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## Glocal Migration and Transnational Politics: The Case of Senegal

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Ten per cent of Senegal's population live and work abroad, making them an important constituency for Senegalese politicians. During the 2000 presidential elections, the eventual winner, Abdoulaye Wade, directed his campaign from his residence at Versailles, near Paris, France. The most important political parties all have permanent representatives in France and all the candidates but one organized large meetings in Harlem, New York. In 2001 and 2007, the Senegalese who live abroad organized support committees for the new president all over the world, particularly in the U.S. and France, but also in other European countries with important Senegalese populations, like Spain and Italy. Through my fifteen years of research on political and religious Senegalese networks in West Africa, Europe and the U.S., these developments prompted some questions: to what extent do the Senegalese who live abroad have a qualitative impact on the democratic process in Senegal and in their current residence countries? How do the Senegalese abroad manage to address their political claims to local politicians, and how do the latter integrate them into their political campaigns, especially in the U.S. and France? Are transnational networks fostering democratic participation or do they create new alliances which only support the ruling class?

In previous publications (Salzbrunn 2002, 2004), I have shown that religious practices and discourses have played an important role in Senegalese elections, especially during the electoral campaigns waged by the new president Abdoulaye Wade, founder of the liberal party, PDS (Parti Démocratique Sénégalais), which replaced the Socialist Party in 2000. Islamic brotherhoods, most notably the Tariqa Murīdiyya, have been politically influential at the micro and macro level. The name Tariqa Murīdiyya derives from the Arabic word, *tariqa*, for brotherhood (plural *uruq*) and *murid* that describes a disciple within a Sufi-brotherhood. These brotherhoods have formed translocal networks that have nodes in Paris, New York and several Italian cities. Although Sufi brotherhoods are religious in nature, in my fieldwork in Senegal, France, Germany and the U.S., I found that the networks focused on political change and included migrants who were Muslim, Christian or from another religious group. Thus, I can confirm a "privatization of religion" (Casanova 1994) in the sense of a demystification of religious authorities. Since colonial times, religious authorities (*marabouts*) have played an ambiguous role in politics: they either conducted resistance movements or, more often, mediated and helped the ruling authority locally. After Senegal's independence from France in 1960, religious authorities asserted their influence through political orders (*ndigals*) that made recommendations for candidates who had bought the *marabout's* support. In 2000, the voters did not follow the *ndigals'* endorsements but Abdoulaye Wade's close relationship with the *murids* suggested a continuing importance of religion at the highest political level. Through participant-observation of electoral meetings in Paris, I realized how Wade's electoral strategy succeeded: he organized the election campaign from his residence in Versailles, built on the growing influence of migrants, as well as their families and friends in Senegal, utilizing the *murid*

networks. The expansion of new means of communication, such as the Internet, satellite radio, cell phones, created more transnational social spaces which contributed to political change and were decisive in the presidential election results in Senegal.

The increasing migration of Senegalese peasants to urban areas, and then to international destinations has reinforced the creation of translocal social spaces. Historically, Senegalese labor migration to West African cities shifted to France, and later to neighboring European countries, particularly Italy, Spain and Germany, and then, in the 1980s, to the U.S. From the tri-state New York metro area, migrants moved throughout the U.S., building several regional concentrations such as in Atlanta, Georgia. Migrants remained linked through religious and political networks that have always been closely linked to trade networks and religious authorities on the local, regional and national level. So far, studies on Senegalese migration have focused on murid trade networks that share job and (petty) trade opportunities through their religious ties. Mosques are not only places to pray, but also to share information. In my work, I have enlarged the question of religious networks and shown the extent of the will for political change that has unified the followers of different Sufi and Christian groups.

## RELIGIOUS NETWORKS IN THE U.S.

In New York City, a group of several hundred *murids* set up their first *dahira* in 1986. *Dahira* is a Wolof term derived from the Arabic word *da'ira* that means circle. In Senegal and in Senegalese residence places abroad, a *dahira* is initially a group of followers (*talibes*) from the same brotherhood who help each other and pray together. This solidarity can lead to the emergence of commercial networks, especially within the *murids*. During the 1980s, *murids* met regularly in Brooklyn, at a house named Keur Serigne Touba that was funded by a non-profit organization, the Murid Islamic Community of America Inc. (MICA), that Shaykh Mourtalla had set up.

In 1991, three years after his first visit to the U.S., Shaykh Mourtalla asked MICA to buy a house in New York in order to create a “House of Islam”. While it proved difficult to find the space to expand in Brooklyn, the organization found sufficient space in Harlem in Manhattan, the heart of New York City. Shaykh Mourtalla gave US \$55,000 to support the project. In eight years, the *murids* managed to raise an additional \$500,000 through gatherings and assemblies in order to rehabilitate the building. A mosque and a school “for the teaching of Muslim religion” was installed on the first floor and a residence for Shaykh Mourtalla was constructed on the second floor. My informants reproduced the discourse of *murid* hospitality, declaring that “anybody who arrives and who is looking for an apartment can go to the House of Islam and reside a couple of days there.”

Shaykh Bassirou Lô, head of the House of Islam, wanted the House to be an open space for anybody who is interested in Islam. He estimated that *murid* community in New York to be between one and two thousand members who pay a monthly membership fee of between \$30 and \$50.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the Senegalese Consul in New York regularly attends Friday prayers and Senegalese embassy staff in Washington comes to the House of Islam in New York for the main

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Shaykh Lô in New York, September 5, 2002 and House of Islam meeting procedure notes.

religious celebrations: Eid, Magal and prayers at the end of Ramadan.. The House of Islam is not restricted to *murids*; members of the *Tijaniy* brotherhood also attend prayers. The Tijaniy is another important *tariqa* in Senegal that was founded by Cheikh Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Mukhtar Ibn Salim at-Tidjâni (1727-1815).

Although migrants follow strategies across translocal spaces, activists take into consideration the cultural and political differences in their various places of residence. In New York City, West African Muslim groups have successfully promoted their specific Islamic practices by connecting them to common American discourses on minorities. Murid organizations and movements developed particularly successful strategies in New York by engaging in the available religious discursive resources in the U.S. and utilizing their prominence within the identity politics of New York City. Murids paid attention to the different inhabitants of Harlem, the state representatives as well as the mayor and their associated political programs. These actors are part of specific opportunity structures that interest groups can exploit when pursuing their goals in New York (Wilson and Rodriguez Cordero 2006; Furlong et al. 1996). Senegalese brotherhoods need connections to key religious leaders in New York and to the local administration in order to build up their own commercial, social, political and religious structures. In this dialectical process, local strategies shape, and are shaped by, existing structures and opportunities (Salzbrunn 2004). For the migrants, the establishment of religious and political structures in New York requires profound local knowledge of the laws, customs, and administrative procedures. The structures, resources and institutional opportunities in the U.S. have influenced the strategies of the murids, and led to new hybrid practices, which take into consideration the specific local situation. The positive response by the political authorities to the opening of House of Islam at Edgecombe Avenue in Harlem was one indication of how deeply the murids have become rooted in that New York City neighborhood. This is a clear example of ongoing glocalization processes that reflect global processes operating on a local level and the capacity of the actors involved to adapt to the local environment (Robertson 1995).

In Harlem, prayers are organized within public space, often via microphones on the street in front of churches or assembly halls. The Senegalese migrants, who became familiar with the religious patchwork of Harlem and the strategies of Christian missionary groups, adopted the use of loudspeakers to announce daily prayers in a mosque in centers of West African migrants, and near the Malcolm Shabbaz mosque. The use of iconographic images (on stickers, or paintings) is much more common than the display of Arabic calligraphy – which can be explained by the limited knowledge of the Arabic language among West African Muslims, in comparison with other Muslim immigrants residing in the U.S.

### RELIGIOUS NETWORKS IN FRANCE

Transnational religious networks take into consideration the local and regional structures in each country they are implemented. Their visibility and their perception of the public space differ. In New York City, the House of Islam is located in an area densely populated by Senegalese immigrants. The close proximity and symbolic presence of Senegalese religious leaders within the public space in Harlem provides a feeling of recognition and intimacy among brotherhood

members. In contrast to New York, in Paris murid houses are far from the city center and are located in a northern suburb; another important place with a large Senegalese population is in Mantes-La-Jolie, at the border between the Parisian region and Normandy. The murid houses in France are therefore almost invisible to non-members of the community, and no event is celebrated openly within public space.

In France, West African Muslim groups are also under-represented in national councils of religious affairs like the Conseil National du Culte Musulman (CNCM). The political participation of West African immigrants was almost invisible within the French public space and media until the recent strike of undocumented workers (“sans papiers”). Malian and Senegalese workers employed for several years in the service sector (food service and health care sectors) and who had paid taxes were in danger of expulsion from the country when their employers discovered that they had been employed with false papers. After some initial hesitation, the major trade unions fought for these employees’ rights. Several employers also intervened at the Préfecture (the regional authority representing the Ministry of Interior Affairs) to get work permits for their employees. Finally, the government decided to examine the cases without guaranteeing all the strikers a work permit. This political struggle was extensively discussed in the Senegalese media. Abdoulaye Wade, the current president of Senegal, pointed out several times that the treatment of Senegalese workers is unequal to that of other French workers. During his first election campaign, he promised to improve the bad living conditions of Senegalese in France through diplomatic negotiations with the French government. When he was elected, he focused more on readmission agreements that concern expelled undocumented workers.

The recent debate about residents’ rights and duties and the paradox practice of legal work (including the payment of taxes and social security) without a regular residence and work permits led researchers and politicians to think differently about citizenship. In fact, the legal and regulatory frameworks of citizenship do not match the social and economic practices. Therefore, employers have – consciously or unconsciously - accepted that they had to employ workers with false identity papers in order to employ them under “legal” conditions (meaning that the workers were declared, taxes and social security fees were paid, so that their employment is legal, even if their identity was false). There is an obvious need for workers in certain sectors (especially child and elderly care, but also in the hotel and restaurant sector), but the government refuses to carry out a general regularization program for employed workers without a work and/or residence permit. The gap between the obvious need for immigrant workers and the restricted immigration policy in Europe is particularly striking in the context of growing migration from West Africa. These conflicting trends have led to thousands of tragic human trafficking accidents, especially in the Mediterranean Sea. Several political activists from the former colonies claim that France tries to protect herself against the formerly colonized people (Senegalese, Malians, Algerians, Moroccans, Tunisians, Mauritians, Guineans and people from the Ivory Coast) and thus perpetuates historical dependencies. This means that France still tries to use people from the former colonies as a workforce that can be called – as in the 1960s, when the car industry needed workers – and rejected as soon as the need for labor decreases.<sup>2</sup> Abdoulaye Wade regularly mentions this issue in his discourses, as do Senegalese intellectuals who want to leave France for

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<sup>2</sup> See the discourses held by civil society associations such as Les Indigènes de la République (<http://www.indigenes-republique.fr>) and Conseil Représentatif des Associations Noires (<http://lecran.org>).

the U.S. or Canada where conditions are considered to be far better for the Senegalese. A group of Senegalese intellectuals including Abdoulaye Gueye, Mamadou Diouf and Bachir Diagne, who graduated in France and decided to emigrate to the U.S. or Canada were influenced by a growing consciousness of the consequences of the French colonial policies, and have created new political alliances against France. Gueye (2006: 225) wrote “The Colony Strikes Back: African Protest Movements in Postcolonial France” which found that African protest movements are increasing in postcolonial France. This decision signifies downgrading France after having been downgraded by France through discrimination and exclusion from the job market (Gueye 2001: 121).

### **POLITICAL NETWORKS AND THE CHANGE OF 2000**

After my interviews and participant-observation, I concluded that political issues are increasingly important, especially within the Senegalese communities abroad. The translocal social spaces are not necessarily exclusively based on religious practices or on the belonging to a daira. Communities have cross-cutting ties, so that individuals belong to several networks and interest groups concurrently. For sure, murid economic networks are organized and have a long financial reach. Nevertheless, I observed that individual and collective migrants’ activities, particularly in and around Paris, focus on the will of political change. This element in the migrants’ discourse can be considered as a form of long-distance nationalism (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001). The large political coalition that aimed to break the dominance of President Abdou Diouf in 2000 was united above religious or ideological orientations. For example, during the electoral meetings in Paris three women controlled the financial affairs of the campaign: one Sufi murid and one Catholic woman who belonged to the main opposition party PDS, and one Tijâniy woman who was a member of the ancient Marxist party as well as Jëf/PADS (Parti Africain pour la Démocratie et le Socialisme). This diversity in religion and political party affiliation reflects the attitude of most of the activists as well of most of the voters who put aside their differences in the presidential election of 2000. Religious issues were not openly discussed during the meetings in and around Paris – in contrast, the secular<sup>3</sup> character of the constitution was underlined several times by political speakers. Nevertheless, most of the practicing murids were conscious of the fact that a Murid Talibe, Abdoulaye Wade, was leading the main opposition party.

In the past, several marabouts (religious leaders) got into trouble due to their support for the government – a government that was increasingly contested. The difficult economic situation which resulted from the devaluation of the Franc CFA in 1994 have increased the will for political change, particularly among the youth, whose participation rate at elections was very low until 2000, and reached a record high percentage in 2000. In the same election cycle, it became a growing risk for marabouts to openly support the ruling government with clear recommendation for a vote by the ndigals. In France, a member of the Senegalese Senate, the second chamber, proudly said during an opposition meeting: “I have convinced my marabout not to give any

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<sup>3</sup> The French and Senegalese concepts of laïcité contain a stronger formal separation of public and religious affairs than the common concept in a secular state. In practice, however, religious and public affairs are closely interlinked in France and Senegal too.

ndigal, although he usually supported the Socialist Party.” The applauding public in Paris shared the opinion of the marabout, believing in a real chance of politics. People were taking autonomous political decisions, independently of the marabout’s advice. We can therefore assume that the historical structures of religious authority were largely contested in 2000 even though the religious authorities remained relatively calm. This recent evolution was fruitful ground for Abdoulaye Wade’s strategy to count on translocal networks. Wade himself organized his political campaign from his residence in Versailles. His local contacts, especially with the French liberal political leader Alain Madelin, were crucial in the organization of his election campaign. Several deputies of Madelin’s party supported the members of Wade’s party by loaning their office space in Paris for his campaign. However, after the 2000 election, Abdoulaye Wade publicly thanked the khalife (leader) of the murids for his prayers, as did the elected deputies of Wade’s party in 2001.

After Paris, the second most important place for the Wade election campaign was New York City. Political claims of the migrants, mostly economic demands, constituted the central part of his political program: a favorite customs policy, governmental aid for investments in Senegal, bilateral social insurance agreements, as well as demands for better living conditions for migrants in France. Before 2000, migrants were monitored upon their arrival at Dakar Airport in Senegal, and then again harassed several times on the way to the countryside by mobile customs employees, according to the returning migrants who reported that these corrupt employees asked them to pay fines or cash for the goods that they were transporting. The immigrants said that they were bringing gifts, but the employees’ argument was that they had trade goods. In New York, he met with members of the West African community based in Harlem, focusing on the problems for migrants coming home to Senegal, such as the custom practices outside the airport, and on the local situation in New York.

Paris and New York were considered the most important ‘battles’ that had to be won because they were strong symbols of the winds of change. The main candidates - Abdou Diouf, Abdoulaye Wade, Landing Savane and Djibo Kâ - shared the ambition to win Paris and New York. All candidates, except Abdoulaye Bathily, went to New York to canvass the migrants. Although the absolute number of electors registered on the list of voters was relatively low, the candidates expected to start an avalanche that would impact subsequent elections at home, particularly the parliamentary elections in 2001. A central element of Abdoulaye Wade’s strategy was the instrumentalization and an audio-visual reproduction of events during the campaign. Wade tested his strategy in “Little Africa” or “Little Senegal”, the main quarter of Senegalese migration in New York around 116th street. In contrast to France, where students have historically been opinion leaders and where workers constitute the most important support group for political parties, in New York shop owners and rich entrepreneurs had the vote multiplier role because the Senegalese immigrants to the U.S. are generally younger, richer and better educated.

New York City’s ‘Little Senegal’ has the most important constituency for Senegalese politicians. The area, located in Harlem, houses the highest concentration of Senegalese although there are also many other nationalities represented that fall under the broad rubric of African Americans. Even though the area is therefore not exclusively Senegalese, many Senegalese mingle in the markets, grocery stores, and restaurants there, from recently immigrated taxi

drivers, students to consular staff. In the presidential election in 2000, most of the candidates rented a school assembly hall or similar locations in Little Senegal for their central meetings. Abdoulaye Wade, wishing to counter the reserved attitude that his rival Abdou Diouf had adopted toward the Senegalese population, invented an original campaign strategy, which he called the Blue March. Instead of entering closed spaces and waiting for his (potential) supporters to join him, he decided to actively approach his potential voters. By walking along 116th street, accompanied by a big delegation, he introduced himself to shop owners, restaurant guests, grocers' clients and video film producers. His presence quickly attracted a huge crowd of supporters, making the Blue March one of the most memorable events in the whole campaign. Although he used a similar discourse as the one in France that emphasized that he was honestly interested in the migrants' personal affairs, when Wade addressed himself to Senegalese American migrants, particularly when he met entrepreneurs, he emphasized his liberal economic thinking. He emphasized the economic success of migrants, trying to convince the rich entrepreneurs to invest their money in Senegal after his victory in the elections. Since building a large coalition was the only way to defeat the Socialist Party, differences among the united opposition parties were downplayed. Voters could still vote for the coalition party without supporting Wade strongly because they were against Abdou Diouf and the Socialist Party PS. Finally, these strategies showed the importance of the local migration platform and the capacity of the protagonists to adapt their discourses and the organization of political events to local and national economic, social and political situations.

In 2000, Abdoulaye Wade's main strategy was to utilize transnational networks to disseminate his political message and to help convince a large number of Senegalese voters living in Senegal to give him their votes. Electoral meetings in the main centers of Senegalese migration were videotaped and screened at other meetings in which Wade could not participate personally. However, the dissemination of his image helped create an impression of his ubiquity. Even though the number of participants in the European and American meetings was relatively low in comparison to the total number of Senegalese voters, the dissemination was extremely efficient and created an image of an engaged candidate who did not hesitate to meet his Senegalese co-citizens anywhere in the world. I followed several meetings in workers' residences far away from the Paris city center, where the fact that Wade found his way to these places made him extremely popular. As a second strategy, Abdoulaye Wade presented his electoral program for potential groups of voters through videotaped interviews and speeches. In France, he produced a discourse matching the Senegalese residents' expectations in 2000. Wade underlined that France had needed Senegalese immigrants for industrial work in the 1960s, but had tried to discourage immigrants from entering or remaining in the country as soon as the French unemployment rate rose: "Now, immigrants are subject to rejection and racism."<sup>4</sup> He drew a very idealistic image of the U.S., arguing that "it is difficult to enter, but once you are in, you are in peace. In France, you have to face discriminating identity controls anywhere, anytime" (ibid).

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<sup>4</sup> "Discours d'Abdoulaye Wade aux immigrants." (Videotape sold during the election campaign in Paris, my copy and translation). For an extended analysis of this discourse, see Thomas Lacroix, Leyla Sall, Monika Salzbrunn, 2008. "Les Marocains et Sénégalais de France, permanences et évolution des relations transnationales" in *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, 24 (2): 23-43.

Senegal has always had a relatively free press in comparison with other West African countries and now, due to the Internet, satellite FM radios and cell phones, information circulates quicker than ever before. Therefore, the conditions for a victory of the opposition parties were particularly good. Journalists reported stories on the corruption of the ruling government, a new private press group named Sud openly supported the Sopi coalition. Sopi means change in Wolof and the Sopi coalition, which supported the candidate Wade defeated the ruling Socialist Party and ran the decentralized election campaign in the local centers of Senegalese migration abroad.

Another reason for Wade's victory was the preparation work done by members of the opposition party in France before the elections. They supported the consulate in organizing the practical and administrative matters in the election process. First, they convinced a high number of potential voters to register at the consulate. In France and Senegal, voters do not automatically figure on the voters' list, but have to register. When members of the opposition party went to workers' homes and civil society forums, especially women's organizations, they tried to convince their co-citizens to register to vote and support the opposition party concurrently. This strategy was highly efficient. Similarly, the election process itself was decentralized in order to attract a higher number of voters who could not vote before because of logistical issues - they lived too far away from the central election offices, mostly situated in or around Paris. The opposition party hired buses in order to help voters to reach the election offices and civil society organizations, mostly lead by women, organized informal buffets next to the election offices. In summary, the establishment of good logistical conditions by members of the opposition party also contributed to Wade's victory.

## THE 2007 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The success of creating a multiplying regional impact through a transnational election campaign was replicated for the 2007 elections in France, the U.S. and Italy. Despite growing critiques of his autocratic style, President Wade was again intensively supported by local committees in New York, Paris and in large parts of Italy such as in Breschia. Indeed, as the ruling government faced growing critiques, it increased efforts to win the 2007 elections through international support, forming the *Alliance Internationale d'Emigrés Sénégalais pour la Réélection du Président, Maître Abdoulaye Wade en 2007* (International alliance of Senegalese emigrants for the reelection of master Abdoulaye Wade in 2007). Senegalese residing in Italy created the *Mouvement des Sénégalais d'Italie pour la réélection d'Abdoulaye Wade* (Movement of the Senegalese in Italy for the reelection of Abdoulaye Wade). In France, there were public critiques of Wade in workers' residences, at cultural or religious events, and in formal and informal debates. The forum, *Res Publica*, regularly organized debates on the political situation in Paris; the website [www.afriklive.com](http://www.afriklive.com) organized meetings with Senegalese politicians and disseminated information on the Internet. Bilateral relations between France and Senegal are regularly discussed on the community websites. Several political demands came up during a demonstration on February 27, 2007, in front of the Senegalese Consulate in Paris, concerning the right to vote through the Internet.<sup>5</sup> Despite the fact that the election offices were opened

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<sup>5</sup> During the demonstration organized by Res Publica on 27 February 2007, in front of the Consulate of Senegal in Paris, several claims were expressed, in particular a demand for the retirement of the Minister of Interior Affairs. Source: <http://www.respublica-senegal.org> (last accessed 14/09/09)

outside Paris, geographic distance still discouraged a high number of potential voters.<sup>6</sup>

After Wade's victory in 2000, the importance of translocal political networks grew. The government is now aware of the importance of remittances sent by Senegalese abroad, developed more translocal communication strategies and migrant issues and their economic and political achievements appear in presidential speeches. The Minister in charge of the Senegalese residing abroad, Abdoul Malal Diop, and the deputy who was elected by the Senegalese abroad regularly speak in citizen forums. Abdoul Malal Diop explicitly referred to the remittances sent by Senegalese abroad as an integral part of economic policy when he encouraged emigrants to invest in sustainable economic projects and in return the government would help them with administrative issues. He mentioned the example of Senegalese who have succeeded in the U.S. (as engineers or IT-specialists) in contrast with the Senegalese residing in France. The median salary of the latter is lower and so they cannot afford to send as high amounts of remittances as those residing in the U.S. He also mentioned the French-Senegalese return migration agreement and the bilateral co-development programs that aim at decreasing the immigration rate.<sup>7</sup>

Despite these political claims, the promise of improving the Senegalese government's administration has not been met, and the Senegalese residing abroad have not been convinced to return home. Sustainable investments that create employment are still rare, and only the real estate sector benefits from remittances. Senegalese abroad buy property or build houses in order to maintain the myth of an eventual return – in the short term or for retirement. In reality, these houses are only occupied during the owners' holidays and the Senegalese in France and the U.S. hesitate to invest large amounts of money in Senegal, preferring to invest in their current locations. Despite the creation of an emigrants' bank, private channels remain more important than any official transfer system and migrants continue to use informal channels and not participate in the formal banking system.

### CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS OF TRANSLOCAL POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

The growing consciousness of an increasing socio-economic gap between inhabitants of European and African origin in France is currently emerging. West Africans are aware of discrimination against them on the job market.<sup>8</sup> They develop transnational political practices

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<sup>6</sup> Italy is now the most important European residence country for Senegalese emigrants. In contrast to France, where 35 electoral offices were opened in only 12 places, Italy has opened more than 60 offices. This can be explained by the large number of Senegalese in Italy and by the Italian administration, which is more flexible than the French administration concerning the opening of electoral offices.

Sources: <http://www.cena.sn> (Commission électorale nationale autonome/National autonomous electoral commission); <http://www.respublica-senegal.org>; <http://www.afriklive.com> (last accessed 14/09/09)

<sup>7</sup> Diop said, "Concerning these cases, we work together with France who, in the case of co-development, has provided financial help for the Senegalese who are in France and who would like to invest in Senegal. In the beginning, this was a total failure. Today, we are currently negotiating a new kind of partnership with France." As quoted in *Rencontres du Soleil*, [www.soleil.sn](http://www.soleil.sn) (08/14/2007).

<sup>8</sup> The results of an official testing carried out by the Centre d'Analyse Stratégique, a think tank attached to the French Prime Minister, are published on [www.strategie.gouv.fr](http://www.strategie.gouv.fr) and in the journal, *Horizons Stratégiques*, 2007 (5). The whole report, *Discriminations à l'embauche. Un Testing sur les jeunes des banlieues d'Île-de-France*, was written by Emmanuel Duguet, Noam Leandri, Yannick L'Hority, Pascale Petit and published in 2007 by the Centre

that combine national history with references to transnational historical issues such as slavery. New technologies and communications media like the Internet, mobile phones, satellite radio (especially FM radio broadcasted from Dakar, Senegal) contribute to the enlargement of a transnational political space. Close links between religious and political networks can still be observed, but the alliances are complex and dynamic. The local enterprises in Harlem, New York and Barbès, Paris, also serve as places for interfaces between Senegalese living abroad and those traveling there. The localized rooting of migrants' networks also contributes to the general process of re-scaling cities (Glick Schiller and Caglar, forthcoming). Workers' residences and workers' restaurants are still places for informal trade that resist official temptations of formalization (through supranational banks). Not only Internet platforms, but also civil society organizations (CSOs) such as the Association of West African Women provide important opportunities for formal and informal meetings where political and economic activities are carried out. Female mediators (Delcroix 1996) who are members of these CSOs serve as interlocutors in local social or political conflicts.<sup>9</sup> The CSOs and the mediators thus act as different nodes in the same network.

## CONCLUSION

The contemporary dynamics of transnational political mobilization take place on a local, regional and transnational level (Pries 2008). The most important negotiation processes take place through personal interactions and informal networks that can only be understood through long-term fieldwork in different localities (Anghel, Gerhartz, Rescher, Salzbrunn 2008). These translocal networks transcend national or religious groupings and remain efficient thanks to their local roots in an urban environment. Their action has a qualitative and substantial impact on the democratic processes in Senegal. Senegalese residents abroad have become ambassadors and vote multipliers for the opposition, transmitting their conviction of voting against the ruling party in 2000 to their peers in Senegal. Senegalese in France and the U.S. have addressed their political claims to the candidates as part of their campaigns. Hence, political messages, vote recommendations and claims have circulated around the globe through these networks.

The media have also contributed to a dissemination of the claims of Senegalese abroad. The multi-sited election campaign stops and speeches were transmitted via private and commercial videotapes, the opposition-party's screenings and through the media, mainly through the Internet site of the private opposition-friendly media company, Sudonline.<sup>10</sup> During the 2000 and 2001 elections, transnational networks fostered democratic participation. However, voters were later frustrated as the winning candidate, Abdoulaye Wade, did not meet the (high) expectations in the years following his election victory. Therefore, support for his party was lower in the 2007 elections. The fact that the voters expressed their dissatisfaction with the government's achievements is part of this ongoing democratic participation by the Senegalese abroad.

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d'Analyse Stratégique, Premier Ministre, Paris. The research confirms hiring discrimination against West and North African immigrants by employers.

<sup>9</sup> They are part of an interface situation as defined by Norman Long (1999: 1): "Interface analysis focuses on the linkages and networks that develop between individuals or parties rather than on individual or group strategies." See also Long, 1989.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.sudonline.sn/>

Furthermore, the migrants' activities also influenced local and national politics in their places of residence, as well as in their immediate urban environment (Salzbrunn, forthcoming). Unlike in France and Italy, in the U.S. the Senegalese are particularly visible within the public space through their contribution to the gentrification of Harlem, New York and through the organization of political and religious forums. They continuously learn the American political language, semantics and references and manage to become a part of New York in the eyes of the inhabitants and of the mayor. Mutual recognition processes and the material expression of local belonging through buying property lead to a long-term rooting in this new place of residence. For these reasons, the U.S. has become an important alternative location for the glocal political and economic activities of Senegalese abroad.

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