



Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences
and Education
Department of Sociology

Call for papers

International Colloquium on Sociology in
Senegal:
Tribute to Professors Abdoulaye Bara
DIOP, Boubakar LY and Gora MBODJ

**Theme: Teaching and practice of
sociology in Senegal: pathways
and challenges**

Date: October 17 to 19, 2023

Venue: UCAD II and Digital Open Space (ENO) of Dakar Mermoz

In French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa, Senegal is the first country to introduce sociology as a university subject as early as 1959. Considered as a transversal discipline, sociology, under the leadership of Georges BALANDIER (TAMBA, 2016), was taught at the University of Dakar in the departments of Classics and Modern Literature, Philosophy, German, Spanish, History, Geography and Portuguese.

In Africa, particularly in Senegal, research in sociology was for the colonizer, first and foremost, an instrument of the colonial administration for the sake of efficiency. Indeed, faced with the growing need to collect information on African populations, the Grand Council of the Afrique Occidentale Française indicated in a report that “the imminent creation of a sociology section constitutes a certain process and the guarantee of a close and necessary collaboration with the administration”. Introduced in 1946 at Institut Fondamental d’Afrique Noire (IFAN) by Georges BALANDIER, we witness, in the opening of the research Section on Sociology led by Paul Mercier, with study areas such as urbanization, immigration, industrialization and demographic structure.

Following BALANDIER and Louis Vincent THOMAS, Senegalese sociologists, such as Abdoulaye Bara DIOP, Boubakar LY, Gora MBODJ, Malick NDIAYE, Moustapha TAMBA, to name but a few among them, have played a vital role in advancing the field of social sciences particularly Sociology in the Senegalese context. Indeed, B. LY and A. DIOP were the pioneers in the field of Sociology in Senegal to take an interest in Halpulaar societies (LY, 1967) and Wolof (DIOP, 1960) and they have contributed to the training of generations of sociologists. Later on, with the opening of the Université Gaston Berger de Saint Louis, the remarkable works of Gora MBODJ have been noticed in the field of sociology in Senegal.

The institutionalization of Sociology was a challenging process related to its acceptance and perception by political authorities of the time, particularly in regions deeply influenced by the works of ethnologists in the centuries preceding their independence. The closure of the sociology department at the University of Dakar and the firing of faculty “considered” to be sulphurous during the events of May 1968 highlight the difficulties of establishing sociology as a recognized discipline.

In fact, with the publication of the works of Louis-Vincent THOMAS (*Les ideologies négro-africaines d’aujourd’hui*) (THOMAS, 1965), of Pierre FOUGEYROLLAS (*Où va le Sènègal? Analyse spectrale d’une nation africaine*) (FOUGEYROLLAS, 1971) and Majhemout DIOP (*Histoire des classes sociales en Afrique de l’Ouest*) (DIOP, 1971), a close link had been quickly established between the revolutionary Marxist ideology and sociology by the ruling regime embodied by president Leopold Sedar SENGHOR, as well as other

political-administrative regimes. This had a negative impact on the teaching of the discipline in Senegalese universities. However, in 1990, the opening of a sociology section at Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis, the second Senegalese public university facilitated the reopening of the Department of at Université Cheikh Anta DIOP de Dakar which would only be effective in 1998 (TAMBA, 2015). Since the expansion of the university map in the early 2000s, sociology departments or sections have emerged at the University Assane Seck of Ziguinchor and later at the University Virtual of Senegal now renamed Université Numérique Cheikh Hamidou KANE (UNCHK). Université Alioune DIOP de Bambey, Université Iba Der THIAM de Thiès, Université Ibrahima NIASSE de Kaolack, and Université Amadou Moctar MBOW do not have a dedicated department even though the discipline is taught there. Furthermore, sociology is practically taught in all Senegalese public universities, but also in some private higher educational institutions and business schools or engineering schools as a discipline capable of shedding light on social phenomena in general.

Nowadays, sociological expertise is called upon all sectors of life (health, transport, politics, etc.) both in the public service and the private sector, as well as in the organizations of technical and financial partners. This awareness of the value of sociology is the result of the work of several generations of sociologists who have fought against the “elimination” of the discipline in the university environment. After decades of teaching and practicing sociology in Senegal, it seems important to take a reflective look at the constitution and pathways of the discipline in Senegal, from the standpoint of its theoretical, epistemological, methodological and practical contributions.

“Teaching and practice of sociology in Senegal: pathways and challenges” is the concern of this conference initiated by the Department of Sociology of Université Numérique Cheikh Hamidou KANE (formerly the Université Virtuelle du Senegal). This university created in 2013, became in 2018, after 5 years of existence, the second largest Senegalese university in terms of the number of students who are regularly enrolled, including those in the department of Sociology.

Globalization and the advent of digital technologies (internet, digital television, connected phones, etc.), the high level of penetration of these tools and their appropriation have evolved the habits, uses and lifestyles of the Senegalese, both in the nature and in the forms of interactions. It is the endogenous and exogenous societal changes that this colloquium aims to identify through the prism of sociological reflection by paying a well-deserved tribute to three emblematic figures that have marked the history and evolution of the discipline in Senegal. These are Pr Abdoulaye Bara DIOP, Pr Boubakar LY and Pr Gora MBODJ, whose respective works (*La société wolof*; *La morale de l’honneur dans les sociétés wolof et hapulaar traditionnels*; and

Corporéité et socialisation en milieu wolof, place et importance du corps et des pratiques corporelles dans la société wolof traditions et changements sociaux) inaugurated the sociological research carried out by Senegalese scholars.

- Abdoulaye Bara DIOP (born in 1930 and died on January 3, 2021) was the first sociologist to be a full professor at the University of Dakar. He taught and mentored many Senegalese and African students and led the Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire de Cheikh Anta DIOP from 1986 to 1995. He strongly contributed to the development of the discipline, the training of many leading figures in the field of sociology and the publication of reference books and articles.
- Boubakar LY, (June 7, 1936 - October 14, 2019): a renowned professor is one of the first sociologists recruited in French-speaking Africa who trained generations of African intellectuals at the University of Dakar. He devoted his life to the defence and promotion of sociology and was the coordinator of the journal "Education and Society".
- Gora MBODJ (January 6, 1947-April 21, 2021): Vice-President of the Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis (UGB), Director of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences from 2000 to 2006 and founding member of the Sociology Department. In addition to these responsibilities, he was the founding director of the Interdisciplinary Study and Research Centre of the Valley (CIERVAL) and member of the International Association Bureau of French-speaking Sociologists (AISLF).

From this background, presentation proposals turnaround of the following focus areas :

Focus Area 1: Institutionalization, practice and teaching of sociology in Senegal

This focus area questions the exogenous nature of sociology practices teaching programs in Africa, the contribution of African sociologists in the construction and deconstruction of global and local sociological knowledge and the place of local languages in the learning and teaching of sociology. As in all the countries where it has emerged, the birth of sociology in Senegal is more a process subdivided into different phases than an event that can be dated. The participants in this focus area will address the contexts, events and circumstances that have conditioned, accelerated or hindered the construction and/or consolidation of sociology in Senegal.

In other words, as a tool of the colonial domination strategy, has Senegalese and African sociology in general decolonized itself after its university and academic existence process since 1960? Furthermore, in the diagnosis, has the history of sociology and the hostile perceptions and censures by

policies towards the influence of a supposed subversive science weakened or tarnished the unveiling posture of this discipline?

Focus area 2: Tribute to three emblematic figures of sociology in Senegal: Pr Abdoulaye Bara Diop, Pr Boubakar Ly and Pr Gora Mbodj

In this area, the contributions of three emblematic personalities whose works and careers are inseparable from the constitution of the sociological discipline in Senegal will be analysed. A tribute will be paid to them by revising their careers and their scientific contributions to the beginnings and consolidation of sociology in Senegal. On the one hand, it will be a matter of presenting these three prominent personalities who are essential to the genesis of the constitution of sociology in Senegal. On the other hand, their academic contributions to the construction of this discipline in Senegal and Africa will be revisited. The importance of this activity is more than constructive because the singularity of a Senegalese and African sociology, like other schools, can only be admitted by starting an analysis and systematization of works and contributions.

Focus area 3: Social utility of sociology in Senegal

The question of social utility and the contribution of sociological knowledge in the construction of societies or in the elaboration and implementation of public policies is an essential issue. Although sociology has been established and consolidated in Senegal for several decades, the debate on its objectives or its project is more than recent. This question arises mainly since sociology in Senegal is still heavily dependent on theoretical and methodological approaches inherited from the colonial legacy. Thus, dealing about its social utility poses not only the problem of its contribution to problem-solving, but also the way it is taught and practiced in Senegal. This raises questions about the process of producing socially and politically useful knowledge. How can sociology be placed at the heart of public policy? Can we continue to consider that the questions we ask ourselves are more important than the answers in a context where social objects pose vital challenges such as health or natural resource management? What to do about the difficulties related to the professional integration of sociology graduates in Africa and Senegal? What contributions does sociology bring to the resolution of contemporary problems and challenges in our countries?

Focus area 4: Study and analysis of the changes within the Senegalese society in crisis

The Senegalese society is undergoing a dynamic process of several mutations in its demographic, social and cultural aspects. The forms of interaction and their context have evolved, which is of scientific interest to the sociological. Indeed, the traditional safety and security valves having strongly weakened, the Senegalese society is exposed to all forms of threats and aggressions both internal and external (violence, crime, addictions, radicalism, insecurity, irregular migration, social networks ...) that need to be

questioned to understand their mechanisms, channels of reproduction and their consequences on the Senegalese society. Communication in this axis will take an analytical look at this evolving Senegalese society.

The dynamics of social transformations are visible but their deciphering and understanding can only be done through a perspective armed with tools and techniques but also a posture of complexity. As a scientific discipline focusing on society, Senegalese sociology is at the crossroads between the process of social transformation and the need to understand it to guide actions.

Focus area 5: Ethics, governance, youth and activism

The current excitement of citizen movements, regular debates on Senegalese democracy as well as the development of new forms of commitment (through social networks, urban cultures, etc.) constitute new and fertile areas for Senegalese sociology. These themes deserve to be explored in light of the multiple political, economic and cultural crises that Senegalese society is going through. This area questions on the one hand, the modes of governance of citizens, institutions and profiles that exercise them by going beyond the texts and formal aspects. It will be about comparing the principles stated, the writings on which they are based and the reality by going through the feelings of the actors. On the other hand, it questions the actions and practices of these citizen movements and activists, their mechanisms of intervention, their imaginary, etc. These analyses can be supplemented by questions about the ability of these citizen movements to promote lasting social change and to co-produce public action on an equal footing with the state, international NGOs or donors.

Besides, the recent discoveries of gas, oil and zircon deposits as well as the whole debate on contracts (extractive operations), constitute an axis of reflection for Senegalese sociology. Indeed, such resources place Senegal in the geostrategic space by giving rise to multiple issues that involve governance to avoid getting trapped in what the “the curse resources”.

Focus area 6: Gender and Sociology in Senegal

Although the well-known and recognized pioneers of sociology in Senegal are often male figures, some women have also contributed to the influence of sociology in Senegal. This area revisits the place and contribution of women in the construction of sociology in Africa in general and in Senegal in particular. A major challenge of this axis is to see how gender studies can structure the future universes of research and collaboration between sociologists and researchers from other disciplines.

This area allows us to reposition the historicity of the notion of gender, particularly the contribution of feminist researchers, but also the semantic

shift that has taken place over the past decade. Is gender reduced to the question of gender equality or does it overflow into different social categories? How can gender be taken into account in public policies and social practices? How can gender contribute to better social welfare? These are some of the fundamental questions that will be addressed in this axis, as gender constitutes an inseparable point in the existence of Senegalese sociology, both the academic field and in praxis.

Focus area 7: Understanding Senegal through collective memory: culture, heritage, art and education

Senegal is a homogeneous set of social classes upon which the nation was built. This reflects, on the one hand by the acceptance of diversity and, on the other hand, by the daily sharing of certain socio-cultural realities. Rites and rituals, traditional or exogenous religious practices, consumption patterns (culinary, clothing...) are among others, the manifestations of this state of affairs, thus determining the way of being of these people. This area, which refers to the memorial, cultural, artistic and educational dimensions, aims to capture these issues from a heuristic point of view through the material and immaterial acquisitions and legacies as well as through the socialisation mechanisms.

TERMS OF SUBMISSION OF PAPERS

An abstract of about 300 words (excluding bibliographic references) can be written in English or French. The abstract should include an introduction presenting the purpose of the paper, a theoretical framework and methodology, discussion of findings, some bibliographical references and 5 keywords.

Please indicate the title (in bold), the name of the author and co-authors if necessary in capital letters and their institutional affiliations.

DEADLINE

Authors are invited to submit an abstract before June 30th, 2023 to the following addresses colloquesociologie2023@un-chk.edu.sn with copies to: mansour.dia@un-chk.edu.sn and moustapha1.ndiaye@un-chk.edu.sn

Notifications of acceptance, modification or rejection will be sent starting from July 30th, 2023.

The articles to be published in colloquium proceedings are expected by September 15, 2023 and the submission of the final draft is set for December 10, 2023.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE WORKS

The colloquium presentations will be published as proceedings **in the first half of January 2024.**

The chair of the scientific committee is in charge of coordinating the publication of the proceedings. Submission of the final is due **December 10, 2023.**

Registration fees for the conference: (30.000 Francs CFA) the institutional account for depositing the participation fee will be notified to the participants after acceptance of the communication proposal.

FORMAT OF THE EVENT

The event will be hybrid, both the in person and online. However, the in person mode will remain privileged. The venue is at UCAD II for the inaugural ceremony and at the Digital Open Space (ENO) in Dakar Mermoz.

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