

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL CLIMATE IN SENEGAL¹⁾

— The case of the Diourbel Middle School —

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Summary:

The climate of a middle school in Senegal is measured according to three indicators of perception: the quality of the relationships between the individuals who attend the middle school and the quality of the tuition and the security within the school. The analysis was made on the total number of the teachers. The results thus obtained allow to see on the one hand that the physical general condition of the school is acceptable, and on the other hand that the quality of the tuition is good in spite of the numerous constraints in the teaching-learning activities. It can be seen too that the quality of the relations are good also, particularly the relations teachers/students and school/families have a positive impact on the running of the school. Finally the results show that if one observes here and there some deviance cases juvenile delinquency has not as much as reached an alarming threshold. The security climate is generally good.

Résumé :

Le climat d'un collège du Sénégal est mesuré à partir de trois indicateurs de perception : la qualité des relations entre les individus qui fréquentent le collège, la qualité de l'enseignement et la sécurité au sein de l'établissement scolaire. Les analyses ont été effectuées sur l'ensemble des professeurs du collège. Les résultats obtenus permettent de constater d'une part, que le l'état physique général du collège est passable et d'autre part, que la qualité de l'enseignement est bonne malgré de nombreuses contraintes dans leurs activités d'enseignement / apprentissage. Il en ressort également que la qualité des relations est globalement bonne. En particulier, les relations professeurs / élèves et les rapports du CEM avec les familles ont un impact positif sur le fonctionnement de l'école. Enfin, les résultats montrent que si on observe ça et là des cas de déviance, pour autant, la délinquance juvénile n'a pas encore atteint un seuil alarmant. Le climat de sécurité est généralement bon.

INTRODUCTION

The province of Diourbel is situated between 14°30 and 15° of North latitude and 15° and 16° of West longitude. Its covers a superficy of 4,769 km. It is limited in the south, the west and the north by the province of Thies, in the south and East by the province of Fatick. The province of Louga

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constitutes the northern and eastern limit.

The economy is mainly vocational agriculture. The sector of agriculture occupies more than 57% of the active population. Yet paradoxically the monetary incomes drawn from that activity only represent 8,5% of the total provincial incomes. The province of Diourbel equally has a tradition of handicraft which plays a role of prime importance as a provider of jobs. Trade also is a very dynamic sector of the provincial economy.

A hardly clement local economic environment and a non rational management of natural resources that are strongly degraded are the foundations of the fall of the households into poverty in the province. Diourbel has a poverty rate of 65.3% (ESAM1) the rate of the contribution of the province to the poverty of the country was about 12,5% in 2001.

The population of Diourbel province is estimated at 115,752,2 inhabitants in 2004. the inter-censitary growth rate rose from 3.23% between the first and second general censuses of the population to 3.89% between 1988 and 2002 (RGPH III). The demographic evolution of the province is very fast. The growth rates here are much higher than the national average rate. The annual average growth rate varied from 2.7% between 1976 and 1988 to 2.4% between 1988 and 2002 at the national level.

The province of Diourbel is one of the smallest in Senegal by its superficies. it concentrates however 10% of the

total population. It is very densely populated, with a regional density of 243 inhabitants per km² in 2004. The population is unequally distributed on the provincial area. More than one inhabitant out of two lives in the department of Mbacke (59%), and within the same departmental area there are disparities. The borough of Ndame concentrates more than 80% of the population of the department of Mbacke, about 49% of the provincial population. The rural community of Touba Mosquée shelters 96% of the population of the borough of Ndame and 47% of the total population of the province.

Less than one inhabitant of Diourbel out of five (19.4%) resides in the department of Diourbel. Bambey is the department of residence of 21% of the provincial population. The population of Diourbel is mainly rural. At the heart of the peanut basin the province of Diourbel houses the holy city of Touba, the cradle of the other big confraternity of Senegal: the "Murids".

Its urbanization rate is one of the lowest in the country; it was 15% in 2004. This situation can be explained through the "demographic phenomenon" that constitutes the village of Touba Mosquée. This city, by its religious and commercial functions, exercises a very strong attraction on its immediate and farther environment. In fact the rush of big magnitude towards Touba has changed the village into the most important human settlement of the province that alone

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concentrates 47% of the total population.

The results survey on the Senegalese households (ESAM II) of 2002 confirmed that the province of Diourbel had an aver inter-provincial migration. Diourbel indeed receives 13.2% of the total of the immigrants. The departures registered towards the others provinces represent 10% of the emigrants. The province represent 10% of the emigrants. The province yields a position migratory balance of + 99365 people.

The religious and trading functions of Touba seem to play an important role in the internal migrations. The internal migrations from or to Diourbel interest 674,377 people, about 11.5% of the total migrations in Senegal.

The town of Diourbel, the capital of the Diourbel province, is characterized with first its accessibility (roads and railways). It is a relatively populated town where can be found all the administrative services from the Governor's to the basic services (water, electricity and telephone services, a provincial hospital including the Provincial Council, the Town Hall and of course the Academy Inspection. So civil servants are numerous and people are devoted to some economic activities (commerce, handicraft...etc) besides agriculture and cattle raising. Thanks to its influence in the province the town has a strong attraction on the hinterland.

Greater-Diourbel, one of the last human settlements of the peri-urban zone of the town, is a poor popular district

where generally live low income populations (civil servants, petty traders, farmers and craftsmen. By its recent figures the district suffers from the lack of site nets (roads, water net, public sanitation...).

At the difference with the others districts of Diourbel, Greater Diourbel is not reached by the "Moodu-Moodu"²⁾ phenomenon. This procedes from the fact that the majority of the citizens are Sereer and Haal pulaar still attached to their homelands. The only moodu-moodu that were registered belongs to the Wolof and Laobe ethnies.

PROBLEMATICS

The notion of school climate refers to the quality of work and communication perceived within the school. It gives a general indication of the atmosphere that prevails in the social relations of the values granted to individuals and the institutions as a living place. In other words the climate of a school refers to the values and attitudes and feelings that are obvious among the actors of the school. In a middle school, for example, the climate is a subjective variable linked to the perception established by the teachers on their roles in relation with the students. It corresponds grossly to the culture of the school and can be analyzed on the basis of the set of the perceptions of all the school actors.

In the course of these last years more and more works

have taken interest in the study of the school climate. The literature shows that the school performances are not only on the account of the individual characteristics of the students but they are also in the same way influenced by the attitudes and behaviours of the teachers. Some works besides have a tendency to demonstrate that those last variables condition the school climate and that one facilitates the promotion of the quality of the teaching (Solmon, 1976; Janosz and Leclerc, 1993; Parks and Stivens, 2000).

In a middle level school we can estimate that the school climate will have a great importance because it has an important effect as well on the life quality in the school as on the learning of the students (Rutter, 1983; Steinberg, 1996; Janosz and Georges and Parent, 1998; Thiebaud, 2003).

The question of the education quality interests decision-makers and planners and education managers and bosses and trade unions, families and communities, development agencies as well as educators who wish young people to master the key competences that allow them to participate to the new global economy of knowledge (Lewin, 2003; ADEA, 2004). Bearing in mind that education of quality is the key to development the Senegalese political power has the determined ambition to set the quality of education in general and in the middle cycle in particular (ME, p9 EF 2000; Ndoeye, 2003; Bregman and Bryner, 2004; Sourang, 2004);

through this policy it aims at training the frameworks the country needs to implement a development policy that will be well articulated, the only means to break the poverty circle.

Taking in account the quality in middle education the problem of the work climate of the middle school teachers today appears not only as a stake but as an imperative need.

Strange enough if many studies have been interested by the influence of the climate in firms (Likert, 1967; Bruner, 1983) few have studied the school climate. Better, research linked to school climate very often puts aside African middle schools. Last the rare times when the interest has been put on those schools teachers' opinion has not been taken into account. This present article aims at filling that gap.

Proceeding from the fact that few empiric works have studied the psychosocial situation of the middle school teachers this present research, of a small scale, is entepirized in the psycho-sociological framework where the subjective perceptions of teachers are considered as firsthand importance data.

Its objective is to describe and analyze the atmosphere that prevails at the M.S of Greater-Diourbel. More precisely it bears on the enlightening of the incidence that this climate may have exercised on the lasting attendance and performances of the students. After having shown the problematic elements and the conceptual framework that

light the analysis the methodology and results will be dealt with. The last section will state the main conclusions.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Researchers in the psycho sociology of education have established a set of similar results on the relation between the climate and the school efficiency. Indeed many of them agree to say that schools differ not only in some of their ecological variables but also in the atmosphere and the climate (Halpin and Croft, 1963; Kalin, 1980; Owens, 1998) and that this difference bears on the results of the students (Brookover and *al.* 1999; Heck and *al.* 1990). In the same way Anderson (1992), Matluck (1987), Cruickhank (1990) and Bliss and *al.* (1990) for North America gave a review of the works on the influence of the climate on school results. According to the conclusions of these various studies it seems that the ecological variables (physical and material aspects) have a weak influence on school performances (Klitgaard and Hall, 1974; Brunet, 1991; Janosz and Le Blanc, 1996).

It is important yet to be cautious with those conclusions since some studies show that behaviour and academic success tend to be better in clean schools, so favouring a climate good for learning (Rutter, Mortimore, Ouston and Smith, 1979).

At the level of the milieu variables (individuals and groups) it appears that the characteristics of the teachers

(training, salary) and those of the schools (socio-economic milieu, ethnical origin) have little influence on school performances. On the contrary it seems that teachers' moral is in positive correlation with school success (Ellett and Valberg 1979; Lumsden, 1998; Pelletier, Saeguin, Levesque and Legault 2002). Many studies tell indeed that the more the teacher's surroundings offer social support the more people are motivated by what they do (Short and Rinehart, 1992; Sagos, 1996; Cropanzono and Kaemar 1995; Ryan and Dect, 2000).

About the social system variables (relations between individuals and groups) it seems that good relations between school administrators and teachers (Ellett and Valberg, 1979; Sweeny, 1992 between students and teachers (Phi Delta Kappan, 1980; Chittom and Sistrunk, 1990; Grisay, 1993) favour school success. On the other hand decision-taking shared with teachers (Norman, 1988; Fitzgeraldandall, 2003) and good communication (Silverman 1970) ; Gonder and Hymes, 1994; Hanna, 1998) seem to positively influence students' performances.

As for the school climate variable acknowledging its role as essential on the various factors linked with the students' and teachers' work and welfare has been supported by many researchers. Bloom (1964), Bandura (1969) and Savoie (1973) recognized the environment as a powerful source of influence on learning. Students show better readiness for

learning (Janosz, George and Parent, 1998) and better performances (Bulack, Malone and Castleman, 1995; Stronge and Jones, 1991) when they perceive the climate of their school as good. Also Sweeny (1988) strongly says that if the school climate is positive, the teachers stimulate learning and improve pupils' performances.

Finally Kliepera and Gateiger-Kliepera (1994) demonstrated the existence of a significant relation between a bad classroom climate, a lack of confidence between teachers and pupils, as well as a high rate of aggressions. In the same way, classes with few problems of aggression are marked with good relations with teachers. These results do not differ from those reported by Debarbieux, Dupuch and Montoya, (1997) ; Janosz and *al.* (1998) ; Streffgen (2003) ; Bowen and Debiens (2004) whose works say that the climate of a school is narrowly in relation with the perception of the problems of violence in the school. Among the rare studies on the school climate in developing countries Samoff, Assie-Lumumba, Cohen, (1996), Garrett (1999) came to the conclusion that some organizational figures (for example, school equipments, infrastructures, material resources, the availability of course books, the hours devoted to learning, teachers' qualification, etc.) exercise a significant influence on the school climate.

Studies in the African context showed that in middle school academic variables had an effect on the teachers'

moral and on the school success of the pupils. Among them the analysts ranged the school authorities' policy, school buildings, syllabuses, teaching styles, class oral interaction, staff's qualification, equipments, course books, didactic materials, computers and printing materials, personal contacts, school security (Watking, 2000; Lahaye, 1987; Fuller, 1986).

With an interest in the effect of the middle school climate on academic yielding we take into account the fact that, despite the heap of the results suggested by the authors quoted here none was found out through the empiric works conducted in Senegal, West Africa. This present empiric paper is focused on the climate of the middle school of Greater Diourbel.

Conducting such a study raises some questions of methodology. Which pieces of information to collect? Whom from? How will the collected data be analyzed and how will the results be exposed?

We will answer all these questions on the one hand when we put beforehand precision in the description of the inquiry, and on the other hand when we deal with what we call the data collection.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This present psychosociological research is exploratory and it consists of a qualitative study with the teachers. So

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the proposed approach uses deep interviews to better emphasize the meanings which carry the perception of the teachers of Greater Diourbel.³⁾

As the aim was to deepen the knowledge of school life through a careful and structured and scrupulous study of the motivations and perceptions and intentions of the subjects the methodology was necessarily to use the new research paradigms in the science of the person (Rogers, 1985). The necessity to identify and preserve the individual meanings was at the start of the choice of the interview as a tool for data collection.

Subjects

For the choice and the number of subjects of the inquiry we relied on Bertaux who described a sampling procedure that seemed particularly suitable to the characteristics of our study. It is on the concept of saturation, defined as being "*the phenomenon through which, after a number of interviews, the researcher gets the impression that he has nothing new more to learn as far as the object the inquiry is concerned*" (Bertaux, 1980: p.205). Following this logical steps, the election of the teachers to be interviewed was without any problem in terms of the number of subjects but the difficulty was rather at the level of the redundancy of the gathered pieces of information. The sampling procedure bases its validity not on a statistical justification, but on the aim of obtaining the validity of the content. In

the case of this present research we collected information through deepened interviews with thirteen (13) teachers.

Tools of measure

An interview grid covering all the themes of this research was elaborated to be used as a flexible guide rather than a rigid dictionary. This interview scheme was tested and refined in the course of the phase of first contact. The approach of data collecting was planified in two steps: first contact with the political authorities of the province, with the educational authorities of the school and later with the teachers in order to preserve the research unit. These meetings were aimed at rousing the support of some of those people and their participation in the inquiry for others.

The Target Group Deepened Interviews (TGDI) conducted by two (2) assistants took place in the very school. Every interview was conducted by one of these ground inquirers and taped. These ground inquirers had a good training in sociology and better, they had a rich experience in research interviews.

Systematically in the course of the drilling interviews and also throughout the inquiry, tests of concordance were administrated in order to check first if each interviewer was gathering information in coherence with the objectives. The interviews lasted two hours each on the semi-directive mode. The way they were done was the same. The subjects were

asked to freely answer general questions on each theme of the study. Then more specific questions meant to precise the initial expression were asked. All the dimensions and themes had not been the objects of an identical development. According to the characteristics and particular interests of the subjects, some aspects were more developed than others. The interviews were taped and transcribed "verbatim" later.

Analysis

The data exploitation was done every evening in order to complete the missing pieces of information. Each set of two or three interviews were immediately transcribed and analyzed to list the main ideas and words and themes and phrases and quotations which translated the perceptions and feeling of the subjects vis-à-vis their work conditions. That first analysis consisted of various deepened readings to get out the common specificities and the different aspects of the collected corpus. So many partial analyses were written in the course of the first two-week period of field inquiry and in the four weeks before the writing of the first version of the study. The data fidelity was granted all along the analysis through a checking by two trained judges who were to reach full agreement.

A more deepened content analysis was done when writing the final version. The gathered information was submitted to a double reading: first a grid highlighting the

main socio-demographical characteristics of each subject and then, the full transcription of the interviews were done with EPI-INFO logiciel designed for the processing and analysis of qualitative data. That means allowed us to seize the links between the social conditions and the personal life experience of the teachers to compare them.

RESULTS

Characteristics of the teachers :

The teachers were interviewed on the elements we thought the most immediately linked to their teaching and the administration of the middle school.

☞ Some important features of the individuals (sex, marital status).

☞ The main conditions for the practice of their profession (state of the school buildings, types of equipments, tasks and material resources) ;

Table I: Personal and professional Profiles of the teachers of Greater Diourbel Middle School

The teaching body of the Middle School essentially consists of male teachers (eleven out of thirteen). Many of them are married with one wife (eight). The composition according to the sexes of the teaching body of the Middle School of Greater Diourbel is the image of the situation at the national level (Ndoye, 1996). Female teachers are under-represented (if we consider their number out of the total

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number in the semi-urban zones and/or rural zones. They are only two (2) out of twelve teachers (12).

Sex

Family and First Name	Sex	Age	Matrimonial Status			Académic level	Professional Diploma	Professional Status
			Married		Single			
			M	S				
M. SARR	M	49	1			Bachelors	MSTC	MST
C.T. KONE	M	51	1			A' Level	MSTC	MST
M. FALL	M	32			1	Under graduate	Computer Diploma	Part time teacher
M. THIAM	M	27			1	Under Graduate	MSTC	MST
F. SECK	M	34	1			Under graduate	MSTC	MST
A. BADJI	M	34	1			B. A	MSTC	MST
B. GNING	M	32	1			M. A	STAPS	Part time teacher
M. SENE	M	27	1			A' level	MSTC	MST
M. SECK	M	44		1		A' Level	MSTC	MST
R. DIOUF	F	37	1			A' level	MSTC	MST
B. NDIONE	M	27			1	M. A	MSTC	MST
S. GUEYE	M	48			1	M. A	ESTC	Primary school teacher
A. D. DIAW	F	49	1			A' level	ESTC	Primary school teacher
			8	1	4			

Legende: MSTC: Middle School Teaching Certificate
MST: Middle School Teacher
ESTC: Elementary School Teaching Certificate

The discrepancy males/females is a difficulty in a school where girls' excellence is promoted when we consider that

the sociological studies on that question underlined the positive impact of the female presence on the schoolgirls' learning (Ndoye, 1999).

Age

The average age of the teachers is 37.7 years, the oldest is 51 and the youngest ones are 27. In general eight (8) teachers are under 40 years, five (5) between 44 and 51 years. More than one teacher out of two is under 35 years, which makes that group the most important one in the school. That relative youth is linked in the one hand to the recent development of the middle schools, and on the other hand to the fact that at the very end of their secondary studies some students are recruited as teachers in middle school after a two year training at the University Teacher Training School.

Academic level

The general study level of the teachers is not uniform. It goes from the GCE-A Level (four) to the Master's Degree (two) through the University 1st Cycle Diploma and the Bachelor's Degree. Most of the teachers were trained at the University Teacher Training School (ENS) for two years to be qualified with the middle school Teaching Certificate. The other types of initial training we know are: the Proficiency Teaching Certificate read in the Primary Education Teacher Training Schools for one year, the Middle School Teaching Certificate in one year after the Bachelor's Degree, the

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STAPS and a Computering Diploma. There are two teachers without any training. They are substitute teachers recruited by the State because of the lack of teachers.

Professional diploma

That variety of professional degrees is explained by the evolution of the different policies of recruitment of teachers. Yet the Middle School Teaching Certificate (CAECEM) remains the most common diploma. Six teachers hold that degree and five others have a higher equal level. The predomination of the CAECEM is justified by the fact that since the opening of the C Department of the University Teacher Training School middle school teachers have mostly been recruited at that level.

Professional status

In the whole the teaching body is composed of three (3) MST (Middle School Teachers; Bachelor's+1 year) and six (6) (BAC+2 years) and two (2) substitute teachers. Such characteristics yet hide noticeable differences between the teachers of the middle school. Indeed there are young teachers who are "unexperienced" side by side with teachers having three or four times the number of years of teaching.

The quality of the middle school teaching

The General Physical State of the School

According to the school Principal the middle school is up-to-date and well located at the crossroad of many

villages. Its physical state is good for it is a new unit. This opinion is shared by the female under-teacher who says that *"the school is up-to-date but is poorly equipped. There is just the minimal equipment to allow its functioning, the comfort is really poor. We would like to have offices at the level of our status of teacher trainers. Truly it would be a shame for me to receive my female friends in such an office (and what an office!). Have a glance at the Principal's office, it is a true attic"* (verbatim). Some teachers as for them think that the middle school looks like a rural school. Recalling his first impression on his arrival at the middle school a teacher says: *"on my arrival here for the first time, I asked the taxi driver if he was not mistaken so much the middle school in front of which I was had the profile of an elementary school. It is the reason why people say that it is a bush middle school"*. (Verbatim)

The art education teacher talks in the same way: *"I was discouraged to work in the open air; the pupils do not like this school which is deprived of all and they would prefer to attend other middle schools with a better standing"* (Verbatim)

In the unanimous opinion of the teachers what is embarrassing in the physical state of the middle school is less the lack of comfort of the classrooms than the lack of wall. A teacher witnesses: *"the lack of fence round the middle school allows animals very often to go into the classrooms and disturb the courses. Such conditions present major risks as well for the teachers as for the students"* (Verbatim)

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Although the physical state of the middle school is unsatisfactory it must be noted that its presence in the peri-urban zone is very much appreciated by the populations. Indeed the Greater Diourbel Middle School had been built to meet the real needs of education of the basic community. Most of the pupils of that community had it difficult to attend secondary schools because of the long distances mainly (most of them live downtown) and also because of the high cost of education in private-owned schools to pay monthly. It remains that the middle school is with no fence or surrounding wall⁴⁾ and under-equipped.

The premises state

The work conditions are generally in relation with those that prevail in the middle school. The general opinion of the teaching staff is that the premises of the middle school are in an unhealthy and uncomfortable state. This unhealthy state is due to two main reasons:

☛ The lack of good education of the pupils in health and sanitation. A quick visit to the classrooms informs you on the low level of the acquisition of the notions of sanitary behaviour by the students, on the culture of environmental hygiene. As a rule the classrooms are not regularly cleaned in spite of a cleaning group mostly composed of girls. These rooms may be compared with rubbish heaps (scattered waste paper pieces, fruit skins, tissues and pieces of stuff...etc.).

The schoolyard is also flooded with plastic bags and rubbish of all kinds. The Principal explains this unhealthy situation of the yard by the fact that before the opening of the Middle School the site was reserved and used as a public rubbish-place. In spite of the students' mobilisation the buried wastes still pose problem especially in the schoolyard where the plastic bags and rubbish are scattered.

☞ The lack of a surrounding wall of the middle school: this puts the school in the situation where it is impossible to control its academic space which is used as a passage way by cars and cabs and walkers and even cattle. As says the Principal in an unquiet whisper: *"this Middle school is transformed into a live stock park at times for herds of goats and sheeps and cattle. In the morning the cattle raisers cross the schoolyard to the pastures and in the evening they cross it back. This lack of wall is one of the disturbing elements (sic) of the students' level. It sets a non-security situation as well for the pupils as for the teachers. This situation makes it difficult to take any action of reforestration"*⁵⁾ (Verbatim).

Critically the teaching body is unanimous on the nakedness of the Middle School of Greater Diourbel. Some teachers do not like it and see in it disrespect for teachers. As explains one of them: *"they do not respect the State's agents for we work classrooms with untiled floors and a lot of dust. No one minister or engineer would like to work in our conditions. The State should have more consideration for teachers and*

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pupils" (Verbatim).

In addition the lack of ceiling fans in a town where the temperatures between April and July reach 45°C easily is such a factor to hinder tuition especially in the afternoon: "*the perspiration is too intense and it is sometimes impossible for the teachers and pupils to give or follow courses*", says a teacher. (Verbatim).

Classrooms

The Middle school started with two forms (1st and 2nd) at the school reopening of 1996-97. It was in the course of the 1998-99 schoolyear that the Ministry of Education (M.E) built two other classrooms. Of a surface of 63 m² each, these classrooms with untiled floors are under equipped with pupils' desks, built-in-blackboards and a teacher's desk and a book chest. The untiled floors and the missing of a good cleaning system contribute to make the classrooms unhealthy. Better, each classroom in average houses 28 desks for a number of students that varies from 92 to 145 while the official ratio is 55 pupils for a teacher, so the pupils don't have enough sitting places in the classrooms of the middle school. It is easy to guess the closeness the pupils live in and mostly the girls whose rate of registration has significantly increased in the course of these years at different levels.

In addition to those plethoric numbers the middle school suffers from the insufficiency of the classrooms. To make up

with this deficit teachers are compelled to borrow rooms in

Table II : Evolution of the students' numbers 1996-2001

Numbers	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001
Classe 6 ^{1st} Form Total Number (B - G)	50	75	83	148	145
Number of girls	20	20	20	59	48
Girls' rates %	40	26.7	24.1	38.9	33.1
Classe 2 nd Form Total Number	100	74	119	123	151
Number of girls	23	25	38	36	63
Girls' rates %	23	33.8	31.9	29.3	41.7
Classe 3 rd Form Total Number	-	81	92	119	110
Number of girls	-	22	29	41	32
Girls' rates %	-	27.2	31.5	34.5	29.09
Classe 4 th Form Total Number	-	-	61	87	92
Number of girls	-	-	23	31	38
Girls' rate %	-	-	37.7	35.6	41.3

Source : Archives ME, Dakar, 2000

the elementary school "Ngor Sene" fifteen minutes away from the middle school. In fact the middle school has got 8 pedagogical classes of:

All of them are in the same building of four (4) rooms.

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Making profit of the vacancy of the primary school Ngor Sene in the afternoons with the double-tide system the middle school holds courses there every Monday and Friday afternoon and Saturday morning in order to meet the regular hours of teaching stated in the syllabuses. These to-an-fros from "*Ngor Sene*" and the M.S are tiring for the pupils and teachers and have an impact sometimes on the duration of the courses.

Course books and references and teaching material.

The Greater Diourbel Middle School is remarkable for the lack of course books and teaching material. Taking in account the financial situation of the Provincial Council which has the education sector in charge as a transferred competence the middle school is sometimes confronted with a reduced portion in the distribution of course books. So most of the teachers say that they make use of all means at reach for their courses. In maths, for example, a teacher says that every year he is compelled to write a synthesis of the application exercises at the end of each chapter for his students to master his courses. He also writes for them a collection of paper topics for the G.C.E.-O' Level (B.F.E.M) to help them work easily for their exam.

The others teachers are in the same situation each of them making his best to find the books selected for the year and the pertinent teaching supports for the pupils to acquire the necessary knowledge (photocopies, mimeos and other

printed items...). What this teacher says is an illustration of the situation of shortage: "*it is impossible for me to correctly teach my art education activities because we can't either mix colours or stock the pupils' works*" (Verbatim). His point of view is reinforced by his colleague, a German teacher: "*for the German courses only three students have books they bought. The Middle School has seven reading books only for the 3rd Form, which compels me to have photocopies or to write out all application drills on the blackboard*" (Verbatim). Even the gym teacher is not spared by that shortage because he has to find out his own supports for physical education (buying weights to throw, and to take things as they are in their worn-out state).

As for the appropriateness of the class books the teachers agree to say that the ones they have in small quantities are out-dated and old. A teacher says: "*the available books are out-dated; the syllabus has changed but the course books have not followed*" (Verbatim). To avoid the difficulty the teachers use tricks, one of them says: "*we are compelled to make a medley of books to teach the lessons on the syllabus*" (Verbatim).

Yet it must be said that the teachers do suffer from the lack of books of methodology, audio and video material. In the language practice the audio material remains indispensable for the improvement of the pronunciation and listening. It is the same in natural science or Life and Health

Science in which experiments constitute important parts of the course. All in all we can establish that the Middle School, as state the teachers, is pedagogically poorly-equipped. The pedagogical equipment such as a library service and paper sheets and a world map, the metric compendium and the geometry and physics material...etc are not often available.

Study syllabus and teaching methods :

Most of the interviewed teachers have declared that the syllabus is too long and even ambitious. "*The syllabus is ambitious though rich*", says one of them. Another one joins in: "*the syllabus is not difficult but long if compared with the number of hours. The content is good in the whole but the time devoted to teaching is short. Hardly do we teach half of the syllabus*" (Verbatim). And yet some teachers insist on the fact that the syllabus does not often take into account the local realities. Here there is a real discrepancy between the official syllabuses of the ministry and those used in the ground. As explains one of the teachers: "*the selected themes on the syllabuses are very interesting but sometimes there is an inadaptation of the content to the study milieu. In fact a standard syllabus which is schemed by the ministry of education does not allow to take into account the realities specific to the milieu in which the school is and where the syllabuses are in use*" (Verbatim). The words of the teachers reflect a set of strategies used to complete the courses and adapt them to

reality. The most common strategies consists of ground visits, lectures and class debates, language club facilitation, thematic research groups, resortvisits (cultural, industrial, touristic and ecological, sanitary), school twinning...etc. those practices are pertinent because they participate in the academic activities and allow the students to acquire new knowledge in many fields mostly related to their preoccupations. Better *"such activities allow facilitating exchanges with other students and can rouse vocations"* (Verbatim), states a teacher.

In addition to the methodological matters the teachers declare that they use other themes to better take in charge the local realities. Among these topics we can retain; rural exodus, the "Moodu-Moodu" phenomenon, family ceremonies, civic education, STD/AIDS, youth reproduction health, culture.

Those various strategies allow the teachers to deal with the preoccupation of the pupils who live in a fast-muting society regarding globalisation with more and more acute informal constraints on various topics. Taking into account the new environment the students are more and more difficult in matter of knowledge.

Correction and grading and school performances

Because of the plethoric student numbers the teachers unanimously recognize the major difficulty to respect the norms of the two-semester papers. So do they have quick

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evaluations with oral questions before starting their courses to be sure the lessons are regularly learnt. In addition to that punctual control strategy of the learning they have a semester class exam and, usually, a semester paper. So it becomes difficult to efficiently check the pupils' performances and to bring in the best timely pedagogical and appropriate changes.

Yet despite those non-continuous assessments and conditions of the Middle School the academic performances are good. And the Principal proudly says: "*we won the Olympics of 1998 and for the G.C.E.-O' Level (BFEM) we always are among the best middle schools, we are regularly quoted as a reference at the level of the town of Diourbel, which we deserve*". (Verbatim)

The analysis of the school quitting and class repeating rates we are given by the administration of the school shows that indeed the Middle School has a fairly good school yielding. In 2000 the class repetition rates were between 15% and 26%, especially in the 3rd Form and 4th Form (the form for the G.C.E.-O exam). On the contrary the school quitting rates are between 0.8 and 8.1%. Answering a question on the pupils' performances the Principal underlines that "*the girls do not do less for the good results of the school. They have good academic results and make people question the sex stereotypes on their aptitudes to understand sciences and maths and technics (SMT). In the Middle School itself the pupils with*

the best performances are the girls. "Even for the G.C.E.-O' Level our girls are among the best of the middle schools". (Verbatim)

That opinion of the Principal is confirmed by all the teaching body and according to them the best students of the Middle School are girls. If we believe the teachers their performances are high because of their motivation in their studies. Yet this motivation is not equal. For a teacher: *"village pupils are more motivated than town ones who often neglect their studies for other activities such as TV video watching, rap music, games, entertainment in dancing rooms, tea round"* (Verbatim). The motivation of the rural pupils is seen in the fact that they still believe in the utility of the school. Studying is their main entertainment. A teacher explains : *" some pupils are motivated even though there is no longer a reference model because they still believe in school. In other words they believe that studying is necessary for success "* (Verbatim). Indeed despite the difficult conditions they live within and the distance they walk daily (in average 7 Kilometers) the village pupils are the most punctual and regular in their performances. A teacher witnesses: *"you should see the abnegation with which these pupils work at school. Measured with their life condition the commitment of these pupils can be understood only through their motivation and resolution and all the hope they invest in their studies"* (Verbatim). We can on the one hand think that the interest the pupils have in their studies, especially the rural world girls, comes from the new

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strategies of education which have other motivations. As state Yar and *al.* (2000); *it is less for these disfavoured fringes to climb the social scale through education than to reach social integration, which more and more necessitates the minimal mastering of the basic elements of education. In this perspective school is no longer perceived with the only view of getting a promised work, it has other basic functions (to read and write French, to know how to make one's way through the public services) which from now on are included in the education request expressed by parents. In fact the acquisition of these basic functions can be a factor of individual or group emancipation, an instrument of appropriation of different capitals (symbolic, social, politic, economic) and various knowledge (practical, technical, of communication...).*(Quoted by Gerard, 1989)

But we can on the other hand recall the changing of the ends of education, i.e. give account of the fact that in some circles the valorisation of the school capital from now on has new meanings and motivations because it allow the conquest of other socio-economic areas or the reinforcements of some activities (for example commerce) or it prepares girls for the marriage market whose main clients are the well-to-do migrants (Moodu-moodus). Essential then is the debate relative to the ends of education in their concrete modalities of implementation.

In this view we can wonder on the impact of the

"Moodu-moodu" phenomenon on the degree of motivation of the pupils for their studies. Indeed one of the aims of education is to get a job and an easily-earned salary. The potential advantages that can be drawn from education may be factors of motivation or factors of discouragement when registration starts at school. If children must at the end of their schooling join in the long queues of those who look for a job, parents are much inclined to be disillusioned and so to encourage their children to explore others spaces whose yielding is immediate. Their choice is more motivated by the fact that it may be in the close surroundings a man or a woman having succeeded in life with no school education. That success of non-educated people strongly questions the postulate according to which success is a consequence of conventional education. (French school for example) and sometimes shows the real discrepancy between the hopes of society and what school offers: the Moodu-moodu example is pertinent enough in this aspect. As says a teacher: "*with the Moodu-moodu phenomenon the pupils study to become traders*". (Verbatim) He goes on his analysis and explains: "*trade is an investment with immediate yielding and a Baol-Baol gives more importance to yielding than to academic knowledge acquisition. So they do not hesitate to choose between school and trade*". (Verbatim)

Pupils' discipline

The teachers are unanimous on the pupils' discipline.

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They all say that the Middle School students are much disciplined. Some cases of indiscipline may be, for example, to refuse to obey or to take a class admission ticket after missing. It is noticed that such cases are those of "resheltered" pupils from other schools who rely on their parents' protection sometimes having great influence in the town of Diourbel. A teacher states: "*but except the cases that may be handled, and that happen about the end of the school year when the students are tired, the pupils are disciplined and even shy*" (Verbatim).

The quality of the relations

It is important to observe that nearly all the teachers affirm that the relations between the pupils are good on the one side, from the fact that most of them are from the district and on the other side because they live in a space of communication and meeting which allows them to strengthen their relations (home, English club, German club...).

Elsewhere the relations pupils/teachers generally are good because many of the teachers have their sons and daughters in the middle school, or their nieces etc. this special aspect of the school shows that this one is well inserted in its surroundings and it may explain the quality of the relations between the teachers and their pupils. We can notice the good relations between the Principal and his pupils. As think many teachers the Principal is a very gentle

and available man. One of them gives this opinion: "*he is a schoolhead who is not authoritative. He is very soft. He has good father-sons relations with his students, for he is before all a family father*". (Verbatim)

Nevertheless there are sometimes some unhappy conflicts between students and teachers. They may be so strong that the pupils refuse to attend their courses sometimes categorically. That happened with one pupil who since the opening of school has not attended the maths class of a teacher. The problem is still on and the pupil may suffer in this and his training in maths may considerably be damaged.

Living in such a conflictual situation the pupils use the class walls as a framework for the expression of their soul state: "*so most of the teachers and under teachers are taunted and jeered on the walls of the classrooms. An example of this: "Mrs. X is a she-monkey" (Mrs. X is as ugly as a monkey) or "Mr. Y has no guts"*". Even the Principal is not spared. He says: "*I happen to read on the walls words about myself that are no polite at all. I simply ask to erase them. Let us notice that this practice is not specific to our middle school. In most of the secondary schools and middle schools and even at the university kids are used to expressing themselves on the walls of the classrooms*". (Verbatim)

Those disagreements do not seem limited to the relations pupils/teachers. Through some four interviews we can feel a

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conflictual situation between the Principal and part of the teaching staff. On this point the Principal is blamed for not calling a meeting of the Management Committee to report on the pupils' annual registrations and the amount of the school year budget. And a teacher says: *"in spite of all the initiatives taken to have information on the registration of the pupils and on the budget the Principal refuses to communicate with us. He even dared to forbid a teachers' meeting and sent us an explanation mail. We talked to the Academic Inspector (IA) and to the Departmental Inspector of the Ministry of National Education (IDEN) to settle this problem but with no results"*. (Verbatim)

The point of view of those teachers is interesting because it fairly well illustrates the difference felt by the teachers between the constraints of concertation and the personal way the Principal manages the school.

We can wonder whether this lack of communication of the Principal is not the source of the accusation against himself by one of the teachers. This charge is: *"there is money misuse because for five years the management committee has not met and we have no pedagogical and logistic material and no chalk nor any support"*. (Verbatim)

Another teacher mentions a conflict that opposes him and the Principal about the printing of course papers and other supports. He says: *"this school is badly run; sometimes I have great difficulties to have printed material"*.

At the end of his interview with us, the Principal answering about his conflicts with some teachers didn't deny them, but in the answers there was a great will of concertation and dedramatization. He thought the conflictual situation between him and some teachers came from misunderstanding. So, for him, for the general interest of the school, it would be good to organize a session of explanation and to call the management committee in order to establish a good atmosphere. An underteacher agreed. She thought that "*in all human communities there are conflicts and disagreements that sometimes put fire in the atmosphere, but people should overcome them*" (Verbatim). And another teacher joined her: "*these divergences should be hidden for the interest of the school. We all have to do things in the interest of the school and the pupils*". (Verbatim)

About the relation between the administration and the pupils some misunderstanding is noticed. And a teacher said: "*the underteacher is very authoritative and hard with the pupils. Maybe because he is from the secondary school where the students are more troublesome. He wants to impose himself on!!*" (Verbatim). The underteacher-in-chief said on the other way it is just a matter of understanding the school by-laws for the pupils. He thinks that his work is to see to the respect of these by-laws in the most acceptable way.

On the relation between the teachers and the schoolgirls the different interviews show what they are simply

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pedagogical. If in general the pupils-teachers relations are good there is nevertheless a tense climate between a group of pupils and some teachers which is not of the best. It seems that the Middle School of Greater Diourbel is in the phenomenon described by Barry, the Principal of the Middle School Mamadou Diaw, Thiès, Senegal, in his article "Crise d'autorité et violence dans nos lycées". He wrote: "*if we scrutinize things we quickly see that the phenomenon in fact (not new in our education system) is the revelation of two bad things which have been developing for a long time slowly in our education system: the lack of authority and violence....These bad things of course can be explained by an objective situation due to the multifold-crisis context that stirs our society and also to the serious and material and human carelessness that often causes great difficulty in the running of our secondary and middle schools.*" (WalFadjri, number 2781 of June 23-24, 2000, page 10)

Security climate

In the whole the teachers affirm that because of the non-erection of a wall surrounding the Middle School we can note some insecurity as well for the teachers as for the pupils. To illustrate that climate of insecurity, a female underteacher tells us: "*one day I was alone in the office and I was aggressed by a madman. I shouted outbreathly. I locked up myself in. It was the same on another day when a bull attacked a group of students. One of them with the bull running after her escaped thanks to her great experience with animals. She laid*

down flatly breathless and motionless. Her friends kept on telling her not to move or breathe. A while later the bull went away".
(Verbatim)

Cases of insecurity have been reported by the teachers also. Before the digging of the foundations of the surrounding wall carts and cabs would go through the school sometimes at a high speed. Of course these practices endangered the lives of the students and teachers. Elsewhere in their answers they also have mentioned cases of theft of books and documents in the school secretary's office, stone throwing by the kids of the district and naked madmen strolling in the vicinity of the Middle School.

And yet neither racket cases nor physical violence cases or sexual harassment or sexual abuse cases have ever been met in the middle school. The interviewed teachers talk about pupils who smoke cigarettes and very rarely "yamba" or marijuana. For these teachers, most of the pupils smoke for mimetism especially in the communication space or in their tea-rounds. But as the teachers fear it and as drug and marijuana consumption is more an urban phenomenon, it is obvious that the young ones of Diourbel will not be able always to escape from it particularly on the occasion of dancing parties and "*fourals*" or music concerts, or tea-rounds.

Those meeting spaces of the youth also constitute places of sexual contacts between the pupils and occasions of TSD

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and AIDS contamination. Recent inquiries on the AIDS prevalence at the level of the Secondary and Middle schools reveal rates that are higher than the national average rate (2%). That is a very preoccupying situation if we know that most of the sexual intercourses at that age are non-protected and can lead to undesired pregnancies or illegal abortions with nefast consequences on the girls' reproductive health. For all those reasons the teachers are happy to note that pregnancies are very rare at the level of the Middle School. For example last year 2000/2001 there was one single case of pregnancy of a 3rd Form girl. That seems not to have surprised the female under-teacher who affirms: "*as soon as I saw that girl with her manners I asked the teachers to be very cautious with her boyish behaviour. She was a resheltered pupil in our Middle School; she was from elsewhere with manners unknown in this school...*" (Verbatim). Another teacher confirms that opinion: "*I once met that girl at a late time at night and when I asked her why she was in that place at that time, she told me she was there to watch films. So I am not surprised to see that pregnancy*". (Verbatim)

Answering the question: "*what attitude to have in case of pregnancy in the school?*" The teachers answer minutely. Let us mention that if all the teachers remain unanimous for the respect of the by-laws in force which carry the school exclusion of a pregnant girl; on the other way the partner in the pregnancy too is to be excluded (if a pupil) and the

sentence should be extended to him if it is a teacher. And as underlines one of them: *"it's really shocking to see a schoolgirl with pregnancy excluded while the guilty boy is not punished. More than that pregnancy is a true loss for parents and a big risk for the girl who is not in good conditions to carry her pregnancy to the end and to have an undesired child "*.

(Verbatim)

Conclusion

This inquiry allowed us to sound the general climate of the Greater Diourbel Middle School as it is perceived by the teachers of the institution. Its results show that the school climate plays a determining role in the good running of the Middle School. So in this school where you feel in security and where you can rely on the others and where the stress is put on a teaching of quality, its teachers are very much involved in their work, and pupils reach good academic performances. Concretely this research sheds light on the teachers' conditions which are, if not poor, difficult materially and pedagogically speaking. For them the buildings are of fairly good quality. Sure they are relatively new but they are not taken care of. There is not a true staff room and school equipment. See the incredible state of the sanitary equipment, the bad telephone service, the penury of fresh water, the lack or insufficiency of the course books and teaching supports, the plethoric pupils' numbers, the lowness of the pupils follow-up rate and the strong pressure

of the teaching load. Giving their opinion on the quality of the teaching, they think in their great majority that the syllabuses should be reduced and adapted to the local realities, especially through taking in charge the gender problem firmly. They find it difficult to innovate at the level of the teaching methods and they are confronted with routine and the constraints of the teaching/learning situation. About paper grading and correction, generally the teachers recognize it difficult to respect the norms of two papers a semester. Despite these adverse factors the performances of the students remain good because the teachers pay great attention to the pupils who are much motivated in their studies and disciplined in their behaving.

Measuring the security climate the teachers acknowledge that, despite some cases here and there of deviance, juvenile delinquency has not yet reached an alarming threshold. For them the relative tranquillity of the milieu creates a feeling of security which favours their implication in the education practices.

This present research sustains the conclusion of Klitgaard and Hall, (1979); Brunet (1991) and Janosz and Le Blanc (1996) according to which the ecological variables have weak relation with the academic performances. It also brings to light the importance of the variables of the social system. Because the school context offers social support, the teachers and also the students are motivated by what they

do. Similar results were gathered by Short and Rinerhart, (1992); Cropazano and Kacmar (1995); Sagor (1996); Ryan and Deci, (2000) at last interesting results on security climate have been gathered. So like those of Grisay (1993) and Bowen and Desbiens (2004) our own present conclusions are this Middle School is characterized by a good relation between the pupils and the teachers and has little difficulty with drugs and sexuality and TSD and violence.

In the light of those results it seems correct to generalize this study and to conduct it with a representative sample of all the Senegalese middle schools. In addition to the analysis of the climate of the middle schools at the national level, such a research will allow the identification of more organisational and individual features (relational climate, educational climate, security climate, justice climate, and belonging climate). Sure enough in bringing up new lighting on the role of the school factors and organisational factors in the explanation of school yielding, it would provide precise data to school heads anxious to preserve or build a school environment which materially and psychosocially will be favourable to learning./.

[Notes]

- 1) With a total superficies of 196.722 Km², Senegal is a semi-arid country which occupies the most advanced position of West Africa in the Atlantic Ocean. Physically Senegal is a flat land

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rising not above 130 meters. At the human level its population was estimated at the end of the year 2003, at 10.127.809 inhabitants. That population like those of the African countries in the South of the Sahara, is characterized by its rapid growth. The average year growth rate was estimated at 2,5% between 1988 and 2003. This rapid growth of the population can be seen in the more and more important densification of the human occupation of the national territory. In fact the density of the population in 2003 (51 inhabitants per km²) was 1,5 times more important than that of 1988 (35 inhabitants) at the national level.

Those data also reveal a bad balance in the spatial distribution of that population. The Province of Dakar which occupies 0,3% of the national territory shelters 22% of the total population of the country: it is the most density populated province (4147 inhabitants per km²). On the other way the province of Tambacounda has the weakest density : 11 inhabitants per km²).

The urban population of Senegal is estimated at 4.120.375 inhabitants, with a rate of urbanization of about 41%. The province of Dakar is particular with its degree of urbanization. Indeed it gathers more than half of the urban population of the country (53%). Besides its is characterized by its strong urbanity, the great majority of its population living (96%) in towns. It must be said however that the development of new balancing poles has strongly influenced the place occupied by Dakar in the urban population of the country is reduced going down from 80% in 1988 to 51% in 2003. Beside Dakar, the most urbanized provinces are Ziguinchor (43,7%), Thies (43,5%) and StLouis (36,1%). The provinces of Kolda, Matam and Fatick with respectively an urbanization rate of 13,8%, 13,2%, 12,7% are the less urbanized ones.

In the whole a rapid growth (2,5%), a life hope of 49.5 years and an extreme youth (about 50.2% are under 18 years) are the marking characteristics of that population which is urban at 41% (D.P.S, 2003). The Gross National Product (G.N.P) is 720 us dollars in habitant, which ranks Senegal among the countries with an intermediate income. Its agriculture represents 12% of the G.I.P, the services 60% of this same GIP, and its industry 18%. The principal sources of income of Senegal are mainly tourism, fishing, phosphates, peanuts and cotton. In 1990 the adult education rate was 31.4%, the education gross rate all and all was 31%. The indicator of education level was 0.31% and the indicator of human development (I.H.D.) was 0.331, which ranked Senegal in the 153rd position among 174 countries (P.N.U.D, 1996).

2) "Moodu-Moodu" : It history goes back to the Islamic religion and its the specificity of its local practice. This noun is structured by reduplicating the Senegalese proper name Mòòdu ; which is the diminutive of Muhammad or Mamadou. Its most common meaning refers to Senegalese emigrants living in rich countries of the North.

The French and the Italians used, at first, used it to refer to Senegalese peddlers living in their countries. Nowadays it tends to describe a socio-professional group, namely those you encounter in the informal economic (Thiam, 2000); the sense is currently evolving to social behaviour, who, on the field of economy is tough at trade, saving every cent, rather fundamentalist, of a rustic in their everyday life, great capacity of adaptation to circumstances, and abstemious (Ndiaye, 1997).

However, in Senegal it is : a people who did not go to school and who became rich, after emigrating from Senegal. (Sène, 2003). The term Mòòdu- Mòòdu meaning is evolving to a

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group of individuals, trying to achieve professional integration without any support from the State. They manage to by-pass the institutional structures by using informal and intra-personal relationships.

The kernel location of the networking process is Touba, capital city of the Mourides : 49 km from Diourbel, and central market places all over Senegalese cities ; from where they shape their commercial strategies to spread in such a span that they are to be met in African countries such Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Congo, South Africa, etc. or in the Us, in Asia (Turkey, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, etc. or in the Pacific (Australia, etc.).

- 3) The choice to concentrate this inquiry on the Greater Diourbel Middle School is an answer to a practical problem: we had a social study to do there on the request of a N.G.O in Dakar. We took the opportunity to study at the same time the work conditions of the teachers. The focused school is located in a vast populous district which is newly developed in the southeast surroundings of Diourbel (a town 127 Km away from Dakar.). Moreover this school has a strong power of attraction on the students of the villages in its vicinity. It is more attended by pupils of poor condition. Opened in 1996 it had 481 students in 2002-2003. So we can notice that in its geographical position and in its student population this school is an interesting sample of the middle school population.
- 4) Beside the administration building the Provincial Council funds the creation of a fencing wall and in September 2001 they completed the building of another block of two classrooms.
- 5) For the present time the 2001 June situation seems to have changed: according to our last information the closing wall is now built.

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