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The Challenge of NICTs and Their Role in Urban Change: The Case of Touba

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Introduction

The city – often considered to be a sort of time-lapse snapshot of the changes occurring within a society – is made up of a complex of powers, social interactions and material objects. It is regarded as the cradle of civilization: the innovative focal point from which technical progress is disseminated to the rest of the country. Information and communication, with their capacity to control power and people, are therefore important elements in this process. Today, cities are experiencing rapid and unprecedented changes in borders, citizenship and urban environment; new socioeconomic groups, influenced by new information and communications technologies (NICTs), are emerging from the shadows or reinventing themselves.

Since the beginning of the century, cities have been the epicenter for the progressive penetration of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in Senegal. Could one argue, then, that these technologies are one and the same with urban life itself; that their success in the urban milieu is attributable to the fact that their networking capacity is inextricably linked to the essential nature of the city?

Historically, Senegal has been highly receptive to changes on the world stage and has, for some time, gambled heavily on the potential of NICTs. The transistor, which brought revolutionary changes in urban and rural life, played a major role in the birth of nationalism and political awareness in Senegal. In an environment dominated by oral communication,[1] State-controlled radio broadcasting has been a tool for the reproduction of power. What, then, is the social and political impact of liberalizing and transnationalizing the audiovisual media, and the impact of ending the State's control over tools of mass propaganda, such as radio and television?

The Société Nationale des Télécommunications (SONATEL), Senegal's national telecommunications company – one of West Africa's most successful companies and Senegal's second-largest business in total sales – undertook a bold initiative, beginning in 1985, to develop telephone service. The telecommunications system, which was implemented gradually and consists of an all-digital fiber optic network providing extensive national coverage, is second to none in West Africa. SONATEL's 1992 decision to authorize private marketing of telephone service was an important step in bringing telephony to the population at large – a process that has continued to expand usage to a mass scale. A number of studies examining telecenters in Dakar and elsewhere in the country have already been conducted.[2] SONATEL continues to modernize its basic network, providing expanded teleservices and facilitating

[1] The independent Senegalese State understood very early the primary role that radio could play, and implemented a development policy consisting essentially of eliminating the tax on radios. As a result, the number of radios grew from 125,000 in 1960 to 180,000 in 1964. Sagna Olivier, 2000 - Les technologies de l'information et de la communication et le développement social au Sénégal: un état des lieux. UNRISD, Research Programme on Information Technologies and Social Development, 62 p.

[2]. Cf Sagna O. 2000. The study by Gaston Zongo, within the work overseen by Annie Chéneau-Loquay (Enjeux des NTIC en Afrique) is, however, the one that deals with the question in relation to Senegal.

development of the information superhighway[3] -- a process that should make the Internet available to the average Senegalese at a rapid pace unmatched by other mass technologies. In the last three years alone, there has been an extraordinary increase in the number of minutes Senegalese have spent online.

The new revolution in ICTs provides a foundation and launching pad for a "civilization of the universal," to use the words of Léopold Sédar Senghor, and poses a major challenge for Senegal, with its increasingly urban, internationally-oriented society.

Touba, the country's second-largest city (with a population of approximately 500,000) and a major religious center, will be a testing ground for observing two intersecting forces: increasing urbanization and the use of NICTs. The development of Touba – unlike Dakar, where the State played a primary role in creating the city – occurred as the result of an initiative undertaken by the Mourides, a Muslim sect, at the beginning of the century, aimed at replacing the traditional social structures of Wolof society (Senegal's dominant ethnic group, representing approximately 45% of the population). This sect, which today accounts for more than one third of the population, is a powerful socioreligious group, known for its agricultural and commercial activities, its deep-rooted traditions, its increasingly international orientation and its capacity for adapting to innovation.[4] In the regions where it has gained control, and in the city – where the modernizing force of urban production serves as a tool for promoting its social and religious interests – it has made itself a major presence.

The choice of Touba as a site for studying the appropriation of NICTs in Senegal – by individuals and, especially, by urban societies – is both appropriate and provocative. While Touba serves as a laboratory for analyzing Senegal's increasing urbanization and the parallel formation of translocal identity – a result of the society's massive, worldwide diaspora – it is also home to a sect whose values and practices, while changing under the influence of that diaspora, have retained their singular character. Thus, while the present analysis will be relevant to Senegalese society as a whole, it will reflect the particularities of the Mouride brotherhood. It is this dialectical ambivalence that makes a study of Senegalese society by a member of that very society particularly interesting.

One must be careful not to confuse the site and the objective of this research. The author's interest in the appropriation of NICTs in Touba arises solely from Touba's ability to reveal the dynamics and changes within the Mouride brotherhood. The city is, in fact, one of the sect's many population centers scattered throughout Senegal, Europe, Africa, the United States and elsewhere. However, it serves as the central unifying force – a place of return, a gathering point for family and friends.

In today's network society, which, according to Castells, is becoming increasingly widespread, "two opposing forces are struggling to remake our world and our lives:

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[3] Senegal is the second most Internet-connected country after South Africa, according to some sources. See Jeune Afrique, June 15-21, p. 122.

[4] Guèye Cheikh, 1999 - L'organisation de l'espace dans une ville religieuse: Touba (Sénégal). Doctoral thesis (new regime), Louis Pasteur University in Strasbourg, 650 p.

globalization and identity… globalization of strategic economic activities. A specific form of organization: networks. The flexibility and instability of work, and the individualization of labor. A culture of virtual reality created by a diversified system of media that communicate with each other and have universal penetration. And the transformation of the basic material dimensions of life, space and time: network society is a place of flow and of "non-temporal" time, which are an expression of its dominant activities and governing elites."[5] Added to this, in apparent opposition to this movement, is the identity that manifests itself more strongly than ever, defying cosmopolitanism, "*in the name of cultural individuality and individuals' control over their life and environment."*[6]

Territory is a theoretical framework derived from the geographic projection of a society's structures and values. It is an identity-based concept, carrying legal, social, cultural and emotional significance, often defined by the sense of belonging and by the emergence, within it, of collective representations. The author's hypothesis is that NICTs constitute the new territory (beyond the national and international realms) to be conquered by the Mourides. The projection (desired and actual) of marabout society – its political functioning, its cultural and religious realities and its economic dynamism – into an ever-expanding space, both in Senegal and abroad, makes "territory" an appropriate term of reference and basis for analysis.

The limits that can be placed on territory depend, however, on the dominance of the society and the extent to which it controls the geographic space. The appropriation of territory may be ethnic, religious, linguistic and/or political in nature, or may be based on other values or identities. The territory can be continuous or discontinuous, material, virtual and/or ideal. NICTs constitute territorializing tools that weaken or eliminate constraints on the realities of distance and space.

These technologies transform territory, and can themselves constitute a territory for a given group. The utility of the notion of territory lies in the fact that it is seen not only as a reality, but also as a quest, a utopia. Given the presence of State enterprises and the globalization of trade, ideas and cultures brought about by the revolution in communications technologies, it is reasonable to ask just how autonomous is this territory. Mouridism appears to be an example of a society that, while possessing a strong local identity, becomes transnational and follows the trend toward globalization by harnessing NICTs. It thus invents a form of migrating religion in which new territorialization is constantly renewing and reshaping the religion's symbols.[7]

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact of the development of NICTs on a religious city that, increasingly, resembles other Senegalese cities; and, by doing so, to gain an understanding of the mechanisms by which such technologies are appropriated by this constantly changing urban society. A study of Touba should

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[5] Manuel Castells, 1999 – Le pouvoir de l'identité. Fayard, p.11 and 12.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Bava Sophie, Guèye Cheikh - Le grand *magal* de Touba. Exil prophétique, migration et pèlerinage au sein du mouridisme. Forthcoming in Social Compass, September 2001.

facilitate an understanding of the behavior of this *urbi et orbi* group, and its relationship to NICTs. There will also be an examination of the appropriation of new technologies by what are often considered anti-Western Islamic societies.

Touba was established as a religious city in 1888 by Sheik Ahmadou Bamba, the founder of a mystical Muslim sect that has gained a large membership over the past hundred years. It is headed by a *khalif general* or supreme khalif – the founder's biological and spiritual heir. This person represents the founder's ideal vision of the capital – a city created to give the religion a worldwide presence. And, indeed, the sect has transnationalized itself and exported its religious and cultural symbols, as well as its social and economic practices.

As a sequel to the rural and urban phases of territorialization, Mouride society is devoting its full energy to realizing its founder's vision: that of creating a site that can serve both as a place of religious devotion and as a moral and social haven. The capacity for innovation and adaptation is evident in Touba's urban society, which is utilizing the full potential of NICTs to enhance the society's internal functioning, while at the same time bringing it into greater contact with the world at large. Touba serves as the focal point for the Mourides' various population centers, both in Senegal and abroad, while NICTs are used to promote the group's identity, disseminate its religious objectives and conquer the virtual territories of the Internet.

Touba recently became the second-ranking city in Senegal (after Dakar) in terms of both population and telephony. Thus, Senegal's urban structure, oriented primarily to the coast, is enhanced by the presence of another large city in the interior of the country, providing a counterbalance to the overwhelming influence of Dakar. However, despite this new national prominence, Touba does not enjoy the administrative status needed, according to national law, to be a city/commune, making it what must certainly be the largest "village" in the world, with an estimated half-million inhabitants.

According to the 1988 census, more than 90% of this population is of rural origin. However, in terms of the rules and values in force within the city, Touba benefits from its extraterritorial status and from being a free zone. Thus, it is not subject to the prohibitions instituted between 1945 and 1968 covering the nation's schools and health care facilities (which were viewed as instruments of Westernization) or to the bans, effective since 1985 within the private domain, on alcohol, gambling, soccer and movies.

Touba's extraterritoriality has acted as a stimulant to an economy that is based on trade and religion – an economy whose viability has long been questioned. Today, Touba seems to have a greater draw than Dakar, and this religious city is now becoming a large metropolitan area, acting as a new center of economic activity and trade. Some are already calling it the "capital of the informal sector." For tens of thousands of international Mouride émigrés, it is favored as the special place of return, a sort of Jerusalem – a symbolically important, ostentatious but, increasingly, economically viable center.

The major telecommunications companies – SONATEL and SENTEL – once they formulated a catch-up strategy for the Touba market, committed themselves to a

forward-looking, speculative investment policy. For SONATEL, as well as for its competitor, SENTEL, Touba is the second-ranking population center in both cellular and fixed telephony; in order to meet increasing demand in this important region, numerous projects have been designed. Given Senegal's current rage for cybercafés and public Internet-access points, it is worth considering what significance this trend has for Touba, where over 85% of the population is illiterate in French. Although the city's life and functioning relies on the contribution of international émigrés, Touba also suffers from extreme poverty. Thus, it remains a question as to how the telephone and the Internet can be adapted to the city's informal sector and to its numerous economic refugees.

The Mourides – who created transnational groups in the countries where they have a presence – not only use NICTs extensively for organizational purposes; they also utilize them in their interaction with the city and with the families who remained or moved there. Today, the invention of new forms of urban management relies on NICTs, which make it possible to apply special land management rules.

Does the concept of a religious city imply particular NICT practices? What role does the worldwide web play in promoting the image of the sect and its capital? The Internet is already an important tool for the Mourides' proselytizing efforts, with websites that extol the sect's power and provide information on its online life. Are the Mourides, therefore, already in an advantageous position in the struggle for knowledge and content, a contest for which Senegal, as a whole, is completely unprepared? In an environment in which the State's role is of decreasing importance, a variety of indicators confirm that progress and innovation is being led more and more by the private sector and by civil society.

A broad analysis indicates that the rapid appropriation of NICTs in Touba is the result of fashion, fascination, opportunity, the need for information, the importance of keeping informed, the quest for individual affirmation and the desire for autonomy.

Methodological approach

This study uses statistical sources and qualitative surveys to identify correlations between the extensive development of NICTs and social changes within the city.

The approach combines a macro level, which has an exploratory function, and a micro level, which examines the appropriation of NICTs by the relevant actors. These two levels correspond to the quantitative and qualitative approaches employed. First, in order to examine the state of development of NICTs in Touba, a historical detour was taken in an attempt to shed light on the social changes engendered by these technologies. Detailed statistical data on SONATEL has been used to aid in understanding the increased use of NICTs in Touba, as well as the significance of this change. The replacement of fixed telephones with mobile telephones seems to be an inescapable fact. Localized sectoral surveys have fleshed out the initial results and hypotheses derived from the statistical data. Beyond the issue of the telephone and the Internet, consideration must be given to use of the computer as an information management tool, as well as to the behavioral changes this entails. To this end, information was obtained from training schools and from representative categories of microcomputer users.

Following an analysis of the creation and transnationalization of the Mouride brotherhood, the study attempts to trace the evolution of telecommunications networks in Touba and to assess the degree to which NICTs are used for urban management, at the neighborhood level, by marabouts, district khalifs and supreme khalifs. The study identifies the mechanisms by which the powerful group of informal-sector merchants is using fixed and portable telephony. It also examines the group's use of computers and of the Internet. An analysis of the content of ten Mouride websites indicates that the Mourides have clearly identified the Internet as a new territory and have sought to give it their unique, collective stamp. NICTs are also instrumental in creating other forms of identity and social relationships that can be expressed over long distances, reflecting the Mourides' global ambitions and rendering more effective the sect's proselytizing efforts. Thus, the two powers analyzed by Castells, rather than being separate, intertwine in mutual dependency.

How the Mourides invented a migrant society: Territorial and identity-based approaches

The first, rural phase of territorialization/migration by the Mourides is essential to understanding the manner in which the sect functions, its significance for Senegalese society and the challenges it faces in appropriating NICTs.

The Mouride brotherhood: An approach based on territorial conquest, implemented initially in the rural context

The Mouride tradition of territorial conquest began in the rural environment. It is there that the sect came into being in the last quarter of the 19th century; the conception and testing of the marabout-disciple relationship – at the core of the sect's functioning – also took place in this setting. The sect was greatly influenced by underlying Wolof culture from the precolonial Cayor and Baol kingdoms of Senegal – characterized by a hierarchy of casts and orders and by "being fully islamized, although – despite the long-standing influence of Islam – this has been true only recently."[8]

The Sufi sects, of which the Mourides are a part, are of ancient origin and represent a "parallel Islam" that derives from "the believer's original, individual experience." With the development of the mystical current in Islam, this became "a method, a set of prescriptions and rites by which a spiritual guide (*murshid)* mechanically, as it were, allows the disciples he initiates (*murid*) to gain access to mystical experience. The disciples, as a group, form a *tariqa*. At the head of this is the *shaykh*, successor to the initiator of the group and linked to him by a spiritual inheritance (*silsila*) that gives him supernatural qualities and powers.[9]

The first sects appeared in the Near East; from there, they progressively annexed major outlying Muslim populations through conquest and trade. They are found today

[8]Pélissier P., 1966 - *Les paysans du Sénégal. Les civilisations agraires du Cayor à la Casamance.* Imprimerie Fabrègue, Saint-Yrieix, Haute Vienne, p.112.

[9]Ibid p.7

throughout the Muslim world in various local forms, as well as transnationally.[10] More than any other sect, the Mourides have inscribed their identity on the religious landscape of Senegal. It has long been regarded as a local branch of the *Qâdiriyya,*[11] which has developed spiritual and biological relationships and progeny outside of Senegal, particularly in Mauritania.

This fact is of paramount importance for the purposes of this study. The sect's *Qâdiriyya* origin has given it a singular place in transnational and cosmopolitan Islam. It's current international character appears to be merely an expression of its maturation as a religious group, which has always proclaimed its universality and has made this universal vision central to its aspirations. The marabout-disciple relationship is the fundamental structure through which the sect functions.

What, then, is the significance of this relationship? Marabout allegiance is a relationship of personal commitment involving two individuals, the disciple and the marabout – one submitting and the other assisting – and includes both a spiritual and a material dimension. The act of submission or *djebëlou* (which has been described, in various studies, in the context of the ceremonies involved), the phrases uttered[12] and the socioeconomic implications involved – all of these elements make the sect unique. This relationship is the sine qua non of being a Mouride – a voluntary commitment to a man/institution, an act of becoming part of a collective endeavor. Thus, *djebëlou* signifies a commitment to developing the sect and disseminating its objectives on a global scale. This dimension must be taken into consideration in attempting to understand the Mourides' interest in NICTs, which provide them a means of enhancing the sect's worldwide presence.

Studies have often stressed the rural essence of the sect, with a peasant culture centered on peanut cultivation. The sect's founder, who became a new guiding spirit and hero of Wolof society, came from a profoundly rural background. Entire regions in central and eastern Senegal saw the founding of numerous pioneer settlements and villages beginning in the 1930s, along with massive land clearing. The sect also succeeded in transforming the massive Wolof population into a major force for territorial conquest, agricultural production and proselytizing, leading to the creation of a venue for the sect's beliefs, its system of training, its religious, political and economic practices, and its strong sacred and secular relationships.

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[10] Their presence in Turkey is familiar in the form of the dervishes and their *"tekke"* (*Zawiyya*). There they continue to play an important role despite being banned by Mustafa Kémal. On the Indian subcontinent they also formed multiple branches after the Mongol invasion. See Popovic and Veinstein, pp. 7-10.

[11] A sect attached to Sheikh Abdal-Khadir Djeylani (1077-1166), of Bagdad, and brought to Africa through Fez to Morocco. Its widespread development in Senegal, beginning in the 18th century, is linked to the action of the Kounta, of Sheik Mohammed al Fadel and Sheik Sidiya al Kebir.

[12] "During the initiation ceremony, a prospective disciple kneels before a sheik and pronounces the following formula: 'I submit myself to you, body and soul. I will do all you ask of me and will abstain from all you prohibit.' The sheik then pronounces a short blessing and spits on the hands of the disciple, who passes his hands over his face, a symbol that he is in the hands of his sheik 'like a corpse in the hands of the washer of the dead.' The sheik then declares his acceptance of the act of submission (njebbel) and, ordinarily, adds the formula 'Always obey orders,' which he may or may not specify." O'Brien, 1970, p. 565.

The affirmation of the Mouride brotherhood is a new form of socialization and spatialization for Senegalese society. The territorialization of the *mouridiyya* addresses a need arising from the loss of traditional physical points of reference, with the disintegration of the Wolof kingdoms. Thus, the migration of Mouride symbols and ideology began in rural Senegal , where the sect originated.

This new social force, created in the rural environment, appropriates urban elements, interpreting them in the context of its own symbolism and societal aims, demonstrating an extraordinary ability in adapting to the new challenges of Senegalese society. The marabout-disciple relationship took on new dimension with the disappearance of Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba in 1927, particularly in light of the actions of his successors. Later, the urban-based and international elements of Mouride migration gave the sect a new direction and new forms of expression. The degree to which NICTs are being appropriated appears, in turn, to represent an evolution of this relationship and its associated practices.

The urban element – a successful innovation for the Mourides: The relation between NICTs and territorialization.

Despite the sect's almost congenital rural roots, it has taken advantage of the massive population flow to Senegal's urban centers. Disciples have created economic and social opportunities for themselves, inventing and dominating entire sectors. The first wave of Mouride migrants to the cities of Dakar, Thiès, Kaolack and to most of the peanut-producing centers, began at the close of World War II. This migration has allowed the sect to gradually replace Lebanese-Syrians in the peanut trade and, thus, to control the industry.

The initial migration also set the stage for a second wave, which began in 1970, with the drought endemic to Senegal's countryside. The presence of early migrants to the cities facilitated the influx and integration of a second generation of migrants. The Mourides' mutual-assistance and socialization networks, which today enjoy worldwide success, came into being in Senegal's cities, influenced by uniquely urban conditions and driven by a strong work ethic and, above all, by an implacable faith in ultimate success.

The territorialization of a society can be both rural and urban, highly dispersed or concentrated. Though the Mouride brotherhood has created a presence for itself in the rural world, its territory encompasses an urban component that includes, above all, Senegal's cities, often considered to be the locus of innovation and modernization. Nevertheless, its deculturating character is evident in the literature. The Mourides have managed to gain a foothold in the city while maintaining links among themselves and with the marabout "executive corps," thus belying the pessimism of some observers who believed that the "urbanization movement is not designed in a way that makes things easy for sect leaders."[13] At present, the Mourides control the informal trade and transportation sector, which is thought to represent close to 60% of GDP and to employ roughly 640,000 individuals, of whom 45% are in Dakar (DPS). In this respect, a study of the mechanisms by which the Mourides appropriate NICTs must address the use of these technologies by the informal sector in Senegal's cities.

[13] O'Brien, 1981, *Politique Africaine*, n° 4, p. 27.

This approach has been developed by the Mourides as a strategy for overtaking the majority Tidiane sect, major segments of which chose the urban-society model at the beginning of the century. In terms of the urban environment, the Mourides' "revenge" has been successful. The Mourides' upward mobility subsequently became a dominant model in Senegal's urban environments and spread, to varying degrees, to all segment's of the society. The accumulation of economic and financial assets pursued by the Mourides within urban settings reinforces the feeling of group cohesion, nourishes and renews the sense of differentiation and identification, and brings its members into closer association with the sect's international networks. It also makes it possible to react more quickly and effectively with regard to the innovations and changes in scale brought about by NICTs.

The massive migration of Mourides to the cities ruptured the physical proximity between marabouts and disciples, requiring a reformulation of that relationship. In order for the relationship to operate at long distance – at a time when all of the sect's energy and resources (both human and material) were required for the construction of its mosque and the building of its city – a very special type of organization was needed. The khalif, who acts as the sect's supreme authority, needed to convey his orders to disciples who were increasingly dispersed and were confined within a restrictive urban system. Thus, the *dahira* – mutual-assistance associations with the capacity to mobilize people and facilitate communication – served as a means for the Mourides to overcome the individuality and anonymity of urban life, while the distance between marabouts and disciples has fostered greater closeness among the disciples and promoted a collective identity focused on values, practices, events and efforts to extend the sect's global reach.

Radio and television have played a central role in this endeavor, functioning as the mouthpiece of the khalif during the great mobilizations often used to carry out the sect's large-scale collective celebrations. Such events provide a vital point of communion with the central authority – an element essential to maintaining its legitimacy. These radio broadcasts, occurring at least three times a year, have drawn (and continue to draw) large audiences in the cities of Senegal and in other locations where the Mourides have settled.

The first of these three annual occasions is just before the rainy season. According to a well-established tradition, the khalif signals to his disciples, in their fields, the beginning of the planting season. It also serves, however, as the occasion for other marabouts and disciples to initiate their own agricultural activities. While this tradition derives from the mimetic function of the marabout-disciple relationship, it is also the result of the unpredictable nature of Senegal's climate over many generations. Disciples, who regard the marabout as a man of enlightenment, believe that beginning their activities at the same time as their marabout will insure them against the effects of drought. Thus, disciples listen, within the broadcast messages, for optimistic predictions about the rainy season. The message is also the starting point for the return of Mouride seasonal migrants who move to the cities for the dry season and return to cultivate their fields during the rainy season. This rhythm of urban/rural migration has been occurring for several decades.

The second occasion is the great Touba migration (*magal*), which is the sect's main collective event (and one of the largest in Senegal). All Mourides regard this moment in time and space as a special, highly-anticipated occurrence – an occasion that, today, brings together some hundreds of thousands of people. The khalif calls for the mass participation of Mourides dispersed throughout the world, reminding them of their duties as disciples and of the principles at the heart of this major religious occasion.

At the "official ceremony," the khalif makes a declaration marking the end of the pilgrimage. This is the moment – anxiously anticipated by disciples, as well as by the State itself – that serves as a barometer of the relations between khalifal and governmental authorities, as well as an indication of the "terms of trade" for services between the two parties.[14] It is in this statement that the khalif thanks the State on behalf of the brotherhood (if the State's actions are deemed to warrant it) and articulates its demands for the future. Anyone familiar with the importance, to Senegal's political stability, of the Mouride-State relationship will appreciate the fact that this statement – delivered on the eve of elections – is of major significance.

Television coverage of the great pilgrimage (*magal*) is a highly important political matter and is controlled, down to the smallest detail, by the brotherhood. Choosing which marabouts will appear, which events should be filmed to best provide the disciples (responsible for financing the events) with a clear picture of the number of disciples and of the miracles of the marabout – these are all elements of a communications strategy which is, itself, part of the proselytizing mission that the sect continues to direct to the world at large. Videocassettes of the gathering are sold in all areas where disciples have settled, evoking and disseminating the emotion of the event.

While these three occasions are anxiously anticipated each year, radio broadcasts are also used at other times to bring messages of khalifal authority to the sect's urban disciples. One such example is the announcement of major works being carried out by the brotherhood – announcements that have occurred periodically during the construction phase of most of Touba's infrastructure. Funds for these works have been raised in a matter of days as a result of the emotional impact and effectiveness of these radio broadcasts: approximately 100 million CFA francs for the Well of Mercy (*Ainou Rahmati*), some 300 million CFA francs for the Touba library, and billions for successive extensions of the Grand Mosque. Moreover, since radio reaches the entire nation, it has been the primary means of spreading the call for settlement, both for rural inhabitants and for Mourides living in the cities. Another radio tradition is the announcement of devotional events and other religious activities. What is known as "previews" present lyrical renditions by recognized and renown hosts, extolling the importance of particular sectarian figures or events.

These radio and television broadcasts are clearly important to the sect. A 1983 lawsuit concerning the broadcast of a message by the sect aroused the anger of khalif Serigne Abdoul Ahad, who, at that point, threatened to launch a Mouride radio station. This has, in fact, become a partial reality, with the establishment of several FM stations broadcasting in Dakar. They are primarily oriented to Mourides, with some stations carrying out a proselytizing function. There is also an increasing number of

[14]Coulon, 1981, p.174.

broadcasts dealing with the teachings of Sheik Ahmadou Bamba. It is difficult to determine whether these stations are targeted to the Mourides themselves or to the informal sector, which is an important potential market for advertising. In actual fact, the extensive overlapping of these groups makes them virtually indistinguishable. Advertising spots are often preceded by jingles made up of psalms (*khassaïdes)* by the sect's founder. Other carefully devised strategies for increasing listenership are also being used by stations to cater to the needs of this population.

As part of a strategy to establish its autonomy, the sect has been gradually developing its vision for an audiovisual outlet, a plan that gained momentum particularly in the wake of the 1983 conflict between the khalif and Senegal's Office of Radio and Television Broadcasting. Today, movements, such as the old *dahira* directed by Mouride students, are attempting to make this vision a reality, with plans to create a Mouride television station in Touba. The station, already in existence, is fully equipped and has, for some years, planned to broadcast programs of the great pilgrimage. However, because of the government's refusal to grant it official authorization, it has not yet been able to launch ongoing operations.

Given the urban environment, which can lead to social alienation, particularly for a sect with a strong rural identity, radio and television have been major tools in the marabout-disciple relationship. These media have helped promote a sense of collective identity for those living in the cities, and the current proliferation of private radio stations on the FM band has strengthened the sect's traditions by providing full-length broadcasts and regular hosts.

The State media also play a major role in promoting the lineage of holy men who make up the Mouride brotherhood and who have a vital presence in the various districts of Touba. The media "participate in constructing and reproducing an identity that gives marabouts the status of 'dignitaries'[15] through television and/or radio coverage of the *magals* and kinship gatherings. These commemorations extol the individual or collective charisma of the marabouts, while also serving to reinforce their commitment and consolidate the State's political support. These are moments of political *ndigël* that support the clientist relationship. The marabouts are not mere 'poachers' infringing 'on the territory of political entrepreneurs,' as M. C. Diop and M. Diouf have written. Rather, they are themselves political entrepreneurs whose legitimacy is based on what Jean François Médard refers to as 'overlapping positions,' projecting Sahlins's notion of the "big man" on African politicians. They use their religious resources to strengthen their political and economic positions and, conversely, use political resources to enhance their charisma and saintliness. The neutrality of the khalif and the capture of peripheral lineages ultimately promote the fragmentation of Mouride society, vis-à-vis its relationship with the State and with the governing class.

Photography should also be regarded, to some extent, as an information and communications technology, since it has been (and continues to be) a means of producing images for dissemination on television and on the Internet. Photographing the saints and the sect's major religious symbols plays an important role in territorial expansion, providing a reminder to the faithful and aiding in the effort to disseminate

[15] M.C.Diop, M.Diouf, 1990, Karthala, p.330.

the sect's beliefs to the outside world. Part of being a member of the sect includes carrying a photograph of the particular saint with whom one is identified; this image, by helping to overcome the distance between the parties, supports the marabout-disciple relationship.

French colonial forces often used photography to surveil persons believed to be potential opponents of their plans. The images were included in the files that the French maintained on these individuals. These photographs were later reappropriated by the sect, which felt a need and duty to use the most forceful symbols possible to maintain cohesiveness among its increasingly dispersed members. The best known and most widely disseminated photograph is certainly that of Sheik Ahmadou Bamba. It is the subject of an interesting study by A.F. Roberts and M.N. Roberts (1998),[16] who reconstruct the history and significance of the photograph – a photograph that gives meaning and identity to that individual, becoming, in the process, the sect's most important emblem.

The migration of disciples to the cities, beginning in the 1940s, is unquestionably part of (and one stage in) the secularization of Mouridism (or *mouridiyya*), representing the dissemination and establishment of a new territorial base and provoking a renewed and ever stronger identity. More than merely a sect or a movement, this represents a group creating and recreating its cohesiveness, socializing within and beyond its traditional social, spacial and symbolic areas, and NICTs have been an element in this socialization.

The city represents merely a stage in the translocalization – or even transnationalization – of the Mouridiyya. "Transnationalization, as we construe it, means the expansion of a religion beyond its original borders… rooted in a land-based frame of reference, particularly through an attachment to holy places, and marked by certain original features of its ethnic and national identity… Such a process may be illustrated by the history of Senegal's Mourides, the history of Zaire's Kimbanguism, or the history of divine Christianity."[17]

International migration and the appropriation of NICTs are a continuation of this process. In this context, the holy city of Touba continues to be the place that embodies the sacred thought and power of the Sheik. The delocalized religious system works due to a circularity between center and periphery, a productive exchange of symbolic and material goods.

Touba, religious capital and place of return: Mouride migrants abroad assume responsibility for the urban project

Emergence of a new urban pole in Senegal: An important factor in the development of NICTs

With the rapid growth (15% per year) that has occurred since 1958, Touba has replaced all other regional capitals in Senegal, becoming the second largest city in the

[16] Roberts A. F., Roberts M. N., 1998, L'aura d'Amadou Bamba. Photographie et fabulation dans le Sénégal urbain. *Anthropologie et Sociétés*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp.15-40.

[17] Mary André, 2000, Anges de Dieu et esprits territoriaux: une religion africaine à l'épreuve de la transnationalisation. Revue Autrepart 14, p.72

country. This sprawling city currently has a population of approximately half a million people, representing at least a four-fold increase in merely 12 years, with a corresponding geographic expansion. The area on which construction has taken place grew from 575 hectares in 1970 to 3,900 hectares in 1990. As of 1997, this area exceeded 12,000 hectares – a degree of growth that has surprised both researchers and decision makers. Nineteen-seventy-four figures projected that the city would have a population of 39,000[18] in 1990. Even more recent National Land Management Plan predictions (PNAT, 1992) projected that Touba would not become the country's second largest city until 2021.

The city is religious. "One often finds the sacred there, and it is the sacred that seems to have given rise to the collective life."[19] Senegalese Islam is strongly sect-based, and the autonomous quality[20] of its sects is reflected in religious centers whose strengths derive either from their link with the colonial-based urban network or from their own volunteer activity, often supported by the State.

The exceptionally strong and rapid growth of Touba in the last thirty years poses new challenges, particularly in terms of the flow of goods and persons, which has been largely reoriented from the coast to the interior of the country. The restrictive conditions that exist in both the rural and urban areas from which migration occurs spur people to move to Touba, drawn by real estate opportunities, increased economic opportunities, and networks that facilitate social integration and provide mutual assistance at various levels.

Directly or indirectly, NICTs are a factor in attracting people to the city. Like Dakar, Touba acts as a magnet that both attracts and scatters people, due to its role in creating a more open and outward-looking society. Touba's population is exceptionally mobile: 94.3% of the inhabitants have migrated at least once during their lifetimes.[21] There is considerable population exchange with other Mouride areas on a rural, urban and international scale.

Thus, the city expands and contracts with the change of seasons and with events linked to the sect's religious life and to the commemoration of its departed saints. According to the 1988 census, more than one third of the city's active population is engaged in agriculture as its primary activity. This explains, in large part, its extreme geographic mobility and the strong relationships people maintain with their places of origin. In 1988, 89.7% of the population was from the department of Mbacké, a rural area close to Touba, but the latest estimates show a trend toward increasing diversity in place of origin. The Louga region, along with departments in the Diourbel and Thiès regions, account for the largest population flows. More recently, the influx of population to Touba – which seems to serve as a refuge – has consisted of international migrants and Mourides from Dakar. This trend reflects the new values and attitudes within Senegalese society.

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[18] Study by the BCEOM, Direction de l'Urbanisme et de l'Habitat (Senegal), 1974.

[19] Racine J. B. , 1993, La ville entre Dieu et les hommes. Anthropos, 355 pp.

[20] Autonomy vis-à-vis the State and other sects.

[21] Again, according to EMUS.

This territorial shift, however, is due, above all, to the nature of the city. It is precisely Touba's role in facilitating the spread of the sect that gives the city its meaning, its raison d'être. This process might be referred to as the "seeding" and "harvest" of the territory, as conservation by the city and within the city. The marking of the territory through the diaspora of the saints, on the one hand, and the burial of the "saint of saints" in Touba, on the other, are two apparently contradictory dynamics at play in the territory.

Without Touba, it would have been impossible to focus the religious spirit and attain its full strength – both in terms of the sacred and the memory it evokes. At the same time, it is the territory beyond Touba that has allowed the sect to discover the possibilities for extending its global reach. The land is part of the Mouride identity, an identity constructed through defensive anchoring, as well as through borrowings and appropriations.

In this sense, globalization, rather than being contradictory to identity, as Castells seems to suggest, is used to promote it. This issue deserves further examination as it relates to the sect's Wolof heritage, the difficulty of distinguishing between religious and ethnic identities, and the reconstruction of these identities under the influence of forces such as migration and the appropriation of NICTs. It is worth examining whether today's transnationalized territory will be shaped by the use of NICTs, and whether these technologies will deprive the sect of its personality and its roots or will, on the contrary, enhance its global reach. NICTs, which tend to blur the boundaries between city and country, between local and global, are important vehicles for transmitting religious values across different types of society. In a city characterized by rapid change, NICTs constitute a veritable revolution – embodying these changes on a mass scale and providing major challenges for the city, for the Mourides who have adopted the urban life in Touba, and for those separated, by distance, from the city.

Touba, major determinant of the NICT explosion: More than a point of departure, a focus of reinvestment.

The development of NICTs is one element in Touba's urban explosion. However, the most striking occurrence – from the 1990s to the present – is the massive and highly visible flow of international migrants into the city's geographic and social spaces. These two phenomena, however, are interrelated. International migration is important to Touba -- linked, as it is, with the Mourides' strong tradition of migration and trade and with the many opportunities provided by the basic marabout-disciple relationship within Mouride doctrine. This stipulates that the *taallibé* (disciple) shall obey his marabout, and that the latter, in return, shall assist the disciple in his endeavors. Diplomatic passports and visas obtained through the efforts of marabouts occupying senior government positions have often facilitated the emigration of young people. International migrants – growing steadily in numbers – are emerging as essential actors in realizing the sect's urban vision.[22]

[22]Victoria Ebin, Ottavia Schmidt di Friedberg, Gérard Salem, Ibou Sané and Moustapha Diop are among the authors best known on this subject.

The Mouride capital is a place of reinvestment and return for the thousands of Mourides who decide to leave Dakar, as well as for those migrating from rural and urban areas in the Louga, Diourbel, Thiès and Kaloack regions. Their choice of Touba by the sect's scattered members is highly symbolic and reflects the sense of attachment they feel for their "Jerusalem." Those living at even greater distances (international émigrés) are the most nostalgic and have a vast potential for making contributions. This, however, is not the only reason for Touba's appeal. Touba has also become a highly viable and attractive place for émigrés – particularly contrasted with the villages or localities from which many have migrated.[23] The desire to live in a functional city is also a determining factor. Among the various benefits, the development of a variety of networks – particularly the telephone – plays an important role.

With their greater ability to mobilize financial resources, international émigrés were once able to gain access to all of the most coveted areas, those for which there was greatest competition – even making these inaccessible, in some cases, to others. Among the most desirable areas were those with telephone service – a factor that thus became an important element in raising the value of land parcels. For an émigré living abroad, the telephone is the only means of communication with his family and is therefore a determining factor in choosing a place to live. Telecommunications, which have less coverage in outlying areas, have thus played a role in affecting land prices.

The modernization and consolidation of the Touba environment – with the telephone being one important element – accelerated greatly in the 1980s and 90s, due to Touba's increasing attraction as a major city and, particularly, as a result of the devaluation of the CFA franc, which provided international émigrés – given their strong financial position – with increased opportunities for construction and access to telephone lines.

In undertaking various construction works at long-distance, international migrants have a vital need for someone to supervise operations – a person to whom they can forward money, who will oversee the progress of the project and the ordering and supplying of materials and attend to ongoing needs. NICTs – especially the telephone, camera and photographs – play an important part in this process, making it possible for the émigré to keep abreast of the work's progress from his adopted country. At the same time, this situation can be an invitation to fraud, since the émigré may be provided with reassuring and deceptive images when, in fact, construction has not even begun.

This fundamental change, of which NICTs are a part, is also reflected in the interior design of houses. The development of NICTs is one of a number of mimetic phenomena that contribute to changing the lifestyles of individuals and families who

[23] More recently, speculation, lack of equipment and networks (electricity, water, sewer) and the fact that available land is too far from the city center, make Touba unattractive, even for émigrés. Many prefer to live in smaller Mouride cities or in satellite villages that offer these services, where speculation is not a factor, with urbanization of these locales being the most visible consequence. Thus, while Touba's symbolic importance outweighed place of origin for international émigrés, this factor is increasingly being superceded by the living conditions and lifestyle offered. Cars, which reduce distance, have also been a major factor in the dynamics of the situation.

emigrated from Touba and settled abroad. Thus, the desire for luxury (at times extreme) seen in Touba is a reflection of the fact that the city is coming into line with capitals and other large African cities that are subject to international influence. At the same time, it indicates that the global orientation of Touba's population, which hails increasingly from other domestic or international urban centers, is reshaping lifestyles and reinterpreting the meaning of comfort. Thus, the telephone explosion accounts, in part, for the current construction fever, creating for Touba a new urban identity.

This building trend, however, also sheds light on the personality of the new Mouride who, in spite of a highly international orientation, views Touba as an anchor and a source of personal identity – a model which, reproduced on a national scale, is both limiting and energizing. Touba's success is subsidized by the country as a whole and by the outside world. Not surprisingly, the new Touba citizen creates an urban society with a strong sense of identity, a mental construct of the Touba homeland, a particular lifestyle and a distinct world view. This can be seen in strong long-distance relationships that are both social and economic and that increasingly make use of NICTs.

The city, its events and its spirit, as well as its families, are experienced by émigrés through audio and video cassettes sent back with those who come to the city or return, as well as, increasingly, by merchants – those engaged in selling the country's images and sounds. These cassettes contain not only new and lengthy messages from the family, whose emotions are brought to life intact; they also contain the latest battles in the traditional conflicts, the baptisms and marriages that drive clothing fashions, the latest elections of Miss Diongoma, various types of music, dances, colors, etc. In this way, the émigré can see the children growing up, girls about to be married, and can participate more fully in his or her country of origin.

For the Mourides, these cassettes carry, in particular, the images and sounds from pilgrimages, religious events, the messages of the khalif, and religious speeches. They are listened to collectively or individually, with listening an occasion for socialization and for building group identity. Systems of dissemination, through lending and through formal and informal exchanges, are increasingly evident and are highly effective.

Satellite radio is another technological innovation that is beginning to play a role in shaping the relationship between émigrés and their country of origin. Through the broadcasts of WorldSpace, listeners abroad are able to listen to Senegalese stations.

The newspaper Wal Fadjri, published an article on June 27, 2000 describing WorldSpace's scope and operation and the response it has received.

WorldSpace

From Africa to the Caribbean, passing through the Mediterranean basin on the way, WorldSpace has installed a satellite device making it possible for certain radio stations, including Senegal's stations, to be received throughout the world. This to the joy of émigrés, notably Senegalese émigrés.

Senegalese émigrés living in some parts of the world have found in WorldSpace a means of following current affairs in their country. More than the Internet, this digital satellite radio company, which relays the signal of Sud FM, 7 FM and Walf FM, allows Senegalese émigrés to listen to the spoken news. Hence the rush to CGE, registered distributor of WorldSpace receivers.

The need for information was so great for our compatriots living abroad that despite the still very high cost of the receivers—20,000 CFA francs—WorldSpace is making definite inroads. Some émigrés even find the sales price affordable. "Even if this radio had been selling for 500,000 CFA francs, we would have bought it. We live as a group—indeed, as a family. So each of us takes money out of his pocket to make up the amount needed to buy the radio," says Moussa Mbaye, an émigré living in Spain. He and his Senegalese compatriots in Europe are enthusiastic in praising the new invention of WorldSpace. "We used to be months without any news from the country. But since WorldSpace had the excellent idea of relaying certain African radio stations… nothing going on in Senegal escapes us any more," says Mouusa Mbaye. And his friend Ablaye Diagne, living in Spain, effuses further: "Since they began, we are informed of everything going on here. You can not imagine the pleasure it gives us to listen to Wal Fadjri FM in Spain. Sometimes it seems like a dream."

The dream has become a reality for some Senegalese émigrés in Italy, as well. At the instigation of their brothers in Spain, they roundly applaud the WorldSpace initiative. For émigré Cheikh Guèye, who is on vacation in Senegal, "these revolutionary receivers have remedied a great injustice, because only those of our countrymen who were able to use the Internet were able to keep abreast of what was going on in the country before—and a lot of time was needed to consult the network of networks."

The coming of digital satellite radio is therefore a panacea for Senegalese émigrés abroad. They now need only to buy the radio supported by this modern telecommunications company and set the antenna toward the east, in order to hear the echo of what is happening in Senegal.

While radio is one of the means by which émigrés stay in touch, it is by telephone that links with their country of origin are created and maintained. A Senegalese émigré spends between 5% and 30% of his or her income on the telephone, despite the decline in the price of calling and the flat rates offered by telecommunications companies in order to attract customers.

NICTs are also used for financial transfers. Indeed, Touba's attractiveness is due, among other things, to the status it has achieved as a true financial center. Billions of

CFA francs are handled there, including gifts to marabouts (the khalif, in particular) and remittances by hundreds of thousands of Mourides spread throughout the world – remittances sent to finance the construction of their houses, family living expenses, the *magal*, collective works, etc. The Touba post office, which is the least important channel for incoming money, nevertheless distributes between 2 and 4 million CFA francs per day between September and March, and 5 to 6 million CFA francs between April and September. This latter time period is when construction begins again, and is the lean period for the rural population, when preparations are made for the great Touba *magal.* This is also the time when a massive influx of telephone calls occurs. Both money orders and telephone calls are directed largely to the families of émigrés living abroad, but at times are also sent to merchants responsible for disbursing money to families for daily living expenses, which they do either before or after receiving the money.

The amounts sent by mail to marabouts, according to their spokesperson, is only around 5% of the total. These sums arrive when the *magal* is approaching and during Ramadan. Most of the money, however, arrives in the hands of other, returning émigrés, or via importers operating at the Sandaga market. These merchants buy merchandise with the money and gradually pay it back upon their return. More recently, the bank has played a role, though there is no banking tradition and little confidence in the banking system. Only the "émigrés" from France, however, are able to send drafts receivable at the central Dakar branch. The latest system for sending money to Touba reflects a trend that increasingly rejects official routes, using instead an autonomous organization[24] utilizing NICTs.

The best known example of an informal Mouride system for transferring funds (Serigne Modou Kara, whose disciples created the exchange, is one of the prominent new figures in the brotherhood) is the Kara International Exchange. Serigne Masour Tall, who is responsible for giving notoriety to the exchange, describes it as follows: "After cashing the amount needed for the transfer plus commission, Kara's New York office sends a request, by fax, to its Dakar office, to remit the amount deposited by the émigré to the person he or she has designated as recipient. The émigré is responsible for providing the information about the recipient and often, at his or her own expense, calls the corresponding office by phone.... The time required for delivery is short, rarely more than 12 hours."[25]

Kara has developed a relationship, above all, with Sandaga (the largest informal market in Dakar), but the strong ideological and financial links between Sandaga and Touba lead one to suppose that some of the money sent via Kara ends up in Touba. Most interesting, however, is the fact that, in addition to the New York-Dakar axis, there are services elsewhere using the Kara model – primarily serving as links to Touba from Italy and Spain. These informal services tend to become centers of freight and transit, sending parts, automobile motors, equipment and appliances of all types and second-hand cars, as well as computers and cellular telephones.

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[24]On this subject, see the remarks of Serigne Mansour Tall at the international APAD colloquium of June 5-8, 1996, University of Hohenheim (Stuttgart): *KARA INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE: un nouvel instrument financier pour les courtiers mourides de l'axe Dakar-New-York.*

[25]ibid, p.7

The role of international émigrés in the arrival, in Touba, of large sums of money is also highlighted by the emergence of an informal currency exchange market. Any foreign currency can be exchanged in the *Ocass* market in Touba, immediately in front of a branch of the city's bank.

Over the last several years, the post office, the bank, multinational transportation companies, formal organizations and informal Mouride organizations have thus created simple systems for transmitting funds. These systems – because they use telephone and fax – are not only ingenious, but, most important, fast.

Although it is impossible to calculate the amounts Touba receives via NICTs, it is certainly a massive figure. Given that the city has almost no productive function, it is these remittances that feed and provide living expenses for the people of Touba. While this is true generally in Senegal, it is particularly true in Touba. In addition to the effect of economic accumulation – linked to the rapid development of trade, small-scale businesses, services, and transportation – the money and fancy cars of the émigrés (like those of the marabouts) create an impression of abundance, accentuating the economic mirage surrounding this religious city. This mirage attracts a constantly growing rural exodus, as well as drawing city dwellers from other urban centers in Senegal, where economic opportunities are scarce compared to those in Touba.

Touba's economic attractiveness also has an ideological basis, expressed in the poem by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, entitled *Matlaboul: Fawzaïni*, which prays for "opulence and wealth in a time of crisis," for "assistance," and for "things to be easier" in Touba. Underlying this is a solid identification with the founder's vision of the city and an attachment to the founder and to the city itself. A point of pilgrimage, a necropolis, a place where the sect's sacred and symbolic content is concentrated, a major economic and financial pole, Touba has become a popular choice, and continues to develop its range of basic services.

Electricity is one example. One of the preconditions for the development of NICTs, it was first supplied, in 1965, by a single generator that limited service to the esplanade of the Grand Mosque. Today, the city is fed by a high-tension line from Thiès, via Diourbel. The distribution system at times defies logic. Large parts of Touba Mosquée, Darou Miname 1 and Darou Khoudoss, as well as most of the *pentch* and the large marabout houses, often have electricity. Entire neighborhoods within the city remain unserved, while outlying neighborhoods and satellite villages are lit. This clientist system makes electricity a tool for increasing the value of one's neighborhood and of areas under the control of the khalif, who is able to select which areas will be supplied with electricity and the thoroughfares that will signal these choices.

In 1988, only 10% of Touba households had electric lights. From 1938 to 1984, the number of subscribers grew to 11,000, and by 1994 SENELEC had approximately 1,000 new requests for service each year. Given the society's lack of resources – with only 250-500 million CFA francs spent per year in electrifying the city – people are increasingly organizing collectives to purchase poles and some of the materials needed to bring electricity to their neighborhoods.

For those in the brotherhood who are part of the Touba environment, the appropriation of NICTs – existing, as they do, in the context of new forms of city life, neighborhoods and social interaction – is an increasingly important catalyst.

Touba incorporates the telecommunications network

Diourbel becomes the second largest region for telephone service: The obvious importance of Touba, or transcending extraterritoriality

With its rapid urbanization and massive population growth, Touba has become the nerve center for the administrative region of Diourbel, far surpassing the region's other cities -- Bambey, Mbacké and, most important, the regional capital, Diourbel. As a result, the Mouride capital counts heavily in all of the region's statistics. While Touba is the place of unity for the transnationalized sect, the Diourbel region is really the cradle of the sect. Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was born in Mbacké and spent most of his childhood there. Moreover, the embryonic organization, which was later to become the sect, came into being in Mbacké. The founder spent the last fifteen years of his life, and died, in Diourbel. Finally, the Diourbel region was the first area territorialized by the new sect.

For all of these reasons, available statistics for the administrative region are also applicable to Touba and provide a necessary background for examining the sect's use of NICTs. Prior to 1985, regional telephone service was handled by the OPT (Office of Post and Telecommunications), with a capacity of 300 telephone lines. Efforts to make the region's network autonomous began in 1983 and were completed in 1985. In 1984, the plan had been to increase the capacity from 400 to 600 lines.

In 1985, the three SONATEL switching centers, built in the cities of Diourbel, Bambey and at the edge of Mbacké and Touba, went into operation. The Touba-Mbacké center brought major development to the Diourbel region and greatly increased the demand for telephone service. Thus, by the time the automatic network went into operation in 1985, a new project to extend service was already being planned, calling first for 1,000, then 3,000 lines to absorb the constantly growing demand.

By 1990, with the completion of the project to provide Diourbel with autonomous telephone service – funded, in the amount of 4.5 billion CFA francs, by the Central Economic Cooperation Fund (CCCE) and by the former OPT (now SONATEL) – the region had a relatively modern system, one of the best performing systems in the country. The strong demand for Touba lines experienced by SONATEL, beginning in 1990, prefigured the dominant role that the region was to play on the national stage. Diourbel already ranked third (after Thiès) in number of telephone subscribers (1,950), with Dakar in first place, accounting for 31,400 of the country's total 41,898 subscribers. As of September 30, 1990, the 1,950 subscribers in the Diourbel region were distributed as follows: 775 in the Diourbel area, 1,1558 in Bambey, and 1017 in Touba-Mbacké. The Touba-Mbacké area has been growing steadily, with a relatively large share of the region's subscribers.

Pending requests for service represent an important datum for understanding trends. In 1990, with 1,593 requests, the Diourbel region ranked second, just behind the

Dakar region. National requests numbered 7,787, among which 1,593 requests were in the Diourbel region, with 1,200 emanating from Touba.

The quality of the network is also an important parameter for the development of telecommunications in the region. In 1990, service-problems rate was only a 4% per month for SONATEL.

Aside from demand, additional factors forced SONATEL to take stock of the telecommunications challenge in Mouride country in the 1990s.

Table 1 : SONATEL total sales and implementation in 1990

	Goals: Total sales, July 90 – June 91	**Total sales in following quarter**	**Implementation rate**
Diourbel	**33,000,000**	**9,691,250**	**29%**
Thiès	31,000,000	8,862,765	28%
Tamba	25,000,000	7,132,705	28%
Ziguinchor	52,000,000	13,935,805	26%
Dakar	360,000,000	93,329,985	26%
Louga	12,000,000	2,483,560	20%
Saint-Louis	11,000,000	1,483,160	13%

Source: SONATEL

The above table shows that, aside from Dakar and Ziguinchor (which also includes Kolda), Diourbel was viewed by SONATEL as the region likely to have the highest total sales, and that expectation was justified. Between July and September 1990, the implementation rate for the region was the highest of any region in the country.

Telephone booths also played a significant role in increasing telephone usage. In 1990, the Diourbel region had 22 phone booths, of which 12 were in Touba, with a satisfactory percentage in proper functioning order.

Nevertheless, as the following table shows, the revenue from these telephone booths does not reflect Diourbel's increasingly dominant role.

Table 2 : Location and number of telephone booths in 1990 (excluding Dakar)

	Number of booths	**Number of working booths**	**Monthly revenue**
Louga	3	2	449,835
Thiès	13	10	294,940
Ziguinchor	22	22	215,714
Tamba	13	13	186,802
Diourbel	**22**	**21**	**170,855**
Saint-louis	6	4	102,592
Kaolack	8	2	

Source: SONATEL

Thus, based on phone booths, the Diourbel region had one of the lowest usage rates. This fact, confirmed below, is a fundamental element in the particular way in which the Mourides have appropriated NICTs.

In its planning policy, SONATEL has often failed to take adequate account of the pace of change in Touba and the extraordinary growth in demand, thus requiring constant readjustments. This is evident in the discrepancy between projections made for the revolving four-year plan, put in place at the beginning of the 1990s (Table 3) and the actual reality. Projections called for 3,433 lines in the Diourbel region by 1995, but 6,161 were actually installed. Moreover, the gap continues to increase. Projections for 2000 called for 5,481 lines in the Diourbel region, but the actual number, as of June 2000, is 18,660.

Table 3 : SONATEL 1990 projections for the Diourbel region

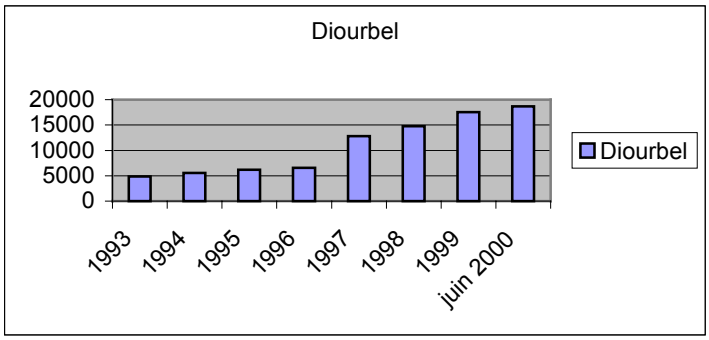
	1989	1990	1995	2000	2005
Diourbel	**685**	**768**	**1212**	**1919**	**3107**
Bambey	155	174	303	528	923
Mbacké	260	332	608	1,007	1,713
Touba	635	785	1,310	2,027	2,975
Touba-Mbacké	895	1,117	1,918	3,034	4,688
Total Diourbel	1,735	2,059	3,433	5,481	8,718

Source : SONATEL Four-year revolving plan (1990-1994, July 1990)

Table 4 : Diourbel establishes itself as number two in number of telephone lines

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	June 2000
Dakar	44,593	49,886	56,762	66,323	75,564	91,171	108,373	118,043
Diourbel	**4,871**	**5,546**	**6,161**	**6,562**	**12,828**	**14,746**	**17515**	**18660**
Thiès	3,833	4,678	5,448	6,399	7,886	9,637	11,731	12,985
Kaolack	2,876	3,119	3,450	4,029	4,636	6,262	7,819	8,009
St-Louis	2,809	3,044	3,452	4,055	5,235	6,024	6,982	7,770
Louga	1,821	2,221	2,641	2,994	3,962	4,921	5,643	5,963
Ziguinchor	2,018	2,436	2,715	3,110	3,757	4,328	5,104	5,587
Tamba	1,042	1,159	1,359	1,598	2,034	2,460	2,707	3,023
Senegal	63,863	72,089	81,988	95,070	115,902	139,549	165,874	180,040

Diagram 1: Change in number of land lines in Diourbel



[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: "June" should be inserted for "juin" in diagram.]

This table shows the changes in the number of land lines in the different regions of the country. All regions are represented, with Kolda included as part of Ziguinchor, and with Fatick included in Kaloack. It shows the strength of the Diourbel region, which ranked second (after the Dakar region) in number of land lines beginning in the 1990s, despite the fact that for all other development indicators, Diourbel was often far behind other regions, particularly Thiès, Kaolack and Ziguinchor.

In a period of seven years, the gap separating Diourbel from the other regions doubled or tripled. Over the years, however, this difference has varied without any regularity, as it has with all regions. SONATEL's multi-year analysis shows the differences in the challenges the company faces and the investments it makes from one region to another.

To take one example, Thiès, which is in third place, had a gap of 1,038 land lines in 1993, 868 in 1994, 713 in 1995, a mere 163 in 1996, and then, as of 1997, 4,942. The fact that the gap between the two regions increased in 1997 is attributable to a

decision by SONATEL to launch the "Diourbel 96" project, at a cost of approximately 16 billion CFA francs. This project modernized infrastructure in the region: specifically, it connected the system with the national network via fiber optic, rather than cable, and installed a network of switching stations around Touba.

In reality, it was this single major response to demand in Touba that artificially boosted the figure in 1997, accounting for a two-fold increase in one year. Since then, the large gap between Diourbel and Thiès has stabilized at around 5,500 lines. However, despite the strong emergence of Diourbel, in terms of number of lines, the Dakar region has retained its number one ranking by a broad margin. These different elements highlight the challenges facing telecommunications development in the Diourbel region, and particularly in Touba, which in 15 years has become Senegal's second largest region in terms of telephone lines.

The paradox of the telephone in Touba and Diourbel: An explosion that reflects the extroversion of its urban society

The world of NICTs has become a new territory for Touba to conquer and tame – both for the local urban society and for Mourides scattered throughout the world.

The installation of a telephone network in Touba occurred in the 1960s, when a real urban consciousness was emerging in the city, following the building of the Grand Mosque and the beginning of the massive influx of population to the city. The first six lines were installed at the behest of the second khalif, as well as for a number of his nephews and cousins[26] -- i.e., for a privileged group of marabouts. The network was created based on a centralized approach, in which Touba's center-point is the esplanade of the Grand Mosque—both symbolically and in terms of the layout of the streets. This is the heart of the city and the spatial locus of marabout power. After this period, the number of telephone lines increased regularly, reaching 126 by 1978. Subsequently, this increase was limited somewhat by technical factors and by the fact that the mass market in Touba was only beginning to emerge.

[26] The concessions of Serigne Fallou, son of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and the sect's second khalif, those of the grandsons Serigne Cheikh Mbacké, Serigne Mbacké Madina, Serigne Moustapha Bassirou, and those of the cousins, Serigne Modou Faty Khary, Serigne Mohmadane, Serigne Sam Ndoulo.

Table 5 : Change in number of land line telephone subscribers in Touba

Year (Dec.)	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988*	1989*	1990	1991	1992	1993
Number	131	134	163	172		589**	688**	785	1,203	2,940	3,601

1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
3,944	3,999**	4,404	9,911	11,946	13,246	

Source : SONATEL
For the years with an asterisk, the figure is as of June 30.
** The figure includes the entire department of Mbacké.

As seen in the above table, however, it was the construction of the famous automatic switching station in 1986, with its 1,000-line capacity for Touba and Darou Mousty (another Mouride center situated 30 kilometers north of Touba) that launched the real telephone explosion. This facility was built with funding from the Central Economic Cooperation Fund (CCCE) and with SONATEL funds. The cost was 917,682,000 CFA francs. However, it was immediately obvious that the facility was inadequate for the fast-paced demand.

The SONATEL planning division, which acknowledges that it has "always had a rather serious problem with Touba, never having been able to predict its demographic development," had, however, implemented "complex planning tools"[27] to make decisions about the power and installation of the Touba facility. The three extensions made in 1988, 1990[28] and 1993 brought total capacity to 5,000 lines, but did not prevent saturation at the central facility. Requests for lines totaled 1,200 in 1990, i.e. 75.3% of requests in the region (1,593) and 15.4% of requests in the nation (7,787).[29]. The growing number of requests in Touba puts the Diourbel region in second place after Dakar.

[27] Birahim Sarr, July 20, 2000, SONATEL DAKAR.

[28] This project was assessed at 300 million CFA francs. Also planned was a telecenter – which was never built – that was to go into operation by December 1991.

[29] The region had a total of 22 telephone booths in 1990, with Touba having 12, more than any other city, distributed as follows: one in Gouye Mbind, in front of Keur Aziz Bara; one in Khaira, in front of Keur Serigne Modou Bousso Dieng; one in the Ocass market; one in Darou Khoudoss; one in the OPCE; one in front of Keur Serigne Abdou Khadre Mbacké; one in front of the khalif's house; one in front of Keur Serigne Modou Abdou Mbacké; one in front of Keur Serigne Sohibou Mbacké; 2 in Keur Serigne Abdoul Ahad Mbacké; and one in Keur Serigne Aliou Mbacké.

Telephone booths are distributed according to a hierarchy of places and people. Each of the authorities associated with the different lineages of saints had a booth in front of his concession, with monthly receipts averaging 170,855 CFA francs per booth.

The telecenters, which have also experienced remarkable growth, now number 1,045.

Between 1986 and 1988, the number of lines in Touba tripled. It reached 1,203 in 1991, 2,940 in 1992, 3,601 in 1993 and 3,944 in 1994 (see Table 5). However, 2,000 requests were still pending. It was at that point that SONATEL decided to make a massive investment, formulating and carrying out a 14 billion CFA franc project. The goal of this project was to meet the needs of the khalif's development plan, which aimed to create and market lots, producing close to 110,000 lots for housing.

The objective was to overcome the technical obstacles created by the sprawling nature of the city. A complex system of four new switching stations with expandable memory was created, while the old switching station was moved to another region. The Ndame-Mbacké switching station (South) handles communications as far as the Touba check point (traffic circle), with the 976 exchange. The Madiyana (West) switching station handles calls with the 974 exchange. The Darou-Khoudoss (North) switching station handles the 975 exchange, and Touba-Mosquée (East) uses the 978 exchange. The Touba switching station also covers the 977 prefixes from Darou-Mousty, the other Mouride center situated 30 kilometers away and linked by a digital hertzian beam, as well as Boustane (968) and Darou Nasrou, which are satellite villages near Touba. Thus, the Mouride capital is a center covering the area within a 50-kilometer radius without regard to administrative regional boundaries, since other satellite switching stations, such as Taïf, are also in its area.

Since these switching stations were put in place, the number of lines has doubled from 4404 to 9911, reaching 11,946 in 1998 and 13,246 in 1999. The Touba-Mosquée switching station, alone, has more subscribers than Saint-Louis Ville and Tamba.

This investment was, first of all, a response to the need for profitability. SONATEL had to maximize its exploitation of the Touba market, which was exploding. However, it was also a way of making the network secure and providing a decisive improvement in communications quality. The system provided interconnection between switching stations, making it impossible for one switching station to shut down the network.

Thus, the SONATEL network in Touba traversed, within a few years, all the different stages in the technological development of the telephone. This is an important point. It shows that in the field of NICTs, the process of catching up is easier than in other areas. Before 1996, the hertzien beam provided connection with other cities and with the world at large. Switching was first changed from manual to semi-automatic, then to automatic. The switching center was converted to digital in 1998 and converted to fiber optic shortly thereafter. Since then, the SONATEL system in Touba has been made up of:

--the lines and networks (access network) center;
--the switching center, which also has a local loop that facilitates the flow of calls;
--the transmission center; and
--the business office.

Each of these different elements is designed to facilitate the subscription and connection of clients. Thus, a request for a line first goes to the business office, then other centers handle the request and notify the business office, which, in turn, calls the client, collects payment, and sends the file back to the lines and networks center. The

switching facility then assigns a number for the client, and the lines and networks center installs the line.

For SONATEL, Touba is an experimental area, one in which all technological innovations are rapidly implemented, with support for development of the Internet, as well as support for the cellular GSM network, which is also offered as a remedy for the saturation of the land line system. On May 15, 1997, SONATEL's mobile subsidiary made the decision to invest in Touba. The X25 data network, available since 1998, was completed in February 1999 with installation of the IP data network. The company claims complete autonomy from the national electrical grid, with its deficiencies and unpredictability.

Thus, SONATEL now has a prospective and anticipatory approach for Touba, which takes account of the khalif's development plan. Once a portion of the khalif's plan has been implemented, SONATEL installs its network.

Currently, another projects is also underway. This is the "Works Plan 97/2000," calling for an expenditure of approximately 8 billion CFA francs for the Touba network, with a new expansion of lines anticipated to create a capacity of almost 30,000 lines.

Mention has already been made of the paradox of Touba – a place where the Mourides have settled and continue to settle and, at the same time, a crossroads and center of mobility that stimulates activity in the larger Mouride territory, encompassing rural areas and villages. The Mouride territory is a reality, and its meaning has evolved with the different phases of territorialization, a process by which the sect constantly reconstructs its symbols and practices.

A further paradox should also be noted. In terms of communications, Senegal's regional capital play a dominant role and serve as a focal point for outlying areas. However, Diourbel – because of the overwhelming importance of Touba – constitutes an exception and its networks are therefore designed differently, in a manner opposite to the norm.

Local calling

There is a third paradox concerning NICTs in Touba and Diourbel, in addition to the two discussed above. Though the region has emerged with the second largest concentration of telephone lines, it does not necessarily rank number one in terms of outgoing traffic – local, national, mobile, international and Internet. For these different categories, SONATEL statistics are organized into 8 regions, with Fatick and Kolda included in Kaolack and Ziguinchor, respectively.

Table 6 : Local telephone calls (in Diourbel) in April 2000

	Duration in minutes	**Charges**	**Number of calls**	**Average duration of calls in minutes**
Dakar	24,087,447	33,220,842	11,916,015	2
Thiès	1,278,720	17,741,915	753,644	2
Diourbel	**1,068,350**	**849,114**	**687,159**	**2**
Kaolack	975,103	721,876	564,466	2
St-Louis	903,473	695,019	532,450	2
Ziguinchor	806,779	583,844	427,304	2
Tamba	401,911	295,450	218,245	2
Louga	398,819	297,866	237,324	2

Source: SONATEL

The Diourbel region, which includes Touba, ranks only third in local calling. In terms of duration in minutes and number of calls, it ranks after Thiès and Dakar, and does not compete with other regions as it does in number of telephone lines. Local calls reflect the extent to which a given population has adopted the telephone, the strength of the relationship of a society with itself, and hence its level of socialization, as well as individual and collective calling habits.

Local calling can also be correlated to the level of development in a region, or to the financial resources of its population. The relative volume of local calling in Touba and Diourbel shows (if any further proof were needed) the scope of urbanization and the expanding local economic life – a life that is intensifying and becoming accustomed to the culture and habits of telephone use.

The appropriation of the telephone by Touba's merchants is one of the principal determinants in the telecommunications boom in the Diourbel region, and puts to rest any question as to the viability of the NICT market for the informal sector. Aside from large groups such as *Hizbut Tarqiyyah* and *Matlaboul Fawzaini,* the houses of marabouts, and certain services that have been established in Touba, the vast bulk of local calling comes from the merchants. This group, which emerged in the 1960s, has gained great financial standing, due to smuggling activities with The Gambia. Today, it has turned to the coffee trade, the containerized importation of auto parts, speculation in agricultural products and land development.

Touba's merchants constitute an influential group, with power in all city-related decisions. They play a major role in providing the city's urban society with a business orientation, reversing models of upward mobility and social success not only for the marabouts, but for the average Touba resident. Although often intransigent when their interests are threatened, they also take an active role in urban development, financing it and, to a certain extent, catering to the marabouts. Their use of the telephone

demonstrates that Touba's urban society – mirroring the country as a whole – is increasingly open to technological innovation.

The brotherhood's second khalif has long been opposed to the installation of a post office – which did not occur until 1971), the establishment of French schools and, even, of health services. In 1996, 35 schools, built around Touba, were closed for this reason. In this context, Touba's rapid adoption of NICTs is all the more astonishing. Moreover, it is likely to quicken the pace of change in rules and practices related to the marabout-disciple-relationship, and could upset Touba's social and religious hierarchy to a significant extent. NICTs put all groups and subgroups on an equal footing. Extensive delays can be quickly overcome and, by waiting for others to first establish service, one can even obtain less expensive and better quality access.

Calls to the rest of the county

Table 7 : Domestic telephone calls from Diourbel in April 2000

	Duration in minutes	**Charges**	**Number of calls**	**Average duration of calls in minutes**
Dakar	4,571,420	24,031,245	2053,792	2
Thiès	1,275,860	2,126,959	676,404	2
Kaolack	1,101,406	1,683,777	540,484	2
St-Louis	1,094,626	1,729,566	508,246	2
Ziguinchor	1,014,712	158,2576	420,509	2
Diourbel	**827,582**	**134,5416**	**450,295**	**2**
Louga	503,520	727,931	251,507	2
Tamba	462,284	736,619	202,832	2

Source: SONATEL

The role of domestic calls is not only an important indicator of the extent to which the telephone has been adopted, but also signals the level of development. In the above table, the Diourbel region ranks sixth, reflecting above all the respective levels of development in the different regions. In terms of domestic calling, the role of government, active officials, and businesses is of vital importance. If one considers the Touba share of total Diourbel calls, and the nearly complete absence of government and businesses in Touba, the reason for the relative weakness of calls to other regions of the country becomes clear. An additional factor is the poverty of Touba's inhabitants, most of whom are economic refugees fleeing drought. These people come to the city seeking the marabouts, who serve as redistributors of the financial manna provided by the Mouride diaspora. Above all, however, the calling level reflects Touba's lack of integration with the rest of the country.

In this context, it is worth considering the question of Touba's extraterritoriality as it relates to NICTs. Desirable or not, the city's exterritorial status is a fact. It has an origin and a history, and it continues to evolve, giving a certain elasticity to the extravagance of the city's ambitious land development plans.

This status, however, has also played, and continues to play, a role in furthering powerful financial and economic activities (not only the bazaar, but other increasingly structured economic networks) capable of stimulating the development of NICTs. Touba is more than the capital for the informal sector. It is an informal city with its own way of doing things. NICTs have the capacity to increase the city's integration with the rest of the country.

In terms of integration with the country at large – according to Table 6, which shows calls from Touba to other parts of the country – this region is one of most backward, along with Louga and Tamba. These three regions have the lowest volume of calls to other regions. In the case of Tamba, which is one of the country's poorest and most isolated regions, the explanation is obvious. However, the situation is more complex in regard to Diourbel. Geographically, Diourbel's central location nationally might be expected to make it one of the most highly integrated regions; thus, the relative weakness of domestic calling is significant in a number of ways.

The region is developing a strategy based on autonomy, due to Touba's exterritorial status. At the same time, it is one of the most outward-looking regions in the country. A clear distinction must be made, however, between the telephone network itself and the manner in which it is used. Diourbel's telecommunications network, by providing the region the ability to interact with the rest of the country, works against and transcends extraterritoriality. And while SONATEL's extensive investment during the 1990s placed Diourbel at the heart of the company's development strategy, the Mourides in the Touba area do not utilize the network to strengthen their links with the rest of the country.

The telephone has developed more rapidly than other technologies. However, it is mobile telephony that has seen the most dramatic growth. The replacement of land lines by mobile telephony appears to be an inevitable trend. In this regard, too, Touba ranks second in the country, although available statistics apply only to the region as a whole, with Diourbel lagging behind Thiès and Dakar. As of the writing of this paper, it was not possible to obtain statistics on the number of cellular phones and the development of cellular telephony in Touba. However, such statistics are not essential, given that mobility tends to blur geographic boundaries. On the other hand, the total duration of calls, the total number of calls, and the average duration of calls in Diourbel confirm the explosion of mobile telephony in the Mouride capital.

Table 8 : Mobile telephone calling from Diourbel in April 2000

	Duration in minutes	**Charges**	**Number of calls**	**Average duration in minutes**
Dakar	4,602,179	14,487,665	4,253,231	1
Thiès	363,823	110,5987	359,842	1
Diourbel	**198,610**	**601,562**	**187,658**	**1**
Kaolack	186,128	537,020	158,566	1
St-Louis	158,542	480,543	135,462	1
Ziguinchor	141,866	469,400	99,383	1
Louga	74,444	220,821	69,526	1
Tamba	4,4448	189,949	43,811	1

Source: SONATEL

Diourbel ranks third (behind Dakar and Thiès) in calls placed from cell phones. This technology still remains a city phenomenon. SONATEL and SENTEL coverage are primarily confined to the area within the city limits of regional capitals, and a number of other cities, that have been targeted because of their exceptional population growth. The fact that Touba has become one of the country's main areas for cell phone use is attributable to the fact that cellular telephony, in addition to being inexpensive, is best suited to the Mouride lifestyle.

The explosion in mobile telephony has been fueled by the prepaid cards ("Diamono") offered by SONATEL and SENTEL. As of December 31, 1999, prepaid users represented 75% of all cell phone users. The extent to which cell phones have been adopted in the Mouride area is, above all, a confirmation of the telephone's growing role in social interaction. The cell phone's success is driven by ease of acquisition and maintenance, the fact that it is in vogue, the fascination it exerts and the need it addresses. It is all of these factors in combination that appear to be responsible for the boom. Nevertheless, the average duration of calls in all regions shows that the unit price of calling serves as a brake on long and free phone conversations. The efforts and marketing strategies of the two operators should move toward adapting pricing to the low purchasing power of the average Senegalese, who has opted for the prepayment format – a system that allows people to have their own telephones without being troubled by bills. A person may, in fact, have a cell phone solely to receive calls, without necessarily feeling obliged to use it for outgoing calls.

The success of this formula is seen in the modus operandi of Touba merchants. Over several years, a new type of activity has developed in Sandaga, in Dakar and in

Touba's Ocass market. One no longer needs to have a storefront or work in a shop. The internal dynamism of these large Mouride markets also relies on the *nourouman,* who seek clients inside and outside the market, providing them with merchandise from the larger merchants. These workers make money from the client to whom they sell, as well as from the shop owner. Most of these *nourouman* use this method of operation to accumulate capital to eventually open their own shops or to finance emigration to Italy, the United States or other countries. For the *nourouman*, as for those who supply them with merchandise, the portable phone has become an essential tool, making it possible for them to locate merchandise quickly and easily.

Moreover, access to cell phones is greatly facilitated by international migration. At least 40% of cell phones are brought back by international migrants and by importers in the markets, according to estimates. Due to the consumption pattern in Europe, inexpensive second-hand cell phones are readily available, and these subsequently appear on the Senegalese market – in the Sandaga and Ocass markets. The most sophisticated phones, and those that are blocked in Europe, are adjusted, repaired, and "tropicalized" without any problem.

Merchants specializing in Asian electronics, who made their fortune in the early 1980s, are currently experiencing a new rise in activity, while young people new to the market have made considerable sums of money in short order, thanks to the cellular telephone market. The rapid growth of the cell phone market, confirmed by surveys, is evidenced by F. Lô, a young merchant who opened his own shop in Touba's Ocass market three years ago. "Three years ago," he says, "the cell phone market was completely nonexistent. Now, it's like shoes. I sell three or four a day. The three brands I sell most in my shop are Ericsson (60,000 - 80,000 CFA francs), Nokia (90,000 - 120,000 CFA francs) and Samsung (200,000 - 225,000 CFA francs). But it is the size of the phone, more than anything, that determines the price."

According to an authorized repair person, Touba inhabitants prefer the SENTEL network to SONATEL's Alizé network, considering it to be superior. "The Ocass market serves as a testing ground, as it is located in a low spot: only the good sets get network reception."

In addition, however, to the merchants who sell these phones (and use them in the process), the poor have adopted cell phones. People can have a telephone and phone service without needing to spend any money at all. This can be seen, in particular, among the relatives and friends of émigrés, who are given telephones and phone service by émigrés returning from Europe. SENTEL provides highly individualized service arrangements, though this is not true for SONATEL.

For the wives of emigrants, the portable phone has become a means of reaching their husbands (wherever they may be), particularly on lonely nights. Thus, the telephone relationship takes on a more intimate character, with conversations between lovers less likely to be overheard by others – a level of privacy not always to be found with the family land-line phone.

Table 9 : International calls from Diourbel in April 2000

	Duration in minutes	**Charges**	**Number of calls**	**Average duration in minutes**
Dakar	1.851.009	1.647.2286	762.277	2
Thiès	111.416	104.6058	57.345	2
St-Louis	85.707	722.435	58.886	1
Ziguinchor	62.063	527.915	39.376	2
Kaolack	61.215	489.633	36.635	2
Tamba	44.448	385.773	44.035	1
Diourbel	**29.242**	**239.536**	**20.556**	**1**
Louga	15.425	135.933	10.129	2

Source: SONATEL

Although Touba receives a large volume of international calls, as mentioned above, a relatively small number are initiated in Touba. For outgoing international calls, the region ranks second-to-last in duration of calls, charges and number of calls. Only Louga – another Mouride region that includes Darou Mousty, home to the second-largest Mouride population – has lower figures.

In terms of the transnationalization of the sect and the intense long-distance relationship between the city and its émigrés, this represents a striking paradox. The fact is that Touba's inhabitants do not make frequent international calls because the international calls they engage in are initiated abroad.

Personal observation of traffic on a number of telephone lines at the Mbacké-Touba switching station, in 1993, already signaled the major role that calls from abroad was to play – notably, calls from the Ivory Coast, Gabon, Italy and the United States.

This exceptional growth has been the result of the installation and use of telephones by international émigrés, whose habits have directly and indirectly affected SONATEL's development plans and profitability. Thus, though Touba and the Diourbel region have emerged as important telecommunications centers for the country, appropriation of the telephone in the Mouride region has unique characteristics.

Although telecommunications are an indicator of (and depend upon) a population's purchasing power, an even more important factor is the degree to which they reflect the extroversion of a society or group. Thus, while Touba ranks second among Senegal's cities in number of telephone subscribers, its unique characteristics make it

a major challenge for SONATEL. As noted above, incoming calls greatly outnumber outgoing calls. This is a reflection of the city's particular nature, and of the unique way in which it has adopted NICTs. The explosion of telephone lines in Touba is above all a response, by Mouride émigrés, to the need to keep touch with their families, marabouts, and the people who oversee their money transfers.

Monthly figures, available since September 1997 from SONATEL, confirm the high volume of incoming calls. These represent between 39% and 64.77% of total calls – including local calls, outgoing calls, transit calls and "other" calls, which refers primarily to Internet and cellular calls. Between 70% and 80% of incoming calls are international. The Touba switching center, which handles calls from the three switching stations in Madiyana, Darou Khoudoss and Touba-Mosquée, as well as from Darou Mousty, Khelcom and the satellite villages around Touba, is the second busiest in the country, surpassed only by Dakar. The Touba facility is also the only center linked to international switching stations.

Two other important factors should be noted:

First, between February 1998 and April 2000, the category "other" rose from 0% to a high of 42.7%. This no doubt reflects the important role assumed by other types of telephone use -- mobile, Internet, Netphone, etc.

Second, it appears that Touba receives a greatly increased volume of calls immediately before, and during, the winter, compared to other times – especially several days before the *magal*. Due to the gradual drop during the month of the great Touba pilgrimage and its proximity to winter, two periods can be distinguished in the SONATEL data. The first is the November-June period (during which calls are more numerous); the second is a lower-volume period from July to October.

According to SONATEL, international calls, in general, and international calls to Touba, in particular, represent a source of foreign currency, due to the massive and continuous volume of calls from abroad. This is characteristic not only of Touba, but also of other towns from which there is extensive emigration (such as the villages of Fouta). In terms of population, however, Touba is the largest – in population, area, and in economic terms – and shows a continuing growth trend in calling.

For all of these reasons, SONATEL assigns special importance to Touba as a telecommunications market. In terms of total sales from subscribers, Touba does not even rank second – in fact, not even close. "This is a city where people do not make many calls, but one that brings a great deal of money into SONATEL. There are international agreements regarding the balance of calls, overseen by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). For each call completed between Senegal and another country, the networks of the two countries must work together. With each country, there is a formula for the distribution of charges. In our relationship with France and all countries, a balance sheet is drawn up each year, showing the number of call minutes, and the country with the greater volume of calls pays based on the difference in volume."[30].

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[30] Conversation with Birahim Sarr, July 20, 2000

Incoming international calls represented more than 94 million minutes in 1998 and 111 million minutes in 1999, constituting growth, in relative value, of close to 19%, compared to 35% in 1998 and 6.4% in 1996, with figures flat for 1995. Call balance was stagnant in 1999, despite the 11% drop in the average accounting rate (expressed in CFA francs). The reduction in the accounting rate resulted either from bilateral agreements with individual foreign operators or from the choice made by foreign operators to use less expensive transit routes for its calls to Senegal.

Call balances – based on SONATEL (and corresponding company) call counts – are reckoned on a monthly, bimonthly or quarterly basis. These are recorded, after acceptance by the foreign correspondent company, in a debit or credit account at SONATEL, reflecting the balance of operations for the monthly, bimonthly or quarterly period. At year's end, the balance of unaccepted calls is calculated. This is entered in the relevant debit or credit account as earnings receivable when they favor SONATEL, and as charges payable when they favor the foreign company.

The call balances represent an average 29.4% of total sales for the last five years, while representing only 26.7% for 1999. While the figure for outgoing international calls is 36.5 million minutes for 1999 vs. 31.7 million minutes for 1998 (representing a rise of 15%), incoming calls show a rise of 19%, with 111 million minutes vs. 94 million minutes. Approximately 60% of SONATEL revenue comes from this international call balance. Thus, the profitable, thriving status of SONATEL – a company held out everywhere as a model – can be traced to émigrés. Hence, the importance of Touba, which receives more calls than any urban center except for Dakar.

Thus, we have what is indeed a strange and paradoxical situation. Here is a city that is not highly profitable for SONATEL, since subscribers do not create significant revenue. However, when the company's total sales are broken down, in terms of domestic revenue and revenue from international call balances, Touba is one of the highest revenue producers. It is this fact that accounts for SONATEL's willingness to invest in Touba and gives the city special importance. Indeed, Touba, and the Diourbel region generally, have even served as a testing ground for experimental telemedicine projects, with SONATEL contributing 30 million CFA francs – proving that it is the driving force for the development of NICTs in Touba.

The widespread explosion in mobile telephony

The number of subscribers to SONATEL's Alizé mobile GSM network has more than tripled. As of December 31, 1999, subscribers numbered 73,472, representing 44% of the total number of land lines and 84% of the mobile market, while SENTEL has more than 30,000 subscribers.

Table 10 : Change in number of SONATEL mobile subscribers

	Dec. 1996	June 1997	Dec. 1997	June 1998	Dec. 1998	June 1999	Dec. 1999	June 2000
Alizé	1,395	3,814	6,942	12,385	16,733	15,983	18,111	19,901
Diamono					5,377	21,774	55,361	92,229
Total					22,110	37,757	73,472	112,130

Diagram 2: Change in number of mobile phones in Senegal

Since 1996, there has been an extraordinary growth in mobile lines, nearly doubling every six months from December 1996 to June 1998. Up until December 1996, growth was limited to the Alizé plan, which is a billed subscription contract plan. Between December 1998 and June 2000, the Diamono plan has shown the greatest growth. From a base of 5,377, the number of users quadrupled in the first six months, and then increased tenfold after its first year in existence. Today, SONATEL has 120,000 mobile users, including 19,901 on the Alizé plan and 92,229 on the Diamono plan.

The number of subscribers to the Alizé mobile GSM plan increased more than threefold in both 1998 and 1999, reaching 73,000 subscribers by the end of the year, or 44% of the total number of land lines vs. 16% in 1998. In 1999, nearly eight out of ten new subscribers chose SONATEL mobile services.

This growth has occurred despite the fact that a second mobile GSM provider began operations in Senegal. SONATEL represents 85% of the mobile market, with total sales of 11 billion CFA francs (a 66% increase over 1998). This sharp growth is primarily due to expanded services, including:

(i) expansion of the distribution network for prepaid cards, with more than 200 sales points;
(ii) improved coverage; and
(iii) expansion of roaming agreements, which now include 39 networks in 28 countries.

With 48% growth in land-based and mobile telephony, productivity rose 43% in 1999. The number of land and mobile lines increased approximately 48% in 1999, as compared with 32% in 1998. Total sales for the Alizé GSM network have grown by almost 66%, to over 11 billion CFA francs.

Touba and the Diourbel region, as centers for NICT activity, account in large part for the explosion in telephony, spurred by strong, accelerating and multi-faceted demand and by SONATEL initiatives. At the same time, the Mourides have increasingly adopted other information and communications technologies.

Beyond the telephone: Touba inhabitants increasingly embrace other ICTs

The pioneering "Déclic informatique" comes of age

Ten years ago, the computer was little more than an obscure technology to the people of Touba. They regarded it as a revolutionary machine capable of providing any information the user desired. The first computer arrived in Touba in 1991; its owner (a marabout named Khadim Modou Bara) viewed it as a gadget, to be made a part of the religious symbols associated with Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, the sect's founder.

This marabout was intrigued by the notion of incorporating modern elements in religious practice, and exhibited the computer (which was not even in functioning condition), along with copies of the Koran and writings of the Grand Marabout, on a richly decorated bed dedicated to Sheik Ahmadou Bamba. It was in 1992 that the first working machine arrived in the city, brought by Pape Sarr Diallo, a former employee of the Office of Planning and Statistics. The Pape created a data base to assist in the administration of the neighborhood, which was headed by his marabout, thus placing Madiyana in the vanguard of land management in Touba.

Madiyana, or use of NICTs to support urban management

Madiyana is a section of Touba that lies along the western bypass. It was created out of nothing, with an initial offering of 2,550 lots financed by the *khalif general* in 1978. Two other developments extended this area to the north: 1,437 lots in 1984 and 1,718 in 1989. The khalif's hope was to provide his brother Serigne Souhaibou, who was known for his lack of self-interest, a role in the city's land management.

Madiyana is notable for its modernist, even avant-garde approach to land management. In 1991, after the death of the district khalif, his oldest son and successor decided to innovate. He created a team to perform a census of the settlement and evaluate the previous land management process. The ultimate goal of this census was to create a reliable computerized data base for the purpose of exerting "more effective control over collection of the rural tax… and prevent all attempts at land speculation for profit," according to the person charged with overseeing the data base. He continues: "Wealthy merchants were beginning to bribe village chiefs to obtain lots, which they then resold."

The census made it possible to identify a number of such speculators and take away their ownership of the land. At the request of other districts within the city, Madiyana was split into a number of sections, in order to provide for better management and more effective law enforcement. The two large areas resulting from this division are overseen by "regional chiefs," with three subdivisions within each of these areas, each overseen by a "representative." This entire organization, created at the local level, is headed by a "secretary general" responsible for distributing lots and arbitrating land disputes. This person also coordinates collection of the rural tax and oversees the finances of the health committee (an autonomous organization in charge of the district health clinic).

Land management, as it relates to the "regional chiefs" (also called "village chiefs" or "district chiefs"), consists of issuing housing permits and registering all new land parcels granted by the secretary general.

Meetings are held on the first Sunday of each month to assess and determine new data to be entered in the data base – a process in which the district khalif does not participate directly. Both the district and regional chiefs are, above all, tax collectors, receiving – as is true for other village chiefs in Touba and elsewhere – 7% of what they collect.

The district khalif and the secretary general are in constant and close communication. The marabout assigns lots and issues instructions on a daily basis, while the secretary general is responsible for enforcing his decisions and keeping the data base current. He is assisted by three co-workers. A statistician (Pape Sarr Diallo who, after a "voluntary leave," joined the team) was responsible for organizing the census and also managed the computerized data. A surveyor played the role of settling boundary disputes and correcting errors in property lines, as well as irregularities identified by the census. The third person (unlike the first two, who were chosen by the district khalif) was enlisted by the secretary general to track changes in field data and bring them up to date. This team appears to be carrying out its work effectively.

While the team draws its legitimacy from the same sources as other village chiefs in Touba, its work is highly innovative, with an approach aimed squarely at effective management. Its collective, highly organized method of operation, its use of computers, and the youth of its leaders (who are between 30 and 40 years old) set it apart from the village chiefs, who are all at least 50 years old.

The team is a sign of the major change in land management methods throughout the district. The key elements are transparency and a mastery of information. The computerized data makes it possible to know precisely how many lots remain to assign, their exact location, the names of those who recently received lots, the names of previous owners, which individuals own more than one lot – which is illegal – and the value of the lots.

New restrictions instituted after the 1991 census relate primarily to the issuance of housing permits. These documents are provided to those whose ownership dates from before 1991 and who are current in their tax payments, and to new owners, for whom these documents are the only guarantee of possession. The main objective of this exercise, however, is to restore the authority of the marabouts[31] and to combat land speculation. As is true throughout Touba, it is illegal to sell empty lots in Madiyana. However, given that an owner is permitted to sell once a lot is developed, the door to speculation remains open. Thus, speculators invest minimally in parcels in order to be able to then sell them. Such investment is known as the "*peine.*"[32]

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[31] This restoration of authority also involves outside actors, such as SONATEL, the telephone company. SONATEL, as part of its new program to extend its network, has installed redistribution centers in various parts of the city, including Madiyana. The team was not apprised of this, however. The district khalif asked SONATEL to stop work because it had not received the necessary documentation from the rural community or from the khalif general who authorized the work. Work was stopped while the situation was clarified.

[32] The French word, signifying "penalty," is used here.

The computer, along with the ability to withhold a housing permit, are the instruments used to control and monitor neighborhood's housing and empty lots. These provide the team numerous ways of enforcing payment of the rural tax. Indeed, where the sale of a lot with a house has been authorized, the final authorization is preceded by an updating of the tax status. All of these constraints act as a strong brake on speculation, since buyers prefer to seek out other neighborhoods where resale is permitted or is less complicated.

While this new, computer-assisted form of control is not without problems, it appears to be a promising model for effective enforcement of land management rules, applicable to the city as a whole. The district khalif, Serigne Cheikh Saye, who saw the need for designing such a system, has a distinctly modernist perspective. This is the result of his close personal relations within high government circles and his extensive travels in Europe and the United States.

With an appreciation for intellectuals (who are dominant within his group of disciples), his strongly innovative and managerial orientation can also be traced to his double heritage. He is the oldest son of Serigne Souhaibou – who, as the son of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, is considered the emblem of orthodox religious thought within the sect – while he also had major responsibility, during the reign of the third khalif, for managing the khalifal *daara*. One can assume that, with the coming of the grandsons, who will likely share the temperament of Serigne Cheikh Saye, the tradition will be passed on.

Today, the Madiyana model is being disseminated and replicated. Darou Khoudoss-Village – the administrative body for the original village of Touba – now has computer equipment (a Pentium 200), which the district khalif purchased in the United States after sending interns to Madiyana. The village chief of Darou Khoudoss (Serigne Ahma) is, himself, a computer buff.

There has been a qualitative change in the technology used for city administration. While Madiyana began with second-hand equipment, much higher-performance computers are now being purchased, indicating the marabouts' interest in computerized management tools – a sure sign that they will gain widespread acceptance in the future. Not only is this change occurring among the inhabitants of Touba and in relation to city administration; the entire sect is increasingly embracing NICTs – particularly international émigrés. The fact that a *dahira* was created and is being managed by émigrés is particularly noteworthy.

Matlaboul Fawzaïni: A transnational *dahira* whose success is attributable to NICTs.

Matlaboul Fawzaïni, in Arabic, means "the search for the two happinesses."[33] This is the name of a *dahira,* founded in 1990 during the construction of a large hospital in Touba, with a current membership of approximately 60,000 persons worldwide. The name was taken from one of the founder's poems, which celebrated the birth of the city and included prayers and predictions for the city's future. This collection of prayers and predictions has become a log book of projects – a means for the sons of

[33] Implying happiness in this life and in the hereafter.

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba to perpetuate their father's memory and, by carrying out these plans, to make themselves part of the legacy of the brotherhood.

Matlaboul Fawzaïni stands out for the fact that it was created abroad in the context of a single grand project. The creation of this *dahira* was accompanied by the use of NICTs, which currently form the foundation for its operation. In 1994, the *dahira* in its present form came into being. The first office, with 33 members, was formed during the famous Touba gathering that year. It included local representatives and agents from France, Italy, Spain and the United States. At the time of its creation, a decision was also made to recruit members through the sale of cards at offices established in each of the participating countries. Members were dispatched to Italy, France, Senegal, Spain, Portugal, the U.S., Germany, Guinea Bissau, Gabon and South Africa.

Different requirements for membership and for membership dues were set for each continent. Senegalese residents buy their cards for 1,000 CFA francs and pay an annual fee of 2,500 CFA francs. For Senegalese who have emigrated to Europe, the Americas and Asia, the cost of membership is 10 times higher, and annual dues are 40,000 CFA francs. Membership fees for Senegalese who have emigrated to other African countries are 2,500 CFA francs, with annual dues four times less than for other continents. Annual dues for women are 50% lower than for men. For members wishing to contribute more, cards of support are available.

Each branch office must open a bank account to deposit the dues. The money is transferred by SWIFT transfer into a particular account servicing all of the *dahiras* in Touba. The *dahira* then matches up documentation required in the host country with the corresponding regional cells, departmental sections, and administrative sub-sections. Sub-sections are regrouped into sections, and those sections into cells.

At the end of each quarter, sections in regional capitals assemble at the cell headquarters and make up a balance sheet. Money collected is then deposited in the *Matlaboul Fawzaïni* account in the particular country. Only at the end of the year do the transferred funds reach the account in Touba, which serves as the headquarters of the sect's central cell.

Now that the hospital is completed and is operational, *Matlaboul Fawzaïni* has taken on the status of an NGO, aimed at diversifying its actions to other sectors of Touba's life – notably in sectors concerned with preventive health care, specifically in sanitation and water supply. Use of NICTs was necessary to facilitate the operation of the organization in its new form. Information and communications are, in fact, the cornerstone of the operation and the key to fundraising.

The far-flung explanation given by Dame Ndiaye is as follows: "When God sent the Prophet, it was to inform us. Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba has produced 7 tons of writings to provide us with information. Initially, the information that forms the heart of our credo was distilled 4 times a year. Moreover, the General Assembly is always a high point in communication. We have a Permanent Office, central offices and cells equipped with cutting-edge information technology tools, namely, the computer, equipped with Internet access and e-mail. Each cell must experience what we experience. The key word is speed. The communication system is designed by our

central offices, which are technologically well equipped. Since these structures were in Europe, it was difficult to escape them, given that what is being constructed is a world without borders. The mission, rather than being one of persuasion, must be to show what is being done. Before 1995, Spain, Italy, and Touba were equipped with machines for managing investments, resources and persons. Given that this was a new technology, we didn't want to be left behind." [34]

For Dame Ndiaye, the self-taught founder and leader of the sect, the computer serves not merely as an instrument to assist in the operation of *Matlaboul Fawzaïni*, but as "professor," thus enabling him to gain greater familiarity with information technology and become knowledgeable in a range of areas. With the help of Déclic Informatique, he is able to surf the Internet, and with the information at his disposal, he is in a position to consider the use of telemedicine for his hospital, in order to compensate for Senegal's lack of trained health care technicians. Already, he uses e-mail rather than the post (even express post).

Information technology and the Internet: a growing market in Touba

Use of information technology in Touba has extended beyond its application to land management, with considerable growth in terms of individual use. Dozens of marabouts have installed Arabic software (Windows 98 in Arabic) and Arabic keyboards for their Pentium computers sent by disciples from Italy. This has gained them familiarity with the world of Arabic word processing, which, while not prevalent on a national scale, is known to the marabouts of Touba.

Given the importance of Arabic writing in the culture and symbolism of the Mourides, its role in the mystical representation of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, and its use in e-mail, information technology is bound to grow rapidly. The cost of downloading and printing a page is 1,000 CFA francs. The marabouts, especially the young ones studying Arabic, frequently use Windows in Arabic for the dictionaries it contains.

Beyond the marabouts, other entities also use computers in their operations. Examples of this are the doctor in charge of the Darou Khoudoss pharmacy, as well as others who use computers for management purposes or for word processing. Moreover, word processing and publishing centers are flourishing, turning out letters, membership cards, business cards, etc.

The Al Azar de Ndame Institute – one of the Egyptian-influenced Arab schools created by the youngest son of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba – also decided to use information technology to manage its affairs. It has long used Arabic in its word processing. An American mission promised to supply them with 11 computers in order to streamline their computer courses and to provide Internet access.

Because of its affordability, the computer has become important in structuring Touba's urban society, as well as its Mouride practices. Hundreds of computers are being brought back from Europe and the U.S. via containers, and are then distributed throughout the city. These used computers come from scrapyards and from the service and computer firm warehouses. In Touba, one can purchase a 486 computer with a

[34] Interview with Dame Ndiaye, July 7, 2000

640MB hard drive and 12MB of memory for 50,000 CFA francs, as well as a 20,000 CFA franc monitor.

It is the Arabic and Asian keyboards, however – which can be changed by putting patches on the keys – that have had the greatest success. These used computers have stimulated the market for computer maintenance and repair, though the people who do repairs complain that customers don't pay anywhere near what the service is worth – not a surprising fact, given the low purchase price of the computers.

The harnessing of the computer has long been part of a widespread trend – over many years – toward increasing use of electronics. In this respect, the role of the *modou modou* and of the marabouts is a key factor. Fascinated by television, double-cassette tape recorders, stereos and walkmen, they have helped change the layout and contents of the typical Touba living room by introducing an array of electronics. The extreme heat and dust – the worst enemies of electronic appliances – have led to a proliferation of electronics repair shops.

For marabouts, being on the cutting edge of any field represents a means of self-promotion. Electronics, in general, and information technology, in particular, are increasingly a means of distinguish oneself and set oneself apart. Access to the telephone and increasingly widespread use of computers provide a favorable environment for the development of the Internet. Thus, the greatest concern must be the potential challenges this could pose for Touba.

Despite this situation, the Diourbel region, which includes Touba, is seeing steady growth in Internet use, though still on a very limited scale. In May 2000, total duration of calls in the region rose to 29,924 minutes and the number of calls increased to 3,330, with the average length of calls being 9 minutes. Even with these relatively low numbers, the Diourbel region surpasses the Tamba and Louga regions. One of the factors driving this development is the partnership between Trade Point Senegal and the private sector, which is now emphasizing training and services.

Private sector response to demand for training: The example of Déclic Informatique and of the Professional Training Institute (IFP)

In the field of training, Bara Wade has played a pioneering role. He was the first to respond to the need for training among merchants and Touba residents, in general, with training locations in both Mbacké and Touba.

Mrs. Bousso Faye's idea of setting up a training center in Touba was the result of advice she received from her brother, who was working on the data base for Darou Khoudoss. "He made me understand that the terrain was fertile and untouched", she explained. "I'm a computer technician. I worked at Eximcor – a gold-mining company in Sabodola, in Eastern Senegal -- until it shut down. After that, I went free-lance. Last year, I decided to come and see to the project myself, because my brothers' management skills were not the greatest. I really came to put some kick into the project. Now I live here. I go back to Dakar every two weeks. Things are starting to move, and I'm beginning to be known by different entities.

Déclic Informatique was created to respond to a growing need for training. In addition to civil servants and private individuals from the formal sector, merchants in Touba

have, for many years, been expressing a real need for training. “Several large merchants in Touba have admitted to me that they can not improve their management capabilities unless they have computers.”

This accounts, in large part, for the choice of the Ocass market – which typifies the Mourides’ informal sector – as the location for Déclic Informatique. While the demand for computer technology is high, meeting that demand is not easy. There has been, for some, both a longstanding distrust of, as well as considerable cultural and psychological resistance to computer technology. Moreover, the illiteracy rate for French is higher in Touba than in any other city in Senegal.

The school, long subject to prohibitions, did not come into its own until 1958 – a development attributable to the determination of one of the brotherhood’s most influential marabouts. This private school remains the only one operating within the strictures of the extraterritoriality statute. Because of illiteracy, “it is difficult, from a teaching standpoint, to get them to understand: they at least have to know how to read. This explains why there were so many dropouts in the beginning.” Déclic Informatique has gradually changed its teaching methods, inventing signs and symbols to meet the needs of its students. Illiteracy is an obstacle – though not an insurmountable one – to the expansion of NICTs.

The goal of Déclic Informatique’s courses is to provide an introduction to Word, Excel and Windows, once students gain familiarity and facility with the computer keyboard. Among Déclic Informatique’s clients are marabouts seeking to learn to create calendars to promote the image of their lineage; civil servants working in Touba or Mbacké; and pharmacy and supermarket managers. Since the end of 1999, Déclic has provided access to the Internet, after strong pressure from its clients. With an investment of 100,000 CFA francs, this became operational as of March 2000.

Among its various activities, training plays the most dynamic role. Today, Déclic Informatique has 20 students, divided into several groups, with different schedules and levels of advancement. Upon arrival, the students enter a classroom equipped with a movable chalkboard and 3 computers. Each student has a computer for each course. Classes are scheduled according to students’ availability. The highest attendance is from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and from 2-4 p.m. Of the 20 students, 8 are female – mostly wives of internationals émigrés who interrupted their studies to get married and are looking for activities to occupy them while their husbands are far away. Young people generally require diplomas or certificates upon completing their training, whereas merchants who take the courses have no such desire.

Déclic Informatique is also engaged in other activities. First, is sells used computers, for which an active market is developing. Mrs. Bousso Faye confirms the fact that people in Touba are interested in Arabic word processing: “The market for Arabic keyboards is very profitable. We’ve sold a few, but we have no more left. We advise two things: buy a disk and have it configured in Arabic, or buy an Asian keyboard and ‘patch’ it .”

In addition to sales, there was the maintenance aspect to be considered, for which a shop area had to be built. “People know me now, and they do not have to go to Dakar anymore to get their computers repaired. The other big market consists of

"tropicalizing" computers that arrive in containers and have to be re-configured. But I will not take anything lower than a 486. At the shop, we can also repair photocopiers, fax machines and typewriters. Maintenance is not very profitable. People dicker too much. They do not want to pay Dakar prices. Since they don't buy expensive computers, they don't know the true value of the products and don't want to pay too much for repairs. The maintenance market for companies located in Touba has not grown. They often have their own shops in Dakar, where the machines are sent."

The move, however, that promises to be the most important for Déclic Informatique is its operational arrangement with Trade Point, which has made this multinational -- a company that has positioned itself in Senegal with astonishing speed – a veritable "antenna." Trade point Touba has been in operation since June 1999. Contact between these two entities began in March 1999 on the initiative of Mrs. Bousso Faye, with an official launching ceremony on May 19, 1999 to inform people of the opportunities offered by this entrepreneurial union. The plan involved a business information system to provide:

a. consulting and opportunities (supply and demand for products and services, training, technical and financial partnerships)
b. access to a directory of Senegalese companies
c. advertising on the Internet
d. hosting and design of web pages
e. e-mail service
f. automation of all pre-entry customs procedures
g. services
h. assistance on economic operations in monitoring current markets
i. assistance in the use of NICTs
j. technical support
k. maintenance of connections
l. computer set-up

Thus, the enterprise consisting of the combination of Déclic Informatique and Trade Point Senegal plays a role in enhancing local potential, decompartmentalizing production, and integrating Touba in international trade. Through its activities, it is able to assist Touba's economic agents.

Due to a lack of communication, however, the launch did not enjoy great success. "Information was only passed on by word of mouth, and did not have much effect." Letters were sent out primarily to people who had little or no schooling and who presumably did not appreciate the significance of the event. Since then, however, interest in the Internet and Trade Point has been growing. The largest business owner in Touba (Kabe Fall) is one of the consortium's best customers.

The goal of Trade Point Senegal, in Touba, is to popularize e-business in the area. For 500 CFA francs (a very modest sum), a businessperson can provide information on his or her products via the Internet, and this opportunity is available throughout Trade Point's worldwide network. "If a merchant in Touba wants to sell millet, he can offer it, indicating the quantity and quality, and we take care of the rest," explains Bousso

Faye, who places great hope in this partnership. For the moment, however, there are no plans for Trade Point to establish an arrangement with Déclic Informatique.[35]

It costs only 2,500 CFA francs to be a member of the Trade Point network and obtain a customer code. Fallou Lô, who went to the launch ceremony to learn about Trade Point, said he "already saw possibilities for finding trade partners." He has the e-mail addresses of a number of suppliers and he, himself, has an e-mail address (which cost him 4,000 CFA francs). However, he says he only got it to be ahead of the game: for the time being, it hasn't been of much use to him. While Fallou, who took a literacy course in 1985, writes his own messages, [36] not all Mouride merchants do so.

Trade Point acts as a consultant and monitors the situation until the contact between seller and buyer is established. Often, however, the transaction between the parties takes place over the telephone and by direct contact. Nevertheless, during the course of a transaction, it is in Trade Point Senegal's interest to keep the customer as long as possible. "First of all, we receive money (300 to 500 CFA francs) for sending and receiving e-mails. If we keep the client and help them more directly in the transaction, we also get a percentage."

The fact that the parties complete the transaction by phone demonstrates that in concluding a transaction, merchants in this environment feel the need to make the spoken word part of the process. In the case of Trade Point Touba, the socio-affective nature of direct exchange goes hand-in-hand with use of the Internet. Thus, use of NICTs involves establishing new behaviors, while at the same time preserving the sense of personal identity that is linked to the spoken word. In Touba, Déclic Informatique's initiative is seen as an important advance in achieving the modern life-style that the Mourides are attempting to reinterpret in the context of their own symbols.

Marabout authorities make frequent visits to encourage those in charge of the initiative. Convinced, as they are, of its profitability, they have indicated a strong interest in expanding the enterprise. However, lack of funds has hindered this attempt. Déclic Informatique, which conducts virtually no marketing, makes approximately 400,000 CFA francs per month – with 35% - 50% derived from training – thus providing the resources to pay the rent, as well as the salaries of the teachers, who are recruited from graduates holding university diplomas in technology.

Moreover, use of the Internet, which seemed incompatible with the Touba environment, attached as it was to its traditional values, is experiencing rapid growth. This is due not only to the marabouts' curiosity and taste for technology, but to the

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[35] "...there are problems with customs, and given the uncertainty, they are reluctant to invest. Customs is not interested, at this point, in a collaboration, nor is the COSEC (Conseil Sénégalais des Chargeurs)," explains Mrs. Bousso Faye.

[36] In eight months, at a total cost of 15,000 CFA francs per month (7 months with Bara Wade and 1 month at Déclic), he learned account management and use of stock management software. He also learned Word and Excel. All of this he did under the supervision of Bara Wade, who has a school in Mbacké and another in Touba (CBAC). Fallou Lô's enterprise, called Gie Touba Darou Karim, sells electronic equipment. He has a computer with Internet connection, and sells SONATEL's Diamono card. He was particularly interested in management software, such as Cielcompta.

relative success that the Internet has enjoyed locally through the efforts of Trade Point Senegal.

Nevertheless, Internet use remains limited. This situation, however, would be altered dramatically by a concerted policy to expand Internet access. “Sometimes, three days go by without a consultation. On the average, we have two people per day. We are the only ones offering it. We have a network connection, so it is possible to establish ten connections from a single line using the WinGate system. That is what is being done in the cybercafés in Dakar.” For the moment, “people are asking about it, but it’s not yet a stampede. Maybe after 3 or 4 advertising campaigns it will become fashionable and we will see a snowball effect. Besides,” complains Mrs. Bousso Faye, “we’re always logging on at a loss in order to expand the number of users.” A number of well-known figures, as well as organizations, are now logging on through Déclic Informatique, which also offers at-home training.

The Institut de Formation Professionnelle (IFP), a school that has been in Dakar for many years, provides another example – of an entirely type. IFP, having discovered that Mbacké could serve as a means of gaining Touba clientele, prospected the area for business, backed by the institution’s good reputation – a procedure that has proven successful elsewhere. Having enlisted 20 to 40 civil servants as students, the school chose a particular area to establish itself. Fees are levied directly.

In terms of Mbacké, private sector individuals and informal sector merchants make up the majority of the students. These constitute the most profitable market for the area – a fact well understood by IFP. In view of this fact, a new strategy was implemented in order to address the relevant needs and constraints.

The IFP in Mbacké has two groups of 20 students each, of which 11 are women, with most students under 35 years of age. A diploma is given out at the completion of each course by the school’s overall director, rather than by the Touba branch. This is what is of greatest interest to the young students. In the Touba region, taking computer courses is even beginning to be a source of job security.

Some students, however, indicate that they take courses out of curiosity and in order to remain up to date and not be left behind. Mbacké’s IFP branch has 13 computers (486 DXs and Pentiums) and offers courses in Windows, Excel and Access. The latter of these, however, is highly demanding and therefore is rarely completed successfully, according to the person who oversees the courses. In general, teachers are forced to gear their teaching to a somewhat rudimentary level in order to accommodate the level of certain students.

These two examples demonstrate that information technology has “clicked” in Touba after just ten years and now appears to be gaining a firm foothold in the local society.

Parabolic antennas highlight the uniqueness of urban society

The growing use of NICTs is directly linked to the Internet; however, television – which has expanded due to satellite technology – has now become a new player on the scene.

Touba not only serves as capital to a worldwide brotherhood; it is also the place where new outward-looking models of urban existence are being invented. Television is one of the main instruments in the interspace that forms the new territory of the Mourides. Arriving in Senegal in the early 70s and adopted by Dakar's bourgeoisie and jet set, television became, during the 80s and 90s, an omnipresent mass media.

For the last ten years, satellite television has been the fashion, with MMDS antennas, known as "TV5." However, despite their explosion across the country and their great height – which itself is a form of appropriation and innovation – these antennas do not provide Touba with good reception. The response to this local problem has been a proliferation of parabolic antennas, which flourish on the roofs of Touba houses in even greater numbers than in Dakar. [37]

Within the context of the deep-rooted identity of Mouride society in Touba, parabolic antennas represent an expansive openness to the outside world, while also representing boredom and inactivity. Touba women, who remain at home all year while their husbands are away, have only television to fill the hours, since other forms of amusement and escape are prohibited in Touba. Moreover, as Senegalese television does not have continuous programming, the only recourse is satellite television.

This openness exposes the religious city's urban society to all of the positive and negative images of other societies, societies that are often based on different rationales – a circumstance that should ultimately make most Touba residents much like city dwellers everywhere, in contradiction to the founder's original plan.

It is above all the international migrants – following the lead of certain traveling marabouts – who have been instrumental in making parabolic antennas an important part of Touba's landscape. However, the development and proliferation of parabolic antennas are also linked to their price in Touba. While an antenna sells for around 800,000F CFA francs in Dakar, prices in Touba vary between 175,000 CFA francs (on the black market) and 400,000 CFA francs (in stores). The antennas sold in Touba, which were manufactured in South Korea, are purchased and reconditioned in the United States and then brought to Senegal in containers by Mouride merchants, or else they are purchased in Banjul. This follows a tradition created by Touba's extraterritorial status, which has always allowed Touba residents to purchase low-priced products from The Gambia. This situation has helped consolidate Touba's image as a miracle city, a place where life is easy.

Parabolic antennas are sold not only in specialized stores, but also in shops that sell textiles and other products. "Less than a year ago, we began selling parabolic antennas. The pace of sales varies: I can sell one a month, or three in a week.
It depends on the customers, but also on availability. There are a lot of people who do the installation, and the seller also acts as the intermediary between the buyer and installer," says Khadim Sylla. an authorized salesman. The parabolic antennas come from Banjul and cost from 185,000 CFA francs to 200,000 francs in his store.

[37] Moreover, this occurred to my great surprise in 1994, when I was beginning my research on this city.

With the growth of the parabolic antenna market, companies like Canal Horizons are beginning to increase their presence in the city by offering other formats, notably, the possibility of receiving a clear picture via this scrambled channel.

Parabolic antennas are now being manufactured, in part, in Touba by several establishments that do metal joinery. The dish, as it is called, can also be sold at extremely low prices. The photo shows a sign of the shop in Touba located near the Darou Marnane market. One can observe a spelling error, which may be indicative of the particular way NICTs are being appropriated.

The parabolic antennas, however, also represent, to some extent, a contrast with Dakar, with its Francophone channels – TV5 , CFI, CANAL HORIZON – compared to Touba's openness to the Arab world, with ARABSAT, LBC, NILE TV, and NILE SPORT, in addition to 300 radio stations.

Apart from parabolic antennas, Mouride merchants in Touba sell satellite radios brought back from Dubai (United Arab Emirates),which in recent years has become a new destination for the Mourides, a new El Dorado. Satellite radios have long been used by Arabic-speaking marabouts to listen to Arab stations; now, they are also listened to by the Mouride diaspora in order to keep informed, which they do listening, particularly, to Walf FM and Sud FM.

The new fashion – one likely to become more widespread in the coming years – is the use of little FM radios broadcasting out of certain marabout houses or from particular neighborhood centers. This broadcasting system has been used for several years at the lead-up to and during the great Touba pilgrimage, providing not only a means for the owners to promote the stations, but also a way for people to take part in the events, with broadcasts that include sermons, chants and poems written by the brotherhood's founder.

While these stations had a limited presence, with maximum coverage of only 1 km radius, they are now poised to become, as in Dakar, true communications systems, as well as vehicles for capturing Touba's nascent advertising market.

The development of the electronics market in Touba's urban society is part of a process of opening Mouridism to the modern world – a phenomenon linked to its increasing transnationalization. Thus, the Mourides – whether living in Touba or far from their capital – are increasingly open to NICTs. This openness, which is indicative of a secularization of the society, is part of the brotherhood's universalist goals. The explosion of the telephone over the past several years, combined with Déclic Informatique, makes Touba and its inhabitants an environment conducive to the development and use of the Internet.

Above all, the worldwide web is well suited to promote the brotherhood's image and to broadcast its message and symbols. In this regard, segments resistant to the sect's universalist plans will have less influence and are bound to play a less prominent role in the future. The *dahiras*, merchants and young marabouts, on the other hand, are positioned to incorporate NICTs as an element in the power structure.

What, then, are the mechanisms governing the adoption or rejection of elements of Western modernism? Since its beginning, Mouridism has developed a capacity for understanding and anticipating the world and its changes. The brotherhood oversees a societal plan that encompasses a certain type of person, a system of education, and specific values and practices. It is generally capable of making a strategic distinction as to what serves this plan (practical alliances with the State; radio, telephone and Internet) and what is detrimental to it (schools, gambling, alcohol).

However, the sect is increasingly heterogeneous, with different segments taking contradictory directions. While the brotherhood is distancing itself increasingly from the central authority and developing uncontrolled fringes, it is difficult to predict what it will choose to adopt or reject – particularly as the relationships between different groups around the world and their individual interests and abilities become more diverse. Predictions about the Mourides have often been proven wrong. Nevertheless, an analysis of the content and typology of a number of Internet sites suggests that the Mourides view the Internet as a new territory to be conquered.

Touba and the brotherhood on the worldwide web, or when the Mourides take up positions in the content war

Touba is the capital of an international brotherhood, and ICTs provide the opportunity for its members to maintain strong ties with home and with their symbolic city. However, this internationalization of the brotherhood represents a migrant religion with a plan and a message to promote. In this context, the Internet seems destined to be the Mourides' new territory, an important channel through which the symbols and words of the brotherhood are disseminated and grow. This observation is borne out by an analysis of the content on the numerous successful Mouride web sites.

The Internet – a new territory for the Mourides – serves the brotherhood's universalist plan

Since its beginnings in the last quarter of the 19th century, the Mouride brotherhood has had a universal vision of the message it wishes to promote. Its founder, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, never contemplated limiting his teachings to his country's borders. Indeed, he, himself, moved frequently, often living in more than one place at a time. His call could not be more universalist:

O ! Dwellers of the continent
O ! Dwellers across the Ocean
Answer the call of the virtuous
The Ocean of Munificence

The brotherhood's territorialization is not a linear movement from rural areas, through the urban environment, to the broader international world, and these various conquests were not accomplished in a strictly sequential manner. Rather, they represent periods that overlap, complete and influence one another. The vast number of disciples in rural areas has not prevented important figures within the brotherhood from settling in cities and periurban areas. By the same token, the city has, to a great extent, been the launching pad for international emigration by the Mourides.

The Mourides' migration to other parts of Africa, Europe and North America, and the methods they have devised for becoming part of their adopted environment, give a universal dimension to the brotherhood, which relies on the participation of the *modou modou* (international migrants) in executive and administrative positions. Indeed, positions are sometimes created for them.

The *dahiras* become worldwide, international or universal movements, and concern themselves with issues beyond the scope of the brotherhood, embracing Islamic – or, more simply, monotheistic – ideology (e.g., the World Movement for the Uniqueness of God). These massive movements have thousands of members and are engaged in implementing a truly societal plan, while developing an autonomist approach aimed at assuming responsibility for all the needs of the sect's disciples.

Thus, Touba is becoming the ideal place, one that can accommodate – indeed, has the duty to accommodate – this ideal society. The new *dahiras* have both a national and international presence. They have assumed an increasing role in urban planning, and they are active in urban construction, investing considerable sums of money to organize the city's great annual pilgrimage, as well as to establish neighborhoods and support health, sanitation services and other municipal infrastructure. The *dahiras* thus become the springboard for mobilizing international migrants to support the city.

Over the years, the brotherhood has developed fund-raising strategies for capturing the financial manna from the Mouride diaspora spread throughout the countries of Western Europe, the United States and Africa. Images of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and of the Touba mosque are becoming emblems, photographed and re-photographed, sketched, sculpted, posted and broadcast almost everywhere around the world. The city of Touba is now an established destination for tour operators. Its pilgrimages are celebrated simultaneously in several world capitals. [38] *"Now I can go everywhere, because I know you'll be there,"* sings Youssou Ndour, international star and disciple of the brotherhood, addressing Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba.

In terms of the expanding use of the Internet, the Mourides had the foresight to grab the ball on the rebound, to use a sports metaphor. The Web has very quickly become an important tool for the brotherhood's proselytizing – a new territory to be conquered, albeit a virtual territory. An increasing number of websites extol the power of the Mourides, providing information about life in the brotherhood, its message, its religious teachings, its different events and their meaning, and the work of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and his descendants.

Some sites are the result of initiatives undertaken by marabouts who create the sites as part of their effort to promote the image of the brotherhood. Most, however, are the work of *dahiras* with both a national and international presence, or with an exclusively international presence in several countries or in a single country or city. The *dahiras* that create these sites also sell their own image by promoting their organizations and activities.

[38] Article by Sophie Bava and Cheikh Guèye. To appear in Social Compass in 2001.

In reality, symbols and materials drawn from conquered areas are always put to use elsewhere. These religious assets – formed and reformed in the rural environment, then in the urban environment, then in the heart of communities scattered across the globe – are capitalized and disseminated on the network of networks. They consist of scientific, literary, linguistic and creative works, as well as the history of the brotherhood, its knowledge, its sayings and its spirit. The Mourides have already positioned themselves in the battle for knowledge and content, a battle for which Senegal as a whole is ill prepared.

Hizbut Tarqiyya: An Internet undertaking confirming the dynamism of this pioneer

Hizbut Tarqiyya is the name given by the sect's khalif to the former Dahira of Mouride Students (D.E.M.), an "association" founded in the 1970s at the University of Dakar to provide young Mouride intellectuals a place to meet and find solidarity. After building a strong presence in Dakar and establishing centers throughout regional capitals and other Senegalese cities, the *Hizbut Tarqiyya* became a major movement and decided to settle in Touba, where it built a large cultural center. However, like the majority of other large Mouride *dahiras*, it has become increasingly international, currently with a presence in several large cities and capitals of Europe.

In its development and growth, *Hizbut Tarqiyya,* which is said to be "inspired, with a cultural plan to promote, has always held strongly to the credo of method and organization."[39] Hizbut Tarqiyya, using modernism and activism to serve the sect's founder and his successors, has managed to make a place for itself in the brotherhood and is a true pioneer in the field of ICTs. It has long used teledetection to monitor its farming operations, and has used Theodolyte for its ground-moving operations. Moreover, Mouride students have, for a long time, been using walkie-talkies to communicate in the fields and have readily adopted the cell phone.

"Information technology was adopted because they made it easier to manage people and goods. The determination to succeed, the spirit of a staffed organization, a specific time – these are the essential elements of Hizbut Tarqiyya. Adoption of the computer is neither a quest for prestige nor an attempt at imitation. It is simply an attempt to satisfy the need for greater autonomy. We began with mechanical typewriters, then adopted electric typewriters due to the pressure created by increased work volume. And we have adopted computers for the same reason," explains Atou Diagne, who inspired this development.

At the end of the '80s, when computers were just beginning to appear in Senegal, the *dahira* acquired a set of computers, provoking wonder and envy in many Dakar circles. The purpose of this acquisition was to adapt to the changes that the dahira was undergoing – its members increasingly mobile and thus in need of exerting greater control from remote locations.

In this respect, computers were its salvation. A file on members was established, providing complete information on each member, including members' financial

[39] Interview with Atou Diagne, July 6, 2000

resources. Gradually, this came to encompass matters related to culture, property and responsibilities.

Hizbut Tarqiyya's acquisition of a set of computers in 1988 coincided with the launching of an "X25 data package transmission network, known as SENPAC.
Providing access to foreign data banks, with 19,200 bps capability, SENPAC is designed for businesses and, to a lesser degree, for institutions of higher learning and research." [40] The overall system was TRANSPAC; the Senegalese portion, managed by SONATEL, was named SENPAC. This system, however, only provided access to French databanks, primarily with the help of Minitels and computers. The *dahira* connects through this system, which is, in effect, the predecessor of the Internet in Senegal. With its Telematic Guide to Mouridism (TGM), it is becoming a pioneer at the national level and within the brotherhood. Visits to this "miracle" were organized, and Hizbut Tarqiyya was widely praised for its use of such connections and for its typically cutting-edge approach. "However, this management system was imperfect, and we suspended it for years," recounts Atou Diagne, head of the *dahira*.

The use of computers was also a way for *Hizbut Tarqiyya* to bring its operations into line with Cheik Ahmadou Bamba's image of power.[41] Members were given computer training to make them part of the ongoing technological revolution. Mobilizing and motivating members is carried out through an internal communications policy that emphasizes achievements and allows members to make use of this dynamic audiovisual undertaking. In this way the members feel that they belong to a cutting-edge movement of major scope.

Today, the *dahira,* which has diversified its financial resources, is devoting all of its energy and resources to organizing the great Touba *magal*, a pilgrimage bringing together 2 million Mourides each year. Putting in place exhibits, a television channel and many other innovations, it is thus making its mark as a modernizing force. Since 1999, the *dahira* has had a major website to coincide with the *magal.* Its stated goal is "to promote cultural values espoused by Mouridism and around which Hizbut Tarqiyya's entire educational system is organized,[42] via the Internet."[43] The creation of a website is a new stage in the evolution of the dahira and is consistent with the plan initiated nearly fifteen years ago.

Investments in the site are made progressively.[44] The site, www.htcom.sn, is managed by the Division of Programming and Cultural Heritage, which is staking its bets on power and quality rather than on number of computers. The newness of the site (still incomplete) and of its followers is reflected in the notice that reads, "page under

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[40] Sagna Olivier, 2000 - Les technologies de l'information et de la communication et le développement social au Sénégal : un état des lieux. UNRISD, Research Programme on Information Technologies and social Development, p. 13.

[41] "The model is not reproducible. Having money does not mean one can do as HT did," explains Atou Diagne.

[42] ibid.

[43] As elsewhere, however, adoption of the Internet takes place with a certain amount of suspicion. "When SONATEL launched the Internet in 1996, we waited, above all, so as not to act as followers and not to be enslaved by information technology," says *Atou Diagne.*

[44] "...without hurrying, because we have an obligation to produce results," states Lamine Diouf, head of the site.

construction." The site presents a welcome text – shown below – that demonstrates (if this were, indeed, necessary) the *dahira's* avant-garde awareness, i.e., its interest in utilizing NICTs to further the brotherhood's universalist plan.

May God's Peace, Mercy and Blessing be with you

Welcome honorable visitors.

We thank you for your kind interest in connecting with the SERVANT, which is one of many sites about Mouridism that are increasingly prevalent on the networks of networks. Why the SERVANT? Indeed, this name is revealing because it derives from the Founder of Mouridism, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba. One may recall that he made himself the servant of the Prophet Mohammed (Peace and Salvation upon Him), such that his name, his abilities and all matters identified with him hearken back to one name, KHÂDIMU-R-RASÛL (the Servant of the Prophet).

Thus, the present endeavor attempts to present the life and work of the Founder of Mouridism. Its culture is exemplified through the SERVANT, in honor of the Prophet (Peace and Salvation upon Him).

This project is an initiative of HIZBUT-TARQIYYAH, an Mouride organization under the guidance of the Mourides' khalif general. Consisting formerly of students, it now spans all socio-professional strata – men, women, children, adults and the elderly. With its headquarters and Cultural Center in TOUBA, the institution includes members from all over Senegal and abroad – in Africa, Europe, and the United States.

This work has been undertaken in the hope that it will be of hagiographic, cultural and religious interest to the public, which is eager for accurate information on the various aspects of Mouridism. The site, which is under construction, represents an opportunity, a resolve to achieve the objectives of a plan which, if it is to be fulfilled, requires the use of the most modern information and communications techniques, for which purpose the Internet is an ideal tool.

In the 1980s, the institution turned its cultural motto into a highly revealing slogan: "Produce in abundance so as to be better prepared to face the future." The institution has always been steadfast in this endeavor. Indeed, from 1986 to 1991, it held an exhibition, during the three days of the Magal, presenting numerous stands covering the basic cultural values of Mouridism – a forum that was one of the most successful attractions of the event. This ambitious plan made a major breakthrough in 1989, with the institution's entry into the telematic era and its installation of a server – the Mouride Telematic Guide (GTM) – for public use. This massive data bank represented Senegal's (and, in fact, Africa's) first public server. In the orientation document connected with this entry into the Minitel sphere, one passage remains apropos even today: "An apostolic message from God never ages. Therefore, use of the most modern techniques of processing and disseminating information is in perfect accord with Islam and is to be welcomed by us, because the goal of Mouridism is to safeguard, perpetuate and disseminate the authentic message of Islam."

Once the product is made available to the public, it sharpens the curiosity of some and at the same time attempts, in a modest way, to quench the thirst for knowledge on the part of others. From this dual perspective, the educational and cultural objectives of Mouridism's basic cultural values are consistent with the search for useful information.

Dear Internet friends,

As you can see, the creation of a cultural product, particularly if the endeavor is to be feasible and competitive, is no easy accomplishment. Islam is a religion built on certainties; it severely condemns anything arising from presumption and supposition. This is evident if one considers the number of exegetes, legal experts, computer scientists, Imams, professors and technicians of all types who were consulted in creating a software program for the Koran and, more generally, for the religious sciences. As is often the case, the work of such a large team involved thousands of hours.

As you will soon see, the summary we are presenting today is ambitious, covering research in nearly every aspect of Mouridism.

The SERVANT OF THE PROPHET: hagiography, status and itinerary in carrying out the mission.

MOURIDISM: its history, development and expansion.
THE HONORABLE FAMILY OF THE CHEIKH: notably the khalifs, their life and works.

The HOLY CITY OF TOUBA: its history, a presentation of its notable events, as well as its infrastructure and development.

The basic cultural values of Mouridism, such as: hagiographic, scientific and moral, literary and artistic values, among others.

The RELIGIOUS SCIENCES encompassed in the works of the Servant of the Prophet (Peace and Salvation upon Him), in the form of educational software and instruction.
The GREAT TOUBA MAGAL, and the fundamental reasons for this celebration.

DOCUMENTATION, including numerous sources from within the Mouride community, as well as information from colonial archives.

Though we have presented only a few of these categories to be covered, it provides a sense of the ultimate content of the site once completed. Moreover, the goal, as envisioned, can not be achieved solely through the resources of HIZBUT TARQIYYAH. For this reason, we are reaching out to everyone – researchers, intellectuals, religious authorities, and those who possess documents of interest to Mouridism – so that each can make a contribution. In what is regarded as a collegial undertaking, contributions of all types, regardless of their origin, will be welcome. In this way, we will be able to construct a comprehensive site suited to the needs of all who consult it.

Completion of the research will depend on the pace of progress and on the prevailing circumstances, and the project will do its best to meet the demand for quality in the ultimate product.

All that remains to be said is, "Get to your keyboards and mice!" We await, honorable cybernauts, your e-mail, your reactions to this discussion forum and your faithfulness to the SERVANT, which is certain to benefit from these, becoming better and more user-friendly.

This welcome message shows us the degree of awareness within the movement, in terms of the new challenges introduced by NICTs. Now, in the wake of the network wars, comes the battle for content. The *Hizbut Tarqiyya* movement, out of concern for educating its disciples, has capitalized on knowledge and issues likely to have value as exportable content.

It already has several hitherto unpublished works to its credit, as well as translations of the work of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba. A repository of literary and audiovisual documentation has existed since the early 80s, providing a theoretical framework for cultural and religious objectives. Included in this are all of the speeches of the sect's khalifs, oral and written stories (with their translations), and the writings of the founder. This assisted greatly in creating the site, though some of the *dahira's* ambitions in regard to content have yet to be realized.

An analysis of the site's content indicates *Hizbut Tarqiyya's* commitment to a universal Islam and to a universalist approach to Mouridism. The site gives a detailed presentation of Mouridism and its role in the "rehabilitation of Islam," in order to elucidate the history and significance of the founding of the brotherhood. Other Muslims are clearly the target for this subject, whose purpose is to proselytize. Likewise, the "Didactic Islam" menu provides prospective converts with Internet instruction on the religious practices of Islam, without reference to the brotherhood. It also describes and explains Islam's major events and gatherings. However, the *Hizbut Tarqiyya* site, above all, deals with the personality of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, who is presented in light of his most-revered role as "the Servant of the Prophet," which is also the name of the site.

The site presents topics that shed light on the brotherhood, through the founder's life story, writings, pilgrimage and beloved city, Touba. Green, the color of Islam, is the background color on the site, which incorporates numerous images of the founder and of other saints of the brotherhood, as well as pictures of its symbolic mosque. Sound is also an important component, with broadcasts, throughout the day, of poems by Cheikh Amadou Bamba, sung by well-known, talented members of the *dahira*. The site also presents, in audio, the latest messages from the khalif. Like other Websites, there is a main menu, sub-menus and hypertext links, which make it possible to refine searches and upload/download texts.

The site also provides an opportunity for dialogue and exchange and makes it possible to remain current on the brotherhood.

In addition to *Hizbut Tarqiyya*, other organizations, lesser known either because they are scattered across the globe or are highly localized, are gaining prominence as a result of their sites.

The Dahira Sahadaatoul Mouridina Touba Lille site

The *Dahira Sahadaatoul Mouridina Touba Lille* is an organization made up primarily of Mouride students from Lille who, in the 1980s, decided to come together and establish a collective where they could live and practice their faith. It has adapted to the Internet revolution by taking advantage of Lille's university environment, which offers, in addition to facilities and networks, a rich and varied store of documents, which it has preserved and made available to disciples for more than a decade.

The site states that its "vocation is to broadcast the work of Khadimou Rassoul." Thus, it engages in active proselytizing, with the goal of disseminating, on a worldwide basis via the Internet, information about Mouridism. This approach has certain implications in terms of content. The site is dominated largely by explanatory texts about the Mourides, as well as information on Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and his work, on the holy city of Touba, on the marabout authorities (whose activities are explained in detail) and on the *dahiras.* Information has been taken from multiple sources (newspapers, books, the Internet) and consists largely of translations from *Hizbut Tarqiyya.*

Education plays an important role in this endeavor. The site is medium-sized, compared to others, and provides links to other Mouride sites – thus demonstrating that the site has no competitive strategy, defining itself, rather, as non-commercial. This approach is consistent with the ultimate objective, which is to disseminate the message of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba. Here, as is true for *Hizbut Tarqiyya,* the creation of a site is a form of religious practice carried out with the hope that the authors will reap eventual rewards. They write: "We have tried to bring our modest and insignificant participation to the work of Khadimou Rassoul; may God approve of this work and make it profitable to all people wishing to gain a small glimpse into Mouridism."

One of the site's goals – as is true of other sites – is to put Mourides in touch with one another via the Internet, providing a forum for debate and exchange of ideas. Thus, it serves as a place to meet and socialize remotely. This socializing is limited to Mouride intellectuals who not only can read and write, but who are frequently online and sufficiently well-informed to engage in a worthwhile exchange of ideas. Mouride sites also serve as places to recruit other Mourides within the *dahiras*, thus benefiting the marabouts.

Thus, the Internet has become a powerful vehicle for spreading the message of Islam, an instrument perhaps more powerful than all of the holy wars. As is true for Mouridism, Muslim communities have a presence and express their individuality on the worldwide web, while also presenting proselytizing speeches. However, beyond its Islamic component, a far more complex identity drives Mouridism on the Internet. The sect is built on diversity – in values and membership – and transforms itself

according to the different environments throughout the world where Mouridism exists.

The Khadimou Rassoul Foundation site

The Khadimou Rassoul foundation is an American organization made up of Mourides and friends whose stated ambition is to set a new milestone in disseminating the message of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba via the Internet. However, it also aspires to be a tool for identifying opportunities for the Mouride community, thereby enabling it to overcome the numerous challenges it faces throughout North America.

The Foundation is located in the District of Columbia and presents itself as a " not-for-profit organization." It explains its Washington location in highly strategic terms: "As the Capital City of the most powerful country of the world and the host of paramount institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and many other very prestigious U.S. and International entities, Washington, D.C. offers a unique channel of visibility and exposure that we really need, as well as the tremendous opportunities, advantages and networking that we can benefit from. As well, as part of the U.S. spirit of charity and the openness of this country, many nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations are flourishing and we will try to join these movements and efforts to 'bridge the gap' between poor and rich, between Africa and the U.S.A., and between all the believers and citizens of the world. Because the very ultimate goal and mission of our Foundation, of our Founder, Khadimou Rassoul, is the empowerment of mankind, the self-help spirit that must thirve [sic] anybody to the pursuit of happiness and the mercy from the Lord."

The Foundation's site, which dates back to 1997, is notable because of its pronounced universalist spirit. It presents an organization that oversees not only religious matters, but social, humanitarian and political issues, as well, in keeping with the global trend toward shared values. Indeed, the personality of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, as well as the meaning of his life and message, are enhanced by these values. The site's exclusive use of English is also a distinguishing feature: all the other such sites are francophone.

The Khadimou Rassoul Foundation site has far fewer texts by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and texts that describe the Touba brotherhood than do other sites. Its objective is clearly less oriented to education, although it promises to make the same presentation in French, Arabic, etc. The Khadimou Rassoul Foundation site is also the only one to present a detailed organizational chart of the Foundation. It emphasizes transparency, by revealing its sponsors and sources of financing, and by publishing its license.

This movement, though it is Mouride in origin, has a strong secularizing orientation. Engaged more in promotion than in disseminating a religious message, it sets forth a plan to link Mouridism and integral development.

"The Foundation Khadimou Rassoul-North America is aimed at supporting the social and economic empowerment of the rural masses in Senegal and is pursuing these specific objectives:

-to eradicate illiteracy;
-to provide social and technical assistance in terms of development's project;
-to promote self-sufficiency in agriculture;
-to rehabilitate and to protect the natural and ecosystems resources from systematic destruction;
-to increase and improve the water supplies systems;
-to improve the health care system;
-to enhance women's status in urban areas and to sensitize people to gender issues in the country and reduce its gap [sic], mostly among the children, in terms of literacy and health care;
-to develop information systems and to facilitate the flows of information and to implement exchanges programs between the rural masses and the rest of the world;
-to alleviate poverty and help to get definitely away from hunger;
-to develop the entrepreneurship initiatives and to foster the "informal sector" insertion in the economic process;
-to create and to develop youth's programs, in terms of training.

This corporation is organized exclusively for the purposes as specified in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code."

Diawartoul-lah: An example of a marabout site

Creating a website has become a component of Mouride religious practice. *Dahiras*, foundations and, increasingly, individuals within the brotherhood are committed to creating online content that is well conceived and designed to sell the image of the brotherhood, giving it global visibility.

Today, marabouts understand the new challenges posed by the Internet, and are adapting accordingly. Thus, for a Mouride marabout, the creation of a Website can take on many meanings.

A marabout is a saint of the brotherhood who owes his status to his biological link to Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba or to a saint designated by the founder during his lifetime. His individual ancestry, as compared to that of other marabouts, determines his position as heir to the lineage of saints. His duty includes enhancing their image, both within and outside the brotherhood. The organizing of pilgrimages linked to the memory of the sect's major saints provides an opportunity for most of the lineages to be seen and heard.

A website can be an excellent showcase for its author to set forth his lineage. Many young marabouts appear to have understood this, having studied at university or lived

abroad and, therefore, appreciated the Internet's potential. A case in point is Serigne Abdoul Aziz Bara Mbacké (31 years old), born, as his name indicates, to the family of Serigne Bara Mbacké, son of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba. His own photo is the first image that appears on the site – indicative, perhaps, of his concern for personal promotion. It is presented, however, as a product of the work of Diawartoul-lah, which, as the site explains, is "an organization founded in Senegal in 1991 by Serigne Abdoul Aziz Mbacké, at the age of 22. It is represented all over the world and in Senegal – particularly in the regions of Louga, Kébémer, Dakar, and Saint-Louis. There are thousands of members, 4500 people around the world, many of whom are in Germany and in Italy, where every year, on December 24th, a Magal is held in Brescia." [...] " It is as a result of the mobilization of the faithful of this organization that we have been able to create this site, which organizes ceremonies for each Muslim holiday – Korite, Tabaski, etc. On these occasions, thousands of faithful come to Hamo 6 to pray behind Serigne Abdoul Aziz. All of the members gather weekly for a local meeting to receive instructions from the marabout."

The marabout site also has an educational component, stating that it aims to "enable young people to receive the teachings of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba and prepare for the 21st century in every area: economic, social, and political."

In examining the site, the general impression is that the desire for personal promotion and promotion of the *dahira* predominate over that of disseminating the message of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, as is the objective of other sites. The following statement is unique to this site: "To anyone who would like to join, send us an e-mail. Do not hesitate to contact us if you are sympathetic or if you would like to be a member. All are welcome."

Clearly, Marabout sites have less opportunity to grow quickly than do the *dahira* sites and sites of Mouride organizations. While there is an increasing number of well-educated, well-informed marabouts, most are incapable of appreciating the stakes involved, much less the need to invest in developing the sites. Moreover, there is the issue of content. While a site can be created without great expense, it is more difficult to insert an appropriate text in a foreign language. Thus, it is understandable that, even when a marabout sponsors the site, it is the disciples who organize themselves to bring the project to fruition.

Conclusion

Today's widespread system of exchange, which is interactive and instantaneous, brings "northerners – the hypermediatized United States, Europe and Japan, interconnected in complex networks" – face to face with southerners – "the Africa of villages and mushroom cities where – though they have partially escaped the organized structuring of spaces and of technical networks – social networks play a determining role."[45]

[45] Annie Chéneau-Loquay, 2000 - Quelle insertion de l'Afrique dans les réseaux mondiaux ? Une approche géographique. In *Enjeux des Technologies de la communication en Afrique*, Paris, Karthala-Regards.

With their mass presence and their increasingly transcendent nature, ICTs herald a new revolution – a revolution that seems – as did the industrial revolution – to exclude some and favor others. However, this Manichean distinction between two categories does not appear to be today's functional paradigm. NICTs have attracted all generations, and even the most backward can easily catch up. In today's environment, the transfer of technology is also made easier by increased mobility and by the presence of networks that are more diverse and have denser coverage. Africa now shares the same history as the rest of the world. Despite its lack of resources, it is gradually integrating networks and adapting its resources and its identity to this new meeting space.

The Mouride brotherhood is one of the symbolic groups and standard-bearers of this change. Having become a migrant socio-religious movement, it is now national in scope, covering both rural and urban areas. At the same time, it is international, filling in the gaps of what is regarded as a globalizing and dominating world economy. Mourides have adopted a participatory approach, riding the wave of globalization. The brotherhood " establishes openings in the transnational culture, slips in, and negotiates its part, with underground business rules and practices, imprinting it with new points of inflection, structuring it adapt to new actors, new operations, and original and flexible forms of accumulation."[46] However, within this approach is a movement to shut away the symbols, out of a contradictory, but valid concern for a recentering of spirituality and of the sacred, in order to disseminate it more effectively.

Through this mechanism, the brotherhood has been able to reconcile its transnational reality – which requires a territory as broad and diffuse as the Mourides themselves, beyond their most favored territory – with a unifying approach, which over the course of time has translated itself into the urbanization of Touba, place of oneness and return. Globalization, therefore, is not synonymous -- contrary to what some believe -- with a loss of place and identity.

NICTs are, on the one hand, an instrument for integrating the greater city of Touba with the rest of the country and, on the other, a means of gaining a broader international presence – one element in the quest for autonomy. The importance of NICTs in the Mouride capital and within the brotherhood make them a barometer of social change in Senegal. Moreover, these technologies facilitate understanding of a cultural plan that is both endogenous and universalist.

Today's world has seen an explosion in the service economy. In this regard, Africa, in general, seems even more poorly positioned than it was for the industrial economy. However, the NICT revolution provides the opportunity to break away, a priori, from a global inequality. This is particularly true in light of the steadily diminishing cost of NICTs, occurring precisely at a time when their strategic and social importance in Senegal is growing.

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[46] Diouf M, 2000 – Commerce et cosmopolitisme. Le cas des diasporas mourides du Sénégal. *Bulletin du Codesria 1*, 2000, p.20.

In the globalized world now taking shape, having access to lines and networks is equivalent to having access to ideas; and having access to ideas is equivalent to having access to power. NICTs, which are gaining ground in Senegal, broaden perspectives, widen horizons, awaken consciousness, provide new opportunities for stronger relationships and make distance unimportant. They have the potential to allow one to liberate oneself from one's body, one's race, one's nationality and one's personality, and to communicate as pure spirits. However, the Mourides have adopted them in a unique manner, incorporating them in their operations and in promoting their religious message. Photography, radio, television, telephone and the Internet transmit symbols by sound and image throughout the world, making it possible to construct and broadcast – among themselves and beyond – the codes of a socio-religious identity that has freed itself of its complexes and demands recognition.

In this regard, two major Mouride sub-groups are gaining greatly from these developments. They are made up of a corps of merchants whose resources are partly responsible for supporting the marabout class and who have adopted NICTs -- particularly the telephone but, increasingly, information technology and the Internet – to enhance their activities.

Such groups, and their activities, continue to grow as a function of their location and size. The world of information and communications plays a role, not only in making them aware of their strength, but also in diversifying their sources of revenue. The *nouveaux riches* of these groups are those who have profited from the boom in cell phones and in imported electronics and computer products.

The other sub-group that is gaining new life from internationalization and from the adoption of NICTs consists of *dahiras,* which are now developing a transnational and universalist vision. They have grasped the challenge of disseminating Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's message, in a world of deeply held beliefs, where each contributes his knowledge. According to one Internet proverb, "On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog." All that matters is what we put online. After conquests on the rural, urban and international fronts, the Internet has become the new, promising territory – one from which they can draw profit, while at the same time disseminating their ideology and practices.

In this respect, scientific output is reinterpreted to provide content for sites aimed at developing links among the faithful. The Mourides' adoption of NICTs from every walk of life helps make Touba their "ideal" city, their pilgrimage city-of-the-dead, their market city, a telecommunications pole that is increasingly influencing national and international forces. Touba is contributing to a reexamination of notions of boundaries and urban life, whose meaning has changed – to the point that they have lost their reality. The city's relative youth and that of NICTs combine well, making the city and its image a point of reference.

The strength of the Mourides consists not only in their ability to adapt abroad, but also in their capacity to recenter themselves, symbolically and actually, on the holy site of Touba, navigating the interplay between the two spheres to enhance and legitimize a sort of nomadic life of the faithful. A process of re-territorialization and reconstruction by NICTs is also establishing new group limits and embellishing, symbolically and concretely, the symbol that is Touba.

This new territory, however, is different from the ones conquered previously, in that it is more virtual than real and involves a worldwide network positioned according to content. Each era has its information and communications tools and technologies. Messengers on foot or on horseback going between the *daaras,* messages from the marabouts broadcast over radio and television, the telephone, Internet sites – all of these are tools that have assisted in structuring and disseminating the sect's teachings and identity. Every territorial conquest thus reconstitutes the brotherhood's identity.

These, however, are values and symbols built or consolidated in other territories – which are then reinvested in the new one. The Mouride's unshakeable faith in success is supported by the belief in salvation, which within the brotherhood, is linked to work that – through the marabouts, as intermediaries – serves the group. This is at the root of their ability to lend their energies to new territories.

Touba is a constructed memory, one component in the territory of the Mourides. Will the sacredness and the symbol (broadcast to far off places via NICTs) and international migration lose their strength with the widening and increasingly virtual nature of the territory?

The brotherhood has always managed to muster the energy required to manage its enterprises. It has only begun, however, to understand the challenges and opportunities that NICTs represent. In this sense, Mouride society appears to be representative of a certain Senegalese society that is more advanced than the State, which is losing its role as a catalyst and is forced to maneuver in order to keep up and maintain a presence.

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