

Migration-driven network expansion via ICTs

Understanding ICTs effect on family dynamics in
Kebemer, Senegal

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This paper discusses the phenomenon of ICTs as social transfers (remittances) from migration flows and how it impacts the source communities and further drives new ICTs expansion in Kebemer, Senegal.

To situate myself and the state of this paper, I am a master's student at the University of Ottawa, in Canada, in sociology, interested in social media, technology, development and migration. I have conducted research in Senegal on these topics last year, and am still working on the data I have accumulated in that process. This research was done jointly, or more "within", a larger research project targeting the community of Kebemer in Senegal. The objective of this research project was to study the consequences of international migration, mostly oriented towards Southern Europe, on local family and social dynamics. This small town in North-West Senegal is concerned by increasingly massive out migration to Southern European countries since the 1980s. My own project was to look into the effect ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) recently had on those family and social dynamics within the migration context.

At this moment, I am in no position to provide confirmed findings. Our data, both qualitative and quantitative is still being worked on and cleaned up; my actual analysis is not completed. Therefore, my intention here is to present my initial findings and leads to you, the greater African studies community, and open it up to comments and suggestions to help steer the remainder of my work in the right direction.

The main theme of this paper, thus, is about how international migration and the related transnational dynamics may be driving and shaping ICTs development and its usage in the African community context by altering family dynamics and how these dynamics are themselves shaped by the same ICTs. I want to see, in turn, how these fundamental changes affect the existing structure of these families' and individuals' social networks, and directly affect their children, and whether or not families in Kebemer are in a position to benefit from the diverse advantages of ICTs. While the use of social media and networking is expanding, an ongoing critique of ICTs has been that it mostly benefits higher social classes. It is important, therefore, to have an understanding of how ICTs get appropriated to comprehend how social media may or may not benefit these populations.

I will therefore begin with a bit of context and methodology, to situate the location and the research. I will then proceed with a brief overview and history of the connectivity situation in Kebemer, followed by a description of the migration phenomenon that is of particular interest to us. I will then look into the family and community dynamics and how they are affected by ICTs which are introduced or provided through this migration process, and that ICTs themselves are not necessarily enough to truly open up to the world's networks. Finally, from the family dynamics I will push towards how they remain at the root of the Senegalese social networks and how migration thus expands the family network in a transnational nature, even within the family dynamics and developmental constraints, and how they may still benefit from it.

Concepts

A few concepts are needed to help understand the dynamics that are to be discussed in this paper. They are all interlinked in the Kebemer context.

The initiating concept we are interested in is of transnational migration, in the context of Senegal and Kebemer in particular. There are many reasons that lead to migration, but the specific one I am interested in is where an individual leaves his household for an extended period of time and relocates in a different country, generally in Southern Europe in the hopes of finding work and better income than what he could find at home. In the context of Kebemer and other areas affected by significant rates of transnational migration, there is even a *culture* of migration that has developed, where migration itself would become a normal life goal for the Senegalese youth (Mondain & Diagne, 2013; Mondain, Diagne, & Randall, 2011) influenced by the *apparent* signs success of multiple local migrants who tend to display it through larger, more luxurious houses for their families.

From this concept, the migrant who keeps on contributing to the household income does so through remittancing, or essentially sending money back home as it is available, often opting for a more modest life abroad to do so. This migration and remittance element is conceptualized from the transnational social fields and cultural diffusion theories of Peggy Levitt. Individuals possess social fields, or spheres, through which they interact with a multitude of other social spheres at once, “a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1009). This conceptualization becomes very interesting to us when we add Levitt’s social remittancing, where “ideas, behaviors, identities and social capital flow from receiving- to sending-country communities” (Levitt, 1998, p. 927), expanding her social fields theory to where cultural diffusion happens at the transnational level. I use this conceptualization with the above migration phenomenon, and modify it to include a recent phenomenon of technological transfer, calling it a technology remittance, working through the same social fields system and migration channels. This technological remittance is essentially the act of the migrant to purchase a computer, generally a laptop, and to bring it home to give it to the household and then connect the household to internet.

This technological transfer introduces ICTs at the core of the Kebemer household. In order to understand the kind of effect this phenomenon has on the community, we look at how it affects *access* and the connection dynamics. I use concepts borrowed and adapted from technology transfer and appropriation theories. Essentially, I am looking at the possession, access, and knowledge, concepts derived from these theories which explain how ICTs get appropriated and how they impact *usage* (Rice, 2003). Possession in the simplest form would mean *ownership* of the technology (owning a computer, and an internet connection, for example). Knowledge of the technology can have multiple levels. For instance, one can know absolutely nothing of ICTs, or can know *of* them, that they exist or have an idea of what they do without knowing how to use them. One can have knowledge of small aspects of ICTs, such as knowing it allows for video conferencing. At the other end of the spectrum, one can fully know and understand how they work and how to use them as well. Knowledge of ICTs is independent from the possession of ICTs. Finally, access refers to the ability of one to be able to use ICTs. Once more, access can be viewed as independent from knowledge and possession to some extent since one who does not own and know very little can still access ICTs. The relation of the three aspects defines how ICTs get appropriated and how they get used.

Finally, the processes of migration and technological appropriation themselves are influenced by family and cultural dynamics. In the context of Kebemer, we are interested with specific gender relations such as marriage related practices where the woman is expected to move in the husband's household and help his mother in taking care of the household, often resulting in lower education. Regarding migration, this expectation also results in a generally male only migration phenomenon, which introduces an added layer of complexity in the family due to the distance between husband and wife. This also results in many cases of a woman marrying on the husband's visit home from migration and thus not even knowing him much (Mondain & Diagne, 2013; Mondain, Randall, Diagne, & Eliot, 2012; Teolis, 2009). As far as intergenerational relations concepts that become interesting to us, we are interested in how traditional forms of relations between generations function in the family, especially considering ICTs knowledge which may be higher in younger generations than the adult ones, reversing the standard knowledge transfers.

Context

Kebemer is not an overly remote small village in the bush. It is a fairly sized town of slightly under 20 000 inhabitants. It is located on the Trans-African Highway 1, close to the coast between Dakar and Saint-Louis, and thus sees a substantial amount of vehicle traffic. The town appears to give us a good balance, far enough from Dakar to have a perhaps slightly more rural culture to it without being completely remote. It now consists of 9 neighborhoods, since recently, three close villages were attached administratively to the Kebemer commune; Ndakhar, Tobi Diop and Ndiabi Fal. While Ndakhar's geographic position is close enough to just pass as another neighborhood of Kebemer, the latter two are geographically remote to the town center and appear to represent socio-economic opposites. It is also former president Abdoulaye Wade's home town, apparently, which proved to be interesting during the research process since it was conducted during the 2012 elections. The town itself is strongly religious, both of mourid and tijanes beliefs, possibly due to the town being fairly close to the Touba religious center of Mouridism.

Methods and Data

Two projects were conducted in parallel. The first, main project was quantitative in nature, and was aiming at observing the consequences of international migration on those left behind, in Kebemer. The project from which this paper is mostly based on is a qualitative project that was done on a smaller scale, but still drawing off the main project.

The quantitative project conducted a study covering about 550 households with a detailed descriptive questionnaire, and individual biographical questionnaires with a sample of 1112 women aged between 15 and 59 drawn from these households. Elements were introduced in these questionnaires to address the ICT situation, and these elements will be used to attempt corroboration or refutation once the database is ready to be used. The questionnaire detailing the households paid attention to the presence and ownership of ICTs, and the biographical ones had a section detailing which, and when ICTs appeared

in the households (and former households) of the interviewed women, hopefully giving an attempt of a timeline average.

For the qualitative study that was done in parallel, I conducted 5 focus groups and 5 semi-structured interviews with resource individuals to gain a better understanding of the town's situation, and then proceeded with 28 individual semi-structured interviews as the main body of the study. The sampling was done to consider a balance in age groups, gender and education, as well as an attempt at representation for each of the neighborhood of the town. I was concerned only with people that were users of ICTs, and selected participants either from leads I would get from interviews or from people I would talk to. Many were also selected from the quantitative project, since the hired inquirers were instructed to keep an eye out for possible interesting respondents while conducting their household and biographical interviews.

Connecting Kebemer

As part of looking into how ICTs played a role in the town's evolution and could change family dynamics, I had to start painting a picture of what the connectivity was like. Even though the research topic is more centered on family dynamics and migration, the ICTs factor has meant that I could not get away from a decent understanding of the recent history of the connectivity in Kebemer. There has been quite a significant evolution over a span of under 10 years. While I am still trying to get information from SONATEL (Orange) on connection numbers' evolution over these years to get more concrete data, I can still use observation reports from the presence of colleagues in the area going back to 1999, my own observation of the town, as well as information from the interviews I conducted. SONATEL is the state's telecommunication company which was sold to the private operator Orange (France Télécom) in the late 2000s. It is still the main operator of landlines in the entire country (phone, television and internet), and is a major provider of mobile services as well. It does however receive some competition on the mobile front from African operators such as Expresso and Tigo (Millicom).

The initial prohibitive costs, in line with the few researches findings pointing out the potential of ICTs in development but also their then limits due to cost and infrastructure (Dulau, 2002; Tall, 2002; Thiam, 2002; Rice, 2003) meant that the initial connection points were mostly with cyber cafés. There may also be a possibility that the infrastructure development in Kebemer was also partly influenced by the presence of the Mourid religious center of Touba, but I still need documentation supporting this, combined with comparative studies in other regions of the country.

Nonetheless, in recent years, there have been significant improvements in the infrastructure, availability and prices of internet services. SONATEL has recently lowered access prices, and the ADSL 512 connection has become the most popular and affordable one in the area. Here remains an interesting history to be made regarding the rise and fall of cyber cafés in Kebemer, in parallel with an 'individualization' of technology, leading to that rise of the ADSL connection. I use the individualization term here, borrowing from a paper of a colleague who conducted research in Ghana on that very subject, the rise and fall of cyber cafés, and the loss of the sociality aspect of it in favor of an individualistic approach through the very same increase of accessibility and lower costs of recent years

as in Kebemer (Perrot, 2013). Today, while Kebemer may not have experienced such a drastic rise and fall of cybercafés, 3 of them remain in operation in Kebemer, as of winter 2012, and they had to diversify their activities to remain in business, including courses on how to use the internet and becoming a copy center (the only copy center in town is a cyber café).

However, while my colleague observed this individualization of technology in Ghana, what I observed in Kebemer is instead what appears to be a communality reaction to this infrastructure evolution. Sometimes, walking around town, one can observe a few kids hanging around outside of a house with laptops. While perhaps kids walking around town with a laptop remain a minority, it turns out that most who could afford a connection and a wireless router would tend to keep them opened and unsecured for everyone to use (except for one network I found, but we later learned they were Americans living there). Through the interview process I investigated this phenomenon and found out that those who shared their connections tended to believe it was important to share the internet and this knowledge, for the betterment of the community. When discussing the matter with said colleague, he had a hard time believing in such gratuitous acts of kindness. While the skepticism is understandable, the interviews did point towards that communal reaction of sharing rather than the cold individualization that we are more used to with our technology, or even in Dakar, as opposed to the periphery. Indeed, even in Dakar the networks tend to be locked and secured. Nonetheless, he did raise a valid question that was not covered in my research process. What are the motives behind this phenomenon? Is it gratuitous generosity, or could it be another form of exposing wealth and obtaining status? Could it be about more “preserved” traditional norms of solidarity and collective thinking, such as the *teranga*? It is another question that is raised; all I can say at this point is that this practice is amplifying access to this technology, and providing an *offer* that goes above the standard infrastructure and cost paradigms. It is also in line with regular kinds of sharing where neighborhood kids (and people) can, and often do, come visit people have a connection to use it, as well as their computers.

As far as the technology offer goes, however, there are other options available to Kebemer, as in most areas of Senegal, such as USB cellular keys on the SONATEL and Expresso networks. These methods remain more expensive and are not often seen in the city. ADSL 512 is the most popular and affordable method of connection probably because it functions over the existing telephone network. However, for inhabitants of the Tobi Diop and Ndiabi Fal sectors of Kebemer, they do not have much choice in the matter anymore. Due to their slight remoteness from the urban center of the commune, they had the telecommunications wiring stolen directly from the poles a few years ago and they were never replaced. That means that their only means of connecting is through these wireless USB systems. Many have them in Tobi Diop, but Ndiabi Fal is essentially cut off. Arguably, Ndiabi Fal may not have the economic means to connect via ADSL either way.

Applying the concepts of technological appropriation and connection dynamics to the context of Kebemer, and for example with the practice of connection sharing mentioned above, I have observed that access tend to remain independent from possession. In other words, one does not need to possess the technology in order to be able to use it. While it remains to be verified with our quantitative data portion of the research, I have observed an availability, or a level of access to the point where respondents would claim that anyone who actually wishes to connect in the community can, which

tends to contradict the standard affirmation where one must have the means (implying possession) in order to be able to connect, or at least provide with a different model for understanding ICTs in development (Rice, 2003; Dulau, 2002; Heeks, 2010; Tall, 2002; Thiam, 2002). This does not mean that the economic factor is not valid, as it remains strong, but perhaps less so than some may think. As such, costs may limit possession, but perhaps not necessarily access.

The next aspect of this connection dynamic is about knowledge. In order to use a technology, a certain level of knowledge is required. However, I have realized that individual knowledge is not necessary, but rather that it must be available within the local social network. Indeed, a person does not need to neither possess, nor know of how the technology works, but merely know about the technology. Someone else that knows how to use this technology can set up what is needed.

Migration

We have laid out a decent working idea of the status of ICTs in Kebemer. At this point in the paper, it is time to explain the phenomenon that is underlying the research. At its source, I was looking at migration and how it affects the development of ICTs. More specifically, I was looking at how ICTs introduced in the family from transnational migration can affect its dynamics. Of numerous factors that can affect the status of ICTs in a place like Kebemer, my observations tend to indicate that migration plays a significant role.

The phenomenon of transnational migration is pronounced in most developed countries, but it is quite so in Senegal (Diop, 2010). Kebemer is an area that is particularly affected by it. It may not be the most affected area, but it is significant enough to be noticed. A sign of household income that is supplemented by migration work is often a larger, luxurious house. There is a cultural trait in Senegal that puts high importance on social standing, and there has been a developing trend with migration that became somewhat of a myth where migrating was being equated with success. Many migrants, therefore, whether or not they were actually successful in their endeavors overseas believed that they had to at the very least appear so. The modern, large house is therefore a sign of a well taken-care of household (Mondain & Diagne, 2013).

A particular example of this is the neighborhood of Tobi Diop that was mentioned earlier. It is a neighborhood that contains many of such houses, displaying a much higher level of wealth, and interestingly enough is also less welcoming and more suspicious. Now these are just observations, but Tobi Diop is the remote neighborhood where the landline copper wires connecting it to the network were stolen, but they still connect through the more expensive USB 3G and CDMA keys (one of the interviewees had three of them: for himself, his wife and his child).

There is an element of interest that I observed often from households that has migrants as active participating members. The basic example of it as we have conceptualized earlier is where an individual migrates to Southern Europe, whether temporarily or permanently in order to increase the family's income. At some point, he decides to come home for a visit, a vacation, and brings home a used laptop computer. At home, he then gives the computer to a family member, his wife usually, and connects the

household to the internet with the money he makes abroad. I have come to conceptualize this action as a particular type of technology transfer, our concept of technological remittance, to carry on with our appropriation dynamics. While most I interviewed mention many benefits from having a computer and an internet connection, the first one that comes up, especially from migrant's wives perspectives, is how video conferencing via Skype is more economical than standard long distance telephone conversations, and allows for much more frequent communications.

Family Dynamics

Migration driven technology remittancing, therefore, is a key factor in the successful integration of ICTs in Kebemer. It is also this particular element that enters at the core of the Kebemer family and exposes it to ICTs. These ICTs, in turn, expose these families to the vast potential of the internet and of its ability to exponentially amplify social networks, driving increased social remittancing. At the core of the family, the door is opened for cultural diffusion through transnational social fields. The family, and consequently the community and society, are exposed to the technological phenomenon, and, as Manuel Castells describes it, the shock of the paradigm shift it imposes on world views (Castells, 2004).

Yet, the question remains in this appropriation paradigm; while the family is exposed to the potential of ICTs through the migration and remittancing process, does it actually tap and benefit from, it? This is where things get a bit more complex. While education and age tend to be the usual suspects as far as knowledge in ICTs usage goes, they have a particular relationship. I have noticed different levels of usage of ICTs introduced in households via migration. Within the migration context, I found that this introduction of ICTs is not always sufficient for a household to benefit from their full potential. As such, I add an additional concept to the appropriation dynamics, and call it "social access".

I will keep using the previous migrant's example to illustrate this. Since the initial motive to connect the household is to improve communications with the family, the main benefiting user often becomes the wife of the migrant. Video conferencing thus becomes the main method of transnational communication, and is more cost effective than the standard mobile long distance plans. I did find, however, that many migrant's wives appeared to simply not be interested in anything other than Skype on the new technology, essentially making it no more than a videophone and thus not benefiting from any other potential these ICTs could provide to them, while others still would use it because they had learned about it before, in school or other education programs.

At first glance, it is easy to say that it is merely a question of education, and would these women be more educated, they would better understand the tool they now have access to. There is, however, more to it than that. Indeed, more interviewees were often talking about how many people had never gone to school and yet were learning of and using ICTs.

« Parce que je vois des gens qui n'ont jamais fait les bancs et qui utilisent bien l'ordinateur. Y'a beaucoup de choses qu'ils savent sur l'ordinateur. »

-Omar, 41, migrant.

At the same time, I have examples like Fama, a 28 years old teacher and migrant's wife, claiming that while she owned a computer and was training in using it, she was not an ICTs user until her husband wished for them to communicate that way. She then went to the local cybercafé to get trained in using it.

As far as age goes, we also have older women who use ICTs, and also younger women who do not. This does imply an added layer of complexity, which I believe may be a certain interaction between these variables. There are two particular examples I have noticed that I believe may be representative of these layers of complexities within a Senegalese household.

The first one is relating to marriage tradition, where married women move to their husband's household, with their mother in law. Depending on the household, this may cause friction within the family dynamic and change the access possibility of some elements. For example, I had an older woman who was not living with her husband, who was living in Dakar, but instead living in her brother's house, with his wife, while he was in Italy. This household had gone through the connection example I have shown earlier, and yet the woman could not use the computer and internet connection, even though she showed interest in ICTs. I found that it was a question of pride because she knew she was not culturally supposed to be living there, and while her brother's wife did not share the laptop computer and the connection, our subject would not ask for it either out of pride, until she could afford one of her own.

« Non, l'ordinateur portable lui appartient, même si mon frère lui disait de me le donner je ne l'accepterais pas. Tu me comprends ? Je peux attendre d'avoir mon propre ordinateur pour me connecter. »

-Aminata, 45, school surveillant

The second example was something more recurrent. Essentially, the migrant's wives I interviewed who were not schooled, mostly house keepers, would most often not be able to use the technology by themselves, even if the husband had connected the household. These are the households where the computers were given to brothers or other members of the family instead of the wife, and she would require that person's assistance to be able to connect to Skype to see her husband. When asked if they were interested in more from these ICTs, most would answer that yes, they were, but did not really have the time for it. Other migrant's wives, more educated (teachers, for example), implied that it was mostly a type of social stigma. It would not be well perceived for an older woman with a certain household status to be taught new things by a younger person, implying the age/education relationship I mentioned.

« Parce qu'elles ne veulent pas qu'on dise qu'à leur âge elles se permettent d'aller apprendre. C'est une question de mentalité en fait. Peut-être aussi le fait d'avoir honte pour demander à une personne de même génération de l'apprendre. »

-Awa, 30, account manager

They may really have only been interested in Skype to see their husbands, not really interested into what ICTs can offer them since it is beyond their reality.

These examples are interesting in representing gender roles which are at the core of the Senegalese families, where women are traditionally expected to marry in exchange of a dowry, and move in their husband's household to assist his mother in maintaining it. In the context of migration, therefore, only men tend to make the move to support their families. This traditional gender role still has a social impact where the education of women remains less important than that of men's if their role is to remain within the household. Migrants were even more interested in finding such uneducated women to marry because it would be simpler to manage (Mondain, Randall, Diagne, & Eliot, 2012). This could be an explanation as to why we see many uneducated migrant's wives who do not use ICTs much more than as a communication device. Yet, some respondents have advanced that ICTs may yet challenge that in a longer term. According to Awa, a migrant's wife and professional account manager, when discussing the impact of migration on the development of ICTs in Kebemer, more girls than ever are in education establishments and are getting professional development courses.

« Tu sais les gens n'accordaient pas une place importante aux études mais maintenant ils veulent que leurs enfants étudient parce qu'ils en voient l'intérêt et ne veulent pas que leurs enfants subissent les mêmes préjugés qu'eux. Si tu vois bien avant il y avait plus de garçons que de filles à l'école, mais plus maintenant. C'est comme maintenant les écoles de formation qui sont bondées de filles c'est comme si il n'y a que les filles qui subissent des formations alors que c'était impossible auparavant. »

Could ICTs, thus, be able to contribute to the emancipation of women? I am unable at this point to confirm this hypothesis, nor link ICTs introduction in households via migration with increased numbers of girls in school, but it may yet look promising in the Kebemer context and would be worth researching further.

These are the types of cultural family dynamics that I believe have an impact in the appropriation of technology for many families and households in Senegal, in the context of migration. Even if ICTs do not necessarily bring Senegalese people into the online world, technological appropriation does find its way and ICTs do slowly change, and improve things, possibly more so than believed, but the particular family dynamics of the culture need to be taken into consideration.

Intergenerational Relations and Family Networking

The benefits of ICTs may not reach directly these individuals who do not understand them, as perhaps they do not have the required skills or knowledge, but their families and children may yet benefit from it. The best example I have of how migration does influence the family dynamics and perhaps drives ICTs and increased networking is Omar and Awa, a married couple, with Omar being a regular migrant to Italy. Omar is an electrician apprentice, and does not really know all that much about computers and what they can do (still refers to them as calculation machines). However, his knowledge is of ICTs from his exposition in Europe; he is fully aware of what it can do for his children.

« Parce que, ils peuvent utiliser ça pour les calculs, ou par exemple, y'a beaucoup de choses. [...] ça aussi, c'est quelque chose qui peut... aider la famille. [...]Parce que vraiment l'ordinateur, ça augmente l'intelligence, l'intelligence des enfants. Ça aide sur l'intelligence des enfants. »

Awa does not use it for much more than to Skype with her husband, and it is still Omar's brother than needs to come into the house to get her connected. Nonetheless, Omar believes strongly it is the future for his children.

ICTs may thus challenge the traditional relation the younger generation has with the older generation, since they might suddenly become more knowledgeable. Will it, however, be enough to change family dynamics? Will Kebemer parents lose some control over their traditional structures? As many changes with ICTs, even though hints points towards such changes, along with gender relations, we will have to wait for this generation to reach adulthood in order to see if there is a sort of emancipation that will occur.

Even unknowingly, those who do not use it for much more than Skype do not quite realize that they have effectively expanded their networks, their reach. There is a certain practice of *expectations* related to the Senegalese culture and migration. Those who end up in positions where they can bring things for people are often asked to do so.

« Aujourd'hui, si j'ai un ordinateur à ma disposition, je peux voir ma famille et quand j'ai besoin de quelque chose je peux en parler avec eux, ça peut m'aider à l'avoir.[...] Pour pouvoir obtenir ce que je veux ou bien mes amis ou quelque chose comme ça. »

-Awa, Omar's wife.

Family members that are aware of their peers' location and intention to return shortly will often ask them to bring things. It is *expected*, up to the point where people tend to disconnect or not announce their returns to avoid overwhelming demands. Skype, and ICTs in general, have amplified this practice, putting much more people in one's social networks in communications range at any time. Yet, even if only Skype is used with the newly acquired ICTs, women are still expanding their networks, or at the very least the *reach* of their already existing network by being able to reach family members more easily. The simple Skype usage helps mitigate the added family relationship tensions that are introduced with the migration distances and limited communication by adding the visual component, and increased frequency in communications due to the relative much lower cost of new ICTs compared to *traditional* mobile phones.

While there is a widespread use of the Facebook social media network in Senegal due to initiatives such as Orange's free access via any mobile phone, other social networks are only starting to gain momentum. For example, while Twitter was beginning to gain popularity in Dakar, especially during the unrest of the 2012 elections, I could not locate a single user in Kebemer. Most of the political rallying was done through Facebook or e-mail. More so, even with the popularity of Facebook and slow gains of others like Twitter, many individuals are reticent, if not *fearful* of online social media, especially in the context of migration and family dynamics. There is a rise in tensions within families where husband lives for long periods overseas, and a rise in divorce rates related to these tensions (Teolis, 2009; Mondain, Randall, Diagne, & Eliot, 2012). Many tend to believe that these tensions are exacerbated by social media such as Facebook, which allow for the husband to keep tabs on their wives and interpret their public feeds. Sometimes it is merely in annoyance, since Facebook appear to change intergenerational

relations within the community, even if it remains online. Thus, many chose to remove themselves from the platform.

« C'est ça en fait, chaque personne à son égo et souvent les enfants exagèrent. Ils peuvent voir une de tes photos et dire que c'est une jolie fille. Ce sont des trucs qui peuvent ne pas déranger quand tu n'es pas marié. Les enfants peuvent commenter une de tes photos et dire des choses choquantes sur tes photos du genre : elle est bonne celle-là. Donc si les gens voient cela ils peuvent te taxer de n'importe quoi, ça ne fait pas une bonne image, ils peuvent penser que tu n'es pas assez responsable. »

-Fama, 28, teacher

A question that therefore rises after exposing the ICTs situation in Kebemer would regard whether or not there is a standard progression for online media platforms to develop and take hold following ICTs development? Is this development of ICTs and online social media usage accelerated in the context of developing countries when they are faced with a technology that already existed elsewhere, as opposed to the developed societies who evolved with the development of these technologies? While technology arguably evolves faster than even the foster societies can really adapt to them, is it reasonable to think that developing countries therefore face a bigger cultural shock when faced with these already developed technologies? I have briefly mentioned Castell in the first lines of this paper. I believe this is where his theory may be very helpful in analyzing the Kebemer situation, where exposition to the technology phenomenon pushes a culture to experience a paradigm shift in its view of the world (Castells, 2004). Reactions of fear, misunderstanding or annoyance can therefore perhaps be seen as normal and part of the appropriation process.

Concluding Remarks

While the question regarding whether or not migration is what increased the development of ICTs in the Kebemer area due to the migrants' demand or if they were simply more receptive in appropriating them remains unanswered, there are definitely signs pointing towards it being a strong driver. The process of technology remittancing, combined with a still existing communal culture of sharing appears to have strongly amplified the accessibility of ICTs to all social strata of the commune. Whether this sharing aspect remains as the area develops or the individualization of technology takes hold like in Dakar or in Europe remains to be seen, but in the current conditions as depicted, Kebemer appears to be on the right track to incorporate ICTs in its development, and its civil society appears to be aware of this and is pushing for it. It does appear that the commune's children will be the ones to really reap the benefits of ICTs, even if their parents do not necessarily. ICTs education is part of the local school's curriculum as an initiative from the community and school management, since they are not government required teachings.

These, therefore, are the main findings my data hints toward so far. I believe that migration plays a crucial introductory role as far as ICTs infrastructure and usage development is concerned, even if family and socio-economic dynamics take over after. Migration tends to help increasing access to more social levels than just the educated elites, both by increasing the offer of ICTs through home connections with their increased income, but in acquired knowledge of these ICTs and their networking and learning

possibilities while overseas. ICTs, via migration, may also help both gender and generational emancipation. While the current adult generation that is not educated may not fully use its potential, they are aware of them for their children, and I believe that it is mostly the next generation that might truly benefit from ICTs, at least in the Kebemer context, should the current conditions remain.

I believe that the dynamics that were observed in Kebemer and described in this paper are crucial in laying the knowledge foundations before I can properly understand similar dynamics purely dedicated to social media.

Of course, all of these are but preliminary findings, and nothing can really be ascertained for the moment. However there does appear to be potential in confirmations. As a final remark, it would be very interesting to see similar studies in different areas of Senegal and Africa to see if anything is replicated elsewhere or if Kebemer is an outlier case with its peculiar alignment of social issues and migration that make it conducive in the appropriation of ICTs. One can also assume that each area would have its own appropriation dynamics according to the local cultural elements.

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