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7th European Conference on African Studies

PANEL (189): Impact of tourism development on urban and rural communities in Africa

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Tourism, Migration, Imagination.

The social and spatial construction of a 'local elsewhere' in the tourist area of Petite Côte (Senegal).



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Petite Côte (Small coast)


MINISTÈRE CHARGÉ DU TOURISME

Saly Portudal et la petite côte

la station balnéaire
les plages, les lagunes
Mbour cité multi ethnique
port de pêche

SÉNÉGAL



Boat migrations: places of departure in Senegal

Arrivals to the Canary Islands (Frontex, 2009)

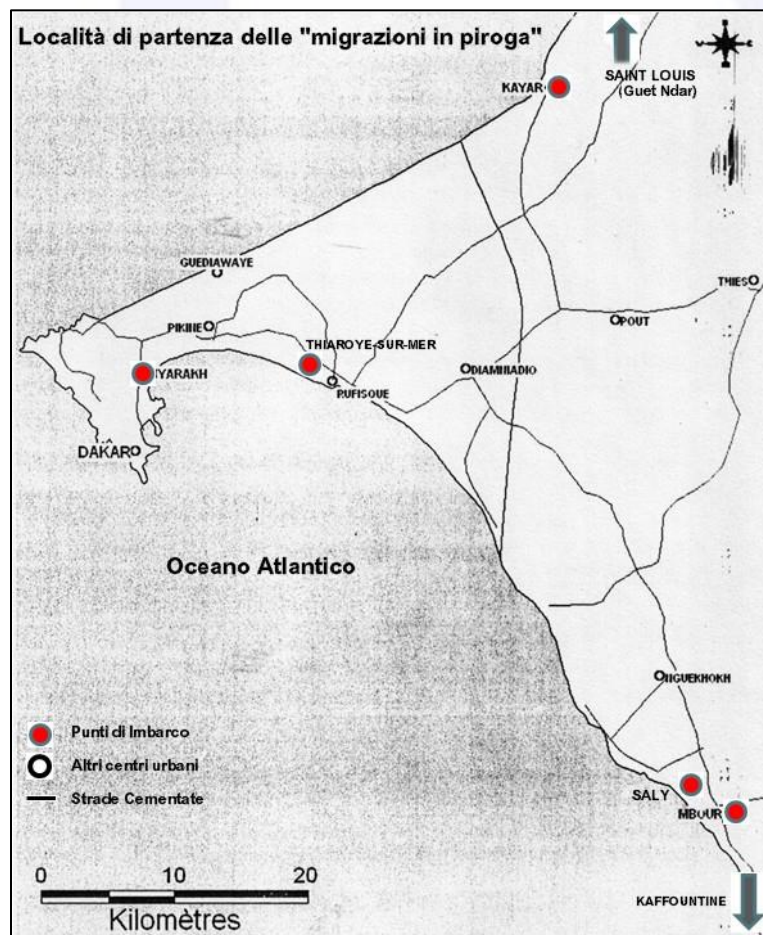
2005 : 4.790

2006 : 33.000 / 23.000 (II° half of the year)

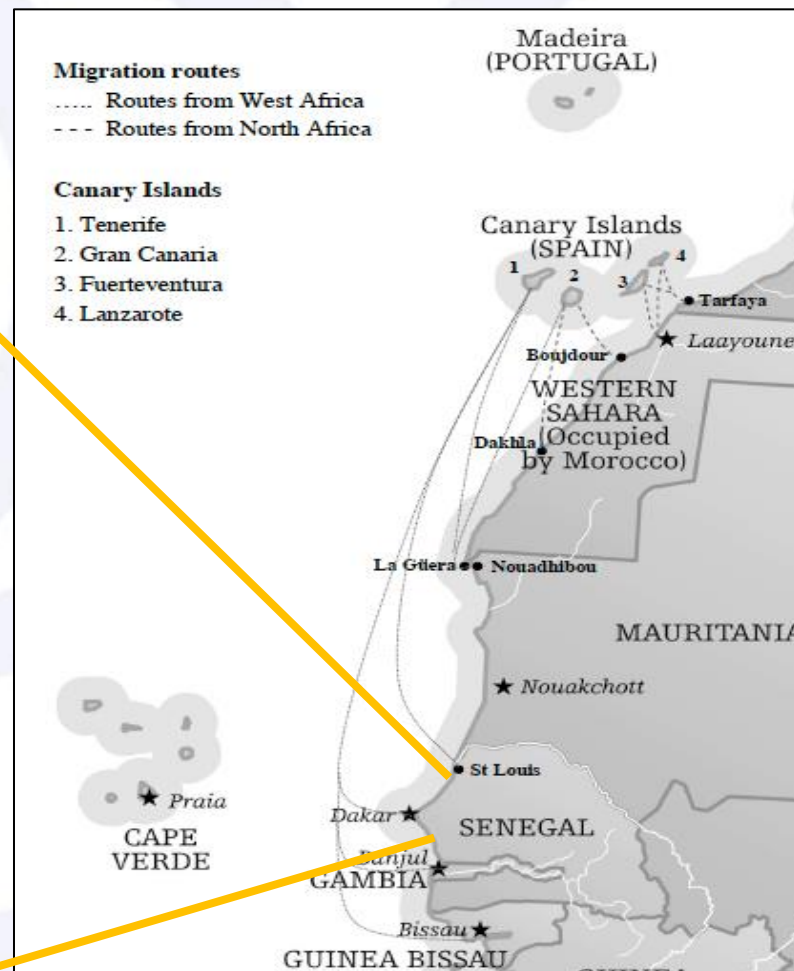
7.500 (only in September)

2007 : 12634 (4.600 repatriated to Senegal in January)

2008 : 9615



EMIGRATION CLANDESTINE À MBOUR
La police arrête 18 candidats
... petite côte n'échappe pas au phénomène de l'émigration clandestine. Chauffeurs de taxi, chômeurs, sont tous prêts à tenter l'aventure, à bord de pirogues de fo...
... péril de leur vie. Le credo, «l'Europe ou la mort», semble être le...
... tièrement de jeunes.



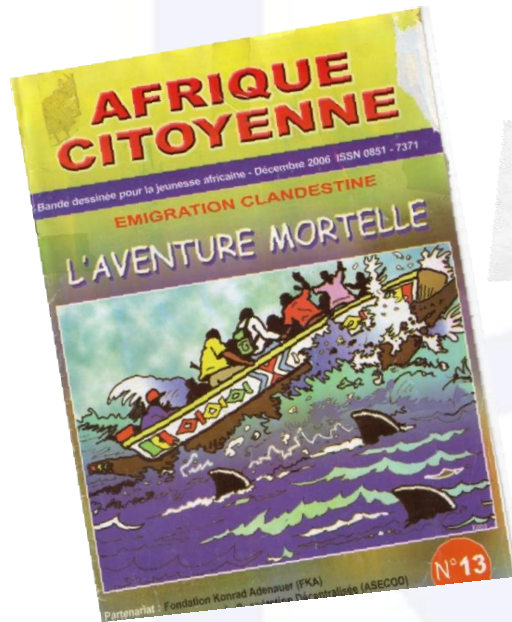
(Hernández Carretero, 2008)

Senegalese Media Representations



degli Uberti S. 2014. "Victims of their fantasies or heroes for a day? Media representations, local history and daily narratives on the migrations piroguières from Senegal". In *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 213-214.

“**Victims** of their good faith. People driven by the force of desperation” (06.18.09 - Walf).



“**The crazy drunk on Elsewhere**” (N.H, 2006).

“**Children** looking for **adventures** to conquer **Europe: the Unknown**” (Le Quotidien, 14.05.09)

The Spanish Archipelago of Canary islands: the new gateway for the **European El Dorado** (N.H,2006).

“To leave is not decided without a consultation, without preparation, without commitments, but also without dreaming” (Laacher 2003).

Exploring the “desire to migrate” in the touristic area of M’bour-Saly

- How do tourism activities shape the migration aspirations of ‘would-be migrants’ in Senegal?
- What is the influence of tourism on Senegalese people and in urban places?

Argument

- Tourismification of people and places: a key-role in the formation of *migration aspirations* and **images of Europe**: the ‘*Elsewhere*’.
- Tourism and Migration imaginaries: inter-subjective experiences, *socially* and *spatially* embedded in the Senegalese urban context.
- **Tourism practices & host/guest interactions** as a creative space enabling aspiring migrants to elaborate an answer to their condition of social immobility (cfr. Carling, 2001).

Aim and How

- To analyze **social representations of urban places** produced by the Senegalese tourism industry and the everyday interactions between European tourists and local guides;
- To shed light on sources of inspiration of tourism & migration imaginaries;
- To discuss how the “tourismification” of M’bour and Saly fosters the production of cultural boundaries between these urban places
- To cast light on the role of tourism consumption towards the social construction of “cosmopolitan subjects”.

Theoretical framework

“Tourismification” & “Tourist gaze” *from the guest’s point of view*

How do images, practices, narrations lead to a “tourismification” of everyday life?

- “A socio-economic, cultural process by which society is turned into spectacles, attractions and consumption sites”
(Wang 2000; Salazar, 2009)
- Tourism as a means of social transformation *from within a society*
(Picard 1996).
- Tourismification of places instead of “turistification of localities: the role of multiple actors.

“**Tourist gaze**” (Urry, 1995) as an intersubjective social construction of *hosts* (tourist) and *guests* (local people) (Salazar, 2005; 2009).

Theoretical framework

Imaginary. Migratory imaginary and tourist imaginary

- Imaginaries as **representational systems** produced at institutional level and in everyday life that mediate reality and form identities (Gardner, 2005; Carling, 2001)
- **Subjective, historical dimensions** of migratory & tourism imaginaries (Osella & Osella, 2006; Salazar, 2010; Venable, 2008; 2009)
- Migratory & tourism imaginaries as creative space of self-definition (de Latour, 2001; Fouquet, 2007; Gaibazzi, 2008)

Vernacular cosmopolitanism

- Coexistence of contradictory notions of *local specificity* and *universal enlightenment* (Bhabha 1996; Werbner 2006)
- What is local, popular, rooted, culturally specific coexists with what is transnational, modern, universal and elitist”.
- **“Cosmopolitanism from below”**

Tourism in the Petite Côte

- **1973.** *Club Aldiana*, village of Nianing (mainly German and Swiss tourists).
- **1981.** *Palm Beach resort*, M'bour (French military and civil servants)
- **90's.** Arrival of Italian and Spanish tourists in Saly and M'bour.

Mid 90's. Middle-age or retired Europeans, returning migrants and Dakar's citizens invest in the construction of holiday resorts, private housing and villas, mainly in the area of Saly.



Changing urban landscape in the Petite Côte



Multi-family houses.

District of Chateau d'Eau Nord



Changing urban landscape in the Petite Côte

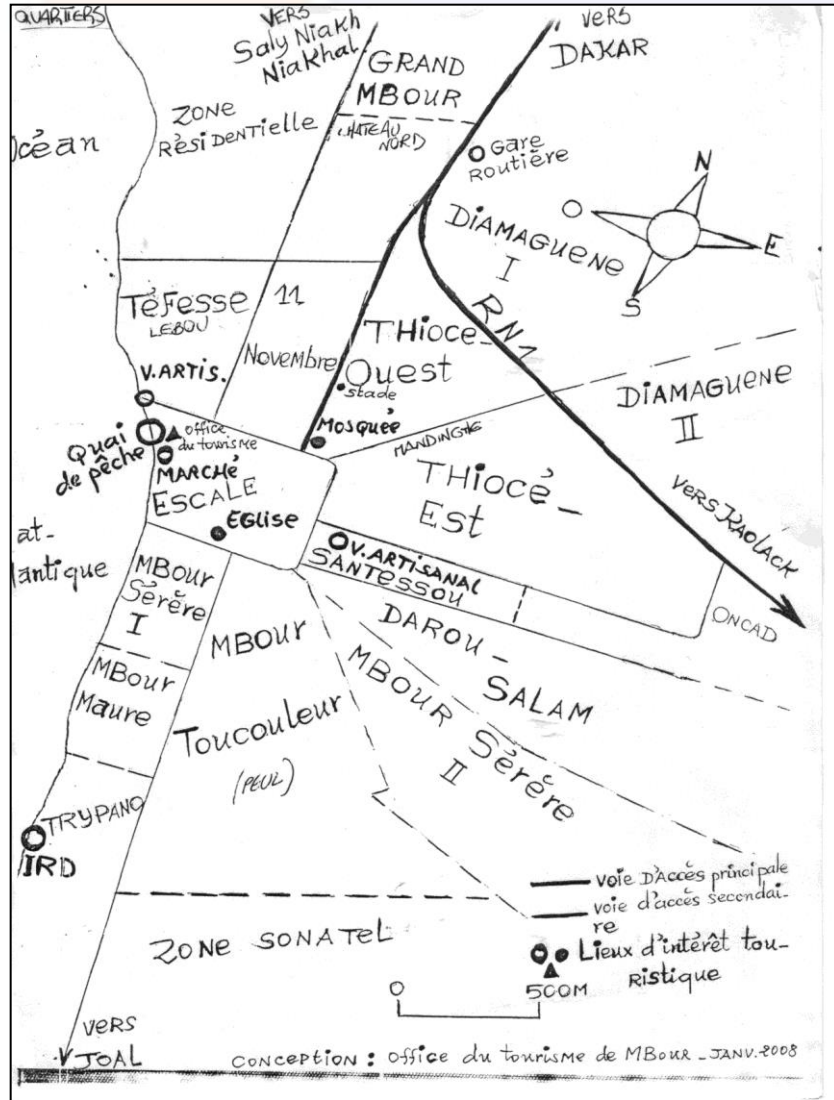


Private residence, neighborhood of
Saly Niakh Niakhal

Private house. District
of Chateau d'Eau



Tourismification of M'bour: «la ville du brassage culturel»



City map (Tourist office of M'bour)

The ethnic groups give the names to the districts of the city. [...]

Originally there were few districts, together with Tefesse and Escale.

The districts of Sonatel, GranBour, Chateaud'Eau are very recent.

As you can see, the history of M'bour is therefore the history of many populations...of their cultural crosses.

(Malik, tourist agent - 10.07.09).

I would say that M'bour is the most “cultural” city of Senegal...it is not by chance that the Fescum festival is organized in M'bour!

(Salim, member of Enda Tiers Monde - 08.07.09)

Tourismification of M'bour: «la ville du brassage culturel»



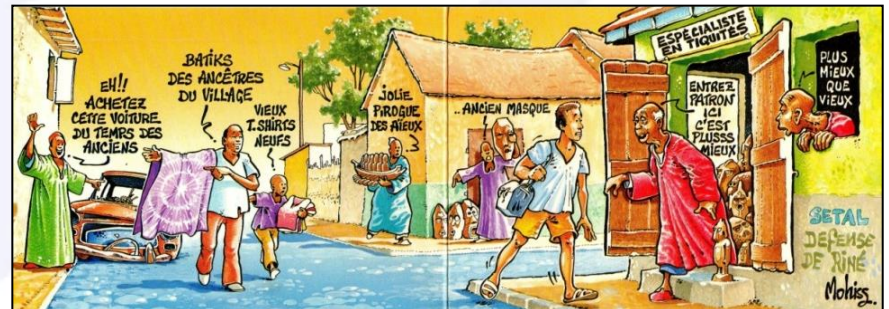
“Culture is at the beginning and the end of development”

The Fescum festival shows the cosmopolitan character of our city. M'bour is a meltingpot of cultures, a multicultural, multiethnic and multiracial place where every Senegalese, African and non-Africa people can feel at home and appreciate the parade of many ethnic groups: Sérèr, Poular, Diola, Mandingue, Lébou...

(El Hadji Fallou Sylla,, Mayor of M'bour - 18.12.09)

Fescum festival as a form of “vernacular cosmopolitanism”

BUT experienced differently by tourists and local population.



The tourismification of Saly



'Resort Eden'

Hotel and restaurant along the 'Route Nationale' crossing M'bour

'Village Petit Eden'

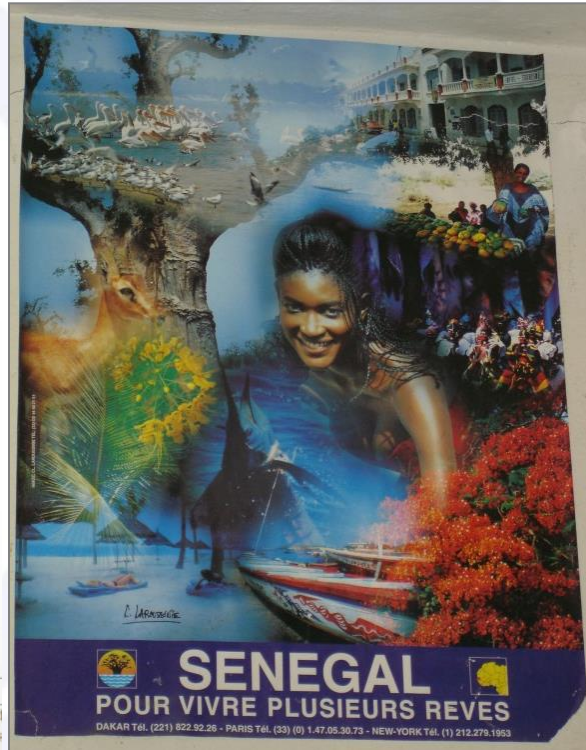
Hotel with restaurant and swimming pool (in construction) along the road between district of GranBour and Chateau d'Eau



The tourismification of Saly

“What if heaven was on earth?”

Advertisement poster in Saly, M’bour and its neighborhoods.



“Senegal. To live many dreams”

Advertising billboard along the ‘Route Nationale’ crossing the city of M’bour.

*“The African charm...
The European comfort”*

Flyer, Les Résidences Tropical Park, Saly.



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(Afrique annonce CEDEAO)



Villas de grand standing - Plein pied - terrain 500m2
situées dans un océan de verdure
à 3 minutes de sa plage

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Le charme africain



Le confort européen



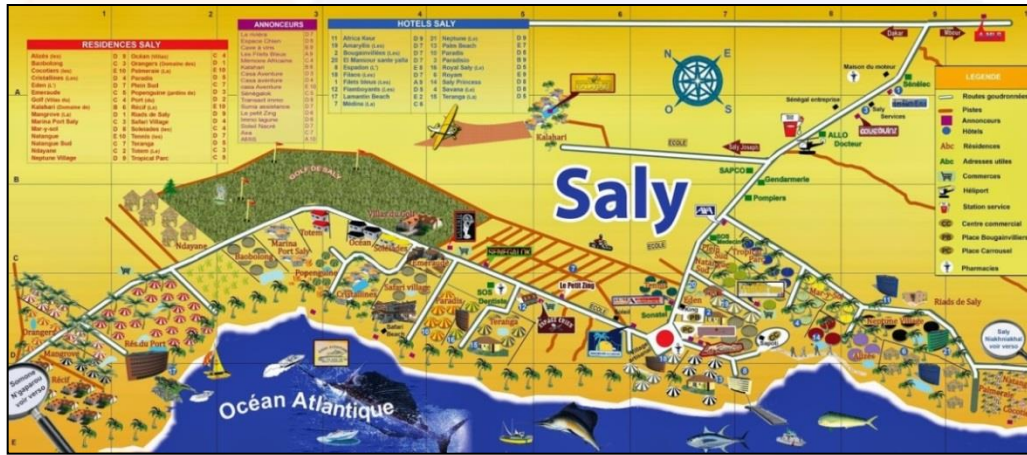
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Tourismification of Saly: the «imaginary Europe»



Saly tourist map

Are you an Italian tourist? ... Spanish? Welcome to Europe!

Here you are in the “modern” Saly! Come on...even if you just want to please your eyes, follow me. I will show you the world!

(Malik, informal tourist guide, Saly Niakh Niakhal – 13.07.09)

Stefano: Why do people say that Saly is Europe?

Adama: *Because it's not easy to go or reaching Europe.*

Saly is like Europe because in Europe there are more job opportunities, but it's not easy to obtain them. In Saly there are all comfort and opportunities that M'bour doesn't offer. (M'bour - 07.07.09).

Saly: tourist experience of a “local Elsewhere”

I love spending the nights in Saly...from midnight till five!

To me the nights spent in the disco with the Europeans are like real trips. The life lights up...like in Paris at night!

You have fun like the Europeans do but at five o'clock the noises of cars start again: “Beep beep!” ...and you realize that you are back to your habitual life in M'bour.

You always end up returning to your standard life.

During the day there is always noise. The life is different in Saly!

(Sidati, shopkeeper, M'bour - 03.08.09)

Tourist encounter: the daily incorporation of the “Elsewhere”

Those who work in tourism sector no longer live their own life...or maybe they start having another life. They live the life of tourists.

When I was working with tourists, I never had time to meet my friends. Your private life became part of the life of tourists.

Your spare time became often that of tourists.

I did not see my friends for months and then, during one night spent with the tourists in Saly, I could meet some of them (friends), but only because they were working also with tourists.

(Adama, 13.07.09).

When Claudine or Matilde call me, my head goes elsewhere and I have a strong desire to join them because, after all, I feel part of their life “Là-bas”. I feel part of their world!

(Adama, 01.08.09).

Tourism experiences of a “local Elsewhere”

Often during daytrips, when I used to guide Mathilde to discover Senegal it seemed to me that she was rather guiding me...She was making me travel! She was taking away a part of me. The tourists take you to another place and after you feel unsettled. You do not know anymore where you are. Since Claudine left Senegal I feel like having two different ways of being, different habits or life conditions that I do not want to lose. I want to reach her! (07.08.09).

I live here but when I am with tourists it seems to me living abroad. Sometimes it is easier for me to understand what is happening in Europe...the European crisis, rather than what is happening around me...in my neighborhood (05.07.09).

Sometimes working in tourism sector was a bit like living on vacation or living another life...this happens especially when tourists invited me to spend evenings or w-ends in their hotel. Most of people of M'bour have never been to Saly (17.08.09).

Tourism experiences of a “local Elsewhere”

Still today I often talk with Claudine. I have my room in Toulouse. Claudine showed it to me with the webcam. She moved to a new house. I gave her many tips on how to paint walls, mounting furniture or furnishing spaces.

I spent a lot of time thinking about how to design “our home”. You know, it’s strange living here (M'bour) and at the same time working there (Toulouse) without living there,...without ever having lived there .

(01.08.09).

Right now I should not be in Senegal but in Toulouse, next to Claudine. We talked several times about this possibility. That’s why sometimes my spirit and my feelings are somewhere else!

(11.08.09).

Concluding remarks

- The tourismification of spaces and *the host-guest* relationship shape the creation of “tourist and migration imaginaries” and the experience of “local elsewhere”;
- The ‘local Elsewhere’ is a *cultural* rather than a *geographical* experience of mobility.
- The drivers to migrate are not inscribed in a stereotyped idea of Europe but it is a *grounded local and social representation*, tied to the everyday tourism interactions and experiences.
- The engagement in tourism is a social practice enabling aspiring migrants to develop an answer to their sense of social immobility.

Thanks for your attention!!

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