a very limited schedule, long blue buses run a circuit from the neighborhood to the center of Dakar and back, a thirty minute trip. This is the only form of public transportation available. Other key institutions in the neighborhood are several telephone centers--some with photocopy machines that are out of service more often than not, a small freestanding metal kiosk painted blue where cigarettes, gum and bread are sold, a corner fruit stand manned by a Guinean vendor, and a few corner boutiques operated by Mauritanian men who tend to wear light blue robes thrown over Western clothing. On an empty lot alongside the football field stands an enormous shade tree. Young people sit on a propped up plank underneath it, or lean against the trunk to watch passersby.

In addition to walls, plants, and private courtyards, a typical home in Liberté VI has a well-decorated living room complete with matching upholstered sofa sets, attractive coffee tables, carpets or Italian ceramic tiled floors, ceiling-high draperies, and a dining

A SECTION OF LIBERTÉ VI

← To downtown Dakar and Liberte



room table set which is generally not used for eating, but instead placed in a corner of the room. Only once in my entire fieldstay did I eat at a dining room table, and only on occasion have I seen such tables set for a meal in middle class homes. Most families, even when they have a dining room set, prefer to eat as a group from bowls on the floor.

In the Liberté VI homes I observed, many had large wall units that house a television of respectable size and, in some cases, stereo equipment. These pieces of furniture are often decorated with ceramic knickknacks, plastic flowers, and other small items. On a few rare occasions I observed books on the shelves. Occasionally these homes displayed pieces of African art such as wooden masks, sculptures, commercial paintings, or posters of African women, perhaps featured with breastfeeding children.

Only in a few houses did I have the opportunity to visit other areas of the house. Of the kitchens I observed, many had tiled counter tops, large refrigerators, stoves with ovens, and other appliances such as a blender. The few bedrooms of youth I visited were furnished with beds and wardrobes, and decorated with posters and images cut from teen magazines and glued directly onto the painted walls. While these rooms were furnished, I was always struck by their unfinished appearance relative to the comforts of the living room. In some cases, the differences were stark. For example, in one young person's room I observed that the floor had never been tiled, carpeted or painted. It was basically an exposed cement floor. In other youth bedrooms, the furniture was clearly old and of a second-hand quality. For example, I observed scraped wardrobes with broken handles and sagging wooden beds.

Through a household survey conducted with 56 randomly selected youth, I derived a general picture of the inhabitants of the section of Liberté VI I studied. The survey was of youth diverse in cultural backgrounds. Besides the expected high number of Wolof and Hal Pulaar-speakers, I encountered more Diola, Manjak and Creole speakers than I did in Noutaire. Speakers of these languages generally have family and other connections in the south of Senegal, in the Casamance region, and on the Cape Verdian Islands, areas where

Catholicism is strong. Although the majority of my informants from Liberté VI are Muslim, I collected surveys from a greater number of Catholics there than in Notaire.

In terms of education and income, among the youth I interviewed in Liberté VI, not as many as in Notaire had dropped out of school. Their parents generally had jobs in the formal sector of the economy. For example, more Liberté VI youth than Notaire youth reported that their mothers were secretaries, educators and managers. Similarly, Liberté VI youth's fathers tended to have employment as administrators, doctors, accountants, engineers and as "informaticiens" (individuals who work with computers).

In terms of the composition of households, Liberté VI youth tended to live in smaller households than those of Notaire youth. Seventy-five percent of the participants reported living in a household of five or fewer persons. A majority of these households had members living abroad. Only 34 percent reported having no family member or relative living abroad, a much smaller proportion than in Notaire (50 percent). Finally, Liberté VI youth report having more émigré household members living in France and the United States in comparison to Notaire youth, whose fewer emigrant relatives tended to go elsewhere, e.g. to Italy and Central Africa. One Liberté VI participant in the survey reported visiting the United States on her summer vacation. Another participant was a returned migrant laborer who had lived several years in France. On one occasion we bumped into each other shopping in the cheese section at Score, an upscale supermarket in downtown Dakar. A final characteristic that emerged from the responses of Liberté VI youth: 29 percent report that their households have television cable boxes. A subscription to cable each month is about \$25 to \$30.

Notaire

This second community is located in Guediawaye, a suburb about 20 kilometers from the city center that was also developed in the 1970's. By Car Rapide, it takes between an hour and ninety minutes to reach the center.

The name Notaire, or Notary, reflects the social milieu in which this neighborhood came in being—in Dakar, the Notary is the public functionary who authorizes land titles. Initially, the neighborhood developed as a place for elite families to extend their households, and to have second homes and more space. Near the beach, it is cooled by evening sea breezes. The neighborhood, however, rapidly filled up with migrant workers and families with less means, turning Dakar families into landlords rather than residents.

Compared with other neighborhoods in Pikine-Guediawaye, such as Medina-Gunass, Notaire is relatively well-planned. Compared to Liberté VI, it has far fewer resources. During the year of my fieldstay, all of Dakar's neighborhoods experienced cuts in electricity and water from time to time. The outages occurred more frequently in the suburbs and lasted for longer periods of time than elsewhere. For weeks on end, women in Guediawaye carried water back to their homes from several neighborhoods away after during a water supply breakdown. In the morning one could observe a line of women walking alongside the auto-route carrying purple, yellow, blue and green plastic buckets of water on top of their heads. I lived on the edge of Liberté VI, and never experienced such an extensive cut in water in my apartment.

As a whole, the neighborhood of Notaire is one large rectangular block, circumscribed by paved commercial strips actively traversed by Car Rapids, "clando" (clandestine shared taxis) and automobiles. Depending on the time of day, there may be tremendous traffic on these roads, and black clouds of exhaust in the air. Within Notaire, the paved roads disappear and it is very difficult to enter by a car. This area of Guediawaye is close to the beach, so it is very sandy. It is also very breezy since there are few buildings higher than three stories to block the wind.

Notaire is laid out mostly in a grid pattern of blocks that each contain four to ten plots of land. It was difficult to know from the map just how many households are in the neighborhood. There are 590 mapped lots, but according to SENELEC, the Senegalese electrical company, in 1999 there were 704 clients paying for electricity. Neither figure

represents the exact number of households. There are a number of two and three story apartment buildings which accommodate multiple households, some of which pirate electricity from existing lines.

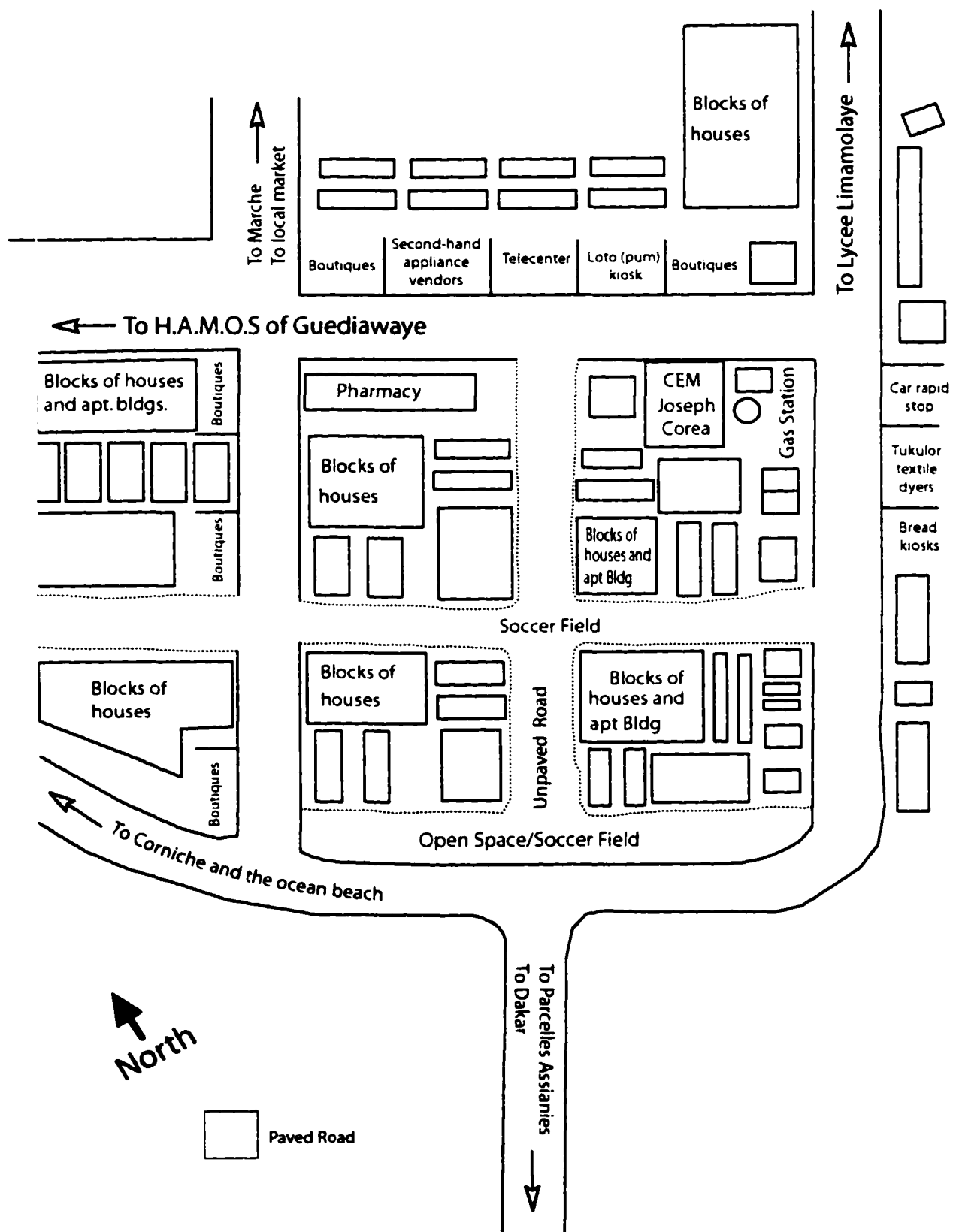
The neighborhood of Notaire is roughly divided into four quadrants, each with a more or less completed mosque. One has a walled enclosure which has yet to be stuccoed to create a smooth and attractive surface.

The "center" of Notaire is no more than a wide, featureless strip of space that divides the quadrants from one another. The strip is wide enough so that, during the soccer season, the neighborhood team uses the intersection as an improvised soccer field. In the absence of a formal plaza, the intersection serves in this way as a central community space. In great contrast to Liberté VI, there are very few shade trees in the community; at the intersection, this absence is especially conspicuous.

In addition to its mosques, Notaire has one public school, Collège Élémentaire Moyon Joseph Correa, and several private elementary schools. University students operate a library in the neighborhood with UNESCO funds. There is no market in Notaire, although the next neighborhood has a market. In front of a number of houses adult women sell small amounts of tomatoes, carrots, potatoes, bitter tomatoes, peppers and fish. Although several bread kiosks and boutiques dot the corners throughout, the majority of commerce is carried on in the outskirts of the neighborhood. Here one finds a bit of everything, including a pharmacy, a second hand appliance and furniture vendor, a gas station, a fruit stand, telephone centers, and boutiques.

Overall, Notaire seems like a "work in progress," although the direction of progress is not clear. A number of houses are still under construction, work on them having been interrupted, if not stopped, perhaps because the immigrant remittances financing them have dried up. Partial cinder block walls are up, and stacks of blocks are ready for further construction, but no workers appear on the site for months on end. Many partially built structures look as if the cinder blocks will deteriorate before the structure is complete. By

NOTAIRE, GUEDIAWAYE



contrast, a few buildings, generally two and three story apartment buildings, have been rapidly constructed by returned migrants or through the remittances sent by more successful emigrants. People casually refer to these structures by the provenance of the émigré. In this way, the reality of migration is inscribed in the physical landscape.

The homes and apartment buildings in Notaire, unlike those in Liberté VI, are not enclosed by walls. The doors to apartment buildings are generally open, if there is a door at all, and people generally move back and forth through each others' doorways, entering each other's central courtyards. There is a good deal of socializing going on in the streets of the neighborhood. In comparison to Liberté VI, Notaire is very animated.

As in Liberté VI, the living room in Notaire is generally the most comfortable room in the home. In Notaire, however, living rooms are more sparsely furnished, often with second-hand furniture and not always with rugs and a dining room set tucked in the corner. Some living rooms that I visited served two or more purposes. Beds and refrigerators among the other pieces of furniture suggest that in addition to receiving visitors they double as bedrooms and extensions of the kitchen.

The décor of the living rooms is very distinct in Notaire, many having large portraits of the female head of household. Rarely did I see portraits of men, and in only one household in another neighborhood did I ever see a group portrait. Posters and images of religious leaders such as Cheikh Amadu Bamba, and Mecca also embellish the walls. Some of the posters are advertisements from local establishments of one kind or another.

In Notaire, I collected surveys from 70 households. The general description of the characteristics of these households highlights, again, some of the differences between Notaire and Liberté VI. Most respondents spoke Wolof and Hal-Pulaar, and most were Muslims. I met fewer "Southerners" in Notaire than in Liberté VI. More youth from Notaire than Liberté VI are school-leavers (60 percent versus 26 percent).

In Notaire, the participants' mothers generally are homemakers and petty traders, and the fathers are generally traders, chauffeurs, artisans, butchers, bakers, farmers, and

religious leaders. In Noutaire, many more youth reported that their fathers are deceased, retired or unemployed (36 percent), in contrast to the fathers of youth in Liberté VI. In Noutaire, more than half of the participants reported that no one in the family has a stable job. Only nine percent of Liberté VI reported the same; here, one to three individuals per household hold stable jobs in 80 percent of the cases. More youth in Noutaire than in Liberté VI reported being in the work force themselves, whether as petty traders, domestics, tailors, masons, bakers, mechanics or day laborers in a factory.

The households I encountered in Noutaire are much larger in size than those in Liberté VI. Noutaire youth typically reported dwelling in households with six to ten people (73 percent). A few live in households with more than 16 other people. About half of the Noutaire youth did not have immediate relatives who live abroad. However, for those who do, the majority of these relatives are reported as living in Italy and in other parts of Africa. Some of the youth I talked to had traveled as well. Several spoke of their visits to villages in the Fuuta where they spent the summers preparing for university exams. Many recalled frequent interruptions as family members from afar would unexpectedly arrive to pay a visit. Some joked about how little their village relatives understood about their lives in Dakar. For example, one said that he was treated like a king in the village, his relatives unaware that he is on the verge of failing his university exams, and that he had to hock his alarm clock in the market to scrounge together money to give them.

Only a few youths in Noutaire reported that their household did not have a radio and only nine percent fewer households had televisions than in Liberté VI. But only 13 percent of the Noutaire youth reported that their televisions were hooked up to cable boxes; less than half as many as in Liberté VI (29 percent).

Blurred “Class” Distinctions

I wanted to conduct household surveys because the consumption literature has a tradition of focusing on class. I therefore assumed that a class comparison would be

important to understanding consumption. Liberté VI and Notaire are two neighborhoods that appear to represent class differences. The homes in Liberté VI appear to be well-equipped while the homes in Notaire are sparsely furnished. The households of Liberté VI are smaller and the heads of households are employed in jobs in the formal sector. More youth in Liberté VI than Notaire attend school.

During the course of fieldwork I observed numerous details about both neighborhoods which suggest that the class distinction between them is less clear than it initially appeared. In material terms, Liberté VI has had more state investment and opportunity to develop in a well-planned fashion. Given the inadequate maintenance of the neighborhood's infrastructure, however, it will not take many years before the cracking streets of Liberté VI are as difficult to drive on as the sand packed streets of Notaire. Although many homes in Liberté VI are enclosed and have full complements of living room furniture, for many the living room is a façade of luxury and comfort. Bedrooms and bathrooms remain unfinished and sparsely furnished. In material terms, some are equivalent to the homes of civil servants in Notaire. The furniture in some of the Liberté VI homes is worn and in need of repair. In Notaire, many new houses are constructed through emigrant remittances, while in Liberté VI, numerous homes are deteriorating, perhaps for the lack of emigrant remittances.

Many households in Liberté VI appear to be financed by public servants and workers in the formal employment sector. But, given the government's divestment in the public sector and the decline in fully salaried employment, Liberté VI households may not gross any more than households in Notaire that rely on income procured in the informal sector. Furthermore, school-leavers reside in some of the emigrant-financed households in Notaire, while students live in many of the non-emigrant financed households in Liberté VI. In short, high levels of economic capital do not necessarily translate into social capital. Conversely, high levels of social capital are not necessarily convertible to financial capital.

To further cloud the picture, in Liberté VI I had the occasion to interview household “pawns,” youth from the interior who were placed within an urban family. These youth are surrounded by sources of capital that make a difference in the lives of “authentic” urban youths. Yet, in their own lives they do not have access to the same sources of wealth. Rural youth in urban households are not present in every Liberté VI household. Nonetheless, they typify Senegalese cultural dynamics, and their presence suggests another “ingredient” that muddies the clarity of class distinctions.

At one level, the differences between the neighborhoods appear to justify distinct class labels; at a closer range, however, the diversity within each neighborhood makes a clear distinction questionable. Instead of describing Liberté VI and Notaire as neighborhoods of distinct socioeconomic classes, then, it is safer to say that they are distinct cultural and spatial settings where youth consumption practices are played out in different ways.

The data below suggests that indeed Liberté VI and Notaire youth are engaged in “parallel” realms of public culture. These do not exist in reaction to some dominant form of public culture in Dakar; rather, they co-exist as realms of cultural production that have significance for distinct populations. As much as one would like to categorize these forms of public culture with “class” labels, class does not accurately describe the cultural differences between two different neighborhoods. One could conclude that globalization creates new patterns of consumption that give rise to distinct public cultures in local neighborhoods. But, as the history of Dakar shows, transurban migration has shaped Senegalese cultural dynamics for many centuries (see Chapter One and Chapter Two.) The globalization of recent years is therefore unlikely to be responsible for the consumption patterns that result in these parallel public cultures. More likely, the present visibility of multiple public cultures can be attributed to the new attention given in the social sciences to transmigration and globalization.

The Wardrobe Check

I attempted to get a general sense of what young people wear by indirectly asking them about items in their wardrobes. I inquired about the amounts and brands of shoes, jeans and ready-made clothing they had. I also asked about “African” clothing, referring to such Senegalese items as grand mbubbs (African robes), kaftans (short robes worn over baggy pants), thiaya (farmer’s clothing that twenty or more years ago was a prevalent form of male dress in the city), ndockets (women’s long ample robe with French style bodice), marinas (women’s short, form fitting robe), pagne (women’s wrap skirt), etc. My questions about tailored modern clothing created confusion as African clothing is also tailored. I also asked about secondhand clothing, sources of clothing and additional aspects popular culture consumption (see appendix 1).

The questions I asked about clothing formed the core of the wardrobe survey. Although willing, the participants did not always have the patience for my 30 plus questions. There were also gaps to bridge between my initial understandings and theirs. For one thing, the notion of possessing one’s own clothing is flexible in Senegal since sharing and swapping clothing is a common practice among youth. Sharing resources is considered to be a social obligation, and not sharing is often cast as antisocial (see Chapter Two and Six). Because most youth live in large households with many siblings and cousins, there is much sharing of clothes as a means to maximize wardrobes, providing each individual with a larger repertory for creating their looks. It is not the case that individuals do not “possess” their own clothes; rather that the notions of owning and possessing are flexible. As a result, it was hard to fully determine what and how much clothing a person actually has.

Well into the process of collecting data in Noutaire, I discovered that for youth in this neighborhood, “Levis” is a code for all types of blue jeans. As I attempted to know what brands of blue jeans Noutaire youth possessed, my lack of awareness of this cultural norm shaped my data. One benefit of this error is that I learned how pervasive the label Levis has become in Dakar!

Ultimately, my survey results were shaped by the participants' approaches to coping with a questionnaire. Many found it difficult to quantify items in their wardrobes, although one young woman brought out her clothing during the interview to show me what she was talking about. Additionally, asking so many questions was tedious for respondents who were not clothing connoisseurs and who did not take much pleasure in conversing on the subject. For some who are very poor, itemizing clothing can be an invasive and embarrassing experience. In the case that my research team or I detected participants' discomfort related to these issues, we did not conduct the interview. Nevertheless, I did interview a number of very outspoken poor youth who felt that that a Western researcher should know the reality of their wardrobes. In general, however, participants' comfort, patience, and strategies in collaborating in the survey shaped the scope of my research and its outcomes. Now for a brief tour through the wardrobes of Liberté VI and Notaire youth.

Footwear

In the surveys I conducted in Liberté VI, youth report that they own an average of five pairs of shoes. Notaire youth report less, an average of three and one-half pairs. In both groups, young women had a slight advantage over young men in the number of shoes they possessed. The differing quantities of shoes that the neighborhoods report may be due to economic differences; the gender difference resonates with the generalization that women wear more outfits and more diverse styles than men and therefore need more shoes.

**Most Popular Brands Mentioned by
Young Men and Women, by Neighborhood**

<u>Brand</u>	<u>Liberté VI</u>	<u>Notaire</u>
Nike, Adidas, Fila, Reebok	17%	10%
No Brands	10%	15%
Sebago, Docksider	3%	3%
Generic European Style	5%	3%
Average number of pairs per person	5	4

The brand names of shoes that youth in both neighborhoods report owning register a few differences between the two groups. A significant portion of Liberté VI youth (seventeen percent) reports owning Nike, Adidas, Fila and Reebok. A smaller portion (ten percent) reports no brand name. After sneakers and no-brand footwear, European styled shoes (five percent) and Sebago and Dockside (three percent) are the third most frequently reported shoe. In contrast, a larger proportion of Notaire youth reports footwear of no particular brand name (fifteen percent). The next largest proportion of answers, however, indicates brand names such as Nike, Adidas, Fila and Reebok (ten percent). And, like Liberté VI youth, the most frequently reported brands after sneakers and generic footwear are Sebago and Dockside (three percent). These results suggest that youth in both neighborhoods wear globally-known brand name footwear, including Sebago and Dockside, even though those in Liberté VI may be able to afford more of it.

Blue Jeans

The data on the number of blue jeans that youth own are not surprising given the implied economic differences of the neighborhoods. On the average, Liberté VI youth report owning four pairs of jeans, while in Notaire, the average is two and one-half pairs. In addition to the economic differences between the two neighborhoods, Notaire youth may also report fewer jeans because, as discussed below, they wear more African clothing. In

both cases, young men report more blue jeans than young women. This gender distinction also resonates with the generalization that women wear robes, skirts and dresses in addition to pants.

African Clothing

With regard to African clothing, Notaire youth report owning five outfits, on average, while Liberté VI youth report only four. One reason for this difference may be economic, some African clothing being cheaper than ready-mades. But African clothing is variously priced from expensive on down. An upscale mbubb can cost more than 20,000 francs (\$30). Modestly priced ndockets can cost between 5,000 to 8,000 francs (\$8-12), and modestly priced kaftans can cost between 5,000 and 10,000 (\$8-14). These items can be tailored from an inexpensive textile for less money, but a decent secondhand (non-African) skirt and blouse may also be purchased for less than 4,000 francs (\$6). A pair of long lasting secondhand jeans costs between 3,000 and 5,000 francs (\$4-8).

Given these prices, economics are clearly not the sole reason why Notaire youth report consuming more African clothing than their Liberté VI counterparts. Markets selling African and other clothing are equally accessible to both neighborhoods, thus accessibility is unlikely to be the reason either. It may be that a preference for African clothing plays a role in shaping these differences.

Tailored Clothing

As noted above, asking youth to quantify this category proved difficult. However, it is clear from my frequent visits that women in both neighborhoods wear more tailored clothing than men. Many young men report that the quality of modern tailored clothing is inferior to imported ready-mades, and that they had stopped buying tailored clothing with the exception of traditional clothing. Some young men also say that tailored shirts are not their style because they express an "adult" look.

***Fëggy Jaay* (“Shake and Sell,” or Secondhand Clothing)**

It was difficult to be sure how much secondhand clothing each group consumed because of the stigma attached to it. When secondhand clothing first began arriving to Dakar in increased volumes in the 1980's, it was sought after by some as unique and an asset to their clothing creativity. Secondhand clothing, however, was also disdained as clothing for the poor person. Many in Dakar continue to view this clothing in a negative light. Others view *fëggy jaay* as a source of cheap brand name goods.

According to my survey data, the majority of youth from Liberté VI deny purchasing or wearing used clothing. The question itself was met with derision and laughter. A few youth would laugh but then restore their seriousness by bragging about wearing used clothing. The majority of participants, however, claim that they do not touch secondhand clothing—a claim of which I am suspicious. In contrast, Notaire youth report buying used clothing with little display of embarrassment, seemingly insensitive to the stigma attached to *fëggy jaay*. I noted this particularly in one young girl who spoke to me while wearing a blouse that was part of a McDonald's uniform; she seemed unaware of representing a global hamburger chain.

Important Clothing Items

Of all of the possible items of adornment, the most frequent response from Liberté VI youth (30 percent) was that shoes are the most important to them. The question as to why shoes are important evoked strong reactions. One young man comments, “When we look at someone it is from foot to head... people judge you by your shoes, that's what we study here....” Another young man suggests, “... When you wear beautiful shoes, shoes that are not imitations, you are seductive.” A third phrases the importance of shoes with an ironic tone, “... if you don't have nice shoes, then you are not going anywhere....” To Liberté VI youth shoes have a lot of social power. They are a signifier of having access to

social mobility and advancement, having “class” and personal allure. One’s social standing and personal being is inscribed in one’s shoes.

The social importance of footwear to Liberté VI youth may be why I often observed, in many young people’s bedrooms, shoes lined up in a neat row on the floor, making a prominent display amidst otherwise sparse furnishings. This practice may be an effect of hygienic concerns or of limited storage space. Nonetheless, I observed that shoes laid out in full view prompted discussions about clothing commodities, market prices, styles, and the body. They also promote borrowing--one basis for developing and breaking social relationships. The way shoes are taken care of when not worn reflects not only their social importance to youth, but also the role that things play in creating social meanings.

After shoes, Liberté VI youth report a strong attachment to blue jeans, which they consider attractive, long lasting, comfortable, and as feeling good on the body. Jeans also help to boost one’s social status. One young man, for example, says, “They give me the status of a noble!” Young men, in particular, say that they attend a broad range of social gatherings in jeans, including traditional family ceremonies and soirées as well as everyday situations. Young women also report having a preference for jeans but consider them inappropriate for weddings and baby-naming ceremonies. One young woman says tight jeans, in particular, “...are not good because it is not good to let the whole form of your body show.”

The clothing preferences of Notaire youth differ somewhat from their counterparts in Liberté VI in that they give greater weight to blue jeans than to shoes. A few related the importance of blue jeans to a notion of tradition. One young man, for example, sees jeans as “...classic clothing in Senegal... they are solid, I can work in them, they are always in style.” Another young man focuses on the latest baggy style of jeans that in Dakar are also called “jungle”. He says, “...I love to wear ‘Bad Boy’ jeans, that’s our generation!” Not all Notaire youth, however, identify with the Bad Boy look. One young man felt that wearing spacious jeans without a belt is simply “incorrect.”

After blue jeans, Notaire youth report that African robes are the next to most important clothing in their wardrobes. Young women, in particular, talked about enjoying going to ceremonies and wearing African robes. Young men and women gave African robes importance because of their associations with religion. In Liberté VI, however, some young women devalue African robes and other African clothing because, they say, they find it hard to move around in.

Brands

In addition to asking youth about the quantity and brands of their footwear, I asked two groups from each neighborhood to make lists of all of the footwear and clothing brands they could name. From this exercise, I found that both Liberté VI and Notaire youth are familiar with a vast number of brand names in each category. Liberté VI youth, however, are able to name more brands than Notaire youth who, in addition, name brands that do not appear on the longer lists of Liberté VI youth. Regarding footwear, for example, both groups list a core set of globally-known products such as Nike, Adidas, Sebago, Dockside, Timberland, Fila, and Puma. They also each list New Team, a Senegalese sneaker and shoe manufacturer that took over the old Bata I factory near Rusfique.

While Liberté VI youth name other globally-known brands such as Versace and Asics, Notaire youth name knockoffs such as Spice Girls, L.A. 2000 and No-Name. A similar pattern is observed in the lists that youth make of ready-made clothing labels. Levis, Lacoste, Wrangler and Nike are part of the core group of brands that both groups list. The Liberté VI youth include on their lists South Pole, Fubu, Tommy, Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Yves St. Lauren, Christian Dior, Carter's, and Boss. Notaire youth, in contrast, mention knockoff labels such as Marlboro, Complice, Chicago, Power, Goldpik and Charp.

The brand recognition exercise reveals that both groups are very conscious of brand labels when it comes to clothing. Liberté VI youth appear to be very familiar with globally-

known products. In contrast, Notaire youth are familiar with some brands, but more importantly, they are familiar with the notion of valuing clothing with labels attached to them. This phenomenon may be related to the outcomes of shifts in manufacturing since the 1970's. During these years, many clothing manufacturers such as Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger put the accent on creating and marketing images and concepts of a lifestyle over producing actual material things. Instead of manufacturing clothing, they outsource under their label, and invest some of the money they have saved in advertising. Since the 1970's, logos have proliferated and the world has become a more "branded" place (Klein 1999). In Dakar, youths' interest in labels may be the result of the training they have indirectly received from post-Fordist capitalism.

The interest in identifying with labels may also relate to Senegalese cultural logics. In the Islamic religious milieu in Senegal, God is viewed as being present everywhere. Even so, adherents rely on and put their faith in religious patrons, or marabouts, who teach and guide, and who mediate the paths of followers. Youth often idolize their marabouts with a great fervor that seems, beneath the surface, similar to their fervor for brand name labels. One's identification with a particular local marabout, for example, is expressed in the *ndièle*, a pendant with a laminated photograph of one's marabout that is worn generally by male Murid adherents. At public gatherings, youth adherents advertise their identification with particular marabouts by carrying large placards with their images. At the filming of *Oscar des Vacances* (Summertime Oscars), the summer youth-talent show aired on national television, in addition to screaming praise for the mbalax and rap artists singing on stage, youth in the audience shake poster-sized placards with photographed images of their marabouts.

While God is thought to be everywhere, marabouts mediate the connection to God. It is important to Senegalese youth to identify their affiliations everywhere, indicating who mediates their particular religious knowledge. Waving placards of one's marabout from a television audience, from the crowds at football or wrestling matches, and from school

protests, is a way of identifying oneself with a particular “label” of Islam. This fervor for images of the mediators of the spiritual life beyond the material world suggests a parallel to youth’s general interest in commodity labels.

Where Youth Buy Clothes

Twenty-one percent of Liberté VI youth reported going to Sandaga when they shop for themselves. Fifteen percent reported receiving clothes from relatives abroad. Nearly ten percent shopped in the secondhand markets. The remaining answers cited a variety of other markets.

It is not surprising Sandaga looms large for Liberté VI youth as it is only a one-fare bus ride away. Also, assuming Liberté VI youth have access to more financial resources than Notaire youth, it makes sense that they report shopping at the more expensive markets, those where the latest ready-made imports are coming into Dakar.

It is surprising that so many youth volunteered that they have received clothing from relatives abroad, particularly as the question asked specifically about market places. This suggests that having relatives abroad is a status symbol for these youth. Liberté VI youth report having many relatives in the U.S. and in France, in contrast to Notaire youth who have relatives in Italy. Liberté VI youth did not mention in great numbers H.L.M., the textile market that is closer to their neighborhood than Sandaga. Finally, that a significant portion of respondents should admit shopping at secondhand clothing markets contrasts sharply with the laughs and put-downs expressed in response to my earlier question about personal consumption of secondhand clothing. I infer that Liberté VI youth are uncomfortable at revealing that they wear or own anything secondhand. Secondhand clothing is not a status symbol for them; it brings shame and embarrassment.

The shopping patterns of Notaire youth differ from those of Liberté VI youth. A quarter of the Notaire youth reported shopping at Colobane and the rotating flea markets. Another fourteen percent referred to Pikine at Marché Zinc, the Sandaga of the suburbs.

Eleven percent indicated shopping at Sandaga, and another nine percent at H.L.M., the textile market. In other words, Notaire youth shop mainly in the low-budget markets where knockoffs and secondhand clothing are sold. Fewer economic resources, and Notaire's greater distance from the markets that sell original brand name clothing, seem relevant here. However, a significant proportion of Notaire youth do frequent Sandaga and Marché Zinc, which suggests that the group may be internally stratified.

It is also interesting that the Notaire shoppers go to H.L.M., the textile market, while few among the Liberté VI youth, who live closer to that market, mentioned it. This resonates with the observation that Notaire youth may wear more tailored clothing.

Money Spent on Clothing

In examining responses from youth in Liberté VI and Notaire, I expected to find differences in their answers that related to differences in economic levels and access to resources such as the range of support provided by emigrants. It was impossible to know for sure how much money youth or others providing for youth actually spend on clothing, as many young people rely on others to buy them clothing. In some cases this clothing is brought from abroad. Some youth, however, procure their clothing on their own. Many interviewees were challenged by the question of how much money they spent on their wardrobes, while others could easily calculate a response, having just acquired a new outfit for a special event such as the opening of the school year, Korité and Tababski, two Muslim holidays, or New Years. Overall, I learned more about perceptions of spending than about the actual material reality.

In response to the spending question, more than half the Notaire youth reported a figure of less than 30,000 francs (\$50) a year, although a few claimed to spend approximately 100,000 francs (\$153) a year. One outspoken university student said he spent no money on clothes and owned only one pair of jeans and one pair of shoes.

In contrast, the majority of Liberté VI youth reported spending over 30,000 francs a year, and a significant proportion spent over 100,000 francs. One youth said in English that she blew \$400 on a summer vacation in Washington, D.C.. Whether or not Liberté VI youth actually spend more money on clothing than Notaire youth, this is the impression they want to impart, and they enjoy boasting about it. The interviews in the two neighborhoods uncovered a vast range of perceptions about money.

Television Advertisements

I asked youth to identify television commercials that attracted them the most and to explain why. While the advertised products were not clothes, I include these results because the pattern of responses resonates with Liberté VI and Notaire youths' consumption patterns and orientations towards brands.

This question produced a range of answers that reflect consumers' interest in the function of the product, the creativity of the advertisement, and the technical quality of the representation. Without separating out these categories, a distinct pattern emerges. According to the responses of Liberté VI youth, an imported Coca Cola commercial has the strongest appeal. In this commercial, African-American girls skip rope in an urban street scene, one full of row houses and stoops that call Brooklyn to (the American) mind. This commercial is rich in color, sound and the sense of movement. It is also dubbed in French. Liberté VI youth say that they are attracted to the realism of the image, and they consider it to be an up-beat commercial.

In contrast, Notaire youth indicate an attraction for a locally-produced Colgate toothpaste commercial which features Youssou N'Dour, a famous Senegalese mbalax-pop singer. In the commercial, he teaches young Senegalese children about the virtues of brushing their teeth with Colgate while speaking in Wolof. The advertisement has a quality of realism that is not quite as rich as the Coca-Cola commercial, but it is also not quite as flat as other locally-produced commercials, e.g., an advertisement for Maggi Cubes where

the camera angles are not varied and the texts and sets are not subtle. Notaire youth say that they are attracted to the Colgate commercial because they love Youssou N'Dour, because there is humor in the advertisement, and because the products for hygiene are very important. These differences strengthen the view that Liberté VI youth are oriented towards globally-known products, whereas Notaire youth, although sensitized to these products, *have a greater orientation toward images and themes strongly rooted in Dakar.*

Consumption and Multiple Public Cultures

In reviewing the consumption of particular clothing commodities, a number of important patterns emerge. At one level, Liberté VI and Notaire appear to represent distinct socioeconomic classes. In several instances, Liberté VI youth report consuming greater amounts of clothing than Notaire youth. This may be the consequence of real differences in financial capital, but it might as well result from an attitude of superiority and entitlement among some Liberté VI youth, regardless of their household's income level. Because the survey is conducted on the basis of young people's perceptions of their wardrobes (it would have been invasive and culturally inappropriate to request permission to actually count participants' clothing), the survey illuminates a youth-generated impression of patterns of consumption. The responses suggest that youth in each neighborhood are stratified and portions of each sample overlap with one another in terms of their actual consumption practices.

In another exercise I conducted with youth focus groups in both neighborhoods (see Chapter Three), youth insisted that, in fact, no distinctions in consumption patterns could be made between youth of Liberté VI and Notaire. When directly asked, youth from both neighborhoods cite wearing denim, claiming all youth to be the same. In one session, I asked youth in Liberté VI to draw pictures of what they thought a typical young person from Notaire wears on a typical day, and vice versa. This request was met with heavy

protests. I was told by youth in each group, "... there's no difference, we are all the same!" And, in fact, the majority of drawings did not highlight much difference.

I view the insistence of shared similarities, however, as a "veneer" of solidarity required by Senegalese cultural norms. To overtly highlight social differences is antisocial and to categorize peers by class is uncommon. At least two young men, however, broke norms and expressed a clear difference between Liberté VI and Guediawayan youth. These two boys said they believed that Guediawayan boys from Notaire dress in a bandit-looking Rapper style, in ripped up clothing, or *thiaya*. These norm-breaking illustrations imply that Guediawayan young men are poor, rural, and perhaps dangerous.

The youths' comments suggest that some Liberté VI youth perceive a hierarchy among their peers, and themselves at the top levels. Tours of their wardrobes reflect this self-perception. For example, Liberté VI youth see themselves as spending a lot of money on clothing. They project an image of themselves as primary shoppers of Sandaga, the heart and "happening" place of the city. Many deny their consumption of low-budget clothing such as secondhand clothing, and many emphasize their knowledge of specific global brands. Regardless of one's actual accumulation of economic capital, Liberté VI youth see themselves as superior to others and in control of large sums of social and cultural capital. It is hard to know if Notaire youth are aware of "privileged" youths' perceptions of them. Regardless, survey responses from Notaire youth suggest that they boldly pursue their own criteria for clothing and clothing practices. For example, the results of the survey suggest that Notaire youth wear a broad range of clothing, but put an accent on African clothing. They also appear to rely on clothing that comes to them through emigrant relatives in Italy, whereas Liberté VI youth appear to procure clothing through emigrant relatives in the U.S.

Notaire youth are interested in a broad range of television commercials, but they exhibit a particular interest in global products cast in Senegalese cultural idioms. Similarly, Notaire youth are aware that global brands bring status, but, with the exception of footwear,

they do not focus on identifying with specific brands. Nor do Notaire youth display the commitment to obtaining the “*ceeb*” (rice, or original versions of branded clothing) to the extent that Liberté VI youth do. Instead, Notaire youth shop at Colobane where “*cere*” (couscous, or knockoffs), *fëggy jaay*, and new cheap and alternative cultural trends are launched.

One example of an alternative cultural trend that influences Notaire shoppers is the “*Marimar*” phenomenon. In the late 1990’s, Marimar garb could be found in Colobane and in the rotating markets that are supplied by Colobane traders. Marimar is a fad based on a Mexican soap opera, Marimar, which was popular in Dakar. The show was such a hit in Dakar that you could not get people’s attention on the evenings when the show was aired. Journalists made fun of intellectuals and adults with critical minds who cut off social engagements early in order to get home in time to watch the show.

As a result of the tremendous interest in Marimar, a number of commodities were rapidly produced and disseminated. They included photographic images of Marimar and her lover, “Sergio,” which bus drivers pin to their rearview mirrors; cheap tee-shirts bearing images of the characters; and stacked Marimar sandals and matching handbags, which imitated a popular style in the market at the time. According to vendors, some of the tee-shirts were made in Dakar, and the shoes and bags were imported from Ivory Coast.

Vendors in the artisan sector capitalized on the popularity of Marimar, too. A leather sandal with Marimar stamped onto the inner sole appeared in the market, and an imitation of the already low-budget Marimar stacked sandal was produced. The knockoffs were detectable by the rubber pieces of the soles, which appeared to be cut in an irregular manner and glued together by hand. In short, a plethora of clothing commodities ranging in quality filled Colobane as a result of local efforts to capitalize on this Mexican media phenomenon in Dakar. Many of these items eventually spread out into Sandaga and the rotating markets, and many were avidly consumed by the youth of Notaire and other suburbs.

The focus on Colobane, African clothing, and Senegalese varieties of global goods and advertisements suggests that Notaire consumers are engaged in parallel realms of public culture. Liberté VI youth are strongly engaged with global goods and images, and with resources sent to them from emigrant relatives in the U.S. Notaire youth are not ignorant of these global commodities, but they are focused on another set of commodities and transnational flows.

The next chapter describes in-depth the diverse clothing styles and meanings that Liberté VI and Notaire youth create with the variety of items they store in their wardrobes.

CHAPTER FIVE

CLOTHES TALK:

THE PUBLIC DIMENSIONS OF CLOTHING COMMODITIES

In Dakar, the minute one walks out the door of one's house, one has an awareness of being watched, of being on display. This is partly the result of the way family and neighborhood networks operate. As described in Chapter Two, nearly anywhere one goes, one meets a familiar person who is likely to report back to the family on one's appearance and behavior. The sense of being on display is partly a function of commodities. Clothing commodities in particular communicate information about the consumer and his or her social position in the urban milieu. Not all social spaces fall under the familiar family and neighborly surveillance. In the heterogeneity and cultural diversity of the city, one's first impressions are strong impressions. The brief encounters and surveillance from unfamiliar eyes is the primary way that individuals make sense of the urban milieu and their relationship to it. The public functions of clothing commodities shape the perceptions of familiar and unfamiliar eyes. One could argue that Dakar is a consumer city where familiar and unfamiliar surveillance heightens one's sense of self-awareness and appearance, and drives the on-going fashion show of youth.

Clothing competitions exist in the city as a result of numerous forces, patron-client and kinship dynamics among them. Because the city is socially and culturally fragmented, there is no one set of images, practices and meanings that structure youths' clothing consumption. Diverse forms of public culture coexist, and in some cases overlap. Within this context, clothing commodities "talk." Anthropological studies often view clothing and other mass produced objects as comprised of symbolic properties which communicate identities to others (Davis 1992; Douglas and Isherwood 1979). Consumers manipulate the symbolic aspects of clothing in order to shape their image and their position within a particular group or the larger society. In this light, clothing

commodities play a public role—they overtly communicate social meanings about individuals and their relationships with others.

This chapter focuses on the public dimensions of youth clothing commodities by reviewing the cultural and symbolic messages that are “spoken” through clothing styles. In examining clothes talk, the study finds that increased volumes of apparel and footwear have not changed the public function of clothing commodities, but have broadened the “conversations” created by consumers. In Dakar, the increase in goods has provided consumers with extensive material to work with in developing style repertoires. With extensive material available at a wide range of prices, a broad spectrum of consumers are able to participate in clothing “conversations.”

In the past, fashion studies of Dakar have examined clothing in terms of modern and traditional styles and expressions (Faye 1995; Heath 1990; Mustafa 1997; Rabine 1997). In these works, youth styles are rarely highlighted as distinct. This study highlights that the content of “clothes talk” has expanded and has become more inclusive. Clothes talk includes styles that defy modern or traditional categorizations, and it broadcasts the central role that youth play in creating styles. Moreover, it reveals youths’ consciousness of the variety of local and global forces that structure different groups’ advantages and disadvantages in the city. Geographic references are an important aspect of this conversation. Echoing patterns outlined in Chapter Four, it is revealed that Liberté VI and Notaire youth are attached to styles that are influenced by different geographic locations in Africa and the globe. These influences are mediated by the social and economic conditions of Dakar and the particular cultural practices and behaviors of neighborhoods like Liberté VI and Notaire.

The “Double Dress Code” of Styles

When considering the fashion system from the perspective of youth, a distinct picture emerges—a picture of a fragmented system. Many researchers who have studied

Dakar's "fashion system" (Barthes 1983) discuss it in terms of two categories: traditional and modern clothing. This double dress code is a historical phenomenon that has caught the eye of many anthropologists, historians and cultural studies researchers (Faye 1995; Heath 1990; Mustafa 1997; Rabine 1997). Since the colonial period, traditional and modern styles of clothing have coexisted in the fashion system of Dakar. Rabine highlights how, over different periods of history, one strand of the code has been favored over the other. For example, under Senghor, it was not permitted to wear traditional outfits in the ministries: Senghor imposed the Western suit as government attire. When Abdou Diouf replaced Senghor in 1980, he abolished this law and African robes almost immediately come back into fashion with a new force. The preferences of political leaders among many other factors did much to perpetuate a dichotomous dress code in which certain outfits are considered to be traditional and others modern –a dichotomy reproduced by researchers. The inhabitants of Dakar now use the concept of a double dress-code in referring to their own styles, an observation which highlights just how deeply seated binary oppositions can become.¹

To a certain extent, it seems that youth participate in reproducing the historical fashion dichotomy. They wear an array of styles that they themselves label modern and traditional. When I asked youth in both neighborhoods to create a typology of youth styles, I found that, with a few exceptions, most styles they mentioned fit into these categories. Below is a list of the current styles Senegalese describe as modern and traditional clothing:

modern styles:	<i>Américain</i> <i>Italien</i> <i>Français</i>
traditional styles:	<i>African-Sénégalaise</i> <i>Murid</i> <i>Baye Faal</i>

¹ Ferguson (1999) and M. Rowlands (1995) make similar observations.

Tijan
Cambérène
Arabo-Mauritanian

Additional styles mentioned by youth that do not fit neatly into these two categories include the Styles Ibadu, Jamaicain, Hindu and Boule Fale.

At a very general level, a single view of this typology is shared by Liberté VI and Notaire youth. Notaire youth, however, specified many more traditional styles than youth from Liberté VI. Notaire youth, for example, added Tijan and Cambérène styles to the list. Liberté VI youth did not include these styles but they added the Jamaican style. This difference in typologies resonates with differences observed in youth patterns of consumption. Each group focuses on both traditional and modern styles, but Notaire youth focus slightly more on traditional styles based in African clothing and Liberté VI youth focus slightly more on global cultural trends, although not to the exclusion of local African trends.

Without yet describing these styles in much detail, suffice it to say that the style categories suggest that fashion systems of youth in Dakar are complex. The broad range of clothing styles indicates the cultural diversity of the city, and, as it is described below, the diverse social contexts in which Dakar youth live their lives and develop their identities.

It is also evident that the style categories do not neatly fit into two polar camps, even if Senegalese youth use the concepts of modern and traditional to describe their own cultural practices. First, the very categories modern and traditional are diverse in content. One generally equates the modern with the West. In this case, however, there are three orientations towards the West, and many more traditional orientations. With this sort of understanding of styles, it is difficult to argue that Dakar is being homogenized by Westernization, Americanization, globalization or indiginization.

Second, the four styles that remain outside the traditional/modern camps of style do so for various reasons. According to youth, the Ibadu style is partly considered traditional because of its association with religion. However, as described below, the practice of wearing a veil, which is the trademark of this style for women, was never practiced in Senegal until its emergence in the 1990s. It is therefore not traditional in the sense of having deep historical roots as a Senegalese practice.

The Jamaican and Hindu styles are also imported to Senegal, but not through the West. Thus, they are generally thought of as independent strands of the fashion system, and youth do not force them into traditional and modern categories. By the same token, the fact that they cannot be so categorized does not prompt youth to revise the dichotomous categories.

The Boule Fale style is partly considered to be a modern style as it is based on the consumption of secondhand Western clothing. However, the meaning of this style, which I describe more fully below, suggests that the only thing foreign about it is the threads. The meanings related to its popularity are deeply Senegalese, making it closer to a traditional style than an imported modern style.

In short, the four additional styles mentioned for one reason or another fall in between or slightly deviate from the standard notions of modern and traditional. This is a heterogeneous fashion system; it is not a dual system of style.

Third, aside from the Boule Fale style not fitting neatly into a modern or traditional category, it was not an easy style to talk about with school youth, who by attending school distinguish themselves from Boule Fale youth. This particular style is associated with poverty and non-conformity, and it may be that the conforming effects of schooling diminish the importance of including it in the typology of school-going youth. The omission suggests as well that styles related to economically marginal groups have not been considered as part of the double dress code. Inclusion of such economically scripted styles further broadens the diversity of the landscape of fashion.

The perspectives of youth on fashion demonstrate that keeping to standard, dichotomous typologies will preclude a full understanding of the complex reality of fashion and Senegalese clothing practices in Dakar. The fashion system as seen through the eyes of youth is radically different from the dominant portrayals of the double dress code that are (probably inaccurately) thought to capture the clothing practices of adults.

Styles: Descriptions, Histories and Meanings

A brief description of the various contemporary styles, their histories and meanings, provides depth to this complex and messy picture of the landscape of youth fashion. It also highlights the agency of youth in creating this important element of urban life.

I have derived these descriptions and insights partially from conducting photo questionnaires in Liberté VI and Notaire. Using 24 images that youth created, I posed questions to understand how youth read style. Participants were asked to respond to my questions by selecting photographs that represented their points of views. Among many questions I asked were, “which clothing styles do you wear?”, “Which clothing styles signify a rich person?”, “Which clothing styles signify a person who is not economically comfortable?”, “Which styles signify a person who is dependent on men for clothing?”, and “Which clothing styles signify a ‘modern’ youth?”. Before conducting the survey I asked groups of six youths each to sift through hundreds of photographs that they and their peers had taken, and to label the styles represented in the photographs. Only photographs whose labels were unanimously agreed upon were used in the survey. While conducting the survey I made special note of the side commentaries that youth made about the photographs and their reasons for choosing particular images over others.

I also collected information by working with youth in focus groups in both neighborhoods. The students developed and defined typologies of current clothing

styles. They then went out into their neighborhoods and photographed siblings, friends and neighbors wearing these styles. Subsequently, they analyzed the photographs they had taken, drawing out the social meanings and attitudes they associated with the various styles. They wrote short essays about selected photographs. Teachers at the schools edited the students' essays. The students organized their essays together with the photographs and supplementary drawings into an informal teen fashion magazine that was reproduced for all of the participants in the focus groups. It was also shared with teachers and parents in Liberté VI and Notaire.

Young Men: *Ndanaan*

Although young men wear imported Western clothing, they have not stopped wearing full-length robes and *tubéy* (drawstring pants) and kaftans (shorter robes) over matching pants. The *ndanaan* is a fashion image created by men who promenade the streets at a leisurely pace to show off expensive and luxurious robes and kaftans. The *ndanaan* gathers the wings of his robes and casually pins them back with his hands that remain clasped behind his back and proceeds to stroll down the street. This seemingly modest gesture highlights the expensive fabrics of his outfit and the elegance of his manner of walking; the *ndanaan* imparts an image of confidence, grace, wealth and self-importance.

According to youth, the *ndanaan* may wear several variations of traditional clothing. The differences in style sometimes indicate religious orientation. The *Style Mouride* is comprised of a *grand mbubbs* and full and length kaftans. It is most distinguished, however, by a particular form of *grand mbubb* called *baye lakhat* (itself distinguished by a crest that comes together at the center of the front collar). Today's version of the *baye lakhat* is more streamlined than the blousy version popular in the 1970's and 1980's. This earlier *baye lakhat* was called *Niete Abdou* (Three Abdous) because it was comprised of three large pieces (billowy drawstring pants, a roomy top

and an ample vest-like robe thrown over the body). The special name also referred to three powerful Murid leaders, each named Abdou.

Some Murid youth use white robes, in which case they are likely followers of Cheikh Moudou Kara Mbacke, the "*Marabout de la Jeunesse*" (The Marabout of Youth). This leader is particularly charismatic and has an especially strong following among young people as a result of outspoken critique of the government's neglect in providing jobs for the new generation. Special accoutrements also distinguish the Murid ndanaan, such as a wide scarf that is wrapped several times around the neck, a blue and white wool skull cap called the *lafu*, the *gafuka*, a small leather box on a pendant, and the *ndiële*, a laminated photo of one's marabout on a pendant. Mbubbs are worn with matching colored, pointed, Moroccan slippers made of thin leather. Typically, the back of the slipper is crushed down so that the shoe functions more on the order of a backless slipper. Some youth wear the Murid style with other footwear, including sandals. The carelessly dressed may also wear it with sneakers. Others embellish these outfits with designer sunglasses.

A ndanaan may also sport the *Style Tijan*, a style that is particularly important among Noutaire youth. According to these young men, the Tijan style, like the Murid style, consists of full-length mbubbs and _ length kaftans. Some say that the _ length kaftan is a more central feature of the Tijan style than the mbubb, although I did not find full agreement on this point. The kaftan is typically cut from *Derëm Naar* (200 Francs), cloth that is imported from Dubai and Mauritania. Mbubbs may be cut from dyed *hazin* imported from the Netherlands and other European sources. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the Tukulor dyers often wear this fabric to advertise their products. Dyed *hazin* worn by Tukulor also increase the chances that the wearer is a Tijan, for many come from the Northern regions of Senegal where Tijaniyyism dominates (see Chapter Two). Like the Style Murid, the Style Tijan is worn with Moroccan slippers and various types of comfortable sandals.

A third type of ndanaan wears the *Style Cambérène*. Again, this style is more important to Notaire youth than it is to Liberté VI youth. It is characterized by flowing white robes and green scarves. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Cambérène is a Lebu and Layenne-dominant neighborhood in what is now a suburb on the northern coast of the peninsula. Typically, individuals who wear the Style Cambérène are also Lebu and of the Layenne religious orientation. While young men of other religious orientations may sport white robes, Lebu last names, distinct Wolof accents, residence in Cambérène and Yoff, and being in the company of others wearing white robes, bolster the Lebu reading of a young man wearing the Style Cambérène.

A fourth type of ndanann wears the Arabo-Senegalese style, consisting of blue mbubbs worn with thiaya or thrown over Western pants and shirts. Typically, this clothing is observed on adult men who are immigrants from Mauritania. Both Liberté VI and Notaire youth, however, considered it part of the youth fashion system because, on occasion, non-immigrant young men also may be seen in such robes. Since few youth in the focus groups were of this cultural background, this variation of traditional clothing was not discussed in depth.

In the lives of C.E.M. students, the ndanaan makes his appearance at school on Fridays, a Muslim religious day, and at family ceremonies and visits. In some cases it is parents who insist that traditional clothing must be worn; in many other cases it is youth who want to show off this clothing to their peers. Young men of both Liberté VI and Notaire give importance to this style of dress. In their view, it is clothing that strongly signifies Senegalese and Muslim identity. One youth who finds pleasure in wearing robes that signify his Murid identity says,

“I love the Murid style of dress for various reasons: 1) the Murid style reminds me of Senegalese tradition, and I think that youth today are forgetting a little bit about their tradition, and 2) I wear the Murid style because I love Serigne Touba (the father of Touba)... When one wears this it attracts all kinds of acquaintances. It is loved by the tourists, most

of all by the women tourists and by European tourists. When I wear this, it gives me a good standing within the religion. I am very very comfortable.... The Murid style has a big reputation in the national and international plan."

African robes permit youth to imagine themselves as "grand persons" in the religious sense. Wearing robes signifies one's direct connection with God. Wearing laminated photographs of one's marabout, as mentioned in Chapter Five, signals an individual's religious dedication and pathway.

Wearing African robes and strolling like the ndanaan also allows one to imagine oneself as fulfilling the Senegalese obligations of consuming clothing. Demonstrating an ability to consume and consume expensively, as described in Chapter Two, is considered evidence of one's wealth and provides a means of securing a high position within family networks. Expensive robes attract others on many levels.

But there are considerations. Youth in Dakar mock the young man who wears African clothing that does not "speak" of status. Youth mock others who wear thiaya, traditional clothing that is appropriate for farm work. They also mock young men whose traditional clothing is not up to date in design. No one dares to wear styles such as the Niete Abdou, or black and white robes worn with a gold threaded headpiece, a style of traditional dress imported from Saudi Arabia in the 1980's but now considered passé. By contrast, youth who wear grand mbubbs see themselves as modernizing African fashion, even though they themselves use the term traditional to describe this clothing look.

That a view of African clothing sought after by European women and tourists figures in the consciousness of young men suggests Western cultural forces, one of numerous audiences taken into consideration by youth as they shape the meanings of the styles they create. As contacts between Senegalese and Europeans intensify in Dakar, the definition of these robes as traditional is reified by tourists and other foreigners. Young Senegalese in the process of learning about themselves are influenced by their reflection

in the eyes of foreign visitors. One but only one aspect of the adoption of traditional and modern constructs to describe their clothing can be attributed to the Western objectification of traditional dress, and of increased encounters with Western tourism. It is one dynamic that shapes the fantasy that wearing traditional robes is a way to defend one's cultural principles, if not to conquer others with one's own cultural power.

Style Baye Faal

Baye Faalism, as discussed in Chapter Two, is a particular orientation within the Murid religion. The style of clothing associated with Baye Faals is very distinct and is worn mostly by young men. The style consists of several items: *thiava* (baggy pants typically associated with the farming lifestyle) and *mbubbs* sewn out of *jaxas*, a textile that is generated by sewing together leftover swatches of cloth. In the 1980's, this home-made textile was commodified and today it is possible to buy bolts of cloth imprinted with the patch-work design. The availability of this modern textile, however, has not put an end to tailors putting in the time to create this unique and colorful fabric. The Baye Faal still commonly wear *jaxas*, as do others who want to create the appearance of a mystique that is often associated with Baye Faals. Variations on this patchwork pattern may be observed from time to time. During my fieldstay, some coalitions of Baye Faal wore robes pieced together from wide strips of red and black cloth. Another group wore robes of alternating yellow and black stripes.

Baye Faal join Murids in wearing the *ndiële* that bears the photo of their *marabout*. Those sporting the Baye Faal style wear wide belts with weapon-like batons tucked inside the belts and hair in dread locks. They often go barefooted or wear inexpensive rubber sandals. Sometimes they wear expensive brand name sneakers.

Relative to the history of Islam and Muridism, the Baye Faal is a modern development. But in the eyes of youth in both neighborhoods it is seen as traditional because it is so strongly associated with religion. It is also strongly considered to be an

undesirable style among the students in my focus groups. This outcome may reflect the absence of Baye Faal youth in the groups, and the ambivalence many have towards and urban Baye Faal. As described in Chapter Two, the Baye Faal on the one hand, represent an anti-materialist community who, in theory, dedicate their lives to hard work and the teachings of Islam. They are greatly respected for giving up material goods and for possessing such strong religious beliefs. On the other hand, in following the “extremist” teachings of Cheikh Ibra Faal, contemporary and urban Baye Faal echo the “lawlessness” of the sixteenth century Wolof *ceddo* military, who were known for abusing alcohol and pillaging villages. Many urban Baye Faal Muslims do not abstain from alcohol and marijuana use, and they justify pickpocketing as a means of working their way closer to God. The style signifies to everyone a way of life, not just a situational fashion statement. It requires a serious commitment to wear the Baye Faal. Not every young person is open to experimenting with this clothing, viewed as admirable yet distasteful at the same time

“Boy Disco,” “Gentleman,” and Thiof: Western and European Looks

Boy Disco, *Gentleman*, and *Thiof* are references to the young man who is a sharp consumer of what Dakar youth call Western and European looks. These terms have different levels of meaning. The Boy Disco labels the young man who is handsome and “correct” looking, but who adopts a casual, “dressed down” look. Gentleman and Thiof are applied to young men who are both handsome and who dress in expensive clothing. A Thiof is considered to be the most desirable man of all, extremely sexy and an extremely good dresser who typically wears suits and ties. Thiof is Wolof for an expensive and rare fish commonly eaten in Senegal before the intensification of globalization in the late 1970’s to mid-1980’s. Today, due to poaching and the exploitation of Senegal’s fishing economy, wealthy families and tourists are its primary consumers.

Within the classification Western and European looks, Dakar youth define three specific styles, each of which has a casual version and an “alternative” version. In the

case of the European styles called the *Style Italien* and *Style Française*, the alternate versions are formal looks (suits and ties). In the case of the American style, the alternate is the *Rappeur* look, which is discussed below.

Youth define the Italian style for young men as comprised of articles of black clothing. It includes black turtlenecks and black slacks or jeans. Sebago and Dockside shoes are part of the casual version of the Italian look, while *Officier* dress shoes are part of the formal look. A formal suit and tie comes with accoutrements such as designer sunglasses and cell phones referred to as *Alizé*, which is also the brand name of a cell phone sold in Dakar. Cell phones are prominently displayed even if they are out of service.

Students define the casual French style as including khaki pants, which are not always readily available in Dakar, Levi jeans, neatly pressed cotton tee-shirts, Sebago and Dockside shoes, and sparkling clean brand name sneakers. The formal alternative entails Super 100² slacks, Oxford, Polo or Lacoste button down shirts and square-toed, closed shoes. Sometimes this look incorporates an ascot, although this appears to be a practice of youth on the high end of the age spectrum (i.e. unmarried individuals in their late twenties and early thirties). Non-prescription eye glasses add to both the casual and the formal look, as they signify that one is an “intellectual,” a studious individual who may or may not be enrolled in school.

According to youth in both neighborhoods, this style may be sported at school and school events, soirees, and nightclubs. The young men of Liberté VI say that they also wear it to weddings and family ceremonies. Young men from both neighborhoods say that they wear these styles when they head out with the specific objective of attracting young women.

² “100” refers to the number of needles involved in creating the textile. In other words, Super 100 is a tightly woven textile, as many needles stitch it together.

Overall, Liberté VI youth have a strong affinity for this style while Notaire young men, although they also like and wear it, are not as attached to it. Young men and women from both neighborhoods see the formal suit of the Italian style as signifying a Christian youth.

The young men of Liberté VI, more so than the youth of Notaire, think of these styles as luxury clothing, clothing that is obligatory for all young men to possess, clothing that impresses adults, and clothing that says one is modern. One young man describes his views of the casual Italian style in the following manner:

The Italian style is the style that is the most well known around the whole world and in my country. It's the new style. From computer programmers, to laborers, to government administrators, to businessmen, to students, all wear this style. They wear it because it's correct, simple, everyone in the world respects you and wants to know you.... I'm young, I'm a Capricorn. I am 1 meter and 35 centimeters tall. I wear the Italian style with Lacoste golf shirt, Super 100 dress pants and Sebago brand name shoes. I wear this style because I can wear it wherever I want to go like to weddings, baby naming ceremonies and conferences. It is seductive, *cool*³, it's comfortable. When one wears this style one feels like an engineer, a man, a good student, an intelligent person.

Through this clothing, the young man sees himself as a contributing member to a society that is based on technological, scientific and administrative fields of work. He sees himself as a correct person, a parallel to seeing himself as "civilized," another expression frequently used in Dakar in relationship to styles comprised of Western clothing, one which calls to mind not only Western colonization but also fitting into a larger world beyond Senegal. He also imagines being at the center of the world's attention and that wherever one goes in Senegal and the globe, the importance of the Italian style will speak for itself. Believing in science, the state, civilization and one's universal powers are symbolic markers of the pursuit of a Western notion of progress. In

³ This passage is translated from French. The word "cool" appeared in English as it is always used in Senegalese speech.

this light, the Italian style reflects the rhetoric of Western modernization ideology. In young people's minds, dressing in the Italian and European styles is a means of following Western pathways of modernization. It is also a style which, at least in the urban context, is "conservative" and "universal" enough to be worn at any kind of event, without controversy. The wearer is playing as much to this Senegalese definition of acceptability as to a Western cultural template.

Apart from making European styles African and Senegalese, other non-European geographies of modernization are also imagined. Correct, respectful and civilized dress and appearance also have Islamic religious signification. Maintaining bodily cleanliness (through ablutions and other practices) and disciplining the body through ritual prayer five times a day are central to Islam. Correct clothing indicates a similarly disciplined approach to the body. The Prophet was a correct and well-groomed man. Murids in Dakar strive to follow his example of cleanliness right down to carrying *socc*⁴, the traditional toothbrush in their mouths during the Ramadan. The concern for a clean and orderly appearance is reflected in Boy Disco, Thiof and Gentleman styles which overlap with central Muslim beliefs and practices of the body. In this type of dress, which originates in Europe, Eastern cultural forces also shape youth's imagination. These cultural flows foster an image of modernity as a future with God.

The practice of European styles has another cultural meaning. The notion of being universal, at the center of attention, and able to transcend social boundaries through appearance as communicated by the Italian style, has significance within the context of Senegalese kinship. In Dakar, Senegalese family networks are pervasive and powerful forces in shaping futures. Possessing an appearance that translates positively across various universes of family social networks has the potential to permit one to rapidly progress in life. An appearance that "speaks" of respectability across diverse social

⁴ Socc is made of branches that come from a medicinal plant. The branches are shaved and cut into small sticks that are sold at bus stops and on street corners.

milieus, from traditional ceremonies to modern gatherings of young people, is also considered a means of securing an advanced position within society. The Italian style, therefore, allows one to imagine that he is rich in social resources and socially well positioned.

The cool and comfortable image of the casual European style also relates to the importance of keeping up appearances in the eyes of family. The concept of cool is pervasive in Dakar youths' speech, having been imported through the circulation of modern jazz music. Popular in Senegal since the 1960's, jazz continues to attract adults in their thirties and older. (It is the least favorite music of the youth of both Ntaire and Liberté VI who participated in my survey). A cool look sends the message that one is relaxed and worry free. In fact many adopt it to mask the stress and worry they feel regarding their futures and the economic problems their families face. Cool clothing appearances can hide shame and even help bolster hope for the future.

The display of European brand name clothing consumption and notions of seduction are elements of Senegalese styles and Senegalese consumerism. Accessing clothing goods from Europe underscores one's social importance, but sometimes at a price. Thiof, as the image of a grand consumer, motivates some youth to excessive consumer behavior. In Ntaire, young people speak of the "*G.T.L.T.C.*" the "*Grand Thiof de Luxe au Teint Clair*" (the big luxury fish of light skin). As described in Chapter Two, the pressure to appear to be a capable consumer pushes many people deeply into debt, into immoral behavior, and into compromising socially and emotionally important relationships.

The desire to consume, and to consume brand names, is reinforced by European styles of dress and the Senegalese drive to keep up with foreign fashion trends. Senegalese youth navigate a combination of Western, Eastern and Senegalese circuits of production and cultural forces in their drive then to consume and appear correct. As the global clothing market creates new items, offering new material for reworking the

markers of social status, young people's knowledge of these items--for example \$100 Michael Jordan sneakers or \$85-\$100 Sebago boat shoes--remains on par with new production trends. Some Dakar youth not only prep the Italian style in their imaginations; they also go into debt and risk important social relationships to realize their imaginings. The contradiction of appearing wealthy while having no wealth is familiar to youth. When asked to discuss photographs of young men's styles, youth most frequently selected the photograph of a Thiof sporting a suit and cell phone as an image that "spoke" of a young man who was at once likely to be rich, have a secure job, and rent his clothing.

Le Rappeur: An "American" Style

The *Style Américain* is the most popular style among young men in both Liberté VI and Notaire. Since the 1960's, Dakar youth have worn blue jeans, the foundation of an American look. Since the early 1990's, a new Senegalese interpretation of American dress has developed. The classic casual Senegalese American style entails Levi jeans, specifically the 501 cut, worn with white cotton tee shirts and brand name footwear such as Nike, Adidas, and New Balance. Sebago shoes are also sometimes considered part of the casual look when worn with blue jeans. Baseball caps contribute too. The new and less conservative version of the American style is called *Le Rappeur*. It is also referred to as the "'Cana,'" short for American. Some youth in Notaire refer to someone who wears the "'Cana'" as a "Jump." The Rapper look is comprised of brand name baggy jeans such as South Pole, Mecca and Fubu. In Dakar, this baggy style of pants is called "jungle," "Bad Boy," "Pocketdown," and "Criss Cross." The Tommy Hilfiger label, called "Hifi" in Dakar, was a popular baggy jean at the beginning of my research. By the end, when Hilfiger's homosexuality was announced in the international press, Senegalese interest in Hilfiger products radically decreased. A Senegalese trader of knockoffs based in New

York City reported this information to me, and it was confirmed by my observation of the slow disappearance of Hilfiger brand products in the Dakar markets.

Baggy jeans are typically worn with tee-shirts, preferably ones that advertise important brand name products such as Nike, and globally-known Rap groups such as Wu-Tang Klang and Tupac. Nylon mesh basketball tank-tops with logos for American teams such as Chicago Bulls are part of the look. (By the end of my fieldstay, the importance of Chicago Bulls garb had diminished, an effect of Michael Jordan's retirement). Timberland boots, however impractical for walking in the heat and sand of Dakar, are part of the style.

Full length and short overalls are a popular aspect of the American style, although many more youth were wearing them at the beginning of my fieldstay than at the end. To affect the image of "cool," one strap of the overall is unfastened and left to hang over the back. Athletic gear is considered to be part of the look, and brand names are important. During my fieldwork, "*joggings*" (sweat suits) in red, white, and blue also had a special status. Camouflage pants and/or vests are associated with the American style. Many buy ready-made camouflage wear, but others buy the textile and have pants tailored. Wearing this clothing marks one's affiliation with Hip Hop militancy. It also signifies that one is a fearless consumer since, as previously mentioned, one risks assault by soldiers in wearing this clothing!

Accoutrements help to fill out the complete look of the American style. These include baseball caps with clothing logos, sunglasses, and thick silver chains with a rap group's insignia's such as Rough Ryders, or the dragon icon. Knit ski caps further contribute to the rapper look of the American styles. By the end of my fieldstay colored bandanas for the head were popular.

According to both Liberté VI and Nottaire youth, the casual and Rapper American style of clothing is worn to school on most days (except Friday), soirées, when meeting up with friends, and when attending rap podiums--a popular activity in the suburbs but

less so in neighborhoods such as Liberté VI. At these events, youth take turns performing “flash,” lip synching and dancing on a stage. Most Liberté VI and Notaire youth say that they do not wear the American style to weddings and baptisms.

The Rapper is a version of the American style that is popular among young men of Liberté VI and Notaire. Both groups of youth think the Rapper style impresses peers, attracts young women, and offends parents. Notaire youth see the Rapper look as sexy, luxury clothing that signifies that one is modern. Liberté VI youth agree, but they see European styles as more attractive, luxurious, and modern. The Rapper look, in short, has slightly more importance to Notaire youth than to Liberté VI youth.

Since its development in Senegal, the Rap movement--clothing and music--has stirred controversy in Dakar because of its implication of American cultural domination. Those who are against the style and music movement focus on the American theme and interpret Rap as a form of Americanization and Western cultural colonization. Professional Rappers in Dakar, however, see the movement as an anti-colonial counter-culture. They take credit for the global Rap movement and call it an African “coolinzation” of the West. Within the pan-Rap community, the extent to which Rap is African or American is itself hotly debated. Some consider the role of oration in Rap to be African whereas, others argue that the emergence of Rap as a form of protest music is a diasporic innovation. Social scientists try to bring clarity to this debate by locating the origins of Rap music, although these are difficult to pinpoint. The cultural hybridity of Rap is equally or more significant than identifying its “pure” origins (Flores 2000; Potter 1995).

Within the context of Dakar, Rap music is divided into a mainstream and “*Underground*” movement. Groups in the mainstream, such as Positive Black Soul, *Black Atholo* (Black Unity) tend to be based in the city’s central neighborhoods. For instance, PBS is based in Liberté VI, Black Mbolo in Medina, and *Jant bi* (Sun) in Dieupeul. These groups sing in Wolof, French, and English about black identity, the history of

slavery, colonization, migration to France, pan-African unity, and local social issues. In addition to playing to a Senegalese audience, many of them perform abroad and promote their music in the world music market.

The Underground movement, in contrast, is located in Pikine-Guediawaye. The most well-known group, *Rap'udio* ("destructively messing up and confusing"), is located in Pikine. The Underground groups sing heavily encoded Wolof and "kal" about government corruption, poverty, unemployment and the changing morality of Senegalese society. They cite the names of individuals who are to blame for the current conditions of Senegal; for their overt approach to "educational" music, they are both criticized and hailed by the Dakar public. (Pan-African race politics are infrequent themes in their music).

When it comes to the Rapper style of dressing, school youth talk about it in terms that are similar to their ways of talking about the Italian style. One young man says,

It is the style that attracts Senegalese women. It is the most sexy and the most expensive clothing in all of the Senegalese markets... I feel comfortable when I wear the American style -- one feels that they are on "Top"! Women are so attracted to you that this style really makes you dream. For me, it is my preferred style of dress. Above all I love wearing the "Cool" Adidas that cost 25,000 francs and tee-shirts, and I really love the Kriss Kross style also. For me, this style is just like the contemporary style of the 'Sape' [francophone West African male fashion fanatic].

Through Rapper dress, youth imagine attaining the lifestyles of African-American Rap artists as featured in global media. In Dakar youth's eyes, these are talented, well fed, outspoken and financially successful individuals. They represent to Dakar youth the success that one may attain through migration to the U.S., or through developing a career as an international Rap performer. Migration to the U.S. during the late 1990's, as described in Chapter Two, was a primary aspiration of Dakar youth. This aspiration is labeled "*dem ci kaaw*" which means in Wolof "goes high up." This is a way of saying

that one is emigrating by plane, that one is high on the social ladder, and that one is feeling so good that she or he is "above all," that is, everyone else in society.

Any one seeking to emigrate must spend hours in a day and months on end strategizing, planning, scheming, and following up leads to a visa. Strategies include befriending Americans as a tour guide, writing letters and emails to pen pals, answering ads for green card lotteries, compromising family funds and relationships in order to obtain travel documents, and obtaining the resources for travel through illegitimate means.⁵ Through all of this, wearing rap clothing is a source of energy.

I did not find that youth talked about the Rapper style much in relation to the politics of black identity. This may be because for youth in Dakar, race politics are associated with France, or because they did not think that they could talk to a white Westerner about this topic. It also may be because few Senegalese youth are aware of social and racial divisions in the U.S., divisions which gave birth to African-American Rap and Hip Hop music, and which contextualize African-American Rap artists' indulgence in conspicuous consumption.

When Senegalese who have lived in the U.S. return, they rarely speak of racially-based injustices they may have experienced, knowing that listeners will not understand. Some listeners assume that returned émigrés speak of such inequalities to dissuade siblings and peers from challenging their own status by migrating behind them. Many returned émigrés "collude" in censoring information about race politics and

⁵ During the time of my fieldstay, one Senegalese man managed to stow himself in the cargo compartment of an Air Afrique flight headed for New York. Evidently, the man was mentally unstable and upon his arrival, he was deported and immediately returned to Dakar. Several weeks later Le Soleil reported that two young boys from Ivory Coast attempted to reach France in the same manner. According to journalists, these young men were not mentally unstable, but they froze to death en route. Before they died, they wrote a letter to their mothers explaining their determination to emigrate in order to make something of themselves in life.

discrimination in the U.S. because they want to impress their families with their success and not put themselves in a negative category vis à vis the American racial hierarchy.

Another explanation for why so few youth relate Rap music to the politics of black identity is because it is not a central issue in a large portion of the Rap and Hip Hop music imported to Senegal. Kriss Kross, for instance, is a not very political variant of Hip Hop, but rather a group comprised of teenagers who perform with their pants on backwards. They became well known partly because of this attention-getting form of dress, and partly because marketers generated the idea for this group on paper, hired the talent, and heavily marketed its image. In some cases, the economics of the Hip Hop and Rap music drive groups such as Kriss Kross to Senegal and into the wardrobes of Dakar youth more so than pan-African or pan-black identifications.

In Dakar, the Rapper style resonates strongly with a regional cultural movement, *La Sape*. The sapeur styles of dress emerged in the late 1970's and early 1980s in the Congo-Brazzaville and Congo-Kinshasa. The phenomenon was ignited by unemployed and unschooled youth who competed for social status by wearing French designer label clothing that they themselves began to import through petty trade and clothing suppliers based in France (Gandoulou 1984, 1989; MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000). Rich *sekous*⁶ musicians such as Papa Wemba and Djo Ballard helped popularize the look throughout francophone Africa. In Brazzaville and Kinshasa, members of "La Sape" (*Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes*) typically wore jackets that were several sizes too large and pants hiked up high around the midriff in a style called the *Grand Père* in Dakar. High pants strategically exposed the ankles and footwear, highlighting the logos of designer shoes and socks. Ties were dropped to the knees and handkerchiefs stuffed into breast pockets at absurd angles. The image of the Sapeur poked fun at the upper classes and their use of clothing consumption as a means to create

⁶ Sekous is fast-paced music that combines Caribbean and Afrobeat rhythms and distinct melodies from the lead guitar.

social distinction. It also poked fun at Westerners who were perceived as encumbered by restricted body movements. Dance in such oversized clothing, in contrast, allows and accentuates free body movements.

Once in Dakar, the Congolese Sapeur style was reinterpreted by Senegalese. Mediated by both Western and religious ideologies of the body, the Senegalese Sapeur wore ties and jackets that were slightly more conservative than the Congolese style. Today, the Rapper look is similar to Sapeur in that a Rapper wears his pants several sizes too big for his body, and brand names are prominently displayed. Trade and travel and global music are clearly part of the Sapeur and Rapper phenomenon. Since more Notaire youth prefer the Senegalese American style than do Liberté VI youth, one could argue that class differences mediate this style--that the Rapper style is a form of social critique much like the earlier Congolese Sapeur style.

Boule Fale: Senegalese Anti-Fashion

The Boule Fale, a new style in Dakar since the mid-1990s, is associated with youth who exhibit careless and improper behavior. This style is comprised of ripped up, secondhand and sloppily arranged clothing. In the 1990's, red, white, and blue and camouflage were associated with the look. It is strongly linked to unemployed young men, and those who are not students.

As mentioned in Chapter Five, in Wolof "*Boule Fale*" means to pay no mind, to be carefree and unconcerned with what others think or say. This style of clothing is associated with youth who have limited economic resources. The school youth of Liberté VI and Notaire prefer to distance themselves from Boule Fale youth. Because they protest just about every form of authority in Dakar, including adult authority, one year of fieldwork was not enough time for me to befriend many young men who are labeled this way. I did manage to speak with some of them at wrestling matches and at bus stops, however.

On the face of it, the Boule Fale style and attitude appear to be the result of American influence. Youth wear clothing that is red, white, and blue, and military garb. They make a point of dressing down, and they flaunt the fact that they wear secondhand clothing. Their protest against nearly all forms of authority calls to mind the counter-culture movements of the United States in the 1960's. In fact, however, Senegalese cultural forces dominate Boule Fale.

The Generation Boule Fale movement put the Boule Fale style on the fashion map at the end of the 1990's. This movement developed in conjunction with the rise of the Senegalese wrestler, Mohammed Ndao, who before the events of 9-11 used American themes in his celebrity image to mobilize supporters. Ndao, also known as "Tyson," became very important to young people because of his superior physique and a consecutive winning streak. Consistent wins at a sport which existed in the pre-colonial period provides new hope to poor youth who feel that growing up in the present declining economy, and under the Parti Socialiste (PS) regime, parallels the waning status of wrestling prior to Tyson.

As Tyson incorporated American themes into his image, he tapped into young people's aspirations to travel to the U.S. for work. He also tapped into the American government's efforts to promote a positive image of the U.S. around the globe. Bill Clinton's visit to Senegal, for example, boosted Tyson's popularity. In short, the Boule Fale style was informed by a symbiotic relationship between the Senegalese celebrity's need for an image and the U.S. government's need for popular local representatives to advance its public relations.

Tyson also became popular because he promoted a message of individualism with strong Senegalese cultural underpinnings. For example, the notion of maintaining confidence, perseverance and discipline is couched in Islamic terms that call to mind the ethics of the Baye Faal. Before every match he consults with his hometown marabout in Kaolack, and he sets out for inspiration an enlarged framed photograph of his marabout.

Although religion is often a conservative element in society, many youth found Tyson's association with religion liberating because it legitimized the authority of the individual, thereby encouraging young people to voice their opinions and contest the authority of adults. In particular, the religious message of perseverance also provides some liberated thinking about young people's relationships to their family. Many young people feel oppressed by family networks in which cynical adults and jealous siblings undermine their initiatives and dreams before they have been able to begin to actualize them. This is a great source of frustration and despair, and Tyson's motto, "*Am fit, am doole, Generation Boule Fale*" (have courage, have strength, Boule Fale Generation) motivates many young people not to completely detach, but rather to distance themselves from their families as a means of finding more psychological freedom.

In other words, Tyson symbolizes a notion of the modern, "authentic" individual. He is outspoken about what he considers to be the uselessness of animist beliefs and practices that are typically a central part of pre-match rituals in wrestling. Although from time to time he engages in some ritualistic milk spilling on his head, he mocks other athletes who rely on "*gri-gri*" (magic) for their physical strength. Instead, Tyson emphasizes Islam as a modern and legitimate basis of fortitude. Disciplining the body through major physical workouts is, in his view, a means of developing authenticity as an athlete. When applied to the lives of youth, this message implies critiquing the system of family networks and consumption obligations that produce "fake" selves. The call for authentic selves encourages youth to adopt an attitude of not caring about how one appears, especially important to poor youth, many of whom only have access to secondhand clothing.

Style Jamaicain

The Jamaican style is associated with young men; few young women wear it. This style entails wearing articles of clothing that bear the colors green, yellow and red, knit

wool caps of these colors, military boots, dread locks, jeans and tee-shirts. This style is worn to Rap podiums, to school, when getting together with friends and when attending soirées. In Dakar, this style has a strong connection with the music world in Banjul, the Gambia. Senegalese musicians say that the popularity of reggae is stronger there than in Senegal; therefore they spend the year working in Banjul and vacationing in Dakar. Although it is possible to see youth dressed in the Jamaican style in both neighborhoods it is mostly Liberté VI youth who talked about this style in the focus groups, even though none of them claimed to dress in it.

Young Women: *Jekk*

Jekk is Wolof for a woman who is chic and attractive and who is considered to be mature; she is a young woman who is in her mid to late twenties. The label is applied to young women who wear African clothing. Liberté VI and Notaire women also talk about African clothing in terms of the *Style African-Sénégalaise* and the *Style Arabo-Sénégalaise*.

The African-Senegalese style includes many forms of dress. Among the most popular are the *grand mbubb*, an ample robe worn over a matching wrap skirt that reaches the ankles; the *ndocket* or *marina*, a long dress with a camisole styled bodice and lace trimmings; *pange*, a wrap around skirt typically worn at home with a tee-shirt if one is working; and *deux pagne*, a three-piece outfit that generally entails a camisole top and ankle-length wrap with an additional but smaller wrap of the same textile tied around the waist and rear. Some say that *deux pagne* originates in Central Africa (Mustafa 1997), others that it was a Senegalese style that was modified in Central Africa. According to some, Senegalese outfits generally are accompanied by matching long, wide and somewhat stiff scarves. Tying head scarves in various ways is a long standing practice of Senegalese women which, however, is not shared by Central Africans, who tie the extra

piece of cloth to their waists, forming two layers to the skirt. This style has since traveled back to Senegal, where it is taken up by young women, but not adults.

The Arabo-Mauritanian style consists of a form of dress called *meulffuer*. This is a long wrap made out of a textile called *khatoum*. Guaze-like in texture, it comes in bright pinks, canary yellows, and greens bordering on fluorescent. The textile is imported from Mauritania by women traders, although some also comes from China. Women wear this dress with open toe sandals. When I asked them to take pictures of youth wearing this style of clothing, a few brought in pictures they had taken of their mothers who were of Mauritanian backgrounds, and one had specifically posed, dressed up, for the camera. The youth in the study consider this a legitimate style, and throughout the city there are young women who do wear it although only on special occasions such as religious holidays and on Fridays.

African-Senegalese and Arabo-Mauritanian clothing is generally worn to school on Fridays, particularly *mbubbs* and *ndockets*. Some young women in Nottare wear *deux pagne* and other variations of clothing which are considered to be African-Senegalese, but are not as elegant and formal as the *mbubb* and *ndocket*. The more formal variants are worn to baby-naming ceremonies, weddings, Muslim religious holidays and other meetings related to religion. In the case of religious events, *mbubbs* and *ndockets* are always worn with scarves that cover a bare head or a head that is covered by a matching scarf, creating two layers of scarves. This clothing is also worn while making family visits, traveling to a new place for business, and making visits to certain young men, depending on the circumstances of the relationship and the impression that a young woman is attempting to make.

Young women of both Liberté VI and Nottare neighborhoods consider this clothing to be important, although the young women of Nottare give it slightly more importance than the young women of Liberté VI. Both groups see this clothing as obligatory; it gains the respect of adults and identifies one as Muslim and Senegalese.

One young woman suggests the power of this clothing: "The mbubb is traditional dress adapted for all kinds of ceremonies and worn by all ethnic groups.... When one wears traditional dress like a grand mbubb that is typically African one is respected by everyone and one has dignity because they are wearing proper dress." Another young woman highlights the fact that the clothing heightens one's status: "wearing this clothing, one is elevated. this is the clothing of kings and queens.... Colonization and Westernization has changed African objects of value...."

Wearing mbubbs and ndockets makes young women think of themselves as grown up. In describing a photograph of a young woman, another youth says,

Here's a girl who is a student of C.E.M. David Diop who is in the fifth level. She works hard, she dresses in the Senegalese style. When you look at her you have the impression that she is a *grand dame* because she is wearing a blue robe and high heel shoes. She resembles a mother of a family.

When I gave young women a week to photograph peers wearing traditional clothing, many disregarded the instructions and brought in photographs of their mothers and aunts. This modification suggests that adult women associate strongly with traditional clothing, wearing it more often than young women. It also may have been difficult for young women to by-pass their elders in order to take pictures of their peers. Young women often wear this clothing, and when they do so they are greatly influenced by or oriented towards adult women. This clothing signifies the transition from youth to adulthood. Many young women underscored this point by commenting that once they get married, they see themselves as abandoning blue jeans.

Mbubbs and ndockets also encourage young women to work on developing a female mystique and techniques of seduction. A young woman's social status is strongly shaped by marriage; therefore, a main thrust of her youth is practicing and perfecting a self that will lure a husband. This typically occurs at gatherings such as baby-naming

ceremonies, weddings, *sabar* (traditional dancing) and *tuurs* (rotating credit unions and family reunions) where traditional clothing is worn and traditional dance is performed. While these gatherings are predominantly family and neighborhood based, typically they have erotic overtones. Griottes, for example, contribute to the atmosphere by reciting orations with erotic implications. The following is a typical song sung at these events:

<i>Ma demon Colobane</i>	I went to Colobane
<i>Sama ganaar nen fa dee</i>	My chicken laid an egg and died
<i>Ma dellu Colobane</i>	I came back from Colobane
<i>Sama ganaar nen fa dee</i>	My chicken laid an egg and died
<i>Maay wax ak moom</i>	I talked with her
<i>Di wax ak moom</i>	and talked with her
<i>Di wax ak moom</i>	and talked with her
<i>Baay ganaar</i>	The chicken vendor
<i>Ne ma noppil</i>	told me to hold off
<i>Dina wax ak moom</i>	He'll talk with her
<i>Kuy aye xopu mango</i>	He who takes the leaves off the mango
<i>Du ci meye doom</i>	Won't be the one who will give them away
<i>Gooru tey ku nu ñam sa</i>	Today's man, when he tastes you, he knows
<i>def ko yonu toll</i>	The direct road to the farm ⁸ .

Dance is another central element of these gatherings. Several generations ago, it was considered a seductive act for a woman to bulk up, wearing several layers of *petit pagne*, and while dancing, expose the fabrics of each layer. Although women continue to dance and manipulate their overskirts so as to reveal the *petit pagne* layer, the consistency of the *petit pagne* has radically changed. Women no longer wear several layers of wraps, but one thin layer only. In some cases, they sew sexually suggestive sayings into the skirt (Heath, 1990). In other cases, full illustrations of sexual acts are sketched onto the fabric.

⁷ When griottes sing this song, they make a sound that signals to the audience to fill in the blank. "*Data*" (female genitals) is what is referred to by the blank. Sometimes the griotte or the audience substitutes the blank with the word "mango."

⁸ The intended meaning of this phrase is "He will take you for granted."

During the time of my fieldwork, a style of *petit pagne* that was very popular was a fabric where patterns of threads are pulled from the overall textile creating a somewhat flimsy and transparent fabric. At some parties, I observed that some women wear cut off blue jeans instead of *petite pagne*. Others dare to show off lace panties and thongs. These exposures are controversial among young women. Some appreciate the drive to experiment with new forms of seduction, but they consider panties, thongs, and shorts as too overt and as leaving nothing to the imagination.

These gatherings for women, as discussed in Chapter Two, are frequent and they are considered to be culturally important events. Keeping up with the cycle of parties, and having new outfits and money to give away as gifts to the host and the griottes, makes one feel like a queen. When this can be done, it is also a statement as to how well one has married. When one can't keep up with the cycle, forfeiting attendance or showing up in an uninspired, recycled outfit, lowers a woman's self esteem. Some women without resources confront this dilemma by shunning the parties, refusing to go. Other women—adult women—lower their dignity and request money from whomever just to assure their attendance.

“Miss,” Mannequin, Jumbax Out and Viviane: Western Looks

Miss, Mannequin, Jumbax Out and Viviane are the female counterparts of the Boy Disco, Thiof and Gentleman. Miss, short for Miss Senegal, and Mannequin, French for model, are labels that refer to young women who adopt formal and elegant European styles. Jumbax Out and Viviane are references to the dressed down looks of American and European styles. Just like the styles of young men, Senegalese versions of Western styles are comprised of imported Western products, although many more outfits of young women are locally produced by artisan tailors. Both formal and casual looks are worn on an everyday basis to school, non-religious meetings, for visiting friends and for soirees. Liberté VI youth have a strong affinity for the Senegalese-European style, while Notaire

young women share an affinity for the French style, as do Notaire young men to a lesser degree. (They prefer the Senegalese-American style).

Western styles are comprised of several orientations. The Style Francais entails ready-made and tailored shirts, skirts, long and form fitting dresses, and pants ensembles. At the time of my fieldstay, long and straight cut dresses were commonly tailored from richly colored velour, stretchy lycra and polyester fabrics. One popular textile was referred to as "*hanche*," (haunch) and "*ange*" (angel) because the fabric hugged the body, and another "*cocaine*," because the fabric sparkled with glitter. High heels and matching handbags helped to complete these sexy but "presentable" outfits. Handbags with metallic straps and heeled shoes with mirror-like trim were very popular as were chunky stacked and open-toed sandals. Low sandals, however, are typically popular due to the sandy terrain of the city.

The Italian Style for women is not very different from the French Style. It includes black garments such as long skirts, dresses and long sleeved blouses. Sebago and Dockside shoes may also be worn with this feminine, black ensemble. Similar to the look of young men in the Italian style, cell phones and designer glasses contribute to the image. At the time of my fieldwork, metallic trimmings were popular: thus, handbags with reflective metallic wire arm straps, headbands, bin-bin (waistbeads) and shoes with metallic trim helped communicate that women who wear this clothing are modern.

The American style is and is not a unisex style. Young women who adopt it wear many similar items as men, for example, brand name sneakers and tee-shirts. In Dakar, there are young women's Rap groups, such as *Alif* ("A" in Arabic), who performed during the Miss Senegal National Beauty pageant wearing baggy jeans, ski caps and overalls. A few young women in Dakar adopt the "hardcore" Rapper look but not many. Accoutrements that signify the American look include braided hair extensions-- particularly ones that reach nearly the back of the knees, and red, white and blue scarves;

Nike logo earrings that are said to be knockoffs from Nigeria are more popular in the suburbs than in Liberté VI.

Women affect an American style of “cool” with less reliance on brand name than men: form fitting jeans and tee-shirts are central to this look, labeled *Jumbax Out* (belly button “out”). This sexy female look is created by wearing a short shirt, tight jeans, sneakers or high, chunky sandals. The Jumbax Out can be achieved by wearing pants other than jeans, in which case the ensemble is classified as a style other than American.

The attitudes of young women from Liberté VI and Notaire are not as divided as the men’s when it comes to viewing European and American styles. Both groups of women find these styles effective for attracting young men, gaining respect from peers, and making the statement that one is modern.

With regard to formal Western styles, young women imagine themselves as elegant, proper, capable of consuming and capable of being consumed. Teenagers describe the image of a Mannequin in the following manner. “she is single, she is charming, full of smiles, attractive and seductive... and she has light skin.... she has a heavenly look with her seductive eyes, acceptable body size and a black watch on her right hand.” In the eyes of young women, the European style is largely about appearing seductive and attracting suitors. This is a fantasy that makes sense given the place of marriage in a young woman’s status. Considering the Senegalese interest in the arts of seduction and clothing, it is difficult to say that the Mannequin is a solely European oriented look and the result of a French fashion phenomenon that serves to objectify women. Rather, the Mannequin look involves a mix of Senegalese and European cultural influences.

With regard to the dressed down looks of the Jumbax Out and Viviane, young women from Notaire prefer the American style slightly more than the young women from Liberté VI. Notaire women see this clothing as expensive and somewhat luxurious. Liberté VI women don’t agree with this view.

Young women who wear the American style are often labeled the Jumbax Out. Like their male counterparts, they are thought to be imagining emigration to the U.S., hoping to work, earn money, and acquire social status. Within the past 20 years, Senegalese networks in the U.S. have grown and developed such that numerous resources are available to the community that were not available before, including health care for pregnant women. Before the United States' engagement with the war in Afghanistan, networks were in place for women to migrate to the U.S. specifically for the purposes of giving birth and securing African-American citizenship and the possibility of emigration for their offspring.

The Jumbax Out style of dress permits women to imagine a gender-balanced world. Dakar is a society sharply divided by gender, where men and women have fairly well defined, separate roles. Women dominate in the private sphere while men dominate in the public sphere. And in many other ordinary ways the gender division is visible. For instance, adult men and women continue to eat from separate bowls of rice. In accordance with Islamic practices, men and women do not share the same space for prayer. When young women dress down in the Jumbax Out style, gender boundaries are blurred. And although dressing in jeans is by no means new to Dakar, as women have worn jeans since the 1970's, it is still seen as "different." In the words of one young woman, "there is nothing more original than for a girl to wear jeans and a tee-shirt. I love this style of clothing!"

The Jumbax Out look is a highly controversial style, and women who enjoy wearing it imagine themselves to be participating in the process of revising definitions of female sexuality. Similar to the way women approach the issue of skin bleaching, many women talk about the Jumbax Out as an improper and indecent form of dress despite the fact they themselves enjoy wearing it. Young women simultaneously point out that exposing so much of one's body goes against religious practices and beliefs, and that the style is "à la mode" and therefore should be adopted.

The Viviane look is a dressed down version of the French style, and in this light it is similar to the Senegalese-American Jumbax Out version. Outfits with jeans and global products qualify as the American look. Short shirts with tailored pants and clog sandals that make no reference to the U.S. are clearly French or European in the eyes of Liberte VI and Notaire youth.

A recently emerging Senegalese pop star, Viviane, is a celebrity who commonly wears the European look, even though she also incorporates a lot of American themes in her image. As the sister-in-law of mbalax mogul Youssou N'Dour, Viviane has had a lot of help in launching her career in music. She is popular in Dakar because she has a sexy voice that she sets to a mix of musical arrangements, including a hybrid version of mbalax and African-American R& B, and remixes of African-American R & B. Her celebrity image also has traces of American themes that fascinate audiences. For example, she sings some of her songs in English. In one of her music videos she is featured singing from the top of an office building in New York, and on a street in midtown in front of a modern sculpture that spells out "LOVE."

The Dakar public also likes Viviane because she is an attractive metisse. Her light skin and thin features are always commented upon in *Thiof* fashion magazine and in everyday discourse. The fact that she has a scar over one of her temples, which her stylists have managed to hide through various casual looking wigs, is also constantly commented upon. Physically, Viviane's appearance is rated as ideal beauty.

Viviane also represents changing attitudes towards sexuality. Some feel that her music and dance are too sexually explicit. For example, she created the dance called "mayonnaise" which simulates sex, and she makes only slightly less coded references to sex in her songs. Some young women feel her music is acceptable because she deals with the realities that youth confront while singing in familiar traditional advice-giving rhetoric. For all these reasons, the artist Viviane is controversial but mostly admired by the general public. Although the style of dress she wears, which many young women

copy, is not very different than the Jumbax Out. her expressions about women's sexuality are mediated by numerous Senegalese cultural forces (e.g. traditional forms of advice-giving, Senegalese ideals of beauty, Senegalese forms of music, etc.).

These layers that mediate new expressions of young women's sexuality diminish the weight of controversy surrounding the Viviane look. In contrast, the Jumbax Out raises controversy because it is associated with "foreign" cultural forces perceived to be changing Dakar cultural practices. In effect, Viviane and Jumbax Out are styles with similar meanings but which read differently as a result of their surface appearances, which signal distinct geographies.

"Ibadu": An Eastern Look

As discussed in Chapter Two, a small minority of young men and women in Liberté VI and Notaire are Sunnite followers of the Jama'at Ibad ar-Raham movement. These individuals have created a new religious "tradition" in Dakar which many refer to as the "Ibadu." The Ibadu look is comprised of veils and skirts, jalabas, and an absence of jewelry and low shoes. Before the emergence of this movement in the early 1990's, women did not veil. Some women wear Western cut skirts and blouses, while others, generally in the suburbs, wear African-Senegalese clothing. Others yet, generally those of privileged families in Liberté VI, wear clothing imported from Saudi Arabia. Wearing these clothes, they veil themselves. This clothing is worn everywhere and many girls do not take the veil off in their own homes. Some university students wear veils and slacks. Several Ibadu women who are black belts in the martial arts compete with the veil under their helmets. Both Liberté VI and Notaire women see this style as the most obvious sign of being a Muslim.

According to young Ibadu women, wearing a veil in Dakar makes an anti-materialist statement. The Ibadu community is critical of the traditional practices of the hierarchical brotherhoods in Senegal that promote maraboutic conspicuous consumption

based on tithes from adherents. Therefore, wearing the veil is practical and economical; it is a money saver to not to have to keep up with the latest Senegalese-European clothing trends. That said, some middle class women create a different social status for themselves by spending extra on jalabas imported from Saudi Arabia and jalabas sewn locally to imitate those from Saudi Arabia. Dressing in a religious “uniform” such as the veil, on one hand, imparts the message that one has withdrawn from the Senegalese competition of creating social status through clothing consumption. On the other hand, Ibadu veiling requirements have prompted others to find new ways to distinguish their social status.

For some young women, wearing a veil brings a sense of relief and security. In some cases they harshly criticize their peers who wear the “indecent” and anti-religious looks of the Vivianes and Jumbax Outs. Many young women express these critiques while admitting that just a brief while ago they themselves wore such clothing. And, even though the Ibadu interpretation of the Koran prohibits listening to music, I found that Ibadu young women are still “*branché*,” aware of the current clothing and music trends. Some admitted to being big fans of the performer Viviane. I also found that some young women who wear the veil see it as an alternative form of seduction, for young men who are interested in religious women are lured by their clothing.

The veil sends the message that one is a traditional woman in the sense that she values the family and respects her parents. Young women who wear veils are viewed as youth who depend on their parents for clothing, as opposed to receiving gifts from young men and borrowing and renting clothing from others. One way Ibadu parents seek to maintain their respect and status within the community is by putting forth a presentable daughter. The veil helps parents control the sexuality and consumerism of their daughters and suggests that a young woman is traditional because she respects and follows the wishes of her parents.

While youth who adopt the veil are admired for upholding Senegalese practices of the family, young women who choose the Ibadu religious orientation independent of their

parents are admired for their individualism. Observers of the movement, who typically express reservations about the necessity to wear a veil, often conclude their remarks with admiration and respect for young women who make such bold decisions about their faith. The sense of individualism associated with Ibadu women echoes Murid values of self-determination; it also calls to mind a new sense of self developing among young women in Dakar.

The veil may also be an anti-Western statement. In interviews with young women, it was difficult for me to elicit this dimension, for the participants in the study were far too polite and obliging to even suggest a criticism of my own Western heritage. It is well known that the official discourse of the Ibad ar-Rahman movement includes a critique of the West's cultural dominance over Islamic communities (Augis, 2002). This view of the West may also be shared across Islamic groups in Dakar. After the World Trade Center bombings, the American red, white, and blue themes in urban popular culture disappeared and decals and images of Osama Bin-Laden were plastered around the city. The Ibad ar-Rahman movement overtly articulates this critique more than other Islamic communities in Dakar.

Thus, regardless of the political consciousness and intentions of a young woman who wears the veil, a critique of the West is likely to be "spoken" and "read" by her looks. It is also likely that the meaning of the veil is changing in tandem with the very complicated and messy current of international relations that connects Senegal to both the East and West. In short, this new style of dress created by Ibadus, like other Senegalese styles, reflects the manipulation of a fluid combination of cultural forces by Senegalese youth.

Style "Hindu"

On occasion young women in Noutaire and other parts of Guediawaye and Pikine wear the Style Hindu. Rarely is it worn in Liberté VI except by adult women who have been Hindu film fanatics for years. The popularity of Indian films in Dakar began in the 1970s; however, it now appears to be winding down. It is still popular in the suburbs, particularly among young women and some young men of Tukolor and Peulh background. According to these young men, the agricultural scenery as well as the marriage issues featured in Indian films remind them of their rural homelands.

A spin-off of the popularity of Indian films in Dakar has been the development of "Hindu" dance troops, mainly in Dakar, but also in St. Louis and Rufisque. While it is rare but possible to see women wear Style Hindu in their everyday wear, it is generally worn to Hindu soirees in the evening, where audiences watch Senegalese dance troops do their own renditions of dance routines they observed in the films. As a style of dress, Style Hindu entails saris, often with gold threaded trimmings and outfits with short vest and sashes often tailored out of khatoum. Hindu outfits, like the Arabo-Senegalese outfits, are called "*meulffeur*."

Young men have not adopted a Style Hindu as part of their everyday wear, for two reasons. The Senegalese dancers who closely interpret the Bombay films observe that in the contemporary films, actors generally wear Western clothing. Therefore, in their performances of Indian dances, they imitate this image and wear jeans and tee-shirts. This is not the case in every dance troupe, some of which tailor clothing for their male performers. In some cases this clothing entails short vests and puffy pants. Many young Senegalese find Indian films too sentimental. They consider the young men who dance in puffy pants and vests, and who make sentimental gestures as they dance, to be overly feminine and possibly homosexual. This association, the view that the movement is rooted in the poorer, suburban neighborhoods, and the fact that it continues to be very popular among the older generations, all stigmatize the Style Hindu for many youth.

Fashion Systems in Review

The diversity of styles discussed in this chapter highlight the broad range of youth that inhabit Dakar and the complexity of Senegalese cultural life. Dakarois live their lives and develop their identities in the contexts of a broad range of social situations which require distinct forms of public appearance. Young Senegalese devise outfits for school, religious meetings, baptisms, job interviews, dates, conferences, athletic events, shopping, soirees, clubbing, embassy visits, travel to religious sites, travel abroad, visiting, time at home, and unplanned free time. The increased volumes of clothing and footwear help youth to cope with the processes of socialization--it helps them meet the demands that diverse social contexts require of one's wardrobe. It also provides youth with material to broaden their imaginations. Not every young person is clubbing, traveling abroad and invited to conferences; however, having access to clothing suggests to others, and perhaps to oneself, that one is not excluded from these social situations.

In the context of globalization and increased volumes of apparel and footwear commodities, the public functions of commodities are extended. Clothing commodities "speak" of social meanings in an expanded "conversation" among clothing consumers. For example, the influx of youth-oriented products has engendered a distinct space for youth fashion to be articulated and acknowledged. In the past, youth adopted clothing practices that were distinguished from adults, but they have not been fully acknowledged in the fashion record. With increased volumes of clothing and footwear targeting youth consumers, it is impossible to consider fashion in Dakar without considering the distinct performances of youth, and without considering the diversity of youth groups and their distinct practices.

The "conversation" of clothing has also expanded as a result of an increase and diversification of products. Increased volumes of imported secondhand clothing bring a Boule Fale anti-fashion look into view. Although secondhand clothing has been

consumed in Senegal since at least World War II, it was a specialty item then. Today, it is widely consumed and poor youth capitalize on the status of this clothing to make a point about their marginalization. The Boule Fale look thereby includes formerly excluded youth within the fashion record.

The diversification of provenances from which clothing imports arrive in Senegal has engendered youths' international imaginaries and their aspirations for transnational migration. The Style Americain, Style Italien, and Style Francaise speak of a variety of Western emigration destinations and status accompanying these sites. Clothing and footwear may in fact be produced in China or Malaysia, but if a link can be drawn between a good, the suitcase or container it arrives in, and a transurban site, youth can use it to build status. Different families have different transurban connections based on class, patron-clientage, and kinship factors. Thus, the association of clothing and footwear with diverse emigration destinations allows youth of a variety of backgrounds to compete for social status. The value and prevalence of clothing performances in Dakar is reinforced in general by these diverse pathways to achieve impressive social status through clothing and footwear.

The diversification of clothes talk indicates that the adaptation and interpretation of styles vary according to gender, residence, religious orientation, work, economic level and aspirations. That the relationships between individuals and styles are dynamic challenges the notion of global cultural homogenization. The differing views of Notaire and Liberté VI youth show that there are multiple fashion systems in Dakar. One is in the process of being reproduced by forces coming from Liberté youth, who have a strong orientation towards Europe and some sensitivity towards pan-African images (mainstream Rap and a Jamaican imaginary). Another is coming from Notaire youth who have a strong orientation towards religion, and some sensitivity towards pan-rural images such as the Hindu imaginary. Within these spaces, the landscapes of fashion are further fragmented by the views and practices of individual young women and men. The total

picture of the diversity of styles and directions from which they arrive in Dakar demonstrates that Liberté VI and Notaire youth are hooked into a fragmented landscape of global cultural imaginaries in distinct ways. The diversity of styles practiced among diverse youth groups suggests that global commodities do not have the power to further homogenize African culture.

This chapter also highlights the importance of including youth within examinations of cultural phenomenon such as fashion and globalization. Seen through the eyes of youth, the Dakar fashion system is fairly complex and certainly more complicated than researchers have described in the past. A view of fashion through the eyes of youth illuminates how dichotomous frameworks fail to capture all that is being expressed through clothing about Dakar social life.

The ways that clothing styles reflect and speak to the public is one means for understanding clothing commodities. There are additional means for understanding the cultural power of clothing commodities, such as their movement in the market and their dynamics in exchange. In the next chapter we examine clothing commodities from this alternative perspective.

CHAPTER SIX

CLOTHES WALK: THE PRIVATE DIMENSIONS OF CLOTHING COMMODITIES

Chapter Five illustrates how the public dimensions of clothing commodities have expanded and diversified in the context of globalization. Clothes talk focuses on the symbolic messages of dress and provides insight into the social and cultural dimensions of various groups. But the symbolic meanings of material objects are arbitrary. Focusing solely on clothes talk takes for granted the processes which give rise to the symbolic meanings of clothing commodities. Specifically, the way clothes “walk,” or circulate, is overlooked.

Igor Kopytoff (1986) argues that commodities of all types acquire a public image just as a person acquires a “biography,” so do things. The biography of a thing is generated as it passes through the processes of production, distribution and consumption. In other words, the circulation of material goods shapes their reputation, value, and culturally assigned use. Moving in and out of commodity status over the course of a lifetime, goods acquire a public image as well as private meanings.

In studies of small-scale, kinship-based, non-Western contexts, the circulation of goods is acknowledged to be a process that contributes to the reputation of goods and to the development of community ties (Mauss 1950; 1990). As a result, these personal or private dimensions of goods are often viewed as a particular feature of small-scale societies, and not a relevant aspect of large-scale urban centers. James Carrier (1994) points out that the public dimension of commodities is generally an unexplored matter in studies of modern contexts. Commodities magically appear on store shelves, and the processes that brought them there and put them into the hands of consumers are not considered a part of a commodity’s social value or a shaping factor of consumption practices.

On the ground, this hidden aspect of commodities may result from purposive action rather than being a given. Masking commodity trajectories is a means for producers to mystify the biography of goods. Inventing and exoticizing the biography of goods can help maximize profits. Commodity analysts need not take the mystique of commodities for granted. Examining their circulation and exchange shows how their social value is created in diverse cultural contexts even if the conditions of their production remain invented or obscure.

In the case of Dakar, the circulation of goods through particular consumption sites is significant to the cultural meaning and value of clothing commodities. Some marketplaces are commonly depicted as urban spaces dominated by peasants, itinerant peddlers, and cheap labor. The rest are typically characterized as high-tech shopping malls, self-service supermarkets, and boutiques, all saturated with capital-intensive shopping aids that replace labor. Such aids include shopping carts, escalators, self-service food courts, and cyber cafes (Plattner 1989:171-208). In fact, clothing commodities in Dakar are sold from both types of marketplaces. The reputation and character of markets shapes how and why youth consume clothing and the social meanings they assign to goods. Forms of exchange are equally diverse. Apparel and footwear are procured through gift exchange, commercial exchange, and various forms of generalized, balanced and negative reciprocity. The dynamics of exchange also shape the social value and meanings of the clothing commodities that youth consume.

The pages below describe the variety of clothing consumption sites and forms of exchange in Dakar. The description of these sites and dynamics reveals the large role that personal relationships play in clothing consumption. One might assume that personal relationships would play a role on grounds that Dakar is a non-Western, kinship-based society whose inhabitants are likely to embrace a Maussian gift-exchange ethos. One might also take Dakar for a peasant urban center with marketplaces primarily motored by

long-distance itinerant peddling (Plattner 1989: 171-193). Personal relationships would therefore prevail in commerce.

This chapter argues that clothing consumption and exchange in Dakar represents none of the above. Instead, the circumstances of globalization have re-created a central role of personal relationships in clothing commodity transactions. Not a leftover from a rural past, these personal ties are a modern feature of the commerce taking place in Dakar--a contemporary, large-scale, urban society--and they contribute to the value that is embedded within clothing commodities.

The Geography of Consumption Sites

The section that follows briefly reviews the variety of clothing consumption sites that now exist in Dakar. Clothing consumption sites are one of many kinds of marketplaces within the city. According to the last official count in 1986, there were 25 formal municipal markets in Dakar. Private boutiques, shops and stores too numerous to count have since arisen in the center city and suburbs. Six of the twenty-five counted in 1986 were created by administrative decisions, three by colonial administrations--Sandaga (the largest clothing and produce market), Kermel (a produce and flower market), and Tilène (a produce market for Medina)--and three by post-colonial administrations: H.L.M. V (a textile market), Guele Tape (a fish market), and Fass (a produce market). Planning for the other nineteen was slow but local people lost no time inscribing commerce into various available spaces.

Clothing market spaces in Dakar are sources of informal employment for many. According to Annick Osmont, who conducted a comprehensive study of the city's markets in 1980, Dakar and Pikine markets employed 28,000 people, slightly more than a

third of the informal sector jobs at the time (Osmont 1986: 30-33).¹ Given the limited jobs in the formal sector, the vending of clothing and other commodities has expanded. The number of people employed in apparel and footwear retail is likely to be much greater today.

Dakar's clothing markets are primarily controlled and operated by men. According to Osmont (1986), in Sandaga in 1980, 80.7 percent (1168) of the 1447 vendors were men, and 19 percent (279) were women (115). To the eye and absent newer statistics, this pattern appears to continue in all the clothing markets today. Colobane, in fact, has an unusually high ratio of men to women, perhaps because of this market's problems with security. Women in commerce are more visible in the neighborhood produce markets. This gender division in Dakar's markets resonates with patterns observed in other cities in West Africa where Islam predominates (House-Midamba and Ekechi 1995; Turrutin 1986). Women are not completely absent from the clothing commerce, however. Many work behind the scenes at various levels of importing, locally and internationally, including the import of secondhand clothes (Sarr 1998). Many are also employed in tailoring clothing.

Another central feature of clothing markets is the overwhelming presence of youth. While statistics have not yet been collected to translate this image into numbers, it is obvious to the visitor at any one of a large range of places where clothing is sold. First, unemployment among youth in Dakar is so high that many young people hang around the markets, seeking opportunities to procure money. In the meantime they pass their day in the company of friends. Second, in a young population dominates the city's demographics, hence youth comprise a large portion of consumers. Third, clothing is often used by youth in Dakar, as all over the world, to create their identity, making them

¹ According to Osmont who drew upon the urban development plan of 1980, there were roughly 75,000 jobs in the informal sector for roughly a population of 1,160,000 in Dakar in 1980 (Osmont 1986:33).

an important presence in the shopping scene (Hebdige 1979; McRobbie 1991; Nava 1992; Willis 1990). Fourth, in the global clothing market, young people are a targeted consumer group. High volumes of clothing and footwear are designed to attract them. These products are prominent in Dakar, and draw youth into the markets described below.

“En Ville”

Sandaga, Ponty, Marché du Port, Centre Commercial, Touba Sandaga, and Score are five areas that define downtown shopping in Dakar, or shopping “*en ville*.” These sites are in the center of town and close to the port where incoming containers arrive. They showcase the latest goods, and many feel that goods bought *en ville* render one “*branché*,” full of status. In most of these markets youth search out “*ceeb*,” which in Wolof means rice. In Senegal, rice is a staple grain considered to be the “authentic” Senegalese food. In the clothing context, *ceeb* refers to original, authentic (versus knockoff) brand-name clothing.

Sandaga: The Central Municipal Market

Inside Sandaga market, the interiors of canteens are designed to create a relaxing atmosphere that will interest shoppers. The average canteen is generally four feet square or smaller. Despite the tight quarters, canteens are packed with merchandise that is displayed on shelves, on the walls, and in glass display cases rolled out in front. Vendors rotate their displays frequently so their stalls appear freshly stocked and appealing every day. Despite the small size, some canteens have small squares of carpeting and mini benches where shoppers may rest. A soft, relaxing blue or rose colored light bulb adds atmosphere; a few vendors burn incense. Some have an electric fan that is turned on

when customers arrive, and if there is no electric fan, a woven hand fan is brought out for the customer's comfort.

This zone of comfort stands in great contrast to the market the shopper has just walked through. Canteens are arranged in a maze of narrow walkways that make for a closed-in feeling. The quantities of clothes, display cases, and *mbalax* music blaring out from some of the stalls overload the senses. Vendors all know and greet one another as they pass by each other's stalls. Visitors do the same unless they are not familiar with the market, in which case they are lead by *courtiers*, youth who are petty brokers and can easily detect newcomers. They follow behind their customers with the intention of directing them and or pickpocketing them. When they contract with customers, they generally direct them to canteens operated by friends, relatives, and acquaintances who are likely to pay them a commission for bringing in a customer. Traversing Sandaga requires a great deal of stamina until one enters the safety of a canteen. That momentary respite ceases the minute the *wahale* (bargaining) or haggling begins. Sandaga merchants are skillful and they enjoy the back and forth of negotiations. Tiring the consumer by low-key and forceful haggling is one of many strategies vendors employ.

Sandaga is both a building and a broader neighborhood where commerce is conducted. The marketplace proper lies between Avenue de Jauneguiberry, Avenue de President Lamine Gueye and Sandinieri, on less than an acre of land. Part of the market is a two-story "*bâtiment halle*" alongside a maze of canteens. Beyond the maze is a street lined with kiosks and more canteens. Within the neighborhood, there are sub-sections or enclaves that specialize in particular items. Flaurus contains the warehouses that stock ceramic tiles and plumbing material. In Pac Lambaye one finds secondhand furniture and appliances, and the Rue Raffenel is the location of black market money exchange. In between these neighborhoods of warehouses and goods, mosques, residences and low-budget dining halls dot the landscape.

According to some, the word “Sandaga” is derived from an African word *daga* (to give a price; place of exchange) and *Sandial* is said to be the former name of the neighborhood behind the market. The formal marketplace in Sandaga was built in 1933. It is a designated cultural heritage site, and planners await funds to renovate it. During the colonial period, Sandaga was strategically designed to facilitate commerce coming into Dakar through the port, and at a distance from the main European residential neighborhoods. Over time, its strategic position helped to make it the center of commerce in Dakar. Today trailers tow containers through the narrow, Parisian-like streets, delivering large shipments directly to warehouses in the neighborhood. In the colonial era, planners did not foresee the invention of SUVs, or the necessity for space for parking and unloading containers. Consequently, the centrality of Sandaga to commerce has created congestion within the city center.

Initially, Sandaga functioned as a local neighborhood market that sold produce and meat, although other activities took place in its building. Elders remember attending boxing matches on the top floor in the 1950’s, and patronizing chicken vendors, also on that floor. Today, produce and meat are sold on one side of the market, the *halle*, while clothing, cosmetics and electronics are sold in the closed-in, maze-like part. On occasion a dance troupe now uses the upstairs floor for rehearsals. In the late afternoons, the sound of the *tum-tum* adds to the flavor of this very animated neighborhood.

It was not possible to fix the precise number of canteens and stalls in the Sandaga market. According to the Plan Directeur d’Urbanisme, in 1986 it had 524 canteens and 743 stalls (Plan Directeur d’Urbanisme 1986: 30). This makes Sandaga one of the biggest formal markets in Dakar.² Of the approximately 1,000 or so fixed vending sites counted in Osmont’s 1980 study, there were 102 tailors, 141 shoe vendors, 130 cosmetic vendors, 68 places for the sale of clothing, 67 places for the sale of textiles, 110 places where local

² Thiaroye-Gare in the suburbs is much larger than Sandaga. There is an interesting description of this market. See Ryszard Kapusćin’ski (2001).

artists and jewelry makers worked, and 127 vendors of electronics (Osmont, 1987: 111). It is probable that the number of tailors has since diminished while the number of factory- and sweatshop-produced clothing vendors has increased.

Sandaga is the primary supplier of manufactured and imported clothing to the center city, suburban, and regional markets. Car Rapids coming from Pikine, Thiaroye-Gare, and Castor take clothing, textiles, shoes, and other imported fashion goods back to the outer neighborhoods and suburbs. According to Senegal's official import statistics, nearly 13 thousand tons of ready-made clothing were imported into Senegal in 1997 (Direction de la Prevision et de la Statistique 1999: 221 and 231). This figure is conservative, however, as it does not account for all of the clothing officially reported³ under different categories of fabrics. Nor does it account for the imported contraband in the suitcase trade. It also misses all the clothing that is inaccurately counted,⁴ and clothing that for one reason or another does not fit within the standard categorizations of imports. Much of this imported merchandise lands in the hands of Sandaga merchants before making its way out to other points. In 1998, ready-made clothing was imported from a host of countries including France, Italy, Belgium, United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, Thailand, Indonesia, Republic of China (and Hong Kong), South Korea, Japan, the U.S., the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Turkey, Morocco, Ivory Coast, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh (Direction de la Prevision et de la Statistique 1999: 225-242).

Originally, in my research I intended to trace the volume of blue jeans imported to Senegal. Unfortunately, the categorization of imports changed in the 1970's and today it

³ The above number is based on adding together the kilo weight of commodities categorized by codes 61 (Clothing and Clothing Accessories in Knitwear) and 62 (Clothing and Clothing Accessories in Fabrics other than Knitwear) of standardized codes for the region. Other clothing items are found under additional categories of fabric and clothing items.

⁴ Customs taxes are high such that importers customarily work with contra-documents, faux invoices that intentionally misrepresent the volume and value of merchandise.

is difficult to pin down a specific item and follow it over time. In 1975, for example, customs logs lumped all “Men’s Clothing” together (code 610100): 62,226 kilos were imported to Senegal at a value of 146,545,274 CFA. Today, the primary categories are more specific. Still, it is interesting to note that the sources of men’s clothing in 1975 are somewhat different than the sources of men’s clothing in 1998. Then the list of countries exporting clothing to Senegal included, for example, Liberian goods of over 1,000 kilos, in addition to the countries one would expect (e.g., France, Italy, Morocco, Ivory Coast, China and Hong Kong). African countries such as Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Ghana, Dahomey (Benin), Nigeria, Gabon, Gambia and Niger also figured as exporters. Today these countries barely register on the logs, although it is well known that a good deal of Nigerian counterfeit clothing comes into Senegal through the Gambia.

Ponty

Ponty is one of the oldest commercial strips in the city. Elders remember it as a key part of their *dioxantu*, a leisurely promenade in a circuit around the city. The general route for strolling passed by the grand cathedral, the Presidential Palace, the Place d’Independence, and circled back around to Ponty.

Named after William Ponty, a French colonial administrator who founded Western schools in Senegal in the nineteenth century, this commercial street lives up to its name--that is, if one considers window-shopping and price comparison a form of education. This narrow commercial street, approximately a quarter-mile long, extends from the central plaza directly to the roundabout that opens up onto Sandaga. Ponty is a shaded street that is often filled with exhaust from the bumper-to-bumper traffic of yellow taxis, Vespas and Sonatrak buses. Each side of the street is lined with an array of upscale shops, including clothing and textile boutiques, appliance stores, cafés, fast food restaurants, a photo-developing laboratory, and an Asian import shop. There are also a movie theatre, cyber cafés, a post office and a bar frequented by tourists and prostitutes.

While Ponty was amenable to leisurely strolls and window shopping in the 1950's, today the sidewalks are too crowded for promenading and peering at window displays. They are packed with street vendors who have flowed over from Sandaga and out of Touba Sandaga, an enclave off of Ponty where one finds yet more clothing shops and shops oriented to the souvenir-buying tourist. These shops feature piles of wooden sculpted masks, pop-art fashioned out of recycled tuna cans and scrap wires, and *sous-verre* paintings.⁵

Along Ponty, vendors set piles of manufactured clothing on narrow tables that make it difficult to walk shoulder-to-shoulder with another person on the sidewalk. The closer one moves towards Sandaga, the more congested it becomes. The upper part of Ponty, near the Touba canteens, is where many courtiers hang out, awaiting to accost shoppers. These brokers can be very persistent in their pursuit, following their prey throughout the market even when informed their services are not needed. If anything, the rejections often motivate these market guides to be even more persistent.

One strategy is to tolerate them until they get bored or give up the chase. Another is to come to Ponty with a clear mission and destination in mind. Without a clear mission, a shopper is easy prey to the youth courtiers. For this reason, many informally research the goods they plan to buy before arriving at Ponty. Shoppers often direct themselves to shops and vendors they already know, or visit vendors in the market who are relatives or friends, or who have been recommended by relatives and friends. Not only does reporting to a well-known contact facilitate shopping, but it facilitates purchasing goods at the right price. Shopping through contacts increases one's chances of obtaining a discount.

⁵ An art imported from the East that entails painting symbolic images on glass that is then reversed before framing.

Marché du Port

The Port is a recently renovated commercial building near the docks and in front of a gas station that also acts as the informal Ndiaga Ndieye bus terminal. In the contemporary history of Dakar, the port has been a main source for modern fashion and ready-made clothing, a role that is now diminishing. Elders remember buying their first pairs of jeans from American sailors at the port in the 1950's. Younger adults remember the port as the place in the 1970's to buy Lois and Garcia jeans imported from Las Palmas and Morocco, and Wrangler jeans imported from France. In the mid-1980's the port was a place where one could find elements to create the "*Luska*" style, a Michael Jackson look with short pants that exposed brand name socks.

In the early 1990's, before this market was renovated, it was also the place to buy a popular classic brand of jeans, Karl Kani. Today the Marché du Port continues to feature the latest imports, including Levis 501 jeans that come to Dakar in shared containers via Morocco. Since its renovation, the size of the shopping area at the port has been much reduced. Although one still shops there for ready-made clothing, today Marché de Port is a much less animated place than Sandaga.

Centre Commerce Touba Sandaga (CCTS)

Touba Sandaga is a privately owned, five-story high-rise shopping mall located in Sandaga, the heart of the commercial district of Dakar. Centre Commerce Touba Sandaga (CCTS) is named after the Holy City of the Murid-Islamic faith which is also the headquarters of a unique Senegalese trading community. Bara Mboup, the owner, is a well-known Murid entrepreneur who got his start by importing secondhand clothing.

In contrast to its neighboring colonial buildings, wooden kiosks and the animated street life of Sandaga, CCTS is a luxurious, modern building. Inside there are approximately 174 vending spaces, a three-story high indoor waterfall, several sets of elevators, electrical security gates, an indoor parking garage, television monitors on every

floor, restaurant, banks, mosques and an over air conditioned cyber café. Spaces rent for about 500,000 CFA a month (about \$800) after a 5,000,000 CFA (\$8,000) deposit is made. This is a lot compared to an average space in Sandaga which costs between 75,000 (\$125) -150,000 (\$250) per month.

The modern and ordered atmosphere of the mall attracts shoppers. Floors are organized like a traditional French *halle*, by categories of goods (e.g. textiles on the first floor, ready-made clothing on the second, etc.). A staff in uniform constantly sweeps the hallways and guards the public bathrooms. Shoppers can wander the halls freely for there are few aggressive shopping brokers. Although the mall is a somewhat controlled environment, browsing in the mall is not unlike browsing the neighborhood. The walk through the mall, the seeing and being seen, resonates with the neighborhood *doxantu*. By the same token, with ambulant vendors occupying numerous formal and informal spaces of the neighborhood, a walk in some neighborhoods entails as many commercial opportunities as shopping in the mall.

The mall is a new leisure space for young people. Many of its stores are geared towards clothing and electronics consumption, two markets that often target youth consumers. Elders, wary of the electric elevators, tend to avoid the mall. This further makes it a place where youth can temporarily escape the controlling eye of parents. In the mall, they spend their time visiting stores to investigate new merchandise, visiting relatives and friends who work in the mall, and visiting stores to keep oneself busy while unemployed. Many of the shops have chairs to accommodate the frequent visitors. In an effort to attract the public beyond one's relatives and friends, vendors rely on familiar marketing techniques found in boutiques throughout Dakar. Soft blue or rose-colored light bulbs illuminate the store and *churray* (locally-produced incense with erotic associations) burns in the corner.

Score

Although not a primary site for downtown youth clothes shopping, Score does offer ready-made clothing and, as an exception to the examples mentioned above, it is worth discussing.

Score is a one-stop supermarket-department store located downtown. A second Score is located on Bourgiba and a third is on the road to Guediawaye. This last Score was not open during the time of my field work. Score sells groceries, clothing, hygienic products, kitchen wares, stationary, jewelry and film development. Score owners invest capital in developing the store environment. Shopping carts, conveyor belt check-out counters, and aisles with merchandise marked with fixed price tags are primary features of the store. In addition to these supermarket institutions, which supplant labor while driving up the prices, Score provides some manual labor services. For example, at the checkout counters “bag boys” who are actually adult men, pack customers’ purchases into bags. A valet outside of the building helps customers flag down taxi cabs and load in their packages.

Because the prices of items are generally slightly higher at Score than in boutiques in the city, at least two types of customers shop there. Middle class Senegalese in search of special imported items, and extra status for shopping in an expensive store, represent a portion of the clientele. Foreigners and privileged Senegalese who prefer to pay higher prices in exchange for anonymity also prefer to shop at Score. Foreigners who do not have connections with vendors and courtiers are often disadvantaged when it comes to shopping; therefore, a high priced supermarket-department store enables them to shop without being pestered by courtiers. Some privileged Senegalese, preferring not to expose their wealth in the general markets, find safety shopping in a controlled and anonymous environment such as Score.

Textiles Sources: H.L.M.

Satin and shiny threads come to mind when describing H.L.M., for this market is dedicated to selling textiles and tailored clothing. As discussed in Chapter Four, among the two groups of youth sampled in this study, youth from the suburbs tend to esteem African tailored clothing and frequent H.L.M. more than Liberté VI youth. It is a place to find good buys on interesting textiles. It is also a place to find relatives from the suburbs sewing and selling their goods.

While walking by kiosks that are interspersed with curb-side canteens, one sees ndockets with satin trim suspended on hangers high in the air, to catch the eye. Hard at work inside the small canteens, tailors hunch over old hand-operated Singer sewing machines decorated with gold leaf swirls. They carefully position textiles under a thin needle while dexterous fingers gently spin a stiff side-wheel. Some have electric sewing machines with foot pedals for keeping the needle and the work moving along. In H.L.M., one also sees rolls of the narrow strip textile "*seru rahal*," which is sewn into broader blankets and given as marriage gifts. In some cases, these expensive dark textiles, replete with silver and gold threads, cover babies that are strapped to their mother's back.

H.L.M. is the city's second largest textile market after Sandaga. The market inherited its name from the neighborhood, which is in fact a housing project (*Société Nationale des Habitation à Loyer Moderné*) built in 1960. Originally, H.L.M. was designed to provide housing for civil servants of the lower ranks. Today the neighborhood is densely populated with families of various economic circumstances. Smaller than Sandaga, there were 291 stalls and 535 canteens in H.L.M. in 1986 (Direction de la Prevision et de la Statistique 1986: 30). Since that time there has been some construction and extension of the market.

Most of the textiles sold in H.L.M. are imported from the Netherlands, Austria, Germany, France, India, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. Some also come from Mauritania, Ivory Coast and Ghana. As discussed in Chapter Two, Dakar once had a

productive textile industry, but the first generation of elites in post-Independence Senegal hollowed out the core capital of this industry and aggravated its decline. Today, most of the textiles produced in Senegal come from the currently Indian-owned factory S.O.T.I.B.A., and are luxury textiles exported for profit. On special occasions local textile production does, however, become prominent in the market. For example, within recent years, textiles were specifically produced to celebrate Bill Clinton's visit to Senegal, the Senegalese "Tyson", and the former president Abdou Diouf during his campaign for re-election in 2000. Specially printed textiles featuring the photographic images of these celebrities were released onto the market; consumers bought them to make garments and other items that could be worn and displayed as a sign of support.

Colobane: Center of Fëggy Jaay Distribution

In the 1960's, Colobane was considered to be the outskirts of Dakar, and in the 1970's, it was primarily a mango market frequented by rural migrant vendors. Eventually a bus terminal and the secondhand clothing market took over from the mangos. As the city grew, the traffic increased. Today, the space surrounding the Colobane proper is so overcrowded with buses, cars and taxis trying to get into the city, that during rush hour, vehicles customarily drive over the sidewalk that borders the roundabout. Colobane is the market where youth come to find "*cere*," which in Wolof means couscous, the secondary meal of the day in Senegal. In this context, *cere*, in contrast to authentic *ceeb* or rice, refers to knockoffs. "*Fëggy jaay*," meaning shake and sell, or secondhand clothing, is also found there.

Like Sandaga, Colobane is both a specific marketplace with an organized structure, and part of a broader neighborhood that bears the same name. Inside the maze-like interior are rows of canteens just like those in Sandaga. However, many vendors do not operate a proper canteen, but have a space with a high wooden platform upon which they display their goods. Others operate out of precariously-covered canteens, and many

vending places are patched together from wood, plastic sheets and cardboard. The alleyways that run between canteens are dimly lit which enhances the vendors' chances of selling knockoffs and items with slight defects.

In contrast, the sun shines brightly on another row of canteens facing a main road. On this side of the market, there is no hiding the fact that many of the goods for sale are used and in some cases beyond repair. A great number of canteens offer clothing, such as running suits, sneakers and jeans; in others one can buy pots and pans, hand and gym bags, used plastic water guns without triggers, stained and worn stuffed animals, and board games in boxes that are covered with scribble. According to the government's study of the city in 1986, the Colobane market contained 124 canteens and 1005 stalls. This ratio of canteens (generally constructed out of cement) to stalls (generally made of temporary materials) indicates something of the character of this market and its secondhand merchandise.

Within the neighborhood of Colobane, there are numerous large and medium sized warehouses that stock secondhand clothing, rags, shoes, bags and other items by the baleful. Stacks of bales in light green, pink and clear plastic wrapping bound with thin straps of metal fill these dark but often newly constructed buildings. The bales are shipped to Senegal in 20' and 40' containers from Toronto, Brooklyn, and various small cities in the textile belt of the U.S., and from a few cities in France, Italy, Spain and Germany. Some warehouses engage in retail sales; others send the merchandise to family-related warehouses in the interior or they flip merchandise to distributors who work in the interiors of Mali, Burkina Faso, and the Cape Verdian Islands, as well as Senegal.

Typically, there is a desk in the front of the warehouse where visitors are greeted. If necessary an order is taken and a carbon copy invoice form is filled out. In some warehouses, merchants wear brown and light green mbubbus or *thiaya*-kaftans with baggy pants that are more typically seen in rural areas. They lean against the bales as if

they were chairs and beds for resting upon. While they drape themselves across the bundled clothing, they philosophize in Wolof about the ups and downs of business, making many references to God and the teachings of the Koran to emphasize their points.

At daybreak the action begins in Colobane. The first bales of secondhand clothing are split open at this time. Petty traders who have just gambled and bought bales from distributors, and the distributors themselves, sell items at retail prices to ambulant traders who, in turn, may wash, iron, and package the clothing in plastic bags to make it appear new. Some consumers are not aware of these tricks. Others are but do not care. Many sales are made in this fashion.

The neighborhood of Colobane is poor and has a reputation for danger. Its tough character is first suggested by the strong smells of diesel oil, urine, dirt and mangos that fill the air. The danger, in part, stems from poverty. It is also related to the market where the territorially-minded petty traders often use violence as a means of staking their claims. In the struggle for a foothold, bands of traders and their associates sabotage the efforts of newcomers by stealing their merchandise and/or causing bodily harm. According to several traders whom I know, it is difficult to break into the secondhand clothing market without undergoing a violent initiation. One was assaulted in the early morning at the market by a gang of young men with knives. Although they slashed his fingers and took off with his goods, he put up a good fight and was, by his account, never threatened again.

Violence and danger are not the market's only features. Here are born new fashion trends based on knockoffs and using counterfeit logos. If shoppers are looking for knockoffs they start at Colobane, not Sandaga. What they often find are new cheap and alternative cultural trends exemplified by Marimar garb (see Chapter Four).

Neighborhood Markets, Boutiques and Tailors' Shops

Many of the oldest neighborhoods in Dakar do not have special market areas, although newer planned neighborhoods, such as Liberté VI, have small ones. These neighborhoods also have clothing boutiques and tailors' workshops. Clothing boutiques are easily recognized because the shops are often given flashy names such as "Broadway" or "Downtown." Goods are often displayed in a front window, hung in the doorway, or on a mannequin placed outside in the street. The reputation of these shops and the goods within depends on who operates them and that person's relationship with others in the community.

By contrast the suburbs contain several larger inter-neighborhood markets where clothing and produce are sold in large quantities. In Pikine-Zinc, for example, one can find the latest ready-made clothing for sale in a market comprised of a long lane of tall, metal canteens painted blue which line the main road. Although lacking a central space, Pikine-Zinc in the 1980's nevertheless had 475 canteens and 392 stalls (Osmont 1986: 30). It is likely to have grown since then.

The artisan production of clothing in Dakar is a vast industry with many levels to it. There are expensive boutiques such as those near Place d'Indépendance where mbubbs can cost approximately 70,000 to 120,000 francs (\$100 to \$200 USA). Within neighborhoods and around the markets tailors install small workshops in the front of their houses or in rented rooms. They invest little in the decoration of their shops, apart from hanging up a few examples of clothing that they can make, and installing a padded bench or plastic chairs for their customers' comfort. Many tailors collect department store catalogues from which customers select models of clothing.

Many years ago, tailors and seamstresses had the *La Redoute* catalogue on hand; today there is JC Penny too. Thick photo albums serve as alternative catalogues. In these albums the viewer sees photographs of women and men wearing a range of fashionable clothing that the tailor has made and documented. There are photos of various styles of

mbubbs (African robes), ndockets (long dresses with camisole tops; less ample than a mbubb), other types of outfits and various styles of embroidery. Photos of modern clothing are also featured in the photo album.

Rotating Markets: *Marché Louma*

The marché louma refers to a series of rotating markets that take place in the interior where there are not many full-scale markets or not enough population density to support a daily market with full stock. The rotating market in Dakar increasingly specializes in secondhand clothing, along with a limited amount of new and modern tailored clothing. Before the end of my fieldwork, a new site on the market circuit emerged on a narrow walkway near Khary Yalla. On Tuesdays and Thursdays this market is in Guediawaye, on Fridays at the Grand Mosque in Dakar, but now on other weekdays one finds it at the traffic divider, near the cinema in Parcelles Assainies Unite 1, and in Rufisque. A core group of vendors follows the market as it moves from place to place, paying truckers to transport their goods. The system of renting space in a truck requires vendors to follow close behind. There are no guarantees that these trucks will not disappear or that bundles from the trucks will not be missing. Given the market's stable, core group of vendors, shoppers can easily build relationships with them.

The marché louma spaces are generally in wide-open areas with little protection from the sun. Grand Dakar has some trees but in Guediawaye there are none, and it is very hot for both the sellers and the shoppers. Yet, despite the heat, many people are there all day long--women, in particular, since it is not far from the produce markets which they visit on a daily basis. The marché louma, serves as a diversion from the general routine for some women.

In the market, vendors lay out their goods on blankets or pile them in a heap on a tarp or low, portable table. A few bring picnic table umbrellas to create shade as well to display their goods, dangling bras, sneakers and baseball caps from the spokes. Hanging

things in this fashion is one way of displaying a mix of both high quality secondhand items and newly manufactured low-budget items. In the case of athletic footwear, for example, some secondhand items are in fairly decent condition, and when displayed next to a new pair of knockoff sneakers, only the footwear connoisseur can tell the difference. Mixing old and new items of fashion is a useful strategy of marché louma vendors. Many young consumers in Dakar, however, are very discerning when it comes to sneakers so not all shoppers are equally confused by the mélange of goods.

There are at least two moods at this market. On the one hand, it is a lively and friendly place where vendors and regular customers know and greet one another and where the vendors engage in some entertaining play to drum up business. In one corner, for example, three young male vendors wear bras and play with the clothing to attract attention. In another, a young man invents songs on the spot about his international goods. As shoppers go by he highlights the countries his secondhand clothing comes from. As I go by, he incorporates within his song the names of the countries that he thinks I might be from, mentioning Russia, Spain, France, then finally the U.S. These spontaneous performances make the market a fun and lighthearted place despite the heat and shoppers' pushing and shoving as they try to uncover unique items in the mounds of piled up clothing.

There is also a darker, alternative mood. While there are many energetic young people in operation, in my visits to Guediawaye, I observed a number of adult traders looking very fatigued. In conversing with some of them, it came as no surprise that their tired looks are the result of working in the heat, the meager profits turned by selling secondhand clothing, and the general ups and downs of life.

In the suburbs, rotating markets are viewed as interesting places to visit because of the variety of goods that arrive and for the convenience the market offers. In Dakar prayer, as mentioned in Chapter Five, some individuals with wealth look down upon these "low brow" markets; they see them as adding to the already bad traffic situation in

the center city. In contrast, others who are becoming accustomed to secondhand clothing view rotating markets more positively.

Informal Spaces of Exchange: Ambulant Vendors

Ambulant vendors comprise an additional “market.” Formal markets are magnetic physical sites that draw consumers. Ambulant vendors create extensions of these places as they move out into the streets and neighborhoods to facilitate the accessibility of goods. As mentioned in Chapter One, ambulant vendors do their work in numerous expected and unexpected, public and private spaces. Ambulant vending is pervasive in Dakar where there is little formal work.

Bajekk Juroom is a particular form of commerce associated with the Tukolor cyclical and permanent vendor. Bajekk Juroom means in Wolof “the daily 25 francs.” This expression refers to a particular door-to-door strategy for vending small items. The Bajekk Juroom vendor selects a neighborhood to work in and gets to know all of the households by dropping by, chatting, and gradually inserting himself within the group as a friend of the family. Once accepted by the family, he begins to impose his goods on them, encouraging them to keep the goods. When there is no money to pay for them an agreement is made. Every day he drops by, the family will put 25 francs towards the purchase. Adding 200 or more francs to the market price, the vendor eventually makes a profit. Ultimately, it is the Bajekk Juroom’s exchange of gossip with families in the neighborhood that leverages him in collecting their credit payments.

Although ambulant vending is a dominant force in the city, vendors do not always carry their goods around with them, and therefore it is not always clear when one is moving into a commercial zone. For example, young women who sell fantasy jewelry and handbags typically wear their samples as advertisements. Tukolor textile dyers also wear their work. This makes for a situation where briefly commenting upon someone’s attractive clothing or accoutrements can land one unexpectedly into the dynamics of

commerce. For some vendors, consuming clothing is a strategy for selling it, and the body becomes a tool that simultaneously takes part in the processes of consumption and exchange. Middlemen (and women) in these “provisioning relationships” of commerce and the city (Hannerz 1980) have been described as “technicians of globalization” (Bestor 2001: 77).

In addition to these examples of ordinary technicians, there are some extraordinary ones. During the weeks of a football tournament important for Senegal, I observed a young man attempting to sell bandanas and clothing fashioned in prints like the national flag. Walking along a main road, he was dressed in thiaya (clothing typically worn by farmers) that was the colors of the Senegalese flag. On his head he wore a bandana of the flag's colors, and in his arms he carried his goods for sale: more flag-colored bandanas and kaftans. This vendor prompted a reaction from many people in the streets. He also stopped traffic, making a few sales to people in cars. In effect, as a physical repetition of the national flag and an exotic representation of rural men, this urban youth converted himself into a spectacle for others to enjoy, an object for consumption, and a more effective salesman all at once. Consumption, as a commercial strategy for technicians of globalization, contributes cultural meaning to the urban milieu. Vending spectacles are frequent in Dakar, and it is generally youth who stage them.

Commercial Sites and the Personal Dimensions of Commodity Transactions

Dakar is home to a range of marketplace forms. Some represent the newest commercial arrangements such as boutiques, supermarket-department stores and shopping malls. Others represent traditional urban forms of markets such as the outdoor market and the rotating market. In yet other instances, commercial exchanges occur within informal spaces. Just as the previous chapter indicates, the provenance of clothing gives goods particular meanings and status. Goods from *en ville* make one appear *branché*. Clothing made from particular tailors can also bring one status. Clothing

obtained from secondhand markets confers both status and stigma, depending upon who is performing the evaluations. In short, the sites from which clothing commodities are procured contribute to their social meanings.

Formal marketplaces are the sites where many imported clothing commodities are generally first offered to consumers. In the past twenty-five years, the number of formal and informal consumption sites has expanded. As a result, consumers are frequently in contact with newly arriving goods, whether they would like to be or not. Dakarais' general knowledge of apparel and footwear is shaped by the dominant presence of markets and vendors. In the past few years, the low-budget markets, in particular, have expanded. Thus, the range of diversely priced goods has also expanded, enabling a wide range of consumers to participate in fashion consumption in Dakar.

Given the diversity of formal marketplaces and the size of the city, one might expect impersonal transactions to play a bigger role in clothing consumption. However, even in the shopping mall, personal relationships play a large role in connecting clients with vendors. The inundation of commodities in Dakar makes the recommendation of buying goods from a friend or relative that much more important. With so many clothing commodities filling up the city, extensive research is required before making a purchase. In this case, it helps to be referred to a vendor who is likely to give a discount or to accept credit. The circumstances of globalization have put many out of work and this has boosted the need for credit, in turn intensifying the need for consumers to cultivate personal relationships in order to consume.

Procurement Strategies and Forms of Exchange

Consumption sites are one part of a commodity's biography. The ways in which clothing commodities move from stock to store to wardrobe and then into the hands of relatives, friends and neighbors, comprise another part of the story. The pages below describe a number of strategies Dakar consumers use to procure clothing commodities.

Personal connections are central to creating consumption opportunities. However, in the context of globalization, personal relationships come under a new strain. The expectations that personal relationships facilitate clothing consumption are very high. In some cases, the need to consume exceeds the strength of the personal connection, leading many relationships to break under the pressure.

An understanding of clothing consumption strategies was derived from participant observation with youth in Liberté VI and Notaire and from comments provided in household surveys and fashion photo questionnaires conducted among youth in these two neighborhoods. Youth from both groups predominantly rely on “parents” for procuring their clothing, although they employ a number of other strategies too. In Dakar, the concept parents, as is discussed in Chapter Two, is a broad category that includes aunts and uncles as well as older siblings and cousins. Youth in both groups talked about relatives abroad who had sent them clothing. As described earlier, Liberté VI youth, in particular, boasted about having relatives abroad who supplied them with clothing. While Liberté VI youth report a majority of their relatives abroad live in the U.S. and France, Notaire youth, in contrast, report that their relatives are predominantly in Italy and in neighboring African countries including Gabon and Ivory Coast.

Sharing, Swapping, “Borrowing,” Renting

Youth from both neighborhoods report expanding their wardrobes by sharing their clothing with siblings and friends. Catholic youth, however, stood apart in this practice. Some Catholics even report that their parents prohibit them from sharing, as they do not consider it to be hygienic or proper.

Youth in Wolof families are brought up to understand things as communal property. Two children, for example, enjoy a pair of rollerskates when each uses one skate, rather than one child using both skates while the other waits for a turn. This logic in sharing objects is commonly applied in various aspects of life. The notion of

communal ownership, though, does not imply that kids freely trade their clothing with whomever, whenever. Individuals also have a notion of private property and in certain cases they are unwilling to share, particularly when they do not have confidence that there will be reciprocity. When in doubt, some refuse to share even minor items such as sunglasses and scarves. When it comes to clothing, siblings generally share as do close friends who live nearby.

A number of youth from both neighborhoods talked about renting their clothing to friends. For example, several in Liberté VI talked about renting shoes for 500 francs (\$1). A sneaker trader in the rotating secondhand market also talked about renting shoes to youth he knew very well, although he did not specify the amount.

At first glance, renting clothing looks like an entrepreneurial response to the declining economic situation. In my consultations with youth, however, renting appears to be the result of young people's efforts to prevent rupturing social ties in the event that valued property is not returned. When friends ask to borrow things, the pressure is great to comply in order to maintain solidarity. If borrowed items are not returned, friendships are at risk. And, in neighborhoods where family and neighborly networks are tight, displeasure with a person over lending clothing that is never returned may not be worth jeopardizing the various other social relationships that may be called into play in the event of a public conflict. Renting is a means of negotiating sharing and its limits within the context of reduced resources. Renting also helps to clarify that a situation is not one of "borrowing," which is sometimes a coded way of saying "taking and not returning." For youth who do not know each other that well, borrowing may be both a rapid introduction and conclusion to a friendship.

In a typical household there is a great flow of visitors moving in and out all day long. Families that receive many visitors are viewed as having status; visitors, even if they are complete strangers, are welcomed into the home. That said, many have the need to protect themselves from neighborly borrowing. They do this by locking up everything

of value—including the telephone, the refrigerator, the water tap, the doors, windows, and the wardrobes, trunks and suitcases where clothing is stored. When heads of households do not take such extensive precautions, neighbors in constant need of water and youth in constant need of telephone conversations freely help themselves without any return. The limits of borrowing can easily become problematic when they are not clarified.

Mbarane and Mbaxal

Another strategy for consuming clothing that is commonly talked about is the *mbarane*, which means to play someone, as in to flirt with someone, with the objective of obtaining money and if not money, gifts of clothing. This is a practice associated with young women. A variation on this theme is also called *mbaxal*. In Wolof, *mbaxal* refers to a leftovers dish, created by mixing together whatever fish and vegetables are available. As applied to the relations between women and men, a woman's "plate" is comprised of various men; she manipulates and plays them off against one another to obtain money and gifts for adornment.

Young women, however, do more than flirt in exchange for small gifts and money. *Mbarane* and *mbaxal* are not considered to be the same as prostitution, although there is an aspect of insincerity and the using of another human life to attain one's own goals. Sometimes a young woman also uses these strategies as a means of acquiring money for the purchase of clothing that will attract a particular man whom she cares about.

Baptisms

Organizing a baptism (*ngente*) is another Wolof strategy for procuring clothing, money, and other objects of value. Within a short period of time after a couple's first child is born, the husband's family may organize a large party that has at least three

objectives. One is to celebrate the arrival of the new family member. A second is to show off the wealth and prestige of the family. The third is to recuperate expenses incurred and gifts that were given away to others at their families' *ngente*. Given the third reason, a *ngente* may be held in the absence of the new baby and parents who may live in another country.

Generally at a *ngente*, the hosts invite as many guests as their budget can afford, and they serve great amounts of food with the intention of demonstrating their ability to please the guests. The guests give gifts of money, textiles, clothing, and other items that can easily be converted into money and clothing for the female hosts who are generally the primary organizers and attendees of these celebrations. The gifts given and received are never recorded, but hosts and guests keep a mental accounting of their exchanges over the years. Generally, gossip ensues in the case of imbalanced exchanges. As described in Chapter Two, the *ngente* requires hosts and guests to wear new outfits. If a *ngente* is a long affair, more than one outfit is required. The outfits are judged critically. They are often financed by the father of the baby who is expected to foot the bill for the entire celebration. In the case that the financier and organizers are not in agreement over the allocation of funds for food, clothing, chair rentals and music, the *ngente* organizers often act independently and call in old loans and go into debt in order to make the event a success. In short, baptisms create the opportunity for money and clothing to rapidly circulate.

Credit

Perhaps the most common way young people independently acquire new clothing is on credit. While credit makes goods and money in the market go round, it is the source of intense and often irreparable conflict. Informal social pressure is often the only leverage one can employ to make good on a loan. A young trader I know once filed a complaint with the city's police in order to recuperate money a client owed her for a pair

of shoes. In her case, the police were effective in forcing the debtor to pay up; however, the client, once a close friend, retaliated by spreading gossip about the trader and her family, and cursed the trader every time they crossed paths in the street.

Another young trader's mother stopped her daughter from reporting a collection problem to the police because she feared that the police, an under-funded municipal service, would manipulate the situation in order to squeeze some benefit for themselves. The mother took matters into her own hands and confronted the mother of the client in default. The mother-to-mother solution was effective in resolving the conflict and in teaching the young trader how to size up consumers and to manage credit.

Family pressure, however, does not always do the job. According to young traders, siblings and adult relatives are the clients who apply the most pressure in demanding credit, yet they are the most unreliable when it comes to paying debts. It becomes a complex dilemma for young traders who in the beginning must rely on their family networks for business. Still it is through family networks that many young traders and consumers learn the dynamics of credit, buying, and selling.

Market Trade-Ins

Trading in the secondhand clothing markets offers another avenue of possibilities to enterprising fashion fanatics. In these markets, depending on one's relationship to vendors, youth can trade in their clothing in for new items or for money. Youth who know how to make such trades are usually savvy with money and tend to closely study the flow of new goods into Dakar. They tend to know the company histories of certain brands and know the value of goods. They also tend to know which vendors in the markets are willing to make such trades. Clothing does not have to be very much out of style before these youth are looking to make exchanges. This feature of the secondhand markets enables certain youth to keep up with and accelerate the rapid pace of fashion.

Their ability to do so, however, depends on their connections with petty traders in the markets.

Violence and Theft

Violence and theft are increasingly used as a means to acquire clothing in Dakar. Members of the armed forces who have not been provided with uniforms by the government are known to rob the pants off of citizens who wear camouflage. More often, however, aggressive youth looking for an easy way up assault others in the street for their sneakers, shirts and watches. In particular, clothing associated with the *Rappeur* look in Dakar is attractive to thieves who want to affect this look. Youth who do not steal but nevertheless wear this look enjoy a certain amount of mystique as possibly dangerous characters. In this light, dressing up is an opportunity to claim status while making oneself vulnerable to attack. As touched upon in Chapter Two, theft commonly occurs among people who know each other. There is, however, an increasing incidence of aggression and theft in the city between victims and perpetrators who are strangers. Consuming clothing is such a powerful force in Dakar that people hurt each other in order to achieve their ends.

Consumption, Globalization and Personal Connections

A look at procurement strategies and forms of exchange highlights that Dakarais relate to commodities in an intensely social manner. This social manner, however, has two kinds of consequences. The increased reliance on personal connections enables some to consume as they want and plan. In contrast, it increases stress on the personal bonds that people share. Through personal connections many find leads to bargains and opportunities for credit. Others find that the obligation to consume leads one to rupture personal ties. For example, the *mbarane* and *mbaxal* can be taken too far, leading some women to embarrass their families by conducting themselves in an undignified manner.

The stress of dressing up and completing one's obligations at baptisms can also lead some to beg for or to extort resources from kin and close friends. The desire and the pressure to consume, coupled with limited access to resources, causes deep frustration and leads some to deceive friends, defraud relatives and to commit aggressive acts of theft against strangers. The increased need to rely on personal connections for consumption cannot always be absorbed by one's personal ties. In some cases, status looks are achieved at the cost of burning bridges with friends, relatives and other sources of credit.

To summarize, the intensified role of personal connections in consumption sites and strategies of acquisition is the result of numerous intersecting global and local forces, including the forces of kinship, traditional practices of exchange, the modern economy giving rise to expanded artisan production, local petty trade, credit mechanisms, and "gifts" from transnational relatives. It has been assumed that the "private" dimensions of the circulation of commodities is not important in modern contexts, and that personal ties denote a pre-industrial or peasant society. In the context of globalization, however, an increased reliance on personal connections is surfacing in Dakar, suggesting that personal ties are an important yet overlooked element of modern, urban clothing consumption.

CONCLUSION: UNDERSTANDING CONSUMPTION

The intensification and diversification of goods in Dakar and the energy and sophistication of the city's youthful consumers can be viewed with optimism or with pessimism. On the optimistic side, consumption prompts youth to create urban public culture, to propose alternatives to social problems, and to contribute to globalization processes. On the other hand, consumption traps youth. Clothing consumption promises social status, prestige, opportunities, and wealth, but it often delivers none of those things. After investing in an elaborate public appearance, many youth consumers are left deep in debt, friendless, and disillusioned. Others, preferring to avoid the reality of their poverty and limited options, live their lives in a fantasy world. The pages below illustrate both sides of this consumption phenomenon through a discussion of "global" and "local" footwear for Dakar youth consumers, and with a picture of youth all dressed up, but with no place to go.

The Sebago Story: The Mutual Benefits of Consuming Luxury Footwear

Commodities acquire their meanings and sign value by undergoing organic, creative consumption processes in addition to following the pathways of circulation. In Dakar, the processes of commodity appropriation are more complex than is generally assumed.

The Sebago shoe is brand-name, status-conferring, imported footwear that has been popular in Dakar for at least twenty years. It first became popular as an alternative to "Pablos," a boat shoe from Guinea Bissau that had a stiff and slippery sole. In Dakar, wealthy young men of the privileged classes initially wore Sebago. Today it appeals to young men and women from diverse economic backgrounds.

Sebago, also known as Docskide, or “D.C.”, and “S”, in Dakar, is a brown, blue, or green-gray leather boat shoe with thick stitching on the side and a white plastic heel. Although the company makes many other styles, this is the one that has maintained its popularity in Dakar. Some explain this by saying that it’s a long lasting shoe, a light shoe appropriate for walking in the sandy neighborhoods of the peninsula city, and a practical shoe that slips easily off the feet at the doorway of the mosque. These practical explanations, however, do not fully explain why some Senegalese are willing to spend \$80.00 to \$100.00¹ on the originals, which are believed to come from America, and between \$25.00 and 35.00² on the knockoffs from China and Morocco. Relative to the economy, both the originals and knockoffs are expensive.

I would argue that it is the expense of the shoe that draws Senegalese to Sebago. In this fashion-conscious city, where dressing up to impress is a central part of social life, the Sebago brand name secures one’s identity as an urbanite. As discussed in Chapter Two, it intimates that one has connections to the Senegalese transnational communities. When youth evaluate individuals, they tend to take note of their footwear, then work their way up. Part of the V.I., V.A., and V.F. system of classification is based on footwear. For many, Sebago shoes indicate that the wearer is a V.I. or a V.A..

The cultural values surrounding Sebago in Dakar are reinforced by the comings and goings of transnational migrants, and the cultural meaning that this movement has for the inhabitants of Dakar. As outlined in Chapter Two, Dakar youth view emigration destinations hierarchically. Italy and the U.S., at the time of my study, held special status, while France was ranked slightly below. The creation of these images is related to the

¹ In 1999-2000, this amounted to between 40,000 and 55,000 francs. With this amount of money, one could pay for four to six months of rent one room with a shared bathroom in Naari Teli.

² This was about 15,000 to 25,000 francs in 1999-2000. A second-hand pair of sneakers in reasonable condition costs approximately 10,000 francs.

sense of economic success that Senegalese in Dakar perceive their counterparts to be achieving abroad. It is also based on a Senegalese reaction against neo-colonialism and racism. Migration to the U.S. and to Italy is seen as a means of skirting neo-colonial domination. Meanwhile, the exploitation and racism that Senegalese experience in Italy and the U.S., as well as in other places overseas, is generally not acknowledged. This is partly because this negative reality dampens the hopes of youth who are seeking to emigrate and partly because of the competition for status in Dakar. Many young people feel that emigrants' reports about economic exploitation and discrimination are intended to discourage others from competing with them. At the same time, Senegalese who assimilate in New York switch from wearing Sebago to wearing Timberland moccasins because they discover that Americans associate Sebago with white yuppies, whereas Timberland footwear is worn by many African Americans.³

In the context of New York, the Sebago shoe on Senegalese feet signifies a trader—someone who has no intention of prolonging their stay in the U.S., or a newly arrived immigrant laborer—someone who plans to stay and who is as yet unaware of the new structure of status in footwear. When Senegalese return to Dakar from abroad, particularly from New York, the commodities they bring back with them signify trophies of the emigrant experience, a reward for having coped with the struggle and stress of living abroad. To viewers, however, they signal the émigrés' elite status and capability to consume.

Producing Sebagos

The Sebago company is in business to sell footwear, and this intersects with the Senegalese community's transnational movement. Sebago started making shoes in the 1940's in the rural region of Cumberland County, Maine. Having long produced penny

³ Timberland has a segmented market approach; their products are heavily marketed to both suburban white and urban African American populations.

loafers for the American market, in the mid-60's their shoes were "accidentally" discovered by Europeans. Since then, the brand name has become globally-known, although the shoe has always had its biggest market in Europe.

In the early 1990's, the Sebago company was forced to make changes to keep itself in the global market. American leather shoe manufacturers had been losing market share to the growing Chinese footwear industry since the 1970's (Skoggard 1998; World Footwear 2000). In order to cut costs, Sebago made a number of changes including combining American production with a factory in the Dominican Republic, and out-sourcing production by contract in Portugal. It also shifted to New York its French distribution center which handled all of the former French colonies in Africa and the Caribbean (e.g. Ivory Coast, Benin, Guadeloupe and Martinique). This move was intended to reduce shipping costs and taxes and to take advantage of possibilities for better coordination with African traders. In an interview with me, Sebago's chief executive officer (CEO) openly revealed that Sebago relies on informal trading networks as the primary means of distributing its shoes in West Africa. Senegalese "suitcase" traders, among others, carry 100-200 pairs at a time. As the traders operate with cash only and have very tight budgets with little room for mistakes, they stick to buying what they know will sell in Senegal. These business conditions shape the availability of products in Senegal, as well as the consumer's exposure to the diversity of Sebago products.

The Sebago company does not have a retail store in Dakar, and it does not advertise. It says that it prefers this low profile as it adds the right amount of mystique to their brand name while not attracting too much attention from the tax-hungry government. Certainly, word of mouth and "organic" advertising have emerged around Sebago shoes in Dakar. During the time of my fieldstay, consumers wore Sebago tee-shirts for the status of the logo even if they couldn't afford to buy the shoes. According to the CEO, the tee-shirts may have originated in Ivory Coast as a local promotional effort, although he was not sure about this. In Senegal, however, the logo was so popular as to

stimulate the production of counterfeits. Consumers' interest in the brand and their cultural need for status keep the popularity and reputation of the shoe alive, and barring radical price inflation, keep up the sales as well. The CEO would not supply information regarding the volumes of shoes that are exported to Dakar or West Africa, but he indicated that the company produces roughly 1,000,000⁴ pairs of shoes annually and that the West African market comprises an important portion of the company's overall business. The West African market, according to the CEO, represents roughly 10 percent of Sebago's business in the European market.

If the Shoe Fits, Sell It

This picture of Sebago shoes and Senegalese footwear preferences and meanings illustrates that luxury footwear consumption is one byproduct of globalization. Depictions of contemporary globalization processes rarely highlight how globalization engenders luxury consumption in African cities. It is generally assumed that all consumers in developing African countries have limited resources and therefore clothing consumption is of a utilitarian nature. In the case of Dakar, in fact, footwear consumption is complex and Dakarais are discerning consumers.

At a theoretical level, the story of Sebago shoes in Dakar illustrates how consumptive and productive forces interact, and how cultural and economic processes intertwine. In Dakar, there is a need for upscale shoes at low cost. The Sebago Company has a need for "quiet" markets, ones that it can slip into at low cost and low risk without drawing much attention to itself. As long as African traders can spirit the shoe in, both consumers and producers are satisfied. In the process of their coming and going, Senegalese traders and migrants both advertise and build status for the shoe, while

⁴ In my interview with the CEO, he appeared to prefer not to talk about volumes and numbers regarding the business; rather, he tended to focus on the history of the company and the aura surrounding his products.

building their own status. These dynamics serve both Dakar consumers' social needs and the shoe manufacturer's needs for advertisement. In short, Dakar consumers and Sebago are tied to one another through a symbiosis of the logics of Senegalese consumerism and informal systems of distribution. This tie is a bundle of cultural and economic relationships that perpetuate Sebago mania in Dakar and Sebago profits in New York.

The New Team Dream

Not all footwear production schemes symbiotically "fit" with youth consumers' desires, needs, and consumption practices. Misfits occur and, of course, result in thwarted production and product failure. The New Team dream is one example of this "pessimistic" result. In contrast to the Sebago story, the New Team dream illustrates how a local Senegalese shoe manufacturer is unable to create stable ties with Dakar consumers. The struggles New Team faces in comparison to the successes Sebago experiences highlight failed connections with consumers, the unequal distribution of market share created by globalization, and entrepreneurial enthusiasm turned into disillusionment.

In 1995, a group of African entrepreneurs wishing to manufacture low-budget athletic footwear for youth formed the *Société Sénégalaise d'Investissement* (SSI) and reopened the old Bata shoe factory (see Chapter Four for information on Thomas Bata) located in Bargny, just outside Rufisque. The Bata factory operated between the mid-1970's and mid-1980's. During this time it distributed shoes from a retail store located in downtown Dakar. The store was an icon of the city, and buying shoes at Bata brought one much status.

After the plant had been shut down for approximately ten years, SSI sought to resurrect both the plant and the notion of brand-name shoe manufacturing in Senegal. In 1995, SSI bought the plant and, in 1997, began producing a line of Hip Hop sneakers which they hoped would put the Senegalese label on the footwear consumer's map. To

support this effort, the company renamed the factory New Team and invested in advertisements and distribution strategies to promote the brand name.

At the time of my visit to the factory in 1999, the company primarily distributed shoes to the interior of Senegal (Kaolack, Tambacounda, St. Louis and Thiès). A small portion was exported to Abijan, Ivory Coast and Bamako, Mali. According to the production manager I met at the plant, New Team owners hoped to expand into markets in other African cities and in Europe.

In addition to athletic wear, New Team manufactures a number of other types of footwear. The company makes an array of plastic, low-budget shoes, including boat shoes, "security" boots, and children's sneakers. They also produce leather sandals, *babouche* (a Moroccan leather slipper typically worn with traditional clothing) and "wet blue," cured leather, which is exported to Italy, France, and Portugal for shoe-making. By the production manager's estimate, the New Team plant produced over a half-million pairs of shoes in 1998. Of all of their footwear, the Hip Hop sneakers take the least amount of time to make. Constructed of vinyl and plastic materials imported from Taipei, between 400 and 450 pairs are manufactured in a day. This is a rapid pace of production in comparison to that for leather shoes, which for New Team is only 25 pairs a day.

At the time of my visit, New Team owned two retail shops: one in Fass, and the other in H.L.M. A third retail store is located in Rufisque. None of these shops are located in the center of Dakar shopping zones, although they are all near local markets in densely populated neighborhoods. The athletic shoes offered in these shops cost approximately 7,000 CFA (or \$10-11 US). The sneakers bear English names derived from other popular knockoff products in the market, such as Spice Girl sneakers and Jump Hoops athletic footwear.

From my conversations with youth, few in Dakar esteem the New Team brand of footwear. In general, they feel that New Team is a poor quality shoe that falls apart after wearing it a few times. Many feel that buying a used pair of Nikes or Adidas for nearly

the same price gives one longer-lasting footwear with greater social value. Some politically minded youth feel that buying national products is a bad idea in general. They say the government has promised youth jobs and improved education but young people have not tasted the fruit of these promises. Suspecting corruption in the close ties between the government and Senegalese businesses, they feel that buying national goods supports a corrupt administration that does not invest in the future of the new generation.

The Shoe Is Not Fitting

It was surprisingly easy to obtain an interview with a manager of the New Team plant. With great enthusiasm, the production manager gave a substantial amount of his time filling me in on the history of Bata and New Team, and then giving me a tour of the entire plant. The production manager is young and on that day he had a lot of energy. In addition to answering all my questions, he gave me a New Team promotional drinking cup as a souvenir of my visit.

A part of our conversation focused on how business was progressing. This is when the manager's optimistic tone turned to one of pessimism. He reported that after two years of producing Hip Hop sneakers, sales were not as high as the management had hoped. He discussed a number of issues that hinder the effectiveness of New Team sneakers in the market. The factory managers cope with antiquated equipment, a dependency on imported raw material from Asia, expensive labor, training issues, and transportation complications. The influx of imported used footwear, he admitted, was perhaps the largest obstacle to New Team's success. The production manager went so far as to say that imports are likely to undermine New Team's goal of manufacturing a notable brand of low-end Hip Hop footwear for the African market.

Although local entrepreneurs have adequately assessed the importance of footwear among youth and the stratification of youth consumers, the success of New Team sneakers is limited by numerous local and global challenges. The company's

largest obstacle is not having adequate capital to rapidly create more competitive products. As cheap new and used imports flood Dakar's markets, the prices for footwear are dropping but the quality of New Team Hip Hop sneakers is not improving. All signs point to the probability of there being no place in Dakar's markets for this locally-produced shoe. In sum, African entrepreneurs' hopes for developing significant footwear are soon to be dashed by uninterested consumers and the forces of globalization that favor transnational companies such as Sebago.

All Dressed Up and No Where to Go: Consumption and Commodity "Pessimism"

The weak and out-of-sync production processes of New Team are one aspect of commodity pessimism in Dakar. The aspect of commodity pessimism apparent to youth consumers could be labeled "dressing up with no place to go." As discussed in Chapter Five, many youth develop "productive" responses to the consumption dilemma by taking refuge in religious movements. Ibadus cope with consumption pressures by eschewing materialism and by adopting an anti-materialist form of dress. Baye Faux also adopt an anti-materialist form of dress. Some steal as a means to consume, and legitimize this behavior by calling it an act for God.

Poor youth who are incapable of consuming fashion goods adopt the Boule Fale attitude. They mock the capable consumers with startling forms of dress and behavior. Others critique the increased pressure by suggesting that musical, athletic and other youth pursuits are more valuable than commodity consumption. For example, the musical group *Pachotille* (French for imitation, or fantasy jewelry) wears "tik-tik," plastic sandals which signify their poverty. They perform complex and amazing acrobatics with a soccer ball while simultaneously rapping anti-materialist messages.

These examples are one set of productive responses to the pressure to consume. Many others, however, have another, perhaps less productive response. By 11:30 in the morning, the employed have long since been at work and are beginning to return home

for lunch and the mid-day siesta. As these workers are getting off their jobs and waiting for the bus back to their neighborhoods, unemployed youth are just getting up, showering, praying, and getting dressed so as to appear as if they have just returned from work or have somewhere to go. After lunch, they gather with friends outside under a tree and begin the long, slow ritual of drinking Chinese tea.

Someone brings out the small *forno* (iron coal container for cooking), *uppukay* (hand-woven fan), and a few coals for the fire. Another slowly walks to the corner store to buy a package of *Saddam Hussein* (strong bitter tea) or *Baaba Maal* (a light-skinned Tukulor world musician who in the context of tea drinking denotes a mixed, light blend). Another brings out the traditional small blue teapot, aluminum tray, and four or more shot glasses from which the tea is consumed. When an expert is in charge of the brewing and artful pouring, drinking *attaya* (Chinese tea) can last for at least two hours. Drinking *attaya* is a principal activity that occupies young men who are all dressed up but have nowhere to go.

One young man reports that he and his friends only adopt this dress on the weekends to give the impression of being in a relaxed mode after a long week of work. All of them are unemployed. By appearing to be in sync with the rhythm of the modern work world, they try to create the appearance that they are ready for work on the off chance that an opportunity should develop. Another informant intimates that he feels physically comfortable in such clothing, and because he is under a great deal of psychological stress, allowing his body, if not his mind, to relax is very important in life.

The experience of young unemployed women is a little different. Young women typically get up early to take care of household chores. Depending on how many young women live together, one may not have the morning free because it is her turn to go to the market, to clean the rice (a time-consuming process), and to cook lunch. After lunch, the day is generally wide open for young women to do what they want. Many stay close to home and have their hair braided or braid another friend's hair.

Other more adventurous women get dressed up and find someplace to go. After lunch they bathe, groom themselves, and dress up for a spin around town. They are well perfumed and coiffed as they leave the house, but they carry a pocketbook that is often empty. The afternoon is spent with one eye to the ground to detect lost change and in thinking of how to slip on and off the Car Rapid without paying the fare. Once in town, they spend the afternoon looking busy. Young women will casually drop in on the people they know, catch up on the news, pass the time, and hope that a new opportunity or at least bus fare home will result from their visit. Unlike young men, who are expected to visit friends and relatives but who will not be rewarded with gifts of bus fares or transportation money for the return trip home, women's expenses are often covered by the generous relatives and male suitors whom they visit.

These "charades" of unemployed young men and women illustrate that clothing commodities provide temporary comfort to youth experiencing the psychological burden of having nothing to do and no means to provide for themselves. Such charades also suggest the vulnerability of youth whose identities and sense of self are heavily invested in clothing commodities. Youth dress up but many do not fully reap the benefits of their public appearance. With no bus fare, no job, and no new life experiences to exchange with others, many are stuck at home bored and feeling empty. Or, in the case of young women, they pass the time hearing about others' lives while hiding behind a façade of put-togetherness. In short, clothing commodity consumption has a dangerous and deeply pessimistic side. Many youth are dependent on the magic of clothing, but consuming it does not advance their lives. Instead, it leaves some frustrated and unsatisfied. It leaves others to live their lives in fantasy worlds.

Final Notes

This dissertation began by describing Dakar as a particular kind of consumer society. In the social science literature, depictions of consumer societies emphasize class as a principle dynamic of consumption. In Dakar, the logics of clothing consumption are different. In addition to class, patron-clientage and kinship matter. These three forms of social hierarchy propel clothing competitions in the city, and they do so as they are shaped by global forces, transnational migration in particular.

Youth are an additional shaping factor of clothing competitions. In Senegal, youth are viewed as having less status than adults. Their practices and perspectives, therefore, are not often considered to be important enough to discuss. The social sciences reinforce the minimal importance of youth actors. In academic studies, adults are generally assumed to be the primary agents of social phenomena, while youth are viewed as partial adults and therefore partial agents.

Studying clothing consumption in Dakar reveals that youth play a central role in producing and reproducing Dakar as a modern consumer society, and in creating public culture through dress. The collaborative research methods adopted in this study contribute to demonstrating how youth actors use clothing to define, create and represent themselves. They illustrate that anthropology is an additional external force shaping clothing consumption along with transnational migration, media, and decentralized production. Dakarais' intense interest and awareness of clothing commodities and competitions are not a "pure" outcome of globalization or Senegalese cultural life. Local and global phenomena intersect with one another, shaping the relationships between people and things.

The consequences of contemporary clothing consumption in the current context of globalization are twofold. Clothing consumption liberates some youths' cultural expressions. It traps others into depending upon clothing commodities to build their social status. Clothing producers (who at one level are also consumers enabled by the

profits generated by their products), experience positive and negative outcomes as well. The decentralization of production and development of informal distribution networks allows some global producers to easily slip their products into Dakar markets, and to readily match the needs of consumers. The flexibility and rapid pace of production, in turn, make it difficult for local manufacturers to obtain a small share of the apparel and footwear markets. Within industries, globalization produces a range of facilitating and debilitating responses which factor into consumers' relationships with apparel and footwear commodities.

Examining clothing consumption in Dakar brings to the fore several additional conclusions regarding commodity consumption and globalization. First, this dissertation highlights the uneven distribution of wealth within an African city. Scholars and the media often emphasize the poverty of African contexts and obscure the dynamics of luxury consumption and its role in shaping a broad range of consumer desires.

The dissertation also shows that local Dakar consumers are significant to the global production, distribution, and marketing processes of apparel and footwear commodities. The example of Sebago shoes well illustrates this point. Scholars often emphasize production processes of globalization to the near exclusion of consumption (see Castells 1996; Harvey 1989; Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton 2000; Hirst and Thompson 1999). Within this framework, African markets are easily cropped out of the picture. As Karen Tranberg-Hansen (2000) points out in tracing the secondhand clothing commodity chain in Zambia, it is African consumers who perpetuate the industry. Logically, therefore, the understanding of globalization is not complete without representing the geography of consumption, for which African spaces must be brought into the picture.

Although youth clothing consumption and style are rooted in Dakar, the diversity of cosmopolitan influences shaping clothing styles suggests that as consumers, Dakar youth have global reach. As youth create style, they enliven the city; youth-driven

cultural expressions make Dakar a global city. In addition to these symbolic terms, specific clothing market niches draw commodity flows to Dakar. Many youth in the city work as informal transnational clothing importers and petty traders facilitating these commodity flows. In material terms, Senegal has not been sketched in the charts of globalization; however, consumption in Dakar places it on the map.

The circumstances of globalization illuminate how the cultural dynamics of consumption are best understood through an integrated lens where the private and public dimensions of commodities are viewed together. Observing the intensification of volume, the diversification of goods, and the speed with which commodities circulate raises questions regarding the extent to which the “walk” and “talk” or the private and public dimensions of commodities are separate phenomena. Divisions within the literature lead analysts to focus on either the public *or* the private dimensions of commodities.

In contrast, the Sebago story illustrates that the cultural value of Sebago shoes, trading decisions, and production and distribution processes are interrelated. How Sebago shoes “speak” to the public is related to their production-consumption processes. In other words, the public and private dimensions of Sebago shoe consumption mutually shape one another. This integrated aspect of clothing commodities is not a consequence of globalization. But, as apparel and footwear rapidly travel through production and consumption sites, and youth consumers rapidly create diverse cultural meanings for clothing commodities, these two perspectives are pushed to the surface together. One cannot ignore that commodity circulation and sign value dynamics are intertwined.

An integrated perspective on commodity consumption suggests that perhaps the personal and impersonal dimensions of commodities are not discrete properties either. This dissertation discusses how Dakar youth consumers practice an ethos of sharing. Clothes are important to an individual’s identity, but they are not strictly viewed as personal possessions that one controls and defines as one’s own. Swapping, sharing, and

various forms of lending develop as one is approached by siblings and friends who are in need of new outfits.

As a result of the sharing ethos, one's clothing and possessions are given over to others, and in the process, one is distanced from or loses control over them. One's "loss" of possessions, however, may be an opportunity for minor personal gain. Sharing one's things freely builds ties and one's reputation. In some cases, one uses the opportunity to give as a means to create ties that may be useful in the future. Dakar consumers do have personal connections to clothing commodities, but interpersonal dynamics vis-a-vis the goods change their relationship to clothing commodities.

Given these dynamics, discussing commodity consumption in terms of personal and impersonal, or alienated relationships is limiting. Dakar youth demonstrate a complex and flexible relationship with clothing commodities that does not fit with traditional definitions of the personal and impersonal. Relying on this dichotomous terminology limits an understanding of contemporary individuals' relationships with clothing commodities.

Examples from Dakar suggest that private and public concepts overlap; separating them limits consumption analyses. To briefly review, the private dimensions of commodities refers to the overlooked processes of circulation and transactions. The public dimension of commodities signals the sign-value or the messages that commodities "speak" to an audience or public. In Western commercial contexts, the circulation of commodities is considered to be masked, and therefore private. In non-Western, small-scale contexts, the circulation trajectories of commodities are also viewed as private because exchange is accomplished through personal ties. In small-scale, non-Western societies, however, the reputation of goods depends on the public's knowledge of the parties engaging in exchange. Thus, exchange is not entirely private. Nonetheless, as a result of viewing Western and non-Western contexts as distinct, the assumption

remains that personal ties in exchange characterize non-Western contexts while the ways in which these ties merge with the public dimensions of goods has not yet been clarified.

Dakar is a non-Western but modern consumer city where diverse forms of exchange operate. Some forms are impersonal while many others are personal and occur within some of the most modern and seemingly impersonal consumption sites such as the shopping mall. In the case of Dakar, evidence of personal ties in shopping mall consumption does not suggest a pre-modern, non-Western consumer society. Rather, it suggests that the idea that commodity circulation in non-Western contexts is private or intimate is over applied. Personal ties may give some individuals special discounts, but it also increases business for retailers who rely on consumers' informal networks for free advertisement. Thus, the personal ties of exchange are in fact a public dimension of commodities. The boundary between the private and public dimensions of commodities is actually blurred; however, this is obscured by a need in the consumption literature to view material things as comprised of two separate and oppositional possibilities, and the need in anthropology to view Western and non-Western contexts as distinct cultural domains.

Just as understandings of the nature and function of commodities are limited when overlapping categories are cast as dichotomous, an understanding of clothing meanings is limited by the tendency to view style in terms of oppositional categories. In the recent past, researchers characterized the landscape of style in Dakar in terms of a double dress code, reflecting the presence of traditional and modern clothing (Mustafa 1997; Rabine 1997). The description of a two-pronged fashion system based in temporalities strongly resonates with observations others have made about clothing and other codes for characterizing contemporary identities in Africa (Ferguson 1999; Rowlands 1995). By contrast, this ethnography illustrates that when looked at through the eyes of youth, the landscape of style –and therefore conceptualizations of modernity--is better described in geographic terms that cannot be neatly mapped onto a modern and traditional dichotomy.

The spatial dimensions of these categories are significant for they indicate how travel and transnationalism are key elements in how many Dakar youth imagine their lives in the future. They also highlight how the meaning of clothing commodities is obscured by binary categories.

The close focus on the dynamics of commodities within the context of globalization highlights the complex nature of globalization's cultural dimensions. However, local and global frameworks are additional binaries that are inadequate for discussing the cultural dimensions of globalization. Dakar consumers include Senegalese transmigrants and traders who, particularly in the case of traders, historically are as global as the apparel and footwear they import to Dakar. Thus, Dakar consumers occupy a space that is not necessarily conceptually in opposition to or so remote from the space of production. This raises questions about positing local and global as dichotomous, or even as the reified categories they have become.

This dissertation concludes by reflecting on methodological questions related to researching global cultural phenomena. In contrast to the abstract nature of globalization theories (Appadurai 1996; Castells 1996; Giddens 1991; Harvey 1989; Held 1999; Robertson 1992; Sassen 1996, 1998; Smith 1990), ethnography helps to illuminate consumption and the creation of modernities. This dissertation argues, as other works have, that ethnography provides an opportunity to view global cultural phenomena as they operate in place (Burawoy 2000; Low 1999b; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003). But at the same time, the processes of research discussed in this dissertation show that many traditional concepts in anthropology are difficult to define given the intense movement of people, the complexity of cultural phenomena and the context of African cities, in particular their rapid pace of change and the degree of their cultural diversity. The dominant assumption that analytical categories used in social science analyses are dichotomous and not overlapping contributes to the difficulties. Although they are not without their limitations, ethnographic analyses, particularly those of non-Western

contexts, are indispensable, for they complement grand-scale theorizations of globalization that are largely based on models of Western societies.

APPENDIX 1

Le Resencement sur l'Habitude et Valeurs des Jeunes

L'Habillement

1. Parmi les habits, les chaussures, les jeans, les bijoux, les greffages, etc. selon vous, quel est le produit le plus important de tous? Expliquez pour quoi cette chose est la plus importante?
2. Décrivez les habits que vous aimez porter et expliquez pour quoi les aimez-vous? (Ditez: Ou et quand vous portez ces habits?)
3. Est ce qu'il y a des habits à la mode que vous n'aimez pas et vous refuseriez de porter? Décrivez-les et expliquez pourquoi vous n'aimez pas ces habits?
4. Combien de paires de chaussures avez-vous? Quelles marque importantes de chaussures avez-vous?
5. La plupart de vos vêtements sont (marquez un): _____ vêtements traditionnels: _____ vêtements fëggy jaay: _____ prêt a porter des marques: _____ habits confectiones.
6. Combien de vêtements: _____ traditionnels avez vous? _____: fëggy jaay avez vous (pantalon, chemise, t-shirt)? _____ prêt a porter qui portent des marques que vous pensez importantes (i.e. 501, Nike, Adidas)? _____: habits confectiones? _____.
7. Comment vous vous êtes procure la plupart de vos habits (Exemple: est ce que les parents l'achètent pour vous, ou ce sont des cadeaux, ou vous cousez vos habits, ou vous les avez acheté, etc. Prenez note de la marque d'où vient la plupart des habits)?
8. Combien d'argent dépensez vous par année pour vos habits et comment vous vous procurez l'argent pour les acheter?

La Musique

9. Avez-vous une radio ou une chaîne stereo? _____ Oui. _____ Non.
10. Quelle musique aimez-vous et pourquoi aimez-vous cette musique?
11. Il y a des groupes de musique que vous n'aimez pas? Quelles sont vos raisons?

12. Qui est votre artiste favori et pourquoi aimez-vous la musique de cet artiste?
13. Avez vous des cassettes et C.D.? En total, combien de cassettes avez-vous? ____; Combien de C.D. avez-vous? ____
14. La plupart de vos cassettes/C.D. sont: Des artistes sénégalais? ____; Des artistes africaines? ____; Des artistes Américain/ Africain-Américain? ____; Des artistes étrangers? ____.
15. Comment avez vous entendu ces artistes étrangers?
16. Comment procurez vous ces cassettes/C.D.?
17. Combien d'argent par mois dépensez vous pour acheter ces cassettes?

La Télévision, le Film et Les Célèbres

18. Y a-t-il une télévision chez vous? ____ Non. ____ Oui. Est ce que votre télévision a un décodeur? ____
19. Quels sont les programmes que vous préférez et pourquoi préférez-vous ces programmes?
20. Quels sont les programmes que vous n'aimez pas et pourquoi?
21. Combien des programmes regardez-vous chaque jour?
22. Parmi les publicités, quel est l'atirez-vous et pourquoi?
23. Qui est votre idole et pour quoi aimez-vous cette personne?
24. Allez vous au cinéma? ____ Oui. Combien de fois êtes vous parti au cinéma cette année? ____; Non. Pourquoi?
25. Parmi les films de cinéma que vous avez vu, quel est le film que vous aimiez et pourquoi?
26. Quel film n'aimiez vous pas et pourquoi?

La Démographique

27. Genre:
28. Quelle est votre date de naissance?
29. Quelle est votre langue maternelle?

30. Quelle est votre religion? Êtes-vous pratiquant?
31. Avec qui habitez vous? Combien de personnes il y a dans la maison?
32. Avez vous habiter plus de cinq ans ici? ____ Oui. Combien de temps habitez vous dans la maison? ____ Non. Où habitez vous et avec qui?
33. Combien des freres et souers de même mere/même pere avez vous?
34. Parmi vos freres et soeurs de même mere/même pere, quel position avez vous?
35. Allez vous à l'école? ____ Oui. À quel niveau etes vous?; ____ Non. À quel niveau avez vous laissé?
36. Travaillez vous?
37. Quel sont les metiers de vos parents?
38. Combien de personnes dans votre maison ont un emploi (bulo)?
39. Est ce qu'il y a des membres de la famille qui habitent à l'étranger? ____ Non; ____ Oui. Où est ce qu'ils habitent, et depuis quand sont-ils parties du Sénégal?

Nom:

No. Domicile:

Date:

APPENDIX 2

Photo Questionnaire sur le Style et Mode des Jeunes

Nom:

Date de naissance:

Domicile:

Genre:

Religion:

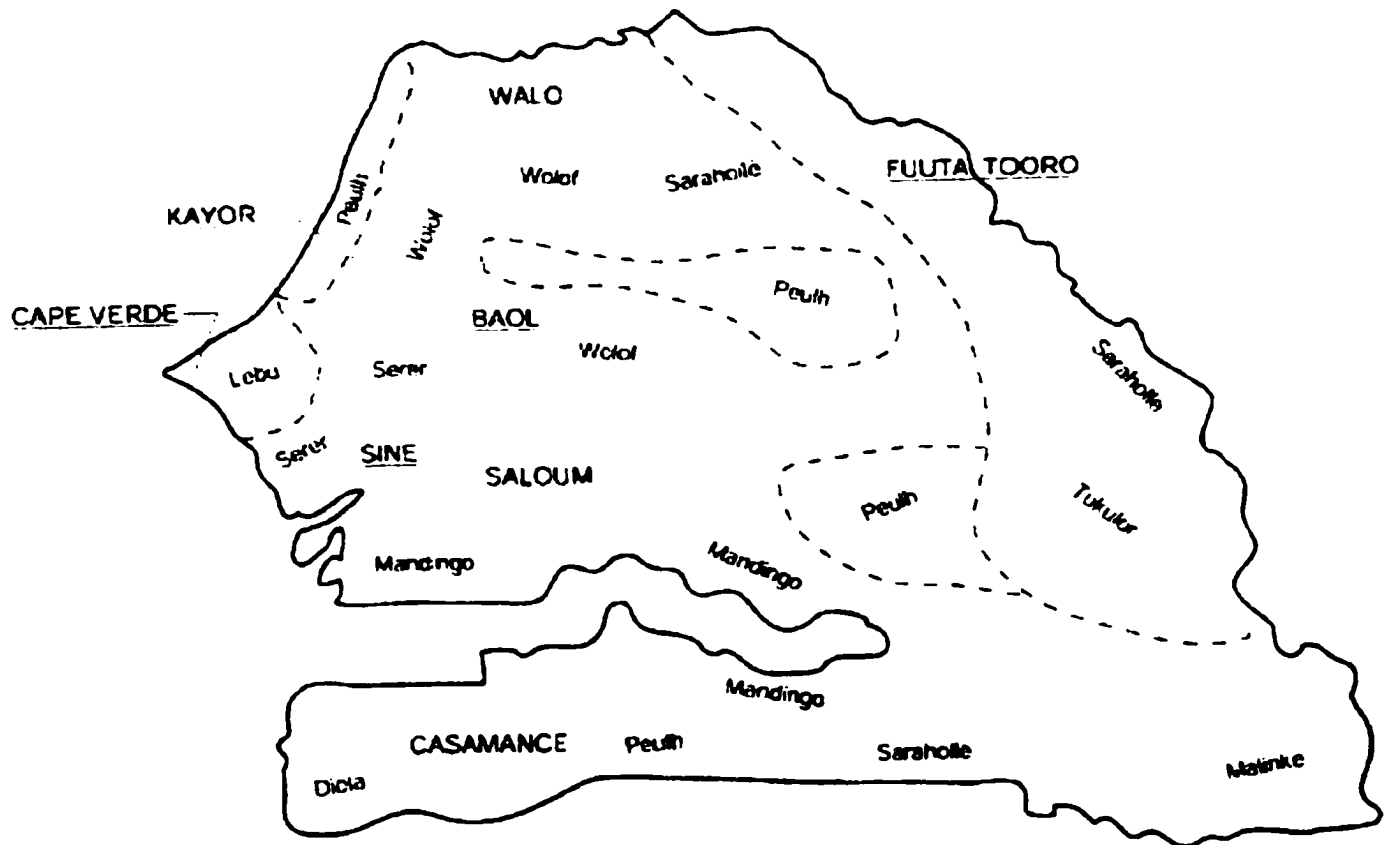
1. De tout les styles d'habillements que vous voyez sur les photos, combine de styles different d'habillment portez-vous? (Variété de style)
2. Quels sont les styles que vous preferez porter? (Preference/+)
3. Quels sont les styles que vous n'aimez pas porter? (Preference/-)
4. De tout les habillements que vous voyez sur les photos, quels sont les habits de lux que toute la jeunesse veut mais n'a pas de quoi payer? (Habits de lux)
5. De tout les habillements que vous voyez sur les photos, quels sont les habits qu'un jeune doit obligatoirement avoir? (Habits obligatoire)
6. Quel habillement croyez-vous respectueux devant les parents? (Respect des parents)
7. Quel habillement croyez-vous respectueux devant les camarades? (Respect des camarades)
8. Quel est le genre de style qui attire les garçons ou les filles? (Amour)
9. Quel genre de style montre qu'on est sénégalais (Nationalisme)
10. Quel style d'habillement montre qu'on est un jeune modern? (Modernitie)
11. Quel style d'habillement montre qu'on n'est pas un jeune moderne? ("Tradition")
12. Quel est le style qui montre qu'on est musulman? (Religion/Musulman)
13. Quel est le style qui montre qu'on est chretien? (Religion/Chretien)
14. Quel est le style qui montre le vrai caractère des nouveau generation? (Jeunesse)
15. Sur quelles photos voit-on les habits les plus chers? (Argent/fille)

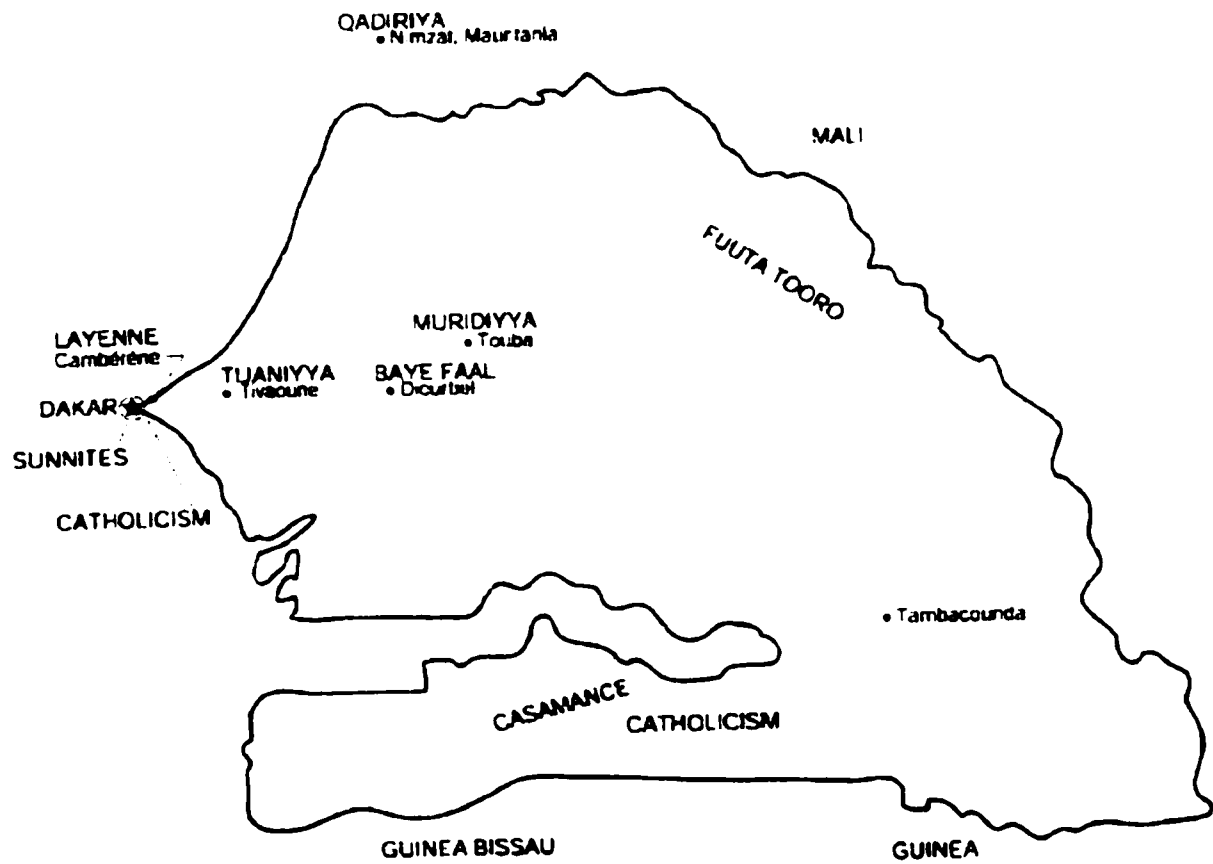
16. Sur quelles photos voit-on les habits les plus chers? (Argent/garçons)
17. Quelle est la personne qui probablement porte des fëggy jaay? (Fëggy Jaay)
18. Quelle est la personne qui probablement emprunte d'habits? (Emprunte 1)
19. Quelle est la personne qui probablement loue d'habits pour aller une soirée?
(Louer)
20. Quelle est la personne qui probablement vienne d'une famille aisée? (Niveau
eco.aisée)
21. Quelle est la personne qui probablement vienne d'une famille pauvre? (Niveau
eco.pauvre)
22. Quelle est la personne qui probablement a des frères ou parents aux Etats Unies?
(Emi.E.U)
23. Quelle est la personne qui probablement a des frères ou parents aux Italie?
(Emi.Italie)
24. Quelle est la personne qui probablement a un bulo et achet les habits avec ses
prop moyen? (Travail)
25. Quelle est la personne que probablement dependre des parents pour procurer les
habits? (Dependence)
26. Quelle est la fille qui probablement dependre des amiès et des garçons pour
procurer les habits? (Dependence.Fille)
27. Quelle "caste" pensez vous appartenir cette personne? (Caste/Americain-13)
28. Quelle "caste" pensez vous appartenir cette personne? (Caste/Africain-1)
29. Quelle "caste" pensez vous appartenir cette personne? (Caste/Boule Fale-22)
30. D'ou pensez-vous venir les habits que porte cette personne? (Provenance/knock
13)
31. D'ou pensez-vous venir les habits que porte cette personne? (Provenance/local-
21)
32. Quel quartier pensez-vous habiter cette personne? (Quartier/Rappeur/fille-13)
 - a. SICAP b. quartier populair c. une ville au interior d. ont ne sais
pas

33. Quel quartier pensez-vous habiter cette personne? (Quartier/Rappeur/garçons)
 a. SICAP b. quartier populaire c. une ville au interior d. ont ne sais pas
34. Quel quartier pensez-vous habiter cette personne? (Quartier/Boule Fale/22)
 a. SICAP b. quartier populaire c. une ville au interior d. ont ne sais pas
35. Quel quartier pensez-vous habiter cette personne? (Quartier/Boule Fale/garçon-23)
 a. SICAP b. quartier populaire c. une ville au interior d. ont ne sais pas
36. Quel quartier pensez-vous habiter cette personne? (Quartier/Religion/Ibadou-6)
 a. SICAP b. quartier populaire c. une ville au interior d. ont ne sais pas
37. Quel quartier pensez-vous habiter cette personne? (Quartier/Religion/Bifal-5)
 a. SICAP b. quartier populaire c. une ville au interior d. ont ne sais pas
38. Quel quartier pensez-vous habiter cette personne? (Quartier/African/fille-3)
 a. SICAP b. quartier populaire c. une ville au interior d. ont ne sais pas
39. Quel quartier pensez-vous habiter cette personne? (Quartier/African/garçon-4)
 a. SICAP b. quartier populaire c. une ville au interior d. ont ne sais pas

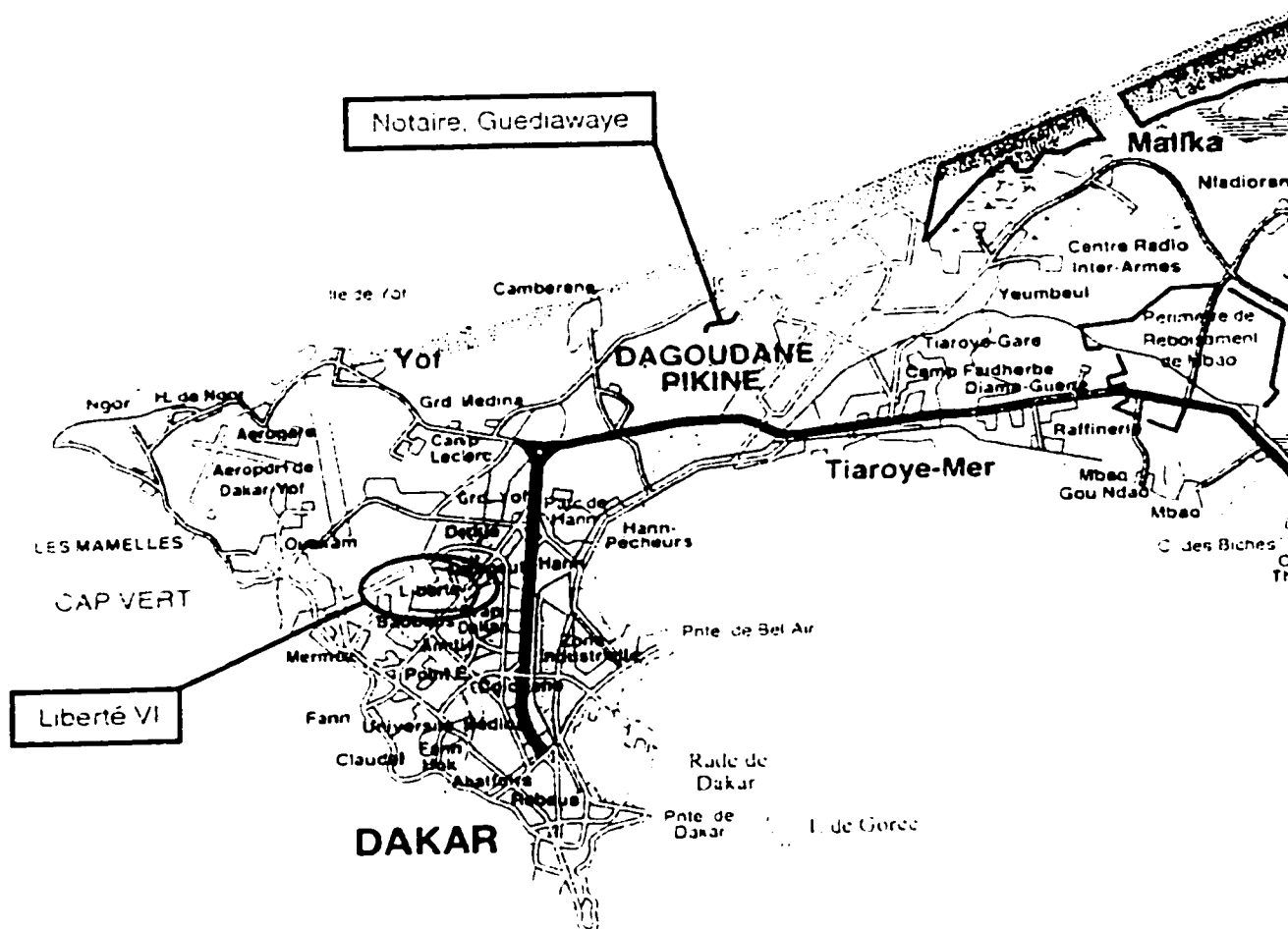
REGIONS AND TOWNS OF SENEGAL

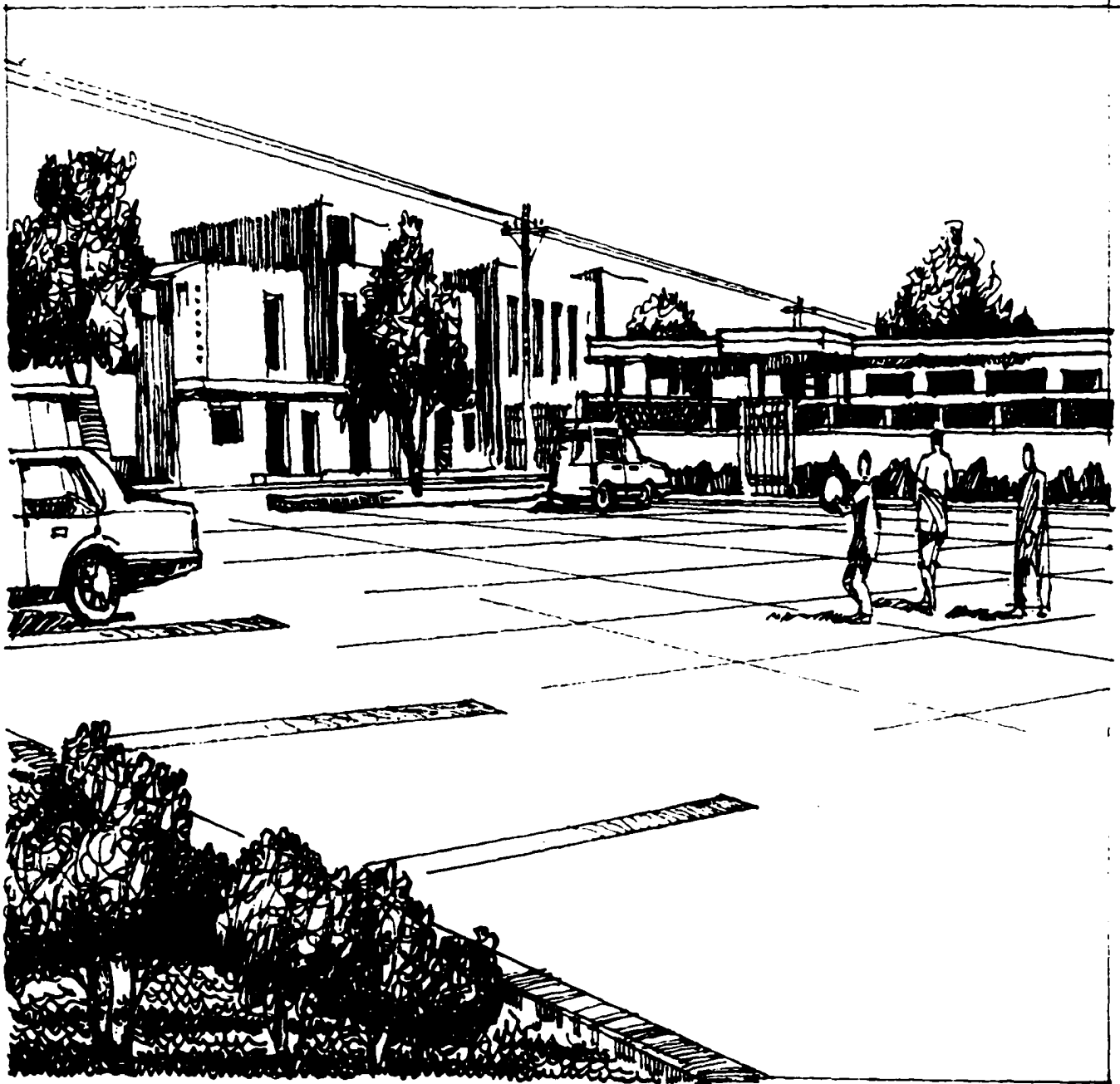
REGIONS AND ETHNICITY



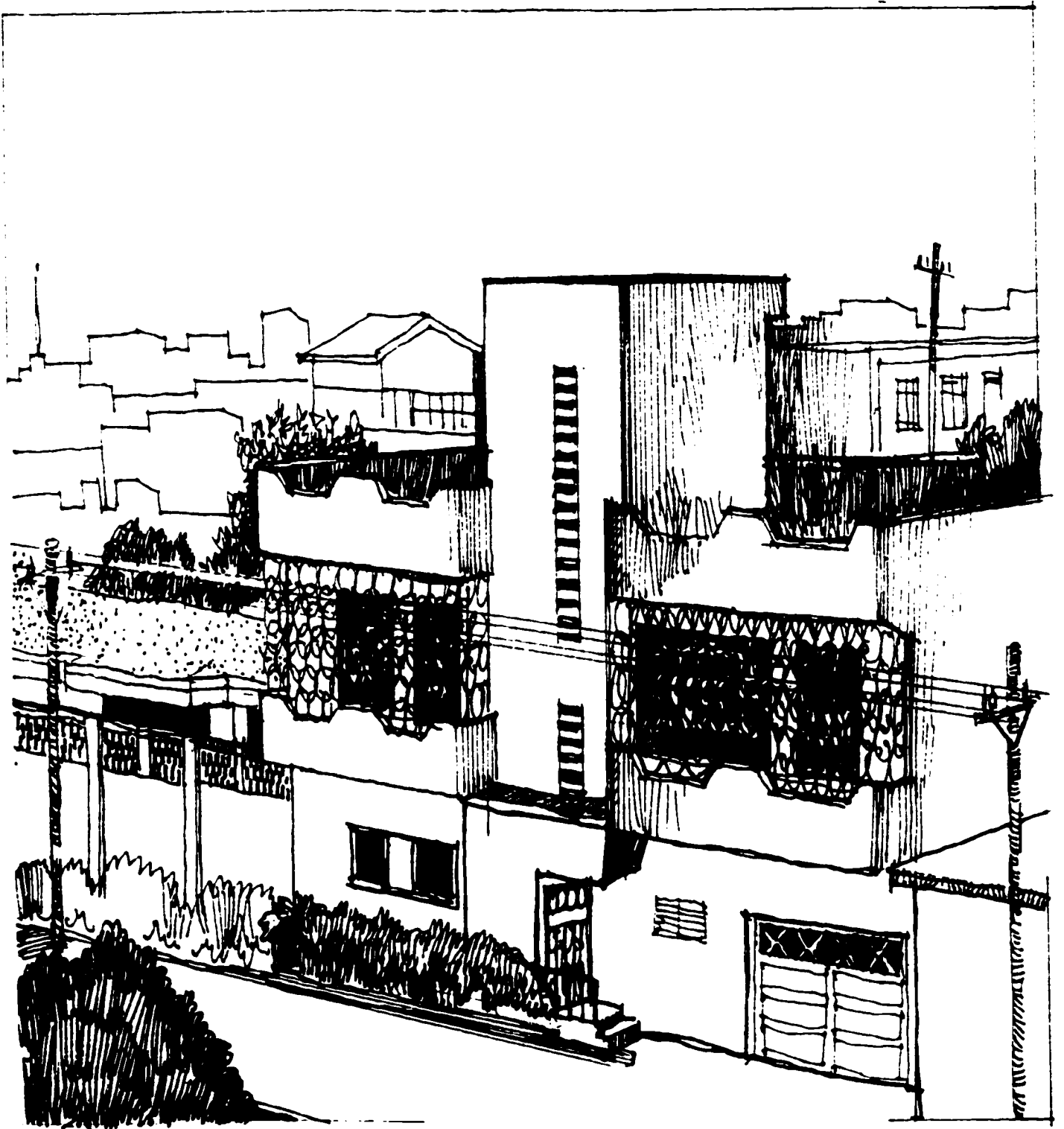
RELIGIOUS HOMELANDS

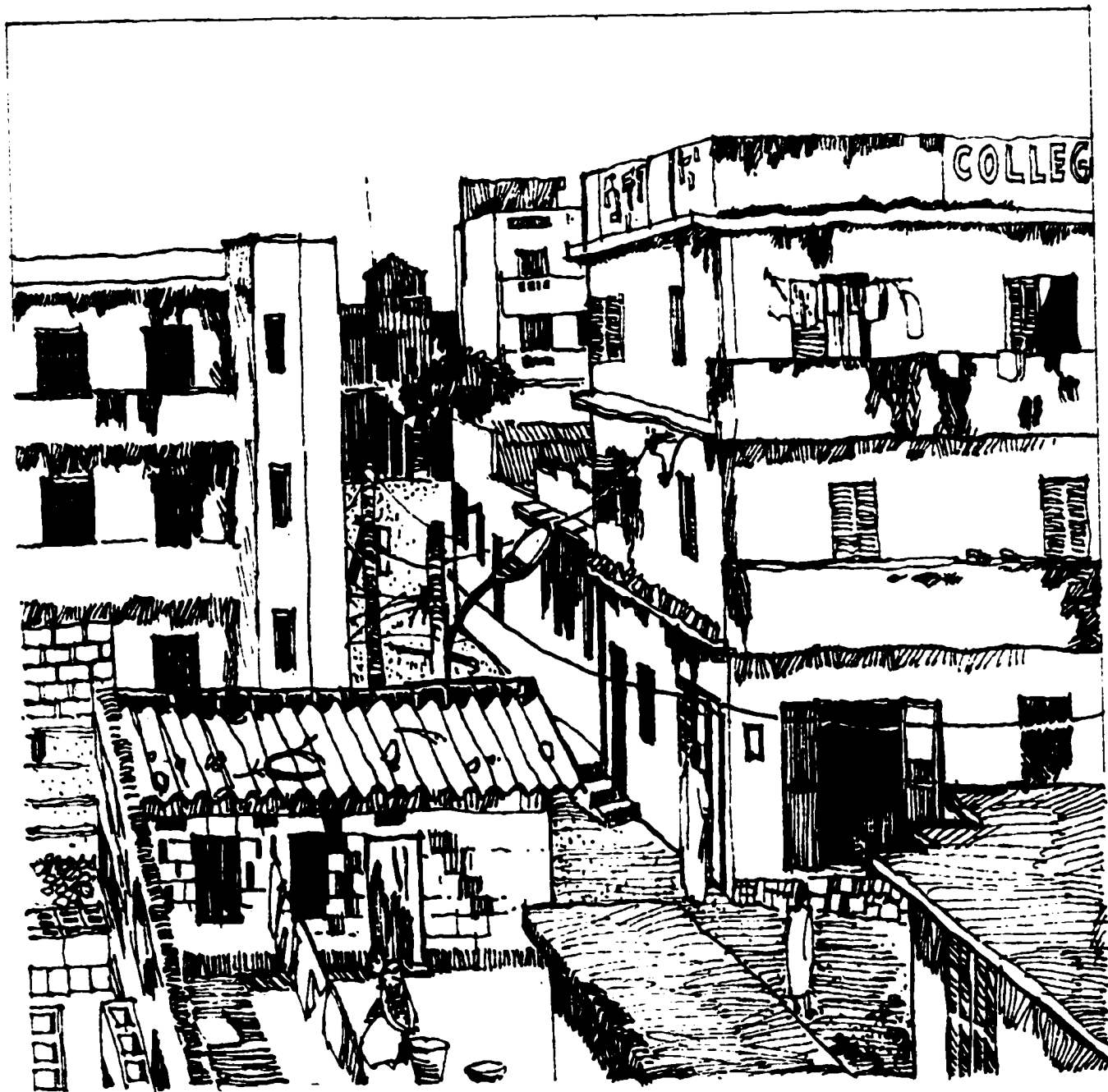
NEIGHBORHOODS OF DAKAR



SKETCH 1: PUBLIC SPACE IN SICAP LIBERTE VI

SKETCH 2: STREET SCENE IN NOTAIRE

SKETCH 3: EMMIGRANT OWNED HOME IN NOTAIRE

SKETCH 4: APARTMENT BUILDINGS AND HOMES IN NOTAIRE

SKETCH 5: MARKET FEGGY JAAY IN GUEDEAWAYE

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