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Young Men and Islam in the 1990s: Rethinking an Intergenerational Perspective

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Abstract

Interest in the question of youth and Islam in West Africa stems from the overwhelming demographic weight of youth and their relatively recent incursion into the public domain, as well as a wave of Islamic revivalism that has swept across Africa from the late 1970s on. In this paper, we propose to examine the sociopolitical role of young men in Islamic revivalist movements that occurred in urban centers in Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Senegal in the 1980-1990s. Such movements were particularly popular among secularly educated young men who attended French-speaking schools. While the role of young men in revivalist movements suggests new configurations of authority and charisma, their religious agency remains closely embedded within relationships that extend across generations. Here, we examine instances of conflicts between generations and pay attention to sites of negotiation, such as mosques and voluntary associations.

Keywords

youth, men, Islam, public sphere, intergenerational relations, West Africa

Interest in the question of youth and Islam in West Africa stems from the overwhelming demographic weight of youth and their relatively recent incursion into the public domain, as well as a wave of Islamic revivalism that swept across Africa from the late 1970s on. Earlier studies of Islam and youth located questions of social change in the context of intergenerational relations, with a

focus on dynamics of gerontocracy (see Last 1992, for instance). In the 1990s, authors such as Donal Cruise O'Brien (1996) went as far as suggesting that today's African youth is part of a 'sacrificed generation', stripped of economic and political power, turning to religion as a source of empowerment and, in many cases, as a justification for violence (see Richards 1996). Following this perspective, anchored on intergenerational tensions, the question of authority and charisma is central to understanding religious dynamics. As such processes of change in African Muslim societies have often been conceptualized in terms of reified doctrinal differences, with scholars opposing different branches of Sufism (Qadiriyya, Tidjaniyya, Hamawiyya or Muridiyya) or alternatively opposing Sufi traditions to Salafism, Wahhabiyya or any other movement in Islam that could be regarded as 'foreign' to local practices (see, for instance, Kaba 2000; Rosander and Westerlund 1997; Brenner 1993). While 'youth' has historically been constructed as a problem-bearing sociological category, the study of young Africans has increasingly challenged such oppositional constructions, revisiting the agency of youth in contemporary African societies (see, e.g., Diouf 2003; Diouf and Collignon 2001; El-Kenz 1995).

Today, studies of youth tend to read their agency and their sociopolitical activism within the framework of social movements' analysis (see, e.g., Wiktorowicz 2004). In view of a number of political and economic changes taking place in the late 1980s, bringing about processes of political democratization and economic liberalization, young people are now conceptualized as social agents in the public sphere—which we define as a space for the exchange of conflicting ideas and discourses (see Bowen 2003 for a similar definition of the public sphere), intermingled with nondiscursive practices (see Diouf 2003; Diouf and Collignon 2001; Comaroff and Comaroff 2000). From the late 1980s onward, young men and young women have intensified their sociopolitical initiatives in order to transcend their situation of political and economic exclusion. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, in the early 1990s, students were at the forefront of protests against President Houphouët-Boigny and demonstrated their discontent by shouting slogan 'Houphouët voleur' (Houphouët the thief) throughout the streets of Abidjan. In Senegal, Abdou Diouf's victory in the 1988 presidential elections exasperated young people who claimed the elections had been rigged and led to riots by some of them who were not old enough to vote or who had not been registered on the electoral list. They used the word *sopi* ('change' in Wolof) as their rallying cry. At the end of December 1996, ten years after the assassination of Sankara, students from the University of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso displayed their dissatisfaction with their working conditions and a corrupt and authoritarian government by going on strike for three months (Wise 1998). In a contemporary African

context, the category of youth generally encompasses those who have reached puberty up to individuals in their forties who remain unmarried and have very limited financial independence (LeBlanc 1998, 2006b; Hamel 1999; d'Almeida-Topor 1992). It must be noted that, in the construction of youth as a social category, gender plays a important role in the relationship in determining the age status of different individuals; namely, in a number of West African societies, as women tend to marry earlier than men and as both genders have different relationships to economic resources, men and women do not necessarily have the same relationship to the social construction of age categories.¹

In this article, keeping in mind gender distinctions, we propose to examine more specifically the sociopolitical roles of young men in Islamic revivalist movements in urban centers in Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Senegal in the 1980s and 1990s. While young women were central to 1980s-1990s Islamic revivalism, if only in view of their high numbers as participants in new Muslim organizations, the relevance of solely discussing the roles of young men stems from their renewed presence in the public sphere as religious leaders. LeBlanc (2000a, 2009, forthcoming) and other authors, such as Masquelier (2008), Schulz (2007, 2008), Janson (2007), Alidou (2005) and Augis (2002 and 2005), have discussed the roles of young women in the context of recent revivalist movements in Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Mali, Niger and Senegal.² Besides their high number as women religious activists and the focus on female bodies in revivalist movements, female religious leadership has mainly been limited to all-female audiences. This article is a synthesis of our empirical researches. Muriel Gomez-Perez conducted a number of historical studies in Senegal between 1992 and 2005 as well as in June 2008, and in Burkina Faso in 2005 and 2006; Marie Nathalie LeBlanc carried out ethnographic fieldwork in Côte d'Ivoire between 1992 and 1995, 1998, 2000 and July 2008. Mathias Savadogo has done historical research in Côte d'Ivoire in 1994, 1996, 2001, 2004 and 2006-2007. Although we have each independently published extensively on the subject of new Islamic revivalism, describing similar phenomena in these three countries, this article allows us to highlight some common dynamics in the activism of young Muslims that extend beyond specific national contexts.³ The parallels between these different instances of nationally based religious revivalism highlight, at the same time, shared transnational processes and idiosyncratic national transformations. In fact, while the relationship between Islam and politics is distinct in Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Senegal, in all cases in the 1990s Islamic revivalism was particularly popular among secularly educated youths, both men and women, who had attended public, French-speaking schools.

In Senegal the sociopolitical dynamics surrounding Islam are tied to the significant presence and influence of Islamic brotherhoods (Tidjaniyya and

Muridiyya). These emerged in tandem with a number of Islamic associations at the end of the 1970s that were vehemently opposed to the secularism of the state (Gomez-Perez 1994, 1997; Magassouba 1985; Fall 1983, 1985; Coulon 1983, 1984). The relationship between the brotherhoods and the political apparatus, particularly in the case of the Muridiyya brotherhood, has been strained since colonial times. Recently, however, exceptions to this relationship have been noted,⁴ leading to the supposition that collusion between the state and Islam is developing. In turn, it is now possible to speak of a form of 'comprehensive secularism' (*laïcité compréhensive*) and of the emergence of a form of popular, state-based, 'Muridi-fied' religious sphere under the presidency of Abdoulaye Wade (Gomez-Perez 2005a). Finally, Senegal's celebrated image as a model of democracy has been tarnished in the last two decades due to the changing political situation (see *Politique africaine* 1992, 2004).

Although Islam is demographically the dominant religion in both Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, it is marginalized in relation to state political authority. In Burkina Faso, this process of marginalization began on the day of the 4 August 1983 revolution.⁵ Today, Islam in Burkina Faso is divided into three principal tendencies. First there are the brotherhoods, themselves divided between the Tidjaniyya, the Qadiriyya and the Hamawiyya. Second is the 'reformist'⁶ movement centered on the Communauté Musulmane du Burkina Faso (Muslim Community of Burkina Faso [CMBF]), an association created by the state; while this association remains subordinate to state authority (for a brief historical overview, see Otayek 1984: 304, 1996: 234; Kouanda 1989), it has experienced internal doctrinal divisions framed in terms of 'traditionalists' and 'reformists' since the 1970s. Finally there are those who identify as Sunnis and associate themselves with the Mouvement Sunnite (Sunni Movement [MS]). Despite the demographic weight of Muslims and their access to state financial resources under the presidency of General Lamizana, they have failed to secure political weight and national economic influence in the long run (Otayek and Diallo 1998; Labazée 1988). Oumarou Kanazoé's trajectory illustrates this failure; it leads to the impression that the Burkinabe Muslim community is entrenched in a situation of political clientelism. Having succeeded in becoming the largest entrepreneur in the country, Kanazoé is also the principal donor of the CMBF, a well-known partner of the state, and he used his political connections in October 2006 to arrange the reopening of the MS's largest Friday mosque in the neighborhood of Zangouettin in Ouagadougou (*Le Pays*, 9 October 2006).

By contrast, in Côte d'Ivoire debates concerning the relationship between the state, society and religion unfolded through the question of citizenship (Miran 2006; Gary-Toukara 2005; Savadogo 2005; LeBlanc 1998). Prior to

Félix Houphouët-Boigny's death in December 1993, the process of democratization and the implementation of a multiparty political system led to the adoption of an ideology emphasizing the concept of religious tolerance. It was thus within the new context of 'democratization' at the beginning of 1990 that a myriad of new Islamic associations, such as the Conseil National Islamique (National Islamic Council [CNI]), were born. This, in turn, led to the reorganization of the Muslim community (Miran 2006; Savadogo 2005; LeBlanc 1998). Faced with the restructuring of the Muslim community, the Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (Democratic Party of the Ivory Coast [PDCI]), which remained in power between 1960 and 1993, adopted a stance of religious tolerance in a general context of state secularism. This ideological positioning is evident when we consider the negotiations that took place between the CNI and the PDCI with regard to the inclusion of *madâris* (sing. *madrassa*) in the national school curriculum and the recognition of Muslim celebrations as national holidays (LeBlanc 1998). Following the death of Houphouët-Boigny and the ensuing battle for succession that took place, the Ivorian state gradually reverted back to a concept of citizenship rooted in the idea of autochthonous belonging, effectively eliminating the possibility of future religious and cultural accommodations for Muslims. Next, with the coming to power of Konan Bédié in 1994, the creation of a new electoral code and the various measures introduced regarding the management of access to lands, a new political category of 'stranger' was created, encompassing individuals originating from the northern part of the country, Muslims and individuals born outside of the country, including their descendants (Gary-Toukara 2005; LeBlanc 1998).

Furthermore, it must be noted that given the historical influence of the Catholic Church, despite the fact that it no longer maintains its hegemonic position (LeBlanc 2003; Otayek 1997), and the more recent influence of adherents of Pentecostalism in the political arena,⁷ Muslims in both these countries must also contend with Christians. Nevertheless, the proliferation of mosques (Gomez-Perez 2009, forthcoming; Kouanda 1996), associations (Miran 2006; LeBlanc 1998) and *madâris* (LeBlanc 1999; Diawara 1996; Cissé 1990) signals the fact that Islam was effectively 'in a process of transformation' as of the late 1980s (Otayek 1996: 233).

To a large extent Senegal has been at the forefront of youth revivalist movements with the creation of the Jamaatou Ibadou Rahmane, or the Association des Serviteurs de Dieu (Servant's of God Association [JIR]) in 1978 (Gomez-Perez 1997). In the case of Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, it was in the context of political liberalization in the early 1990s that young Muslims emerged as significant public actors, most notably through students' movements

(LeBlanc 2006b; Savadogo 2005). We will argue that although the role of young Muslim men in revivalist movements suggests new configurations of authority and charisma, which transcend the boundaries between Sufi and 'reformist' Islam, young men's activism also remodels dynamics of intergenerational relationships. Indeed, we will show that in certain cases young men have positioned themselves in direct opposition to their elders with respect to the subject of religious practice and the relationship between Islam and the state. In the context of the restructuring of proselytism that is at the core of Muslim activism, bridges were being built between youths and elders, signaling their mutual interest and orientation. To highlight dynamics of cooperation between generations, we pay particular attention to sites of negotiation between elders and youths, such as mosques and voluntary religious associations.

We will first describe the renewed activism of young Muslim men in Burkina Faso, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, with a focus on the ways in which they have penetrated the public sphere and on profiles of emerging Muslim activists in the 1980s and 1990s. We will then examine the issue of religious authority and the interstices between the generations that the activism of young Muslims men has brought about. Finally, we describe the contexts and the modalities of cooperation between elders, established Muslim leaders and the leaders of the next generation.

Islam and Young Men in the 1980-1990s: Social Actors in the African Public Sphere

New Fields of Religious Activism

Since the late 1980s the public presence of young Muslim men in Senegal, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire has mostly been felt through the constructions of mosques, the creation of Islamic associations and the growth of Islamic media, bringing about new strategies of proselytism (LeBlanc and Gomez-Perez 2008).

In Côte d'Ivoire, while early initiatives took place in the late 1970s and 1980s, the renewal of Muslim organizations mainly took place in the context of the formalization of associative structures (see also Miran 2006 for a detailed discussion of the emergence of a 'modern' national Muslim elite in the 1990s). During the first half of the 1970s, students from the Cocody University campus in Abidjan created the first official Muslim youth association, the Jeunesse Estudiantine Musulmane (Youth Muslim Students Association [JEM]). The

JEM was followed by the Association des Elèves et des Etudiants Musulmans de Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast's Association of Muslim Students [AEEMCI]), which was created in 1978. Finally the Association des Jeunes Musulmans de Treichville (Treichville's Young Muslims Association [AJMT]) came into existence in 1988. It must be noted that until the 1990s, the JEM, AEEMCI and AJMT were managed by the Mouvement des Elèves et Étudiants de Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast Students' Movement [MEECI]).⁸ As early as 1978, leaders of the Association des jeunes musulmans de Côte d'Ivoire (AJMCI) and the AEEMCI, such as Djiguiba Cissé, began asking for access to radio time in order to benefit from a more accessible form of media, as compared to television, and also to make room for themselves in a media space already occupied by Catholic Christians, who had developed shows such as *Radio Espoir* (Radio Hope) and *Radio National Catholique* (National Catholic Radio). A national television program titled *Allahou Akbar*, created by Boikari Fofana, Tidjane Ba and Lamine Kaba, pioneers of the restructuring of Islam in Côte d'Ivoire, had been around since 1981 (see also Savadogo 2008; Miran 2006; Binaté 2005).⁹ At the same time that Muslim university students were becoming increasingly active, a number of neighborhood-based Muslim associations, created and invested by young people, started to appear in main urban centers such as Abidjan and Bouaké (LeBlanc 1998, 2000b). Furthermore, the AEEMCI, along with other Islamic associations, participated in the creation in 1989 of a new nationwide Islamic association, the CNI, which became the main national Islamic association in the first half of the 1990s.¹⁰

In Senegal, the JIR was created in 1978, and the Association des Étudiants Musulmans de l'Université de Dakar (Association of Muslim Students of the University of Dakar [AEMUD]) in 1984. Islamic newspapers also multiplied during that period; the main ones that appeared in Dakar are *Études islamiques* (Islamic Studies) created by the Organisation de l'action islamique (Organization for Islamic Action) in July 1979; *Djamra*, created by the association named Jamra in 1983; *Wal Fadjri*, created by Sidy Lamine Niass in January 1984; *Le Musulman* (The Muslim), created by the JIR in 1983; and *L'Étudiant musulman* (The Muslim Student), established by the AEMUD in 1989 (Piga 2002a and b; Gomez-Perez 1994, 1997). Young Muslims in Senegal have also been actively campaigning since the 1980s for the construction of a mosque on the university campus (Gomez-Perez 2005a and b). Nonetheless, for two main reasons, the vast majority of these journals are no longer published: in the second half of the 1990s religious activism slowed down (Gomez-Perez 2005b) and the main leaders reoriented their activism.

In Burkina Faso a religious crisis exploded in neighborhood streets and mosques in 1973 between the CMBF and the Wahhabi. In order to ease

tensions, the government agreed to create the Mouvement Sunnite de Haute-Volta (Sunni Movement of Upper Volta), which became the Mouvement Sunnite du Burkina Faso (Sunni Movement of Burkina Faso) in 1984 (Koné-Dao 2005; Traoré 2005; Kouanda 1989, 1996; Dao 1991; Otayek 1984). In 1989 the Centre d'Études, de Recherches et de Formation Islamiques (Center for Islamic Study, Research and Training [CERFI]) was established and, similarly, set up its head office in a newly created neighborhood, *les 1200 logements* (Gomez-Perez 2009, forthcoming). In the 1990s the first Muslim students' association, the Association des Elèves et Etudiants Musulmans du Burkina Faso (AEEMB), was created in Ouagadougou and established its head office in a newly constructed residential neighborhood near the University of Ouagadougou's campus. The group launched the newspaper *An-Nasr* in January 2004.

Due to the flowering of Islamic associations and Islamic media, a new threshold was reached in the public display of young Muslims' faith during the 1990s. The intensification of the public expression of Muslim identities and practices took on different forms, some specific to a national or urban context, others shared across national borders. For instance, Da'wa caravans were created by young Muslim members of the AJMCI and were used to attract new converts across the national landscape (see Miran 2000 and 2006 for observations about the same phenomena). Da'wa caravans were also used in Senegal in the context of the proselytizing actions of the JIR. Participation in the pilgrimage to Mecca also increased among young Muslims in Côte d'Ivoire as of the late 1990s (LeBlanc 2005). Islamic messages embodied in sermons and debates started to be delivered 'outside the walls' of mosques and *madâris*. In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, there is a strong tendency on the part of leaders involved in new Islamic associations, such as Cissé Vassiriki and Coulibaly Aboubakar of the Ligue Islamique des Prédicateurs de Côte d'Ivoire (League of Muslim Preachers of Côte d'Ivoire [LIPCI]), to travel from their head offices in urban areas (Abidjan and Bouaké, among others) to semi-urban areas such as Bingerville and Anyama on the outskirts of Abidjan. The JIR in Senegal set out to drill several wells in rural areas. The phenomena of veiled women both on and off university campuses has gained ground, notably in Senegal (Augis 2002, 2005) and Côte d'Ivoire (LeBlanc 2000a), while it has yet to be observed in Ouagadougou. In 1992 young and newly joined members of the AEEMCI and the AJMCI created the Islamic newspaper *Plume Libre*,¹¹ and it was only in 1999 that leaders of the AJMCI and the AEEMCI were allotted airtime with the creation of Radio Al Bayane.¹² The birth of Islamic media needs to be read within the context of the liberalization of public expression beginning in 1990. It also needs to be understood in view of the transformation of Islamic associations that enhanced both its legal and political

status. Young imams at the central mosque of the Riviéra III neighborhood (also known as 'Beverly Hills'), one of the prominent residential neighborhoods of Abidjan, started to use new technology to enliven their conferences and to create documentation for their followers. The young imam uses a wireless system to present his weekly preaching. When he gives conferences and participates in debates, he uses a video projector and a wide projection screen. It should be noted that Riviéra III is mainly inhabited by the intellectual and the financial elite of the country. National associations such as the CNI in Côte d'Ivoire have created their own Web sites.¹³ In both Burkina Faso and Senegal, it seems that the imams are still in the early stages of experimentation with these new information technologies.

Besides the expansion of their methods of religious expression and proselytism, young people also endeavored to enter new areas that had frequently been ignored by the Muslim institutions of the past. In this way they appear to be the sentinels of their communities. They visit areas predominantly inhabited by people in need or who live on the margins of society. While this phenomenon has been observed in the three national contexts we have studied, it seems that this form of religious activism displays the greatest level of organization in Côte d'Ivoire. For instance, the AJMCI was the association behind the construction of the central mosque at the Centre des lépreux de Bingerville (Bingerville Leprosy Center). They also created a local community center attached to the Communauté Musulmane de la Riviéra Golf (Riviera Golf Muslim Community).¹⁴ Moreover, two young journalists, Dembélé Al Séni and Doumbia Ibrahim, imprisoned in the Maison d'Arrêt et de Correction d'Abidjan (Abidjan's Main Prison [MACA]) initiated the construction of a prison mosque and the establishment of the Communauté Musulmane de la MACA (MACA Muslim Community) (Sylla 2005; Savadogo and Sylla 2006). In Senegal we also increasingly see Islamic associations, particularly those led by youth, organizing visits to sick people in hospitals and prisons and other correctional facilities. They also distribute provisions at the end of Ramadan to poor neighborhoods in Dakar. In contrast, given the central role of the Catholic Church and of evangelical movements, this phenomenon is less pronounced in Burkina Faso.

The Stakes of Religious Revivalism: Between the Global and the Local

Thus far, scholarly work has tended to place emphasis on the external causes of Islamic revivalism among African societies, especially in terms of the influence of Western and Arab countries (see LeBlanc and Soares 2008). While the impact of the Iranian Revolution across all generations has been overemphasized

(Esposito 1990; Gomez-Perez 1997, 2008), an overview of the various publications from youth associations, particularly from Senegal, suggests that the situations in Palestine and Iraq also had an immense impact, especially among young people. However, when looking at the discourses of young Muslims regarding the stakes of religious transformation at the turn of the twenty-first century, it is clear that not only international events are significant. Local dynamics are at the core of understanding the religious activism of young Muslims. In order to outline the concerns of young Muslims, we are using Islamic print media produced by young activists' organizations. For instance, over the course of the first year of publication (2004) of *An-Nasr* (Ouagadougou), only three articles dealt with international issues: one looked at the interconnected issue of secularism and the Islamic veil in Europe;¹⁵ another dealt with the future of the Arab-Muslim world, in which the author directly criticized the divisions among Arabs in the Middle East in relation to the Israeli state, attacked the Organisation de la conférence islamique (Organization of the Islamic Conference) in view of its incapacity to resolve the problems affecting the Muslim community and painted a dark portrait of Saddam Hussein;¹⁶ and a third discussed the assassination of Sheikh Yassine and its ensuing consequences.¹⁷ In 2006 interest in international issues grew with the publication of an article pertaining to the 2006 Palestinian legislative victory of Hamas,¹⁸ another on the war in Chechnya,¹⁹ and a third on the Iranian nuclear crisis (Audet-Gosselin 2008).²⁰ Articles in *Le Musulman* and in *L'Étudiant musulman*—the two main Dakar Muslim students' association's newspapers—echoed the interest in the *umma* (Gomez-Perez 1997) as expressed in *An-Nasr* (Gomez-Perez 2008). Carried in the newspapers of both associations were stories on the question of an Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf War, and the political situations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo. Such print interest for the international Muslim community attests to a sense of identity as Muslims that extends beyond national borders. *Plume Libre*, until it shut down in 2002, and *Islam Info* include issues that concern the universal *umma*. While both of these periodicals mainly published news information provided by other international media, *Islam Info* also publishes comments made by local Islamic associations regarding Muslims in other countries or Islam in general. For instance, *Islam Info* printed comments made by a number of national Islamic associations regarding the cartoons depicting the Prophet published in European newspapers (Savadogo 2008).

Nonetheless, analysis of the content of Muslim youth's associations' print media shows that, in addition to the international context, the intricate relationship between youth and Islam cannot be understood outside of the momentous changes that have taken place in the last twenty years or so across

the African continent and in Senegal, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire more specifically. Over the course of the 1980s all three experienced economic crises (the collapse of the coffee and cocoa markets in Côte d'Ivoire, for example, and the peanut crisis in Senegal) that their governments could neither control nor stop. In the wake of a number of disruptive circumstances, such as the devaluation of the CFA in 1994, the implementation of structural adjustment packages, growing privatization, a greater disengagement of the state in favor of private interests, omnipresent nepotism, a bankrupt process of democratization and rising social inequality, the sense of disenchantment felt by youths has spiraled. Thus, just as young people had positioned themselves at the forefront of the struggle for democracy (see Konaté 2002 and 2003 in the case of Côte d'Ivoire; Diawara 1996, Zeilig 2004 and Diop and Diouf 1990 in the case of Senegal; Kieffer 2006, Otayek 1996 in the case of Burkina Faso), they have been the first to expose the empty promises of this movement and the devastating impacts the degrading economy has had on them. In this context, with no other credible option available to them, Islam has become the only alternative.

Again, such critical stances can be seen in the content of the different Islamic print media created by young Muslims. Some articles dealt extensively with the national contemporary political climate. For instance, in one article of *An-Nasr*, the AEEMB paid tribute to the deceased former president of Upper Volta, Sangoulé Lamizana.²¹ In another, the historian, trade unionist and political figure from Burkina Faso, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, who died in December 2006, was honored (Audet-Gosselin 2008).²² As a further example, Dakar's *L'Érudiant musulman* has placed greater emphasis on societal issues and student life on campus. In effect it has published critical analyses of social issues, such as the Senegalese passion for the *Pari Mutuel Urbain* (Shared Urban Venture), the problems inherent in the health system and family structure; articles pertaining to university life, addressing questions about *année blanche* (officially cancelled university academic years), exam failures and teacher reform; and considerations of political life—interviews with various presidential candidates during the elections of 1993 and articles about the relationship between Islam and politics. In Côte d'Ivoire debates regarding the status of Muslims and northerners in the national space are of central importance to young people. In some cases a political issue was the subject of an in-depth analysis: articles in *Plume Libre* denounced the forms of exploitation suffered by Muslims and brought to the attention of young Muslims the injustices committed by national political authorities, including the refusal to subsidize Islamic schools and the mismanagement of national Islamic activities such as the early pilgrimage to Mecca.

The issue of being a 'good Muslim' was manifest in the Senegalese press (Gomez-Perez 1994, 1997) and took on a central role in the context of democratization (LeBlanc and Gomez-Perez 2008). As a matter of fact, the process of democratization of the last decade of the twentieth century drove to the forefront a variety of demands centered on processes of identification, such as the desire to gain knowledge of one's religion, the desire for public discussions on subjects relating to religious practice and the desire for freedom of expression. For instance, a number of articles in *Plume Libre* pertained to subjects directly related to Islamic religious practice, for example the merits of schooling for young girls. Islamic print media initiated by young activists always offered its readers articles on topics such as faith, the pillars of Islam and Islamic celebrations, the role of women and of the family and Islam's stance on important social issues such as AIDS and Genetically Modified Organism (GMOs). The recent multiplication of religious programs both on television and on the radio²³ also attest to this expressed desire to take one's religious practice to public spaces.

Itineraries of Young Muslim Activists

To a large extent dynamics of religious revival reflect the fact that since the 1980s a greater diversity of Islamic activists and leaders has emerged. They are affiliated either with uneducated youth or with young Muslims educated in Islamic, Arab-language schools (especially in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire), but more particularly with bilingual Franco-Arabic speakers that have studied in both local and foreign *madâris*. This is the case for the leaders of the JIR in Senegal as well as for the majority of the leaders of neighborhood associations and the members of the LIPCI in Côte d'Ivoire. Nonetheless, activists in the 1990s were mostly individuals who first received their education in French-speaking, secular schools within their country of origin and subsequently studied in schools abroad, as is the case for the founders of the AEMUD in Dakar, the founders of the CERFI in Ouagadougou and students involved with the AEEMCI and the AJMCI in Côte d'Ivoire.

French- and Arab-speaking religious leaders are particularly cognizant of the advantages of bilingualism in French-speaking African countries. For instance, two of the young imams affiliated with the central mosque of the Riviera III neighborhood in Abidjan, Imam Dosso and Imam Samassi, have received a twofold training: first in the secular, French-language national system and second in Arab countries. They are, furthermore, polyglots (French-speakers, Arab-speakers and Bambara-speakers).

The emergence of bilingual youths is a result of the process of democratization of secular schooling and the modernization of Islamic schools in West

Africa since the late 1950s. These two processes have had a tremendous impact upon today's Muslim youths. The two latest generations of 'revivalist' Muslims in West Africa, in the 1950s and in the 1980s-1990s, are characterized by their training in secular and/or modernized religious schools, their push for the creation of a new religious leadership and the establishment of interest groups at local, national and supranational levels. These waves of religious transformation suggest a relationship between the emergence of standardized mass schooling, the creation of voluntary associations by young educated Muslims and efforts by religious leaders to transform religion into a political and an economic resource (LeBlanc 2007; Gomez-Perez 2005a).

The three narratives that follow exemplify some of youth itineraries typical of the dynamics of the 1990s:

I was born in Kolda. I went to Qur'anic school at three years old until I was six. At six years old, I started French primary school. While in French school, during the summer holiday, I learned the Qur'an. I went to Lycée Faidherbe in Saint Louis for one year, then at Lycée El Hadj Malick Sy in Thiès for three years. During those years, I learned the Arabic language at home after school with a private instructor. I finished my *lycée* [high school] in Rufisque at Abdoulaye Sadjì in classics and Latin. I started university in law. While I was in my second year, my father retired and I had to stop attending university. I then followed a course in marketing. In 1989 I obtained a diploma in community animation and a diploma in management in 1990. I met someone who brought me to Bilal (JIR center in Thiès), where I met Babacar Gueye in '87. In '88 I became a supervisor at the JIR summer camp. In 1989 I became more interested by Islam, and I entered the JIR School in Medina (equivalent to primary school) as a teacher. I gave courses in French. Since 1994 I have been director of the school. I am also assistant director of the youth movement in Dakar.' (Dakar, March 1994; translated from French)

I was born in Bouaké. I grew up here but I went to school in Abidjan, where my uncle is a schoolteacher. I went to French, secular school in Abidjan. After *lycée*, I got a bursary and I went to university in Abidjan. I studied literature. I looked for work for a long time in Abidjan. Then, I came back to Bouaké, where I found a job as a schoolteacher. I teach French in a *lycée*. Of course, my parents are Muslim, so I did my prayers, Ramadan as much as I could. But I was not really a 'true' practicing Muslim until I went to university. While I lived on campus, a friend brought me to a meeting of Ivory Coast's Association of Muslim Students. I started to be active in the association. I went to the association mosque on campus. When I came back to Bouaké, in the early 1990s, that is when all the changes took place [i.e., the democratization]. We were able to create associations. I went to see the president of the National Islamic Council in Bouaké. We talked, and he helped me put together the Association of Young Muslims of Air France. I have been president since its creation. I have also been taking Arabic-language classes with a teacher at the madrasa in Air France; he is the religious adviser of the association. (Bouaké, April 1995; translated from Dioula)

I went to primary school in Gounghin between 1964 and 1970. Then, to obtain my certificate of education in Arabic, I studied at the madrasa in Gounghin between

1970 and 1975. Next, between 1975 and 1978, I studied general education at the secondary school level. After that I taught in a madrasa for two years and then went to Egypt, where I received training at the Al-Azhar University for six years. However, because of family problems, I returned home after that, and I began teaching Arabic in *madâris* in the Soum. I became aware of the Mouvement Sunnite in 1994 during a training seminar to become a preacher. At the moment I teach at the head office of the association, and I am assistant secretary-general. (Ouagadougou, 23 July 2005; translated from French)

The three narratives highlight some of the prominent features that characterize the trajectories of young men in the context of the recent transformation of Islamic practice in Senegal, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, namely, their training in secular and public French-language schools, their relatively high level of formal schooling (often university level), the role of social networks—often including elders—in their insertion into newly created Islamic organizations, the role of religious and language training in their religious affiliation (both in mnemonic Qur'anic schools and in *madâris*) and, lastly, the relationship between secularly educated and religiously schooled youth in newly created Islamic organizations. As we will show in the next section of the article, to a large extent these specific elements of young Muslim men's trajectories account for the new forms of religious authority that they claim and that often bring them to oppose the legitimacy of the elders' religious authority.

New Forms of Religious Authority: Schisms and Intergenerational Conflicts

In our respective empirical investigations, we have noted that there were four types of changes regarding knowledge and authority that came into play with the emergence of young activists in the 1980s and that affect their relationships with their elders. First, young people created associations in order to contest the elders' practices of sectarianism, their lack of proper religious knowledge and their inappropriate appeal to cultural elements in their religious practice, especially in relation to *maraboutage* (religious rituals and incantations associated by young activists to the syncretism of cultural practices tied to supernatural forces and Islam). As early as 1988 Christian Coulon underscored that

Islam was no longer an activity for the old; I would go so far as to say that it is becoming an activity for the young in opposition to the gerontocratic powers. It serves to criticize the establishment. It acts as a vehicle for, and method of discovery of, the right to expression for young people. The Islamic leadership is being transformed by it, for this new elite seeks to distinguish itself from the older Muslim leaders and its members hope to act as community leaders. . . . These new clerics, whom I call *litterati*, believing

they have more knowledge than the older generation, freely denounce the less orthodox practices of their elders and the latter's compromises with the powers that be (Coulon 1983: 171-172).

The opposition to the religious practices of elders has been extensively examined in the context of Côte d'Ivoire (Miran 2000, 2006; LeBlanc, 1999, 2000b, 2003), of Senegal during the creation of JIR (Gomez-Perez 1994, 1997, 2005b) and of Burkina Faso (Koné-Dao 2005; Traoré 2005; Otayek 1984, 1993). For this reason, we will not discuss it here.

Nonetheless, the opposition to the practice of elders needs to be nuanced, particularly with regard to methods of knowledge transmission and display. Mastery of the Arabic language remains highly valued among young Muslim activists. It is not rare to meet young Muslims who regularly take part in Qur'anic knowledge contests, organized by Franco-Arabic *madâris* or by newly created associations, during which contenders enunciate parts of the Qur'ân in Arabic. In fact, in these settings of proselytism and public education into Islam, Arabic remains at the core of the religious practices of young activists, both men and women. Today a significant number of associations and mosques provide Islamic teaching and literacy classes in Arabic for the public at large. In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, such classes are popular among women aged fifty years and above (LeBlanc 2007). The same can be said for summer camps organized by JIR in Senegal, where children learn to recite the Qur'ân by heart and take classes on the subject of Islamic values (Gomez-Perez 2005b). In both Dakar and Ouagadougou a number of mosques have built within their walls classrooms in which both children and adults are taught basic Arabic and the foundations of religious practice as outlined by the Qur'ân and the Sunna (Gomez-Perez 2009, forthcoming). In some contexts, notably in Côte d'Ivoire (LeBlanc 1999, 2005), literacy in Arabic has come to be a *sine qua non* condition of Islamic practice for all Muslims and not the monopoly of religiously trained leaders.

Second, one of the outcomes of the revitalization of Islam has been the emergence of a new form of leadership, based on the democratization of religious knowledge and often leading to a renewed conceptualization of spiritual authority. It developed slowly throughout the 1980s and increased significantly as a phenomenon in the 1990s. The first transformation of the traditional model of spiritual authority and religious knowledge occurred as it freed itself from the charismatic hereditary structure, often associated with Sufism,²⁴ in which charismatic leaders are the guardians of specific forms of knowledge that only initiated individuals have access to. In the three countries discussed, the growth of Franco-Arabic *madâris* from the 1950s onward (Gomez-Perez 1997, 1999, 2005b; LeBlanc 1999; Cissé 1990) certainly played a central role

in the democratization, the expansion and the standardization of Islamic knowledge. The opening of Franco-Arabic *madâris* brought about a shift in Islamic knowledge away from its mnemonic form into literacy in Arabic, with the inclusion of other topics of knowledge such as Arab literature, Arab history, mathematics and the elaboration of standardized curricula.

Besides the growth of Franco-Arabic *madâris*, mosques have been one of the privileged sites of the democratization of processes of knowledge transmission. In the charismatic model of knowledge transmission, as it applies to the organization of mosque activities, a head imam holds authority over assistant imams and makes decisions regarding worshippers without much dialogue with his assistants. However, we observed in the course of our research that imam colleges had been established in several mosques, such as the mosque of the AEEMB (Burkina Faso) and those that were part of the Mouvement Sunnite in Ouagadougou, and their establishment reflects a desire to break with the older structure of authority. On Dakar's university campus, although a college was not established in the mosque of the AEMUD, another organization was chosen to facilitate the disintegration of the older structure of authority. Indeed, as laid out by the statutes of the AEMUD, which state that only students can occupy positions within the organization, all positions, including that of the imam, reopen for election each year.²⁵ In Côte d'Ivoire, in the context of the general restructuring of the Muslim community, the LIPCI and the Conseil Supérieur des Imâm (Upper Council of Imams [COSIM]), both affiliated with the CNI, encouraged the creation of colleges of imams in the majority of large mosques managed by the CNI in Abidjan (such as the case in the mosques of Aghien in Deux-Plateaux, in Riviéra III, in Riviéra Golf, in Hadja Nabintou Cissé and in Treichville) as well as in the country's interior cities (Bley 2004). As a consequence, as in the case of Dakar and Ouagadougou, where colleges of imams have been put into place, Friday sermons are no longer delivered exclusively by a single imam. In Côte d'Ivoire, while these teams of imams collectively manage the spiritual and social matters of the mosque, there are several commissions that individually manage particular aspects of community life, such as prayers, important religious events, social and logistical issues, communication and finances. Generally, each commission produces annual reports. This type of 'modern' bureaucratic structure is also found in new Islamic associations, both national ones (see Miran 2006) and neighborhood-based youth associations (LeBlanc 2006b). Newly created associations have written and often registered statutes and charters that include lists of officially recognized activities; an administrative structure with an elected president, a vice-president, a treasurer and a number of other administrative positions; official membership and participation dues. The type of

transformations noticed in mosque management and, to some extent, in associative milieus allows for the organization of worship to be undertaken collectively in order to respond to the interests and needs of the entire Muslim community at the local level.

In many cases the processes of democratization that challenge the older form of charismatic authority are accompanied by the hyper-mediatization of religious practice and discourses. This hyper-mediatization occurs via the circulation of sermons in print, audio- and videocassettes (such is the case for the dissemination of Imam Niang and Imam Kanté's sermons from AEMUD in Dakar), the public advertisings of the imams' activities and their participation in Islamic media, such as the popular television program *Allahou Akbar* in Côte d'Ivoire. To a large extent the hyper-mediatization of religious figures encourages the creation of new types of charismatic religious leaders, not so dissimilar from music-based or cinema-based superstars (see Schulz 2003, 2006; Soares 2005; and Davis 2002 for the description of a similar phenomena in Mali).²⁶ Such a phenomenon has been less observed in Ouagadougou. However, older imams—such as the imam al-hadj Aboubacar Sana of the Grande Mosquée of Ouagadougou, which is managed by the CMBF—are quite popular.

Third, this novel model of spiritual authority also relies on the construction of a specific form of religious knowledge. Emphasis is no longer placed on the demonstration of religious knowledge acquired within the context of the family and through interaction with informed individuals, but is rather placed on knowledge gained at the grassroots level through individual experiences of faith. Among other examples, in the context of neighborhood-based Islamic youth associations, during their public sermons young preachers, who usually are graduate students or young teachers in *madâris*, frequently establish a link between the Qur'ân and concrete situations that affect youth in the contemporary world. For instance, in Bouaké in 1995, in the case of a public sermon organized by one of the most popular neighborhood-based Islamic youth associations, the main preacher used sacred texts to introduce a discussion of the impact of the media and advertising on young women's behaviors in private and public interactions. As was the case in the 1990s, such public sermons were usually followed by a period of questions from members of the audience that were addressed by the panel of preachers chosen for the sermon. In this case the questions raised, mainly by young women, led to a discussion that centered on the issue of the public display of romantic love, namely kisses, holding hands and so forth.

Thus, we see a shift from literal knowledge to knowledge gained through everyday life experience in which three dimensions of practical knowledge

emerge as essential: the ability to attract followers of all backgrounds through one's oratory skills; the capacity to render one's knowledge accessible through a discourse that is at once simple and didactic and the ability to expand one's pool of followers by ensuring that sermons are widely available. The use of information technology here is central, especially the use of audiocassette that is easily accessible, affordable and can be listened to at one's convenience. Thus, this new form of spiritual authority and the type of knowledge that goes with it are adapted to the context of religious markets in which hyper-mediation plays a fundamental role. It also appeals to youth's savvy regarding new information and communication technologies such as videoconferencing, video-projection and online training, in contrast with their elders, who never had access to these technologies. Recently, some young imams have gone as far as using online Listservs and mailing lists to reach their followers and to increase their base beyond the confines of national borders, such is the case with El Hadj Mohamed-Lamine Haïdara, the imam of the Mosquée centrale du Port d'Abidjan (Abidjan's Port Central Mosque)—who has become so popular that people have to reserve a seat for his monthly sermons.

Last but not least, beginning in the 1980s, by positioning the Da'wa at the heart of their strategies, young people began to assert an opposing public posture to that of their elders. Young people have flooded urban spaces controlled by their elders. It is thus through this process that the MS, for instance, decided to build their first Friday mosque in the Zangouettin neighborhood in Ouagadougou, an old Islamic neighborhood situated at the heart of the city, in order to compete with the Grande Mosquée managed by the CMBF that is located close to the central market. This led to a public crisis (Gomez-Perez 2009, forthcoming; Koné-Dao 2005; Kouanda 1996). In Dakar, in a similar way, Muslim students are no longer getting together to celebrate their faith in private in their dormitory rooms or the hallways of residential pavilions, but rather in broad daylight (Gomez-Perez 2005b). As a consequence they have organized gatherings and have promoted the construction of a Friday mosque on Dakar's campus in order to fully express their faith and to claim a space that had been otherwise regarded as secular. On Abidjan's university campus, mosques and associations have also flourished, expanding the influence of young French-speaking Muslim leaders in the Ivorian capital and beyond. Thus, throughout the 1980s it was common to see the exacerbation of overt conflicts between elders that maintained close ties with the state apparatus—the apparatchiks—and youths who rejected any form of instrumentalization of Islam by the state. In Côte d'Ivoire this antagonism translated into the opposition between the Conseil supérieur islamique (Superior Islamic Council [CSI]), the official organ of the ruling PDCI, and the emerging CNI (Miran 2006; Savadogo 2005;

LeBlanc 1998, 2005). The examples of the AEEMCI and the CNI in Côte d'Ivoire are telling. Young scholars and students were at the heart of debates in the national *umma*. Their ability to mobilize and devote themselves to the creation of the CNI in the face of consternation from their elders served as evidence of their success. It also permitted the affirmation of al-hadj Boubakar Fofana's and al-hadj Idriss Koudouss Koné's status as representatives of the Muslim community based on their roles as important actors and protagonists on the Ivorian political stage (Savadogo 2005). In Senegal it was the JIR members who accused the leaders of the Union Culturelle Musulmane (Muslim Cultural Union [UCM]) of encouraging the marginalization of Muslims from the state apparatus and their occasional instrumentalization by the state (Gomez-Perez 1997, 2005b). In Burkina Faso, following the announcement of the planned displacement of populations in Zangouettin in 2001, young people displayed their opposition. In addition to protests against state practices, they have fervently contested the authority of neighborhood elders, particularly the neighborhood's representative, Imam Bangré of the Tidjaniyya community. Young people are disappointed with their elders' lack of resolute opposition toward the state, a stance that clashes with their own steadfast denunciation of this plan for urban revitalization. They subsequently created a movement, Al Qaeda, to communicate their demands (LeBlanc and Gomez-Perez 2008; Audet-Gosselin 2008).

The intensification of Da'wa (LeBlanc 2006b, 2008; Gomez-Perez 2005a and b, 2009, forthcoming) has allowed young people to draw attention to the facts that modalities of activism have shifted and that cities have become a hypercompetitive space. It has also permitted young male Muslim leaders to confirm that the nature of the ties between the religious leader and his disciples has evolved. Therefore, the maintenance of a distance between the religious leader and his followers, rendering religious knowledge hermetic and only accessible to a few, is no longer the norm. The new model of the Da'wa represents a reversal of existing sociocultural hierarchies as it promotes the democratization of knowledge by means of the Arabic or French languages (indeed, bilingualism is a primary objective of the Bilal center of the JIR in Thiès and the educational center of Al Falah in the neighborhood of Colobane in Dakar) and the acquisition of both religious and general knowledge.

In the three national contexts discussed here, the initiatives of young male activists mark a turning point in the ways in which young people perceive the role of Islam in the public sphere. For this reason it seems more appropriate to speak of a clash between one version of Islam that was instrumentalized by the state in the 1960s and 1970s, and a version that tries to occupy a space outside of state interests, supported simultaneously by young male militants and an older generation that has been marginalized by the state since the 1960s.

New Forms of Religious Authority: Negotiation and Compromises between Generations

Indeed, while conflicts persist, a new fact appeared in the 1990s: youths and elders increasingly brought their efforts together in order to enhance proselytizing efforts. Throughout the 1990s, several developments unfolded, allowing us to offer a nuanced view of the tensions between generations discussed in the previous section of the article. First, the steps that have been taken by young male activists since the end of the 1970s have led to considerable changes in identity processes, in the relations with the state and in the bases of religious authority. Elders became aware of these changes, and some of them saw the importance of working with youths, of recognizing their level of knowledge and their practical experience, in order to consolidate the work of the *Da'wa* and to prevent their own marginalization within the movement for Islamic revivalism.

The investigations we undertook in mosques and in neighborhood-based Islamic youth associations lead us to analyze elders' awareness of the changes that occurred in the 1980s and early 1990s and to explore the ties being formed across generations. The following interview extract with Ibrahim Binaté, first president of the LIPCI and imam at the mosque at Plateau Dokui in Abidjan, spells out this point by drawing attention to the changing perception of elders toward young Muslim activists:

When we returned from our studies, we had the impression that there was a void in terms of religious training, particularly in the case of young Muslims. There were associations . . . , prayers, reunions, etc. But there was no training in place. However, many Muslims, especially educated youths, were able to repeat Arabic phrases without understanding their meaning. We realized that this was not a good thing. . . . For this reason, we started giving conferences and sermons. At first, not many young people were happy to see us in their mosques, especially for members of the CSI and the Wahhabiyya community. We therefore started in public places within villages and smaller communities such as Anyama, Bingerville, Abobo, Koumassi, etc. . . . Today, we actually receive invitations from mosques' leaders to come and participate in their sermons. The mosque in Riviéra III invites us quite frequently; others, such the Communauté musulmane de la Riviéra Palmeraie (Muslim community of Riviera Palmeraie), invite us to participate in their ceremonies. . . . (Abidjan, May 2004; translated from French)

Both in Ouagadougou and Dakar, elders have lent their support to a project that would establish colleges of imams. Such a structure would avoid the creation of a monopoly over the delivery of the Friday sermons; it would allow for the rotation of younger and older imams and ensure the delivery of sermons that address a variety of themes relevant to contemporary concerns

(Gomez-Perez 2009, forthcoming). In view of similar objectives, the older leaders of certain mosques are increasingly calling upon young religious leaders in the preparation of Friday sermons and their broadcasting, and in the internal management of mosques' business; this is the case at Mosque Point E in Dakar, Mosque M'Ba Kamsongh Yiri run by the MS and the mosque of the MS of the Pissy neighbourhood, sector 17 in Ouagadougou.

In other mosques elders have invited both young men from the neighborhood and young men educated in the Arabic language to assist them in their sermons, particularly by making commentaries in Wolof in the case of Dakar or in More in the case of Ouagadougou.²⁷ In Côte d'Ivoire, however, the situation is frequently reversed: youths deliver sermons in Arabic in order to demonstrate their level of scholarship while their elders provide commentaries in Dioula. The choice of strategically using different languages answers a generalized concern to enhance the social function of the mosque and of Islamic associations. As underscored by some of the leaders of the MS in Ouagadougou, young people are valuable since they 'know what is happening in the world today, they are better informed because of their mobility, are better suited to lead Friday prayers and can facilitate the young disciple's acquisition of knowledge'.²⁸ According to Imam Kane, they are also able to 'capture the attention of disciples... and they are born preachers'. Friday prayers have a special connotation—they are central to community bounding. As a consequence, the imam that presides over them must provide topics of reflection for the entire community of faithful. In Burkina Faso, for instance, at the Pissy mosque elders have decided to let the young men take charge of the mosque while they remain present as guides. At the mosque in Lamizana, affiliated with the CMBF, preachers have been chosen because of their popularity within the neighborhood, gained on the basis of their knowledge of the Qur'ân and their Arabic-speaking abilities. Among them, some attended mnemonic Qur'ânic schools and are aged fifty and over, while others are younger, aged twenty to twenty-five, and received their training in the *madâris* of Burkina Faso.²⁹ It is a question of making more accessible and more relevant their religious messages for their followers in order to 'enlarge the community of militants' and 'train successive generations of militant activists working for the cause of Islam' (Gomez-Perez 2005b; translated from original). All of this is inscribed in the context of new Islamic proselytizing, observed in West Africa, that focuses on 'professionalization' (Miran 2000, 2006) or 'standardization' and 'rationalization' (LeBlanc 2006b; Soares 2005) of both Islamic practice and religious messages.

As a further example in Côte d'Ivoire, in the context of the strengthening of the Da'wa elders have lent their support to young activists in their efforts to

increase their access to mass media. This support has occurred at two levels: on the one hand, they have used their political connections in order to obtain access to a radio frequency for the broadcast of *Al Bayane*, and on the other hand, in Abidjan they have provided the younger generation with material and financial support. For the latter point, al-Hadj Cissé Djiguiba, imam of the Grande Mosquée of Plateau neighborhood and influential member of the CNI and the COSIM, was solicited the most. In addition, during Friday prayers, notably at the Mosque of the Riviera Golf neighborhood, collections have been made to support the functioning of *Al Bayane*.³⁰ In the context of neighborhood-based youth associations, members of the LIPCI (who are generally a bit older and more established than active members of these grassroots associations) help association leaders in the organization of public sermons and in their recruitment efforts.

In parallel with elders' consciousness of a need to coordinate their efforts with young activists' own proselytizing works, young male activists have also developed strategies to come closer to their elders. The context of Senegal illustrates such efforts to bridge intergenerational proselytizing efforts. While the criticism of Sufi Islam by youths, especially by members of the JIR, remains significant, it has become much less virulent. Two elements can account for this collaborative attitude. On the one hand, young leaders quickly realized that overt public attacks tended to lead to their political isolation in the face of the indefectible influence of established brotherhoods (Gomez-Perez 2005b; Villalon 1999). On the other hand, certain brotherhoods, such as the *Dahira-toul Moustarchidina wal Moustarchidaty*, adopted some of the strategies tested by youth, most notably the hyper-mediatization of its founder and current leader, Moustapha Sy, as well as his capacity to attract large numbers of urban youth dissatisfied with the modern depravity of the political system in Senegal (Samson 2005: 163). What is more, young men seem much less inclined to fervently contest political authorities, a development that to a certain degree reassures their elders. In Burkina Faso, for example, the MS did not participate in the protests in Zangouettin following the government's decision to organize a massive relocation project of the population in the area. Concerned about the preservation of the Friday mosque in the neighborhood, the association decided to maintain a low profile in order to receive dividends from the state. They did not have to wait long. Oumarou Kanazoé, president-treasurer of the CMBF and closely tied to the state apparatus, allowed for the opening of a Friday mosque managed by the MS; it was subsequently closed following the public conflict between the central office of the association and the imam El Hadj Ouedraogo Sayouba in 1995.³¹ In Senegal the JIR's position vis-à-vis the political apparatus eventually evolved. During the 1993 presidential elections,

it called upon young people to vote for the party that most closely addressed the concerns of Muslims. Elders had little choice but to accept this recommendation, as the JIR was attempting to calm things down following the 1988 contentious reelection of Abdou Diouf, when young people broke out in violence to display their fury at these results. In 2000 the JIR made it known that they were supporting Abdoulaye Wade, and they used this support to advance their ideas regarding the introduction of religious education to the general public, the acquisition of official status for Qur'anic schools and the modernization of the Institut Islamique (Islamic Institute). These were considered positive claims, as they were intended to address previous and unresolved problems of training.

It must be noted that in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the changes in the relationship between elder generations and younger generations of Muslims must be examined in conjunction with the political situation that has characterized the country since the 1990s (LeBlanc 1998; LeBlanc and Gomez-Perez 2008). To some extent, despite the numerous dynamics of division between Muslims (some, but not all, tied to generational differences), the ethnicization of politics in Côte d'Ivoire since the first multiparty election in 1990, compounded with the context of proselytizing competition between Muslims and Christians in the country, has enhanced the political marginalization of Muslims and by the same token the growth in the sense of cohesion felt among them.³² With the 2002 armed conflict and the emergence of the Forces Nouvelles in the north of the country, some of the young activists at the forefront of the revivalist movements of the 1990s transformed their religious fervor into political action in support of the new coalition.³³ Moreover, as of the late 1990s the overt tension and, at times, conflicts between Muslims and the state representatives (exacerbated by the 2002 military conflict) has encouraged a certain move away from the public display of religious identities among young Muslim especially in the context of Abidjan and a withdrawal toward one's community, implying, in some cases, more subtle proselytizing actions. In Abidjan, for instance, young Muslims (male and female) are now mostly active within specific residential neighborhoods, such as Palmeraies, Gesco and Riviéra III. Other youths engage in individualized spiritual searches, seeking spiritual masters such as Sheikh Somta in the Abobo Pk 18 neighborhood.³⁴

Conclusion

It is clearly evident that the emergence of young male 'revivalist' Muslims as social actors does not bring about an intergenerational rupture. While

intergenerational tensions are omnipresent in the three national contexts we have discussed, the apparent opposition between Sufism and any type of revivalism is highly questionable. Dynamics surrounding the emergence of new authority figures, their hyper-mediatization and the renewal of processes of knowledge construction draw attention to the bridging together of elders and youths. While these elements certainly point to a number of changes regarding the legitimization of religious authority—particularly a shift away from hereditary charismatic figures toward school-trained religious authority figures—there is a need to acknowledge that methods of knowledge transmission and display tend to be shared by younger and older Muslims. In this article we have tried to emphasize new strategies in the development of religious clientelism, which have been elaborated in the hope of broadening the scope of proselytism in urban environments.³⁵ Again, these strategies tend to bring together older and younger generations of Muslims.

The generation of Muslims that emerged in the 1980s was generally critical of their elders, especially in terms of the laxity of their proselytizing work and their complicity with the state. The collusion of some male elders with the state clashed with young people's desire to escape the abyssal zones of economic bankruptcy and the failure of the Western model of secular modernity. However, this younger generation has never given signs of wanting to seize power or to carry out the revolutionary Islam of the jihadists. Rather, they seek to share in the public power of Islam and to contribute to civil society's adherence to the fundamental texts of the religion.

By the 1990s the boundaries between competing proselytizing strategies became more porous, and we witnessed the emergence of polymorphic Islamic identities that blurred diverging codes of Islamization—we are thinking here of young female students in Dakar and Abidjan wearing the Islamic scarf with Western-style clothing such as tight jeans or miniskirts. In this context certain categories of young people, especially young male religious scholars, gained legitimacy and visibility as a result of the mediatization of their religious knowledge,³⁶ while others use their social capital, especially in the case of those who come from well-known brotherhoods, to carve themselves a space in the contemporary religious market. Nonetheless, the majority of young Muslims activists, male and female, who join Islamic associations or who organize *Da'wa* caravans, did so noiselessly, with their main goal being to convert or to re-Islamize the masses.

It is also clear that by the end of the 1990s the male religious leaders of the late 1980s were no longer so young, and that we can certainly point to new dynamics in the three countries discussed that can account for divergent attitudes and practices among young Muslims in the first decade of the

twenty-first century. In Côte d'Ivoire the 2002 military conflict and the resulting division of the country certainly positioned twenty-first-century youths differently than those of the 1990s; the same applies to the context of Senegal with the election of Abdoulaye Wade in 2000 and his subsequent reelection in 2007, and in Burkina Faso with the reelection of Blaise Compaoré in 2005. Future studies of the relationship between youth and Islam in these West African countries need to take into account these shifting political dynamics, as well as the possible transformations of Islam, especially in the post-9/11 context and in the context of an aggravated socioeconomic crisis in the three countries discussed here. To a large extent, 'youth', as an emergent sociopolitical category in African societies in the 1990s, needs to be thought about in light of the aging of this specific generation. While this was not the purpose of our article, it certainly lays the ground for the articulation between a diachronic and a synchronic view of intergenerational dynamics.

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Notes

1. See LeBlanc 2007 for a detailed discussion of the case of young Muslims in Côte d'Ivoire. Examining global processes, Karen Tranberg Hansen (2008) makes a similar argument regarding the impact of gender on processes of transition into adulthood and on the construction of the social category of youth.

2. Numerous studies beyond the African context have also noted gendered distinction; recently, Saba Mahmood (2005) proposed an innovative perspective on female agency when examining contemporary waves of Islamic revivalism.

3. Other authors have also described similar transformations in a number of other West African countries, such as Niger (Masquelier 2001), Ghana (Ilhe 2003), Nigeria (Kane

2003; Loimeier 1997; Umar 1988) and Mali (Schulz 2003, 2006; Soares 2005). It must also be noted that similar dynamics of revivalism have been described among young Christians (see, for instance, Meyer 1999; LeBlanc 2003; Van Dijk 1998).

4. See the works of Donal Cruise O'Brien and of Christian Coulon.

5. Whereas from 1966 to 1980 there was a significant partnership between Muslims and the state under the regime of General Lamizana.

6. The objective of revivalist Islam is to bring Islam into the modern world by endeavoring to open Franco-Arab schools offering alternative subjects and pedagogical techniques, permitting Muslims to exercise their own personal interpretation of the Qur'an without making use of an intermediary, by refusing all forms of religious instrumentalization for political aims, and by establishing contact with contemporary revivalists in North Africa and the Middle East, without losing their own autonomy. Given the fact that the term *reformist* was employed by the colonial government and that the individuals discussed in relation to this movement do not use this term, we have chosen to use the term *revivalist* throughout the text. See, notably, Gomez-Perez 1997, 2005b; Loimeier 1997; Rosander and Westerlund 1997; Brenner 1993; Triaud 1979; and Kaba 1974 for a discussion of different waves of reformism in West African Islam.

7. The government of Burkina Faso, conscious of the popularity enjoyed by the Assemblées de Dieu (Assemblies of God), asked them to preside over the National Independent Electoral Commission during the presidential elections of December 1998 (Laurent 2003: 250). In Côte d'Ivoire the presidency of Laurent Gbagbo (beginning in 2000) marked the insertion of neo-Protestants within the political arena because of the close relationship between his wife, Simone Ehiwet Gbagbo, and American evangelists (the Assemblies of God evangelical churches).

8. The MEECI was created in 1964 by the PDCI and its leader, Houphouët-Boigny, for the purpose of enlisting youths around the party's political ideals.

9. This program still exists. It is aired by the Télévision nationale ivoirienne (Ivorian National Television) every Thursday at 9 p.m.

10. The CNI was officially recognized by the ruling political party, the PDCI, in 1993.

11. Due to financial problems, *Plume Libre* ceased publication in 1996. It started again in 2002 but stopped again that year for the same reason. Today, *Islam Info* is the only Islamic paper to be published nationally.

12. Radio Al Bayane is located at the Riviera Golf mosque in Abidjan. It is broadcast 24h/24 in a 15 km radius; since 2007, it is also streamed on the Internet. Eighty percent of its programming addresses religious themes, including cultural practices, religious teachings and Arabic language teachings. The remaining airtime is made up of general news. Thanks to the Internet, it has listeners in Belgium, France and the United States. Fan clubs from these countries financed the purchase of a 4x4 for its news reports (Savadogo 2008).

13. www.cnicosim.org

14. At the time, the Riviera Golf Muslim Community was led by the mufti Al-hadj Tidiane Ba, one of the pioneers of the dynamism of Islam in Côte d'Ivoire in the 1960s-1970s and the principal mentor of Muslim youth activities in the capital. This mentorship could be considered an example of an intergenerational link. However, we will come back to this issue in the next section of the article.

15. Ismaël Tiendrebeogo. 'Débat sur le voile. La réalité des choses'. *An-Nasr*, no. 000, 23 January 2004.

16. Sanfo. 'Que devient le monde arabo-musulman?'. *An-Nasr*, no. 009, 19 March 2004.

17. Mikailou. 'Assassinat de Cheikh Yassine : des conséquences imprévisibles'. *An-Nasr*, no. 011, 2 April 2004.
18. Mikailou. 'Législatives palestiniennes: La victoire embarrassante du Hamas'. *An-Nasr vendredi*, no. 113, 17 February 2006.
19. Diallo, 'La question tchétchène'. *An-Nasr vendredi*, no. 120, 7 April 2006.
20. OD, 'Les dessous du dossier nucléaire iranien'. *An-Nasr vendredi*, no. 154, 24 November 2006.
21. Tahir, 'El hadj Sangoulé Lamizana: Homme d'État, homme de foi'. *An-Nasr vendredi*, no. 74, 3 June 2005.
22. Tiégo Tiemtoré, 'Sermon Tabaski 2006'. *An-Nasr vendredi*, no. 160, 31 December 2006.
23. For example, in Dakar some radio stations were created as a result of the privatization of radio in 1994: Radio Dunya (December 1994), for example, and Radio Sud FM and Walf FM (1998). In the aftermath of the Alternance, the political change in Senegal with the election of Abdoulaye Wade (Parti Démocratique Sénégalais/Senegalese Democratic Party) against Abdou Diouf (Parti Socialiste/Socialist Party), religious programs multiplied with the creation of Radio RFM (September 2003) and Radio Walf 2 (December 2004), as well as the creation of television channels such as RDV TV and Walf TV in 2007. In Ouagadougou an Arabic show, *Les événements de l'heure* or *Ah Dathou Saa*, was first aired on Savane FM and, in December 2004, an Islamic radio show, *Al Houda* on 98.5 FM, was created. In Bobo Dioulasso an Ahmadiyya Islamic radio station was started in December 2002; it was also broadcast to the cities of Dori, Léo and Dédougou.
24. In fact, it appears that young Muslim activists in the 1990s tended to deploy their actions outside of existing divisions within the national Muslim community. For instance, in Côte d'Ivoire young Muslims active in neighborhood associations situated themselves outside of the historical divide between Wahabbiyya and non-Wahabbiyya Muslims, to use local terminology. In Senegal, in the 1950s, the UCM already stood outside of local divides between Muslims. The leaders of the JIR reappropriated this discourse in the 1980s.
25. Interview with Imam Niang, Dakar, June 2005.
26. The same phenomenon of religious superstars is also found among Christians in Côte d'Ivoire, where some religious leaders are active in the media. Among Christians, especially evangelical Christians, choral singing, which is at the core of their religious practice, has brought about the inclusion of religious artists in popular music shows aired on Ivorian television.
27. Interview with Moctar Sakho, the first imam of the Al Mansour mosque in Grand Dakar, June 2005. This is also the case in the mosque of the MS in Pissy, sector 17, and in the Lamizana mosque in Ouagadougou.
28. Interview with Aboubacar Kane, one of the imams that lead the five daily prayers at the mosque of Point E, June 2005; translated from French.
29. Interview with the first imam and president of the management committee, August 2005, translated from French.
30. Information regarding the financial contributions of followers was given by Imam Cissé Djiguiba, head of the radio, during the public launching of Opération 10.000 Amis pour Al Bayane (Operation Ten Thousand Friends for Al Bayane) on 12 June 2008.
31. *Le Pays*, 9 October 2006.
32. See Gary-Toukara 2005 for a similar argument regarding the impact of ethno-religious conflicts on Muslim identities and practices in Côte d'Ivoire.

33. For political reasons and to respect the anonymity of these young men, there is no reference to their identity.

34. He is a Tidjaniyya *shaykh* in his forties. His house is a *zawiyya*, and his main religious activities consist of training young *tālib*.

35. In their studies of women and recent revivalist movements in West Africa, LeBlanc (2007 and forthcoming), Janson (2007) and Augis (2002) highlight the role of women in the broadening of proselytism. They note how female-based proselytism generally tends to be enacted in the context of everyday life rather than in mediatized public events, as is the case with young male religious leaders.

36. While conducting empirical research, we have encountered young female activists, especially in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, who hosted radio programs or who gave public conferences. While these women mainly addressed an all-female audience, it would certainly be interesting to investigate their relationship with older male authority figures.