Disaggregating the Transnational Community

Senegalese migrants on the coast of Emilia-Romagna

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Many migrants, it is argued, now tend to live their lives simultaneously across different nation-states being both "here" and "there", crossing geographical and political boundaries and there have been numerous attempts, from different theoretical standpoints, to make sense of what seems to be a new mode of migration. "Transnationalism" and "transmigration" are the terms commonly used to contextualise and define such migrants' cultural, economic, political and social experience (Rouse 1991; Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Basch et al. 1994; Kearney 1995). Some scepticism has been expressed about the newness of the phenomenon of transnationalism. Grillo notes that, 'Anyone reading the recent literature on transnational migration against a background knowledge of work on international migration in different parts of the world over the last 35 years would be thought odd if they did not experience a sense of déjà vù' (1998: 16, cfr. Amit-Talai 1998) Certainly, the literature on what was called "circular" or "circulatory" labour migration in Sub-Saharan Africa during and after the colonial period dealt extensively with what would now be called "transmigration". Members of the Manchester School such as Mitchell and Epstein had focused on family and friendship networks and on the variety of ways these are maintained and deployed in the new urban centres of the Copperbelt. In that earlier period, the focus was on political economy, on the circuits of labour migration, the ideology of kinship as background to the migration process, and on the significance of urban ethnicity. These are pioneering accounts, which have considerable significance for the contemporary anthropology of migration. Similarly, numerous recent and less recent studies on migrants in several countries have discussed transnational practices without actually naming them as such.

Nevertheless, Vertovec believes that although 'transnationalism (as long distance networks) certainly preceded the nation… today these networks function intensively and in real time while being spread around the world' (1999a: 447). Guarnizo and Smith (1998: 4) contend that 'although not entirely new', for reasons which include globalisation, technological change, and processes of decolonization, transnationalism has 'reached particular intensity at a global scale at the end of the twentieth century'; 'Intermittent spatial mobility, dense social ties, and intense exchanges fostered by transmigrants across national borders have indeed reached unprecedented levels' (p. 11). In similar vein, Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt argue that what distinguishes new transnational migrants are the 'high intensity of exchanges, the new modes of transacting, and the multiplication of activities' they sustain across borders (1999: 219). Furthermore, the approach via transnationalism, if not as novel as is sometimes claimed, represents a positive step in the study of migration, especially when compared to past perspectives that focused on assimilation and acculturation, avoiding any serious consideration of migrants' socio-cultural backgrounds, and connections to the context of origin.

Although sharing with other researchers a focus on actors, their everyday experiences and social relations, and fully concurring with critiques of bounded concepts of culture and identity, I nevertheless find some of the theoretical assumptions underlying discussions of transnationalism unsatisfactory. The diverse degree of migrants' integration and exclusion, their access to political and social domains, their economic and legal status within both the country of residence and that of origin are crucial arenas that determine very different kinds of transnational strategies (Grillo Riccio and Salih 2000).

Although migration from Senegal is a much studied phenomenon, little has been said about how well it fits with a transnational perspective on migration. Yet, if as Carmon suggests, 'the world has a new type of migrant' (Carmon 1997, 25), the 'transmigrant'

(Basch et al. 1994), the Senegalese, and the Wolof in particular, provide an excellent illustration of the characteristics of this migratory mode. In this paper I will show that Senegalese transnational experiences and trajectories are profoundly anchored in the material, legal and cultural constraints and possibilities that grow out of the local and national places migrants inhabit, and consequently sending and receiving contexts shape migrants' transnational experiences and projects in many different ways. The nature and quality of migrants' movements and practices needs to be understood in the light of the nature and quality of their membership in the various contexts. I would like to emphasise the importance of disaggregating the so-called "transnational community." My purpose is not to argue against this category as such, but to urge the importance of recognising and analysing the internal tensions characterising these communities and the plurality of trajectories emerging from their transnational spaces. For instance, I will show the variability of social networks used by my informants according to different situations. I argue that transnationalism constitutes a field of contrasting and complex effects. It is not a system of reified transnational networks but rather a dynamic process of constant networking which encompasses a wide range of different and situationally varied practices within transnational spaces.

Senegalese emigrate mainly for economic reasons and in particular because of the crisis of the traditional agricultural system, which produced the following historical pattern: first, internal, rural-urban, migration in Senegal, then internal migration within West Africa, then emigration to Europe (mainly France), next internal migration within Europe (from France to Italy) and finally a change of direction of emigration from Senegal, with migrants going directly to Italy. The early Senegalese emigration to Europe concerned mainly *Toucouleur, Serere* and *Soninké*, this last ethnic group the most numerous in France (Timera 1996). Most of the Senegalese migrants in Italy in the 1980s and 1990s are *Wolof*, and come mainly from the north-western regions of Senegal. Senegalese migration to Italy began in the 1980s with migrants coming initially from France and later directly from Senegal. 1989 was the year of Senegalese immigration and of Senegalese internal migration within Italy. Many Senegalese, who had previously worked in the south began moving to the richer, more industrialised north. This involved seasonal migration towards Emilia Romagna, aiming not so much at gaining employment in the industrial sector as at entering the profitable market for street selling on the tourist coast. In 1996 Senegalese immigrants regularly resident in Italy were mainly men (30,229) migrating as individuals, following the paths shaped by migratory chains, and highly mobile within Italian territory. The proportion of women (5%) has been growing slowly through family reunions, though it is much lower than in other immigrant communities.

There is, however, considerable diversity among migrants which derives from the timing and trajectory of their migration. Sociological ideal types of the kind frequently found in the Italian literature, may help with a preliminary understanding of Senegalese and Moroccans in Italy, but they should not be reified. Some Italian sociologists, for example, are puzzled by the seeming ambivalence of a Senegalese community which, on the one hand, has successfully entered the receiving society (as exemplified by the growth of Senegalese associations, by their involvement in trade unions, and by novels written by Senegalese migrants), but on the other hand, shows itself to be a self-sufficient, even closed community, interacting only occasionally with the receiving context (Marchetti 1994). Indeed, all studies of Senegalese stress a very strong sense of solidarity and a cohesive, group-centric organisation (e.g. Campus, Mottura and Perrone 1992, Schmidt Friedberg 1994). Such a mode of organisation is believed to provide newcomers and job-

seekers with advice and financial help. This communitarian lifestyle is also found within households ruled by hierarchical and age criteria, and the fair distribution of duties.

This ambivalence between entering the receiving society and closure, however, reflects a complex dialectic between different trajectories and strategies within the community. The Senegalese migrant who is integrated within a trade union, sometimes acts as associational spokesperson of the community who may be found in a school telling his story, is different from the trader-wholesaler, who is well-integrated within a transnational trading space, but living at the margins of, or even excluded from, the receiving society. Here again, this example should not be taken as an alternative typology. Rather than trying to provide another set of categorical types, we would emphasise the fluidity of such types, which can represent different stages in the migration process and immigrants' experiences, as well as different strategies and life orientations. Although the discourse and practice of solidarity, which forms part of Senegalese self-representation, is the more dominant and apparent, it coexists with a less collectivist, albeit at times hidden, narrative of autonomy and individuality. The present paper will focus on the Senegalese experience of transnationalism and incorporation in the Italian society. First, I will take into account the view from the context of origin, then that from the context of migration; finally, I will conclude by stressing the multiple and processual nature of Senegalese transnational formations and the ambivalence characterising the experiences of Senegalese transmigrants.

A view from the context of origin

In this section, after some historical background, I will focus on specific sending contexts: the villages and what I call the post-colonial towns (once flourishing and now surviving thanks to emigration), the holy city of Touba, which directly and indirectly represents the centre of Senegalese Mouride transnational migration, Dakar and its markets, which are important sending contexts, but also arenas of investment for migrants. Then, I will discuss different typologies of emigrants leaving for Europe and conclude with a summary.

Historical background: 'Saints and Politicians' (Cruise O'Brien, 1975)

Although Senegal was a 'quite remarkable success story' thirty years ago (Gellar 1982), especially if compared with the experience of other African states, it now finds itself in a precarious economic and social situation. Since the 1960s there has been a rapid increase in population. From three million in 1960, it reached five million in 1976 and seven million in 1988. The Dakar region registered the highest growth rate of 4% per annum. The youthfulness of the population has socio-economic implications such as the large size of the dependent population (Mbodji, Mané and Badiane 1993). Like many African countries within the contemporary globalized economy, Senegal is in a state of economic crisis and consequently under the control of the IMF, whilst the prospect of recovery remains distant. As a result of drought (1968 onwards) and farmer disaffection, production is irregular, often escapes the official marketing network, and large numbers of people abandon their land producing a rural exodus (A.B. Diop 1992; Mbodji, Mané and Badiane 1993).

Numerous scholars have emphasised the patrimonial and clientelist character of Senegal's politics. Since independence in 1960, the intervention of the Senegalese state has been promoted through local groups and communities equipped with local and religious leaders (*marabouts*), who have acted as brokers between state and society (Coulon and Cruise O'Brien 1989; Diouf 1993). 'Sufism (mediation; mysticism) is the Senegalese mode of Islamic devotion. More precisely, to be a Muslim in Senegal is almost automatically to be affiliated to a Sufi order (*tariqa*: "the way") or brotherhood' (Cruise O'Brien 1983: 122). *Mouridiyya* is one of the four main Sufi syncretic brotherhoods in Senegal and was founded in the 1880s by Amadou Bamba, who 'drew followers from many levels of society, mostly artisans, traders, and slaves, who more than other members of the community had something to gain from the Mouride doctrine of hard work as the way of salvation' (Ebin 1996, 96). The brotherhood today has its capital at Touba, the site of Amadou Bamba's revelation, where Mourides have constructed the largest mosque in sub-Saharan Africa. The highest office in the brotherhood is held by the Kalifa-General, who is the eldest surviving son of Amadou Bamba (Sy 1969).

During the colonial period, although the French initially distrusted Muslim brotherhoods as a threat to their hegemony (Bamba was exiled, for instance, Ba 1982), they eventually came to rely on their support for control of the peasant masses. When Senegalese politicians began to organise the nationalist movement after World War II, they recognised the importance of Muslim leaders, especially in the countryside, and vied with each other to gain their support. Since independence in 1960, the *marabouts*' support has been essential for the government's stability (Behrman 1977; Cruise O'Brien 1971, 1975, 1983; Copans 1980; Coulon 1981; Diouf 1993). The Islam of the brotherhoods is also a 'structure of aid and support, material as well as spiritual for destitute peasants, urban dwellers in distress, and merchants or businessmen' (Coulon and Cruise O'Brien 1989: 157). However, religion is not a homogeneous phenomenon in Senegal and is rather characterised by different cleavages. An example is provided by the conflict between the young disciples of different brotherhoods (Diop and Diouf 1990). These cleavages, together with ethnic, caste (although less relevant nowadays) and class divides, shape a complex society from which differing migratory trajectories have developed at different stages.

In addition to migration within Africa (Bredeloup 1995; Robin 1996), Senegalese emigration to Europe started in the colonial period with the French enrolment of *Tirailleurs* at the end of nineteenth century and during World War I (Fall 1986). After the French colonial West African states achieved independence (1962), there was a growing mass migration attracted by the European economic boom of the 1960s. In the mid 1980s, the downsizing and restructuring of European enterprises badly affected Senegalese workers in France, while a new type of migration developed, characterised by familial or individual initiatives, a widening variety of destinations, and access to the trading sector (Robin 1996). Nowadays, with the crisis of the Groundnut Basin, Senegalese young people from the Baol, Djambour, Cayor, Sine and Dakar leave for new receiving countries such as Spain, the USA and especially Italy and, through a circulatory movement, shape new transnational spaces.

Emigration from villages and postcolonial towns

Since drought is a key reason for internal migration and emigration, one important sending context is that of the rural village. Babacar, who comes from a village near Diourbel in the Baol, told me that he left a place, *'where if someone does not emigrate, it is because he has no legs to do it'*. Many young Senegalese feel they have no other choice as the withdrawal of government involvement from the farming sector and its high prices and taxes make it very difficult to earn a living in the countryside. Furthermore, in the words of Mor, a development worker expressing his worries about the rural exodus: *'desertification can be faced somehow, but if everybody escapes it becomes unstoppable; the rural world is emptying itself and this makes us even more dependent on others.'*

Assane, a widely acknowledged expert on rural development, who talked with me about the migratory phenomenon within the rural context, underlined the importance of the return of migrants too, especially when it is characterised by ostentation - this plays on the imagination of the people staying at home and, in so doing, forms a symbolic push factor underlying the emigration from rural Senegal. He gave a striking example of a new house built in the middle of nowhere in the countryside yet having two floors, like the *Toubab's* in Europe (*Toubab* means "European", Bruzzone 1996). Although, as Watson wrote in 1977, 'emigrant communities almost invariably experience a housing boom as returnees invest their savings in new dwellings' (Watson 1977: 4; see also Ballard 1987; Olwig 1997), in this case I noticed myself the importance attached to houses of two or even three floors. They are becoming a status symbol and even a symbol of identity. Many migrants, especially of the first waves, belonged to the low castes and classes. But if successful they could return with enough money to show off and hold economic as well as symbolic power. Money gives the low caste returnee the power of renegotiation in the local society. Yet, many among these people still cannot say that they come from the Fall family (as an example) of the ancient kingdom of Cayor. They use other signs of identity. For example, an informant coming back from France introduced himself to the person sitting next to him on the plane who replied: *'My name is Mamadou Lo, and I have built a house with three floors.'* My informant found this striking and assured me that this is a peculiarly new phenomenon.

The same can be said about transnational organisations of migrants abroad competing for the construction of public services at home. One can see a well with a sign showing that it was built by migrants in Italy and a communal house in the centre of a village built with the contribution of migrants in France. *'Associations however do not produce development, they rather invest in mainly infrastructural work; sometimes not functional but very visible with the label'*, said Assane. However, improving the services and infrastructure of one's locality of origin enhances one's status and may contribute to structural features indirectly conducive of development (Quiminal 1991; Goldring 1998). We will appreciate this aspect better by looking at the complexity of another sending context: the postcolonial town.

Kebemer is a small town in the region of Louga (ancient Cayor), that is a typical sending context for emigration to Italy, where each house has a member of the family who has emigrated. One immediately appreciates the investments of emigrants, such as new houses and shops (food, spare parts, beauty products, clothes, *Télécentres*, bakeries) managed by emigrants' wives or friends, who are responsible for the subsistence of the family. Waiting to be able to build a new house, migrants shape transnational strategies, such as the leather trade through contacts with the local butcher and other good contacts with leather firms in Italy (especially Tuscany; Mansour Tall, personal communication).

Other products very much in demand are tiles and bricks for construction projects. The burgeoning house building industry has also given an impetus to new import activities, such as the trade in domestic appliances. After the groundnut crisis, local traders became the link between the migrant and his family. Through loans of initial capital for emigrating, the local trader ensured that remittances came directly to his hands and through him to the migrant's family and sometimes to the builders of the house. In other words, playing the role of an informal bank, the trader (sometimes a former migrant) secured the regular sending of money to the family, to the house builder and to the shop. He is a pivotal character who reinforces all the points of the network whilst investing for himself.

Migrants' investments also change the landscape of the town. For instance, the main junction becomes a trading centre where one finds different shops (*boutiques*), the bakery, founded by three migrants in Italy, the Shell petrol station, opened thanks to other migrants. Another migrant has established a laundry in Dakar made with Italian materials. The management of containers to transport other people's products is becoming an important service activity in itself. All these trading activities are not without difficulties: normally they are run by people without other qualifications and time and experience are needed, so they are activities run by older generations of migrants. Young people still prefer to invest in weddings. A wedding is the other important sign of success. It means settlement. As a member of the local council said, *'The migrant does not have a precise global projec , he is an adventurer ... only the signs of success can be aimed at as a general goal.'* The overall economic success of migration and the development of a culture of migration (Gardner 1995) produces shifts in stereotypes too. For instance, *'a district full of migrants was considered a ghetto but now their inhabitants are seen as idols and heroes.'* As we will see, the constructs of the emigrant are more ambivalent: he (they are mainly men) can be viewed as a hero, but also as a trickster. However, what I want to stress at this point is that a mixture of village friendships and kinship linkages shape the town sending context of the migratory 'circuit' (Rouse 1991) through which the migrant manages activities abroad. Meanwhile, members of the family, friends, or even the trader who lent the money, manage the shop at home. When the migrant returns he starts managing the shop for himself. Religious adherence is not the main factor in the migratory circuit here as it is for the Mourides in Touba.

Touba and Mouridism.

The Mouride order historically showed an impressive institutional capacity for transforming and adapting to socio-economic change (Ebin 1996; Diagne 1993). The phenomenon of Mouridism has been so central to many scholars' research, that Bayart suggests it is to political science what the Rift Valley is to geomorphology (1989, quoted in Perry 1997: 257). No synthesis of such well-documented research is attempted here (see Riccio 1999a), rather I will focus on two key features that emerged from my own fieldwork, and which help explain some aspects of Senegalese transmigration in Europe: the core relationship between *marabouts* and disciples and the holy city of Touba as a central pole of transnational social formations. The core of Mouride morality and organisation (A.B. Diop 1981 and Copans 1980 would call it ideology) is represented by the relationship between the *marabout* or *Serin* (the saint and guide, 'the one who wants') and the *Talibe* (disciple). Although it is an asymmetric relation, a kind of reciprocity must be stressed: the former is a spiritual guide that guarantees grace (*baraka*, see Geertz 1968, Gellner 1981, and especially Gilsenan 1982), and through his economic and political

power also provides the latter with help on practical matters; the *talibe* obeys and works for the *marabout* and his service is considered as prayer (A.B. Diop 1981; Cruise O'Brien 1971).

For a migrant, the blessing of the *marabout* is fundamentally important to the success of his enterprise. This is why every member of the brotherhood tends to be dedicated to his *marabout*, and has to surprise him with special effects and unforeseeable gifts (Cruise O'Brien 1975). According to an informant, an outsider can sometimes find certain behaviour very irrational. For instance, an emigrant Mouride bought an expensive car for the Kalif of Touba. Meanwhile he *'exploited the solidarity of his family each time he came back to Senegal, relying on the use of his brother's car for instance, without ever giving any remittance when he was abroad; only a Mouride is able to do something like this.'* What shocked my informant was the superiority of the bond with the brotherhood and the *marabout* over the bond of the family. However, within Mouride morality such an action could be perfectly rational and also indirectly produce positive effects toward the family by making the migrant very respectable and opening many opportunities for business. However, talking about the relationship between *marabout* and disciple in Mouridism, another of my informants cautiously stressed that, *'talibes are not obliged to give money to their marabouts, everything is voluntary. If there is a promise from the talibe then it is the value of your word that counts, it is the fact that you do not want to lose face that links you more tightly to your marabout.'* Thus, one should consider the *marabout*-disciple relationship a dialectical one. On the basis of my fieldwork, I tend to agree with Villalon who argues that 'the high degree of stability in the attachment of individuals to specific *marabouts* or to an order has not been translated into any significant degree of rigidity in these relationships' (Villalon 1995: 115).

Caution is needed also in approaching Mouridism's link with emigration. There are anecdotes of *marabouts* who played the role of *"passeur"* for some followers: *'Many people obtain their visa through their marabouts who later exploit part of their gain.'* Yet, these cases should not lead us to generalise; a direct involvement of the Mouride brotherhood in organising emigration has been refuted by a study (Schmidt di Friedberg 1994), which stresses more the general importance of a culture of work and migration through identification with the exiled founder in providing migrants with strong bonds for networking and reciprocal help. Indeed, a strong mythical identification with the founding saint seems to be shared by Mourides disciples. However, this strong mythical identification does not imply a blind irrational support for all the brotherhood's *marabouts* in Senegal and abroad. We may summarise, drawing on the work of Ebin, that there exist at least two kinds of ties: the vertical ties (*marabout-talibe*) by which the *marabouts* are actively involved in the community, providing a focus for their followers' spiritual lives and helping them considerably in their occupations; the horizontal ties (inter Mouride members) by which reciprocal solidarity is ensured and the base for the successful establishment of transnational networks is formed (Ebin 1996).

Together with and connected to these horizontal and vertical Mouride ties, Touba, the sacred capital of the order, which symbolises Bamba on earth (Amadou Bamba is often called Serin Touba by Mourides), plays a key role in shaping Mouride transnational social formations. 'Touba "commands" Mourides, wherever they may be' (Ross 1995, 233) and is a very important sending context for migration towards Italy since 70% of emigrants go there (Lallou, personal communication). It is a sending context, but also a receiving context of an international as well as an internal flux of people and investments.

However, 'Touba cannot be described as a village that somehow grew into a city' (Ross 1995, 231). From the beginning plans were drawn up under the supervision of its founder (Sy 1969) and its expansion was the product of the various Kalifs' actions (Ross 1995 and Gueye 1997 for further description). Until the end of the 1960s Touba was not very populous. In 1973 the effects of drought and the *Ndiguel* (order, decree) of the Kalifa-General Abdul Ahat, requiring that all Mourides had to have a house in Touba as a guarantee for the afterlife (Coulon 1981), influenced its urbanisation. Furthermore, access to land and water stands in contrast to the situation prevailing in other urban centres. Bara Lo, an old blacksmith who was born and has always lived in Touba, commented: '*Here you find much lower prices than in Dakar. Here we do not pay for water either.*' Yet, with drought and unemployment at the beginning of the eighties international emigration developed. This is how Bara Lo described the changes:

> *Touba is a peculiar place, it is above all a holy city and must be an example for the rest of the world. It is the Mecca of West Africa, all good things must converge on Touba, this explains the luck of Touba. Migration is good. Migrants are in contact with other people: enlargement of the field of knowledge and experience. You see this in the urbanisation of Touba, old houses are different from new houses which are similar to the European ones. Satellites are another sign. Touba's changes have been very fast: every five years there are new districts founded by people from Baol but also from other regions.*

Touba is becoming the second city of Senegal and, overall, a big economic and financial centre. '*Touba is like Milan, it is not the administrative capital but it will become the economic capital. All the migrants are investing in Touba, everyone wants to buy a house in Touba.*' During the Magal (the annual celebration of the Mouride brotherhood held in Touba, see Coulon 1999) every Mouride comes to Touba full of gifts to obtain the blessing of the *marabout*.

Furthermore, Touba's large market, Okass, provided and still provides many advantages for traders: '*they do not pay taxes, this is why they find it such an extraordinary situation for their business*', said Lo. During my fieldwork I could follow Thierno, the son of a village chief, who participates in all the stages of transnational trade from Ravenna to Touba: he buys products in Italy, comes back to Senegal following the container, and he himself sells all the products until they run out. When we met, he was engaged in his own import-export activities and had sold almost all his products: hi-fi, sewing machines, cassette shelves, washing machines. Talking about his personal activities, Thierno says: '*It is not easy, there are many unpredictable factors. For instance, I wanted to exploit the occasion of the Magal to sell out all the products quickly, but the container arrived late and things went much slower.*' Such difficulties show some contradictions within transnational spaces which manifest less smooth and more ambivalent characteristics than may be found in the more celebratory versions of the literature on transnationalism.

However, Mourides (like Touba), are less homogeneous than is often portrayed. The internal competition within the M'Backé family, for instance, informs and is embedded in the urban organisation of Touba. Sometimes some disciples' popular beliefs are criticised and considered unorthodox by intellectuals like the *jeunes Mourides*, providing an example of how the "unquestionable" power of the M'Backé family is questioned by some intellectual elites (Cruise O'Brien 1988). In addition to the organisation within its

headquarters, one may appreciate the Mouride expansionist movement and the flexibility of organisational power by considering Mourides urbanisation.

Dakar: immigration, emigration and trade.

Dakar and its suburb Pikine contain almost a fifth of the total population of Senegal and close to half of the urban population (Antoine and Diop eds. 1995). Immigrants in Dakar often find a better *insertion* than inhabitants, because of the value of informal and religious networks in accessing housing and the labour market (Fall 1995). The Mouride brotherhood - at first a purely rural organisation - has spread to Senegalese towns, especially since independence. Its traditional agrarian structure, the *daara*, in charge of the 'Wednesday field' cultivated for the *marabout*'s benefit (Cruise O'Brien 1971; Copans 1980; Coulon 1981), could not be successfully transplanted into the urban context. Instead of the religious, economic and residential unity of the Mouride villages, the city was characterised by a non-agricultural economy, a diversity of ethnic origins and social statuses, and a spatial dispersion of the faithful, who could no longer provide their leaders with gifts. The *dahira* developed as an adaptive answer to these problems: in the new urban setting, it has taken over the functions of the rural *daara*, assuming the same aims especially in terms of the *marabout-talibe* relationship (M.C. Diop 1981). The *dahira* means a local 'cell' (Villalon 1995), 'circle' (Carter 1997) or organisational unit of a Senegalese brotherhood (the Tidianes followed the example of the Mourides), or of the followers of a specific *marabout*. *Daara* in general refers to a Koranic school or the house of a *marabout*, but among the Mourides was also used for an agricultural community of young men in the service of the *marabout*.

The 1960s were years of consolidation for the Mouride community in the capital, and the principal open-air market has progressively been 'conquered' by Mouride tradesmen (Cruise O'Brien 1988: 139). For instance, Sandaga is controlled by Mourides and like Touba is a major point for the informal activities of import-export and of departure of people towards Europe and the USA (Ebin 1992). Once I had arrived in the market I made the acquaintance of Abdou Diop, who like many of his colleagues was inviting people to see his products, *'only for the pleasure of your eyes'*. He lived for three years in Italy (he shows the African Club card of Turin), and there he learned Italian very well. At the beginning he was street peddling and an Italian advised him to learn the language. He showed me different material and clothes shops and the central warehouse, where many people work sewing and transforming Senegalese textiles (some are also made in Asia) according to tourist and western taste (*Toubab*-oriented) into articles such as dungarees, bags and T-shirts. The articles include some patchwork ones that almost caricature this tendency. His brother went to Germany and speaks German and another brother speaks English. All of them learned to speak these languages by migrating to Europe and now they capitalise on it by guiding tourists into their shops and warehouse. In Sandaga I also met Malick who works and lives in Italy. He was in Dakar only for a couple of weeks, just long enough to see his parents and to do a little business. First of all he filled his brother's small shop, situated at the main junction of Sandaga, with all sorts of fashionable and trendy clothes bought in Italy; meanwhile he purchased hundreds of audio-tapes to play music on party nights in Italy, also a viable business.

Another typical sending context is the *village artisanale* (Salem 1981), where another stage of Mouride commercial migration started. It is the centre of *Laobé* carvers who produce African art objects such as masks, beads, bags and carving of all sorts, acting as a

springboard for commercial migration to Europe. In other words, it is a pole of the commercial system using as its framework the structures and practices of the Mouride Brotherhood, the numerous *dahira*s born abroad (Diop 1985; Carter 1997; see also next section). Thus, there is an historical continuum linking the experience of Mouride urbanisation and Mouride transnational social formations. The Senegalese case provides a less reactive example of transnationalism than that theorised by other scholars, who argue that the changing conditions of global capitalism and the consequent vulnerability has increased the likelihood that migrants would construct a transnational existence (Glick Schiller Basch and Szanton Blanc 1992). Although I can share this argument, I have the impression that the development of transnationalism is assumed to be reactive. The Senegalese trade diasporas are not, however, simply the fruit of a reaction to global capitalism or western racism, but also an extension of organisational solutions developed through the urbanisation process within Senegal.

Modou modou: heroes or tricksters?

The *modou modou* is the general image of the migrant (every migrant could be thought of this way), but is more specifically one applied to migrants from Diourbel, Kebemer and Touba. According to some informants, if we want to picture an ideal type we may think of an illiterate who knows trading well, who is very good at saving and who invests in glamorous things when he is back in Senegal. Oumar says of the typical *modou modou*: *'He is interested in earning money, building big houses, marrying the most beautiful girls, driving big cars, opening boutiques and leaving again to do more trading abroad.'* Despite the ostentation of the return, the key aspect of this success remains saving. If there are investments they are always very safe. In a collective conversation in a district of Dakar, Cheikh gave his view about this subject:

> a characteristic of the Baol Mouride is that he is always careful in his investment; he invests little. He is discreet about his sources, he does not trust anyone in business... He will carry on like this, working hard and saving the maximum until he is 40 years old and then he will retire, praying and focusing on God in Touba.

Many think, like Diallo, that *'without modou modou, Senegal will be on its knees. Remittances are the real source of development of the country.'* Mor added:

> The people who leave are becoming a point of reference here. Even fathers choose migrants as an example for their children: "Look what he did for his parents and his family." Look who is getting married now, they are all Mouride migrants. They are the example.

Thus, migrants are contemporary heroes. This is why these characters are found within the most widespread phenomenon of everyday life (especially in an urban milieu): music. Many famous musicians (Youssou N'Dour, Ismael Lo, Ouza) sing about migrants and peddlers as symbols of contemporary society, because of their solidarity and their labours far from home for the well-being of their families.

Yet, thought Oumar,

> *The modou modou have given a vision of Europe as an El Dorado and that is false. They do not work as they do in Italy when they are in Senegal. The returnee did not live abroad as he would have done in Senegal.*

According to this opinion, abroad seems easier, because when one is far from home, he is ready to do things that he would refuse in his own country. Therefore, there are also negative opinions regarding *modou modou*. *'They are closed, and ignorant'*, thought Abdou. More specifically, Assane argued that they are able only to trick, to become rich in a fraudulent manner (see also Bayart et al. 1999), while Mor felt that *'People are judged for what they have. Sometimes we do not think about how they got it anymore.'* These comments are connected to another criticism of people wasting money on big weddings and houses instead of investing it in more entrepreneurial ways, producing jobs for others. Mor, for instance, suggested that *'when they leave migrants are worried about gathering money more than how to invest it. Xalis (money) for the sake of it. When they are back, they run the risk of wasting their capital by distributing it around the family, the neighbourhood.'* These comments convey a sense of the ambivalence surrounding the discursive mediations in people's understandings of migration. By looking at the most important audience for many Senegalese transmigrants I have shown the complex symbolic baggage they bring with them abroad: they are the "heroes" but also the "tricksters." These ambivalences are some of the reasons why one needs to disaggregate the so-called Senegalese community.

The white collars

After the devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994, emigration is affecting every category of person, not only the Mouride street peddlers and intellectuals who have been the object of much research (Salem 1981; Diop 1985; Ebin 1996; Schmidt di Friedberg 1994; Carter 1997). This last wave encompasses the urban elite, including functionaries who, after devaluation, look to Europe as their only chance for work with suitable remuneration. Here we have people leaving even "good" jobs (though salaries and wages are not guaranteed) because they are influenced by the illiterate traders who come back and buy big houses showing off their success. The director of a school for social workers in Dakar provides an example:

> *I have a friend who left a very good job to go to the USA and become a trader. Now he is selling electric household appliances, even though he had been trained in a highly regarded training school, but he found his salary was not enough to live well. He saw that people, whose intellectual level was not very high, had migrated to Europe or the USA ... but these people, when they came back on holiday, he saw that they have a lot of money, nice cars etc. This is why he decided to quit and go there. And there the solution was to become a trader. People prefer to do small jobs abroad than prestigious ones here ... It is also easier for traders because the informal organisation works well, here they come back not to settle but to buy or sell and leave again. They always have options open at home and abroad.*

Two examples may help to clarify the main characteristics of this new wave of urban emigration. After a training course in administration, Ousmane found a job at the Ministry of Economy and Finance and worked there for eight years until 1993 in a temporary post. He got married and moved to another district. Dissatisfied with his salary,

he left for Europe because the money was insufficient for the new family. Abdou found a job through his cousin who was working in management at a hospital. When the director left, he left too after three months. The lack of resources made him feel bad, he could not stand the situation: '*people were dying for the lack of good management*'. He consulted his *marabout* and left for Europe too.

The lack of prospects for young people also produced new waves of emigrants. Educated youth cannot hope to find employment in the formal sector: the public sector has been under structural adjustment for decades with severe constraints on hiring (Fall ed. 1997). 'Today's students compare themselves with preceding generations, those who could count on getting government jobs because of their degrees; they see themselves as an abandoned generation' (Cruise O'Brien 1996: 65). Momar left university during the *année blanche* 1987-89 (a whole academic year interrupted by strikes; see Coulon and Cruise O'Brien 1989; Diop and Diouf 1990). He went back and finally got a Master's in Law at the UCAD (1992). Nevertheless, he had difficulty in finding a job although he made several attempts: '*the labour market was too closed and corrupted',* and decided to leave.

These new kinds of migrant are influenced by the transnational circulatory model of *modou modou* migration. As Portes (1998; 1999) would put it: 'it becomes the thing to do.' Ideally, Abdou wants to work seasonally in Italy, returning at least once a year to Senegal, because he gets very homesick. During his return, he looks for potential connections to sell different kinds of products imported from Italy: used material, clothes, beauty products, and spare parts. The whole time I was with him he tried to convince future buyers in Dakar as well as in Kaolack (his town of origin), relying on family, friendship, and religious connections. Whilst visiting some members of the family, Abdou was also organising some potential business. Another example is provided by Simon. His brother-in-law wants to open a spare parts shop in Dakar, and Simon is thinking of adding a repair shop and selling underwear.

Summary

Let me briefly summarise what we have considered so far. Goldring rightly contends that 'transnational social fields, and localities of origin in particular, provide a special context in which people can improve their social position and perhaps their power, make claims about their changing status and have it appropriately valorized' (Goldring 1998: 167). However, I tried to show in this section that there are many ways of being a transmigrant. As Guarnizo and Smith cogently argue, 'migration from the same country is formed by a heterogeneous rather than unitary group of people, possessing distinct personal and social endowments ... migrating under disparate circumstances' (Guarnizo and Smith 1998). There exist different stages, different sending contexts (villages, postcolonial towns, the holy city, the capital), different forms of organisation at the beginning of the migratory chain (compare examples from Kebemer with those from Touba and Dakar, for instance), different backgrounds of class, urban or rural culture, and of religious attachment. Second, since a transnational circulatory model of migration is seen to be successful, it tends to be imitated (Portes 1998, 1999). Finally, having an ambivalent audience to respond to, and a multipolarised sending context to leave from, a Senegalese "transnational community" can manifest itself in many different ways. I will, therefore, 'write against culture' (Abu Lughod 1992) in the next section by considering the different experiences of Senegalese transmigrants in Italy.

A view from the context of migration

Most Senegalese I worked with state explicitly that their ideal organisation is a transnational one. They do not themselves use the "sexiest" term of the contemporary anthropology of migration, but they explicitly mean, as Mamdou put it, '*living part of the year in Italy and the other part in Senegal, making the best of the two countries*'. However, as with the Bangladeshis in Rome (King and Knights 1994; Knights and King 1998), acquisition of the *permesso di soggiorno* affects the possibility of transmigration. It is only when the permit is obtained and the re-entry to Italy guaranteed that Senegalese can start going backwards and forwards and manifest transnational mobility (Perry 1997 for similar remarks in New York). Far from being in a post-national era, transnational organisation still needs to negotiate with nation and local state regulatory and sometimes exclusionary practices as well as with the representations of immigrants held in the migration context.

Senegalese transmigrants in the two provinces of the Romagnan coast

As a whole Emilia Romagna is considered and (self)represented as a multicultural, tolerant or at worst "*poco razzista*" society. However, the representations of, and attitudes toward, immigrants vary. We can go from the blatant racism of many Italian traders especially toward street sellers (Riccio 1999b); through the "*poco razzismo*" shown by employers (Sciortino 1994) and the local newspapers (Belluati, Grossi and Viglongo 1995, but cf. Iris 1991 and Riccio 1999b for the case of Rimini); to the commitment to a multicultural society claimed by the various charities (*Caritas*; *Migrantes*), left-wing associations (ARCI), and trade unions. One aspect specific to the Romagna sub-region is the tourist coast which saw the arrival of numerous street sellers at the end of the 1980s. In both Ravenna and Rimini provinces, the Senegalese were the main target of immigration policies and the main source for collective representation of the new immigration phenomenon. Regarding the quantitative dimension, around 7,567 immigrants live in the province of Ravenna, corresponding to 2.2% of the total population of which 6,863 are non EU (Caritas di Roma 1997). The Senegalese are the most numerous foreign community and in 1997 numbered 1,698 (Pinto and Garcia 1999). Rimini had 3,806 foreigners (1.1% of the total population) of which 2,806 are non-EU (Caritas Roma 1997), and the Senegalese form the second largest community with 358 residents after the Albanians (Pinto and Garcia 1999).

To summarise the difference between the two provinces it is worth drawing on Wallman's 'homogeneous/heterogeneous' model (1986; 1998) in a loose, illustrative way. Rimini represents the homogeneous type with an economic structure focused almost entirely on tourism and where the street selling carried out by the Senegalese is easily perceived as threatening the wealth of the community, built mainly by traders and merchants. This difficulty partially explains why, although Rimini was one of the first communes to do something for immigrants in the region, so little has been done in immigration policies since that first attempt. As I have shown elsewhere (Riccio 1999b), illegal informal trade is a much longer-standing problem for Rimini than immigration. The question of what is described as "unfair competition" has survived and has gradually become conflated with international immigration. The association with the most despised activity in town constructs the Senegalese as a marked group, which easily becomes a

scapegoat for traders' discontent. Indeed, traders belong to that category of Italian citizens who feel particularly threatened by the country's socio-economic changes and tend to project this anxiety towards immigrants (Maher 1996; Gallini 1996; Cole 1997).

Ravenna offers a more plural economic structure (industry, agriculture, tourism, and trade), able to be more resilient when facing socio-economic changes. Where Rimini received these newcomers with more difficulty because of the confrontation with shopkeepers, Ravenna belongs amongst those small cities seen as 'the leaders in the formulation of public policy on immigrant reception and settlement, with programmes for the provision of housing, medical services, language training, job placement, schooling and a range of programmes, festivals and activities specifically designed to promote multiculturalism' (Hellman 1997, 39). Here, what Grillo (1985) would call an 'institutional complex' of linked organisations began to develop in response to the arrival of immigrants. Despite these sharp differences we will appreciate some similarities in the types of problems encountered by social practitioners on a daily basis (see section on housing) and in the experiences of Senegalese migrants.

The first Senegalese immigration into Romagna was already the product of a transnational logic. Indeed, many of the first Senegalese came from France, which was closing its borders in the early 1980s, and later they were joined by others directly from Senegal (Chiani 1991). Although immigration into Ravenna province (Treossi 1995 on Faenza) was influenced by the opportunity for employment and consequent "regularisation" of immigration status, it was the attraction of the beaches as a suitable marketplace that made the traders and street-peddlers the pioneers of Senegalese immigration in Romagna. Indeed, in the life histories I have collected from people arriving in the mid 1980s, immigrants were received on the one hand by Italian institutions, which did not seem prepared for the management of immigration, but on the other by a very well established Senegalese trade organisation (see section on trade).

Reasons for emigration and narratives of immigration

Many of the Senegalese with whom I talked, either when eating *tie bu jèn* (fish with rice, tomatoes and other vegetables, normally eaten together from the same big plate with our hands) or when drinking tea afterwards (three glasses for each person), explained their emigration in terms of labour migration, either because they could not find a job at home or because of the economic differential. *'Once people with education could find jobs, now this is not the case anymore. It is the difficulty in Senegal that justifies the presence in Europe ... the little savings that one manages to make constitute survival for the relatives',* said Souleymane. Yet, here as in other cases (Zinn 1994 in Bari; Marchetti 1994 in Milan; Perry 1997 in New York) I came across a more empowering self (as migrant) image. As Mandyek put it: *'One does not emigrate only to look for jobs. To emigrate is also to know new things, to broaden one's horizons in such a way one can bring back home what one discovered and learned.'* Others, like Sall, had in mind first and foremost their training: *'I was not coming to sell but to improve my professional skills.'* Many scholars can confirm that for Senegalese travel is an important *rite of passage* to acquire manhood, training and knowledge (Zinn 1994; Carter 1997; Ceschi 1999). Amongst Mourides such a self-image is thought to be even stronger because travel and knowledge are connected with hardship (Ebin 1996). Souleymane remembers the entry into Fortress Europe as a proof of patience and hardship: *'if you have a visa for a neighbouring country (Austria for instance), you wait until Sunday, when there is less*

control, you join a Senegalese with residence permit for Italy and then you cross the border with him. If it does not work, you try again.'

The value of travel is also connected to an unusual way of responding and giving sense to the racism Senegalese migrants have the misfortune to encounter. Racism is often explained as a result of ignorance, implicitly allowing that Italians might be people of good will. Modou explained to me why people from Rimini were afraid of black people:

> *The person who has been abroad will always be better than the one who stayed at home all the time ... The Italian is not informed, he does not travel, and TV gives bad information about Africa, always with bad images. Italians think that, being black, I am a wild person who lives with animals ... and then you discover that you have experienced much more than them and travelled more than them.*

As Zinn explains: 'by positioning themselves as more knowledgeable, more worldly than the Italians, the Senegalese provide an interesting reversal of the racist image that they are 'primitives' among the more developed' (Zinn 1994, 62).

Here is a story of travel and first impact with Rimini at the end of the 1980s:

> Like many other migrants Abdoulaye remembers being very worried during the journey, constantly eating nuts which the *marabout* gave to him. He was praying a lot. When he arrived in Tunisia he had to wait several days to leave on the boat to Italy. He arrived at the port of Trapani in Sicily and from there travelled to Rimini by train. He was feeling very insecure, he did not know the language nor the system. When he arrived in Rimini he saw a Senegalese who realised immediately that he was a newcomer and helped to show him the way. When at the hostel he was glad to be able to speak Wolof, yet very disappointed by the state of the accommodation: poor, dirty and messy. The room was overcrowded. He saw the bags of some flatmate which were full of products and he felt anxious to start selling too. For the first few days he found initial hospitality. He saw people waking up very early to work hard. Some of them explained the way the system worked: he could benefit from a loan to buy the products to sell and after a month he was supposed to share rent and expenses with the others. Around this time he first heard about the *permesso di soggiorno*. As a beginner he followed someone else. His first encounter with the beach was a big shock: *'With all these people naked, even women and elderly people ... how could I approach these people to sell my products?'* He remembers how tiring it was to walk along the beach with the heavy bag. He had little success. He felt uncomfortable and he started missing home terribly. Yet he also felt the pressure of the expectations of his family, members of which started demanding money for the house, for the pilgrimage to Mecca, for new clothes etc. after only three months.

This illustrative story can be seen as a précis of many others. One can appreciate the problem of language, the disappointment regarding the accommodation (the main problem for immigrants in Italy and for the Senegalese in Romagna), but also the hardship of trading.

Trade is an art

As Abdou's story shows, the Senegalese newcomer often finds that a system of selling is established and there are wholesalers that will supply him with products to sell and teach him the strategies necessary to street peddling (Campus, Mottura and Perrone 1993; Schmidt di Friedberg 1994; Scidà 1994). As Ousmane said about his first arrival in the province of Ravenna: *the other said: "Either you go selling or you look for a job, but because you do not have the documents the only solution is selling".* The scholars who have studied the Senegalese and particularly the Mourides' trading diaspora in France (Salem 1981; Sane 1993) and in the USA (Ebin 1992, 1993) stress the power of the self-sustaining system of networks linking ties of belonging and trade: Mourides are 'involved in trade at all levels, from selling on the streets to organizing a flourishing international electronic trade' (Ebin 1996, 96). However, although linked, the networks of belonging and the trading networks do not overlap mechanically (Salem 1981; Schmidt di Friedberg 1994), but they help the development of each other. Moreover, these networks are not closed systems with rigid boundaries as some sociologist suggested (Scidà 1994). Ebin herself stresses how sometimes students, tailors, or those with white-collar jobs also rely on such trade networks to supplement their income (Ebin 1996; also Carter 1997). I noticed how some Tidiane may use Mourides' networks, and Sane illustrated how it can also work the other way round in France (Sane 1993). Considering this complex and processual situation, I feel more comfortable speaking of networking instead of networks.

There also exist personal transnational projects which benefit from networking with Senegalese as well as with Italian people. For instance, Ousmane organises exporting via a container by paying for it with the money acquired by others who rent a space for their products and who may even be able to pay custom taxes. He keeps spare space only for his second-hand clothes, which will easily be sold by his brother in Senegal. Often he makes sure that there is a letter from a priest or a volunteer which testifies that these products are a gift and in this way he avoids custom taxes. His brother will then use the earnings partly for Ousmane's family subsistence, and the rest is sent back to him through a friend who goes in and out of the country. Whilst Ousmane is trying to find finance for his brother's micro-development project, his money will be invested to pay for another container.

Trade is also a sign of identity (Zinn 1994; Carter 1997; Catanzaro, Nelken and Belotti 1996). One day I met a street/beach seller (M'Baye) who is also a proud Mouride. He started and dropped four jobs which *'did not work with'* him: one was too far away, another one was within a difficult family relationship with which he did not want to be involved: *'You see there are people who are keen to trade and others who are keen to do other things ... I am keen to trade.'* Yet, as Carter rightly suggested, some Senegalese would prefer other forms of work. For instance, Moussa explained to me: *'I am not a trader and I do not like it. I saw people here almost begging for a bit of money. I cannot do that.'* He was obliged to do it anyway, but he was not good at it and he could not speak the language either. He preferred to go to Naples and Turin, buy some products (sport clothes) and sell them within the Senegalese community (mainly friends). Another example is provided by Momadou in Rimini, who had never traded before: at the beginning he walked around without ever opening the bag: he felt ashamed. He overcame this stage by sitting in a fixed place. He found it difficult that occasionally people would give him some spare change. He could not accept that. It was a matter of dignity: *Jom*. As I have discussed elsewhere (Riccio 2001), the issue of moral dignity is ubiquitous and sometimes clashes with what are perceived as *western temptations*.

It becomes also a source of differentiation within the complex world of Senegalese traders. For instance, the younger generation tend to display a different strategy from that of the well-hidden and "good saver" peddler. If the first peddlers preferred to sell in discrete ways, young migrants who plunge into trade are more keen to take risks but, said Byram: *'They want more, and overall they want to sell products to be proud of and not be confused with people asking for charity.'* Trade is an art for many Senegalese who deploy a variety of strategies to improve their business, sometimes by using the same commercial techniques as Italians, for example, having sales where products are sold at a reduced rate. Another example is what I would call seduction through juxtaposition. Romeo, a nickname he acquired on the beach, is loved by his local customers because he speaks fluently the local dialect (*Romagnolo*). Connected to this pride also is the sense of freedom from a boss that working for oneself implies: the famous remark of the migrant cited by Comaroff and Comaroff (1987: 192): 'I struggle, but I call no one "boss"', is a common refrain among Senegalese traders.

Besides this tension between pride and shame, let me stress another important ambivalence in the everyday life of Senegalese traders and their self-representation. It exists between the narrative of autonomy and the narrative of solidarity, the importance of independence and the value of interdependence. Despite the strong communitarian linkages, the Senegalese peddler tends to live and represent himself as an independent trader with his own stock of products chosen according to his own opinions and selling capacities. Even if he shares the apartment, the car or the trip to the main vendor with others, Senegalese sellers do not share the economic risks and successes of their own business: 'in selling everyone plays his own game' (Catanzaro, Nelken and Belotti 1996). This reading seems partially confirmed by the view from Senegal, when sociologist Ndiaye contends that the *modou modou* symbolises the emergence from tradition of a modern mentality which considers individual success a social value, economic competition as an opportunity to produce results (Ndiaye 1998).

Paradoxically, this individual and entrepreneurial feature coexists with and is even embedded within the more visible communitary and collectivist code of social solidarity which has been emphasised by so many studies (Campus, Mottura and Perrone 1992; Schmidt di Friedberg 1994; Scidà 1994). Also Bredeloup (1995) shows in her study of Senegalese migrants in the Ivory Coast that they tend to waver between communalism and individualism. Therefore, the dialectic between personal success and the obligations and opportunities of communitarian belonging is more complex than the simple acclamation of group solidarity. For instance, Momadou was talking about the importance of solidarity among Senegalese claiming that they are *'different from other African groups, where episodes of exploitation can be noticed.'* Not long afterwards, he was complaining about his friends always needing loans and never managing to be independent as he is. Thus, *Solidarité* (which is also the title of a famous Youssou N'Dour' song) is certainly a major theme in Senegalese self-representation, but it is sometimes balanced by criticism of the exploitation of this moral code and an orientation towards personal success. Senegalese solidarity and group internal reciprocity do not prevent the development of different individual trajectories and ways of representing themselves as autonomous individuals with self-worth. I came across such a narrative of autonomy on many occasions, for instance Simon: *'I am someone who wants to do my things on my own I do not want to make other people or even my parents tired with my business.'* As Cohen critically suggests, we should try to 'extend to the "others" we study

a recognition of the personal complexity which we perceive in ourselves' (Cohen 1989, 12). Besides this existential complexity there is also sometimes a conflictual dialectic between two work strategies: trade and employment. For instance, the young migrants who succeed in achieving a good position in the local labour market undermine the strength of the partially self-sustaining system of transnational and mainly informal trade which established itself with the first wave of migrants to the coast.

Employment stories: between recognition and exploitation

Other Senegalese have been integrated regularly and irregularly into many small firms as welders, masons, labourers, mechanics, in construction and painting (including my informants who were not full-time traders or unemployed). Some do not regret having stopped trading, especially in the last few years when the question of irregular trade has become particularly confrontational. Adama explained that: *'employment is more secure and far-sighted. If the police confiscate your products twice you are ruined.'* Many found jobs through other Senegalese and only a minority through Italian contacts. Abdoul found a job as warehouseman in a large store through meeting a friend of his. The relationships within the work environment were and are good and tolerant. On the other hand Cheik escaped a difficult situation by meeting an Italian friend, who had connections with a trade union and helped and provided him with many suggestions. He learned Italian and went to a professional training course in welding. At work he found recognition of his determination to improve his situation and to foster good relationships within the work environment. Abdou had a good relationship with his boss who respected him as a good worker. He now has plans for some import-export, but he needs money, while he waits for enough unemployment benefit to build up capital, he shapes networks in Ravenna for a future business in clothing. In other words, he is preparing to become a transnational businessman.

Aside from these exceptional tales, far more often I met Senegalese who were extremely critical of what they perceived as exploitation in the work environment. This is one of the main reasons why many prefer trading, where they can be their own boss. For instance, Moma worked as a builder in the province of Rimini for three years; he had good relationships with the other workers, but he had an employer who exploited him and did not pay for all the hours worked. He also worked on Saturdays but without being paid. This is why he left and found another job for another three years through a friend. Bara started by selling but during regularisation he found a job as a welder. Then in 1993 he had to leave due to restructuring and found a job in a rubber factory for a year and then as a welder again in another factory. The first boss was *'OK'* but his partner was patronising and exploitative; the second boss was very good but unreliable with salaries. These stories make us appreciate that sometimes Senegalese are not dealing with blatant racism, but with more subtle forms of discrimination, blackmail and exploitation (Dal Lago 1996; 1998; Cole 1997). Indeed, as Carter pointed out, 'the lack of knowledge of work practices and labour laws often keeps many migrants from challenging unfair labour practices' (Carter 1997, 40).

The different work trajectories (trade vs. work) tend to mirror the different organisational strategies (*dahira* vs. associations) which will be the focus of the next section. However, this relationship is not mechanical: religious organisation are important for almost all the Senegalese, and I will show how the differing work trajectories also produce potential conflicts within one form of organisation, such as the non-religious associations.

Religious and non-religious organisations

The Mouride movement seems to be developing continuously in Italy (Carter 1997). In her study of Mourides in Italy, Schmidt di Friedberg argues that the practical importance of the solidarity displayed by the Mouride brotherhood in a foreign environment is twofold: concerning the immigrant, who is not abandoned and uprooted but can move in a universe of meanings that are actually known and familiar; and concerning the host society, which is not confronted with individuals without any social control, but rather with a cohesive group conscious of the difficulties of integration in another reality and ready to negotiate its position, avoiding conflict (Schmidt di Friedberg 1994). Often a strengthened religious involvement is an effective way to find equilibrium in a state of crisis (Perry 1997). For instance, the difficulty an immigrant finds at the beginning in a foreign environment is balanced by the spiritual points of reference provided by religious doctrine: Abdou's disappointment pushed him into a rigorous, lonely and daily interpretation of Mouride discipline and morality.

Another aspect often mentioned by Mourides when talking about the importance of the brotherhood in the migratory experience is that *'it avoids decadence in the immigration'*. As Modou said: *'With me, for instance, it was very important in preventing me from doing bad things even if they would have brought a lot of money.'* The brotherhood helps in respecting the rules of the receiving contexts and, Buba thought, prevents immigrants from *'doing bad things like drinking, getting involved with immoral or unlawful situations.'* It is the fact that the Mouride movement is embedded in a transnational social field that makes it so successful in controlling potentially deviant behaviour. Within this field Mourides transnational formations are kept alive by oral conversation, the selling of cassettes, where besides prayers and *Kasaids* (sacred poems) one finds information about *ndiguel* (orders, decrees) from the Kalif or from the Touba establishment. Another channel is represented by transport: for instance, when Abdou was fully into a mystic phase and was *'working, praying and reading the Koran all day'*, he wanted to go to the *Magal* of Touba and he acquired information on how to obtain a ticket for the flight reserved for Mourides only. This is an example of the organisational capacity of Mourides to maintain transnational social formations. Yet, such social formations are shaped and strengthened mainly by the activities of the numerous *dahiras* widespread in the receiving countries, and by the frequent visits of *marabouts* from Senegal.

These visits are very important to keep the ethno-religious-scape (to paraphrase Appadurai 1990; 1996) alive from an organisational as well as a spiritual point of view. Money is indeed collected by the *marabout* but he also provides followers with blessings and advice. These moments reaffirm the link and the identification between the sacred place (Touba), the Saint (Amadou Bamba as represented by other important members of the M'Backé family) and the diasporic community of Mourides (Ebin 1996). In this context, I will briefly consider an important visit to Rimini. On the fifth of June 1996 Serin Murtada, the last son of Cheikh Amadou Bamba and one of the most important itinerant *marabouts* was visiting Italy and stopped in Riccione where he met many groups of Senegalese who had come from different parts of Italy.

> The meeting was located in a public place which is the House of a district of Riccione, founded with the help of some Italian associations. In the hall were several sellers who arranged their material (mainly clothes) on the floor. Near

the entrance of the big room most of the people (around 200) were praying, there were people selling and distributing different kinds of material - religious artefacts: cassettes, pictures of Amadou Bamba and his sons, books of poetry and sacred books for prayers, most of them in Arabic. Awaiting the Marabout, everyone was praying on their own, except for a group slightly aside chanting Kasaids in a circle. Suddenly, two Baye Fall - Baye Fallism is a sub-movement and sub-culture of Mouridism - communicated the arrival of the Marabout, an impressive silence filled the hall and everyone knelt down at the sides. He was preceded by a long line of followers. Inside, the phases of greeting and blessing had begun. He blessed his followers and also collected their offering. The Baye Fall helped to organise each group coming from a specific town of Italy, and to form a queue for the greeting of the Marabout. He waited in his position as the queue passed before him. Intermittently, there were moments of silent prayer at the end of which every believer lifted his hands to his face. These were the moments where everyone was collecting the *baraka*. This carried on for a couple of hours, and at the end the Marabout left in a way similar to his arrival.

These events are very important for the Senegalese abroad and, as we have seen, they imply also a sort of discreet interaction with the receiving context (Schmidt di Friedberg 1994). Furthermore, they testify to the Mourides' ability to sacralise space through ritual. Werbner argues that the sacralizing of space is centrally embedded in Sufi Islam, Sufism being a missionizing, purificatory cult (Werbner 1996). As the event above suggests, a subtle ritual inscription in foreign western space is at stake, through which Touba is recreated through ritual which temporarily sacrilises space. The holy city is symbolically recreated wherever it is required. As Metcalf suggests, 'it is ritual and sanctioned practice that is prior and that creates "Muslim space", which thus does not require any juridically claimed territory or formally consecrated or architecturally specific space' (Metcalf 1996, 3).

Besides the visits of important ("big") *marabouts*, there also exist temporary visits of less important ("small") *marabouts*. The following is the account of a young *marabout* (Souleymane Mbacké) belonging to the Mbacké Family (who are called *Mbacké Mbacké*), which gives us a sense of the working of Mourides connections and of the transnational extension of the *talibe-serin* relationship:

> *As I am a marabout, all my activities concern the religious teaching. I have no income except from the talibe, who were in Italy. I went there to help them with their problems but also to ask for help ... when I arrived in Italy I was welcomed by my talibe, this is why I was not lost ... The talibe in Italy respect the charts the founder of Mouridism, he asked them to respect the rules in every place and every time, to help each other, to work hard, which is a pillar of Mouridism and not to waste the money they earn. In Italy I saw that talibe coming from different places encounter and create a unity, create dahiras, meet and collect money, expand their action in other regions, and I cannot be anything but happy about that.* (Souleymane Mbacké 9, 1997)

Thus, the religious organisation is very important in maintaining transnational identity, in providing transmigrants with spiritual and ideological points of reference and, mainly indirectly, in aiding the development of networks which are combined with other

networks. People move within a complex web of symbolic meanings and personal connections and try to make a life from it while keeping options open. Yet to relate to the receiving contexts, Senegalese have developed a rather different form of organisation - the numerous non-religious Senegalese Associations of Italy united by a *Coordinamento* (CASI).

The associations of foreign communities are often shaped by the immigrants who most successfully 'speak the language' of the institutions in the receiving societies (Grillo 1985). These are often the better educated, the elite who represent the foreign community only to some degree (Werbner and Anwar 1991; Vertovec 1996). In respect of the Senegalese, the organisation of these associations displayed different outcomes in Ravenna and in Rimini.

At the end of the 1980s Modou (one of the first Senegalese in Rimini to make himself known to Italians), played an important role in mediating between the Senegalese community and the receiving institutions. However, he expresses some resentment and finds that he wasted much time and energy helping others and was not always met with gratitude. As head of the association of Senegalese, Modou encountered many difficulties with the *modou modou* , the traders and street peddlers mostly from rural backgrounds. He was the 'intellectual'but he could not acquire their trust. Conversely, they viewed his attitude as an imitation of the *toubab*, the white westerner. This reciprocal misconception ended up as a vicious cycle where most of the Senegalese did not trust him because he was considered a *'a friend of the whites'*.

The Senegalese associational experience in Ravenna was stronger and more organised. There, two large Senegalese non-religious associations developed: Africa Insieme, which was linked to the CGIL trade union, and ASRA, which was formed to be independent from the unions. The latter is seen by some leaders of Africa Insieme as developing a dependent mentality and as *'less political'*. The principal members of ASRA think Africa Insieme is itself dependent on the unions. However, this divide concerned only the elite because, in a typically practical fashion, all the Senegalese living in the province subscribed to both associations. This behaviour may testify to the fact that for many the collective organisation that really counts is the religious one, and, overall, that here as in Rimini there is a more important cleavage between the bottom of the community and the conflicting elites. Indeed, in Ravenna too, the heads of the associations, who advocated, from different standpoints, a more open strategy and an entry into the public sphere, encountered the resistance of a system that was felt to work better when in isolation. Their attitude was resisted by the people close to the religious leaders, connected to wholesalers who did not like many potential buyers (street peddlers) finding other kinds of employment. In fact, immigrants who are in regular employment tend to be more involved with the associations and the trade unions (Mottura and Pinto 1996), whereas trade is often set up following social and religious networks which provide newcomers with accommodation and work. This is why, although the two forms of organisation (religious and non-religious) are distinct, it seems that they intermittently need to hold dialogues to produce a consistent self-representation in the local receiving context.

Summary

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There is a latent conflict of tendencies within the Senegalese community in Romagna. On one side is the migratory generation from the urban milieu, able to interact easily with the receiving context and advocating more outward movement. On the other are the *modou modou* from the countryside who are involved in trade at various levels, and tend to remain within the group with its own codes, interacting with the outside world only for business purpose and for the minimum unavoidable bureaucratic obligations (Fantini 1991; Carter 1997). For instance, when Modou first met some Italians, who gave him a sewing machine and an old motorbike as gifts, he was warned by his flatmates who were suspicious about this present. The other Senegalese were in fact distrustful and told him to be careful *'because the whites seem nice at the beginning, only because they want to exploit you.'* Furthermore, although one can distinguish a degree of ambivalence towards it, a kind of love-hate feeling, fear of the temptations provided by the Italian environment is a common refrain (Riccio 2001). For instance, Abdou recognises that *'it is difficult to be a good Muslim in Italy.'* This is one reason why it is so important that the *marabout* comes to visit and to give his blessing or the migrant goes to Senegal to visit the family and finally to return there for good. As El Hadjy emphasises: *'Senegal is our land and we would not exchange it for any other one. ...even if I could have a lot of money here, I will not be happy because of the lack of sincerity. ... Here I would always lack something, I will always miss Senegal.'* Such mistrust is not however shared by all Senegalese. For instance, Simon criticises the tendency towards isolation of the Senegalese community abroad. He thinks that the Senegalese should not be ashamed of their culture: *'I often discuss with other Senegalese the need to let ourselves be known by the Italians for what we are, this is how relationships can grow. Good relationships with Italians can provide us with a lot of help*.'

Drawing on a distinction made by Werbner (1997), we may summarise this section by saying that the "cosmopolitans" among the Senegalese in Romagna are the ones who tend to enter the formal labour market with some success, but also encounter exploitation, and interact with the institutions of the receiving context a great deal, not being afraid to let themselves be known. They try to organise a non-religious form of socio-political representation relating to the logic of the Italian associational structure, and shape their own personal networks as well as relying on the communitary networks. On the other hand, the "translocals" are the majority; they may also enter the labour market but tend to prefer trade, they identify the religious circles as the most fulfilling organisational form. These transnationals follow an inward-looking life strategy and tend to avoid contact with Italians; they benefit instead, spiritually as well as materially, from life within a transnational social field. A certain degree of accommodation with a variety of local incorporation regimes seems possible because they can rely on the effective transnational networks that we have seen in trade and religion. They perform that 'third way of integration' which, according to Schmidt di Friedberg (1994), stands between the excesses of two extremes: assimilation and pluralist segregation. Senegalese transnational activities seem to have a communitarian and individual or familial form at the moment, whereas that of home town associations or other kinds of transnational organisations need time to develop, as other studies show (Quiminal 1991).

Conclusion

I began with the different sending contexts, showing the relevance of transnational organisation, and demonstrating that there are various ways of being transmigrant. The

Senegalese showed a more disaggregated configuration than the sociologically defined "community" of sociological representations. I have also tried to convey the ambivalences and tensions shaping representations and self-representations. Two apparently contradictory yet coexisting narratives inform Senegalese self-representation: a dominant discourse of solidarity and a hidden discourse of autonomy and individuality. Furthermore, by providing different examples of attitudes towards Italians, I show that there are different 'cosmopolitanisms' (Werbner 1999) among the Senegalese, some more open to negotiation with external cultural flows, others more inward in their everyday strategies and occidentalist in their representation of westerners (Meyer and Geshiere 1999).

Besides showing that there are various ways of being transmigrant, this study also reveals a less 'reactive' form of transnational organisation than conceived by those scholars who consider transnationalism to be a reaction to global capitalism and western racism (in different ways: Basch et al. 1994; Portes 1999). In the Wolof case transnational social formations were already under way when they encountered the sedentarist logic of the ambivalent reception policies in the receiving context. My ethnography urged me to rethink transnationalism as constant networking within transnational spaces, as opposed to reified transnational networks. In other words, rather than being a homogeneous system, transnational migration encompasses differing practices. Co-nationals tend to overcome religious and ethnic differences in a foreign country and some of them, although relying on communitary networks, also try to shape other networks in the receiving context.

Another aspect that revealed itself to be important to my understanding of Senegalese transmigration in Romagna is that the local receiving context impacts on the scope and depth of migrants' transnational practices. As some transnational configurations stem from the organisational solutions found during internal urbanisation, so future transnational development may emerge from interactions with the specific context of migration. For instance, the institutionalisation of transnational projects seems more likely in Ravenna than in Rimini. Smith and Guarnizo (1998) and Portes et al. (1999) urge us to specify the levels of transnationalism which scholars analyse. I suggest that in this work I dealt with a macro-level of Sufi religious social formation (Werbner 1999) and a more micro-level of transnational activities: 'history and activity of individuals' are, say Portes and colleagues (1999: 220) 'the most efficient way of learning about the institutional underpinnings of transnationalism and its structural effects.' Finally, there is also a "meso" organisational level (Guarnizo and Smith 1998), which has embryonic potential in the kinds of transnational projects emerging from the interaction between Senegalese and the receiving context's institutions.

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