CULTURAL MODELS OF INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM IN A
CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT: SELF-EFFICACY VERSUS INTERDEPENDENCE
IN RURAL SENEGAL

by
MIKELL RITCHEY GLEASON
(Under the direction of Benjamin G. Blount)

ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I discuss the concept of cultural models of individualism and
collectivism as they apply to development. The work is anthropological in that it focuses
on understanding the evolution of cultural models that influence actual behaviors. I first
discuss what cultural models are and how they work, and then continue with a discussion
of how cultural models may be gleaned from analyses of key words and themes used in
talking about specific domains, such as development. I argue that lack of understanding
about the different motivational forces imbued in different cultural models, such as
individualism and collectivism, serves as a barrier to development programs as it is
defined in the dominant modernization paradigm. Using various methodological tools,
including interviewing and a photography exercise, in conjunction with intensive
participant observation, I show that the collectivist world-view in rural Senegal is more
socially interdependent than independent. Thus, it is also more likely to be motivated by
opportunities to help and be helped by other people in their social networks. Most
development activities, however, assume that all people are motivated by the desire to
control their own destinies and to excel for internal reasons. The resulting development
project failures often leave both developer and developee uncertain about what happened
and blaming each other for the failure. I conclude with a discussion of the current most
popular development activity, microfinance, a tool emphasizing self-efficacy and
economic growth. In a collectivist context the tool is often used in ways unforeseen by
the development planners. These unforeseen developments only reinforce the need for
cultural model analyses to help bridge the information gaps between the planners and the
people on the ground. However, I also conclude that a truly participatory approach to
development will require a significant shift in the dominant development model to allow
for the validation of other worldviews as equally rational.

INDEX WORDS: Cultural Models, Development, Senegal, Individualism, Collectivism,
Microcredit, Women
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by

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Dean of the Graduate School 
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>Association Sportif et Culturelle</td>
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<td>ASREAD</td>
<td>Association Sénégalaise de Recherche, d’Etude et d’Appui au Développement</td>
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<tr>
<td>CERP</td>
<td>Centre d’Expansion Rurale Polyvalent</td>
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<td>CODESRIA</td>
<td>Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa</td>
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<td>CWS</td>
<td>Church World Service</td>
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<td>ENDA</td>
<td>Third World Environment and Development</td>
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<td>FNGPF</td>
<td>Fédération Nationale des Groupements de Promotion Féminine</td>
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<td>GIE</td>
<td>Groupement d’Intérêt Economique</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPF</td>
<td>Groupement de Promotion Féminine</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICCO</td>
<td>Inter-Church Organization for Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>KMS</td>
<td>Keur Momar Sarr</td>
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<td>MFEF</td>
<td>Ministère de la Femme, l’Enfant, et la Famille</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAGPF</td>
<td>Projet d’Appui aux Groupements de Promotion Féminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAJM</td>
<td>Projet d’Appui aux Jeunes Maraîcheurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDI</td>
<td>Projet de Développement Intégré</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEDI</td>
<td>Projet Enlargé de Développement Intégré</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEGRN</td>
<td>Programme de Protection de l’Environnement et la Gestion des Ressources Naturelles</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The goal of this dissertation is to reveal some of the underlying cultural models that motivate individuals and groups responsible for creating development agencies and projects and for those who participate in them. While all individuals and groups draw on both individualistic and collectivist models, the models influencing development agents, particularly international agents, are more likely to be individualistic and, thus, often incompatible with more collectivistic models that motivate target groups, such as women in rural Senegal. In order to show how the two constrastive models operate, I will address and discuss the central ideas and topics below, in turn:

- The content, organization, and function of cultural models;
- The two models of individualism and collectivism, idealized and maximized for contrast;
- The characterization of the two models theoretically in a context of development;
- An application of the models in a context of development from Senegal;
- An assessment of the potential importance of using a cultural models approach in practical situations.

The objective is to show that the two models are differently and deeply embedded in the cultural system of international development and in social societies where group cooperation is a paramount concern. The two models are deeply ingrained to the point that the bearer of each has difficulty in perceiving the rationale of the other.
Terms Defined

This dissertation explores the process of modernization of women’s groups in rural Senegal. Modernization is examined in terms of the development process and its effects on the world-view of the people it affects. In this particular context, the relationship between the local women, the local non-governmental organization, and the dominant, global model of development becomes the focal point where larger, sometimes opposing, cultural models of individualism and collectivism are revealed. The concept of cultural models, and individualism and collectivist, will be addressed more fully in Chapters 2 and 3. Modernization, then, is a process of psychological, as well as technological, change that emphasizes self-efficacy instead of interdependence. By self-efficacy I mean that individual people are expected to be the agents of their own success. Interdependence, on the other hand, expects a melding of self-effort with other-effort to achieve success. It is different from dependence, which expects only other-effort to achieve anything, as is the case with small children.

I use the term development, development planners, and development agents to describe the kinds of activities carried out in the name of modernization, and the people who create and implement the projects. There are many kinds of development agencies, from private voluntary organizations to non-governmental organizations to international government-backed organizations. At the very local, grassroots level, it may be possible to have some kind of development that is created out of collectivist models. Problems arise, however, when such groups grow larger and more dependent on outside sources of financing and technical aid. Sometimes the institutional survival of the group takes
precedence over its original mission and it begins to incorporate the goals of the donors, who are influenced more often by individualistic models of “how things should be”.

*Development failure or success* is most often determined in the literature by the ability or inability of the development activity to continue in perpetuity and produce some quantifiable economic benefit to the target group. Qualitatively, a project may also be seen as successful if it has succeeded in changing individual attitudes and behaviors to be more *modern* in some way. From this perspective, there may be some cognitive dissonance when, for example, women manage to pay back their small loans on time, yet they have not used the funds in the intended efficacious manner. From the point of view of the targeted group, a project is successful when it furthers their goals, regardless of whether or not those goals hold immediate economic benefit as an end in and of itself.

When I first began this research my goal was to analyze the process of modernization of local institutions, specifically women’s groups in rural Senegal. What it has evolved into is an analysis of large-scale cultural models that shape the way different women make decisions in a development entrenched environment. The analysis is not about the physical environment itself, nor does it address specific environmental knowledge. It is about how women organize themselves and make a living in a specific environmental context which not only influences their collective and individual world view, but also is influenced itself by actions motivated by that world view. *Worldview* is a term I use to denote an amalgamation of large-scale, general-purpose cultural models. It seems to be a truism in anthropology that different people see the world differently. This truism is the underpinning of the discipline. The world at large, however, and particularly the West, glosses over these differences by calling them ‘traditional,’ ‘backwards,’ ‘limiting,’ or
‘obstacles to progress’. The implication is that they are something to be changed and improved. When these changes or improvements do not produce the expected results, it is easy to blame the victim for the failure (see especially Ferguson 1991). The implicit goal is for other people’s world-views to change to meet the expectations of the world-view held by development planners. A cultural models approach to understanding both models may help individuals involved in the development process to understand one another better, and may reveal to them ways in which their own cultural models have evolved over time.

This dissertation is only one step toward revealing the importance of deeply embedded cultural models not only to the individuals who hold them, but also to any one interested in really understanding the complexity of cultural difference and how it affects behavior. The two large-scale, general-purpose models that I examine are individualism and collectivism. While it is nothing new to state that the dominant development ideology is generally individualistic and that many of the individuals and groups in which development activities are carried out adhere to a generally collectivist world-view, the relative importance of social relationships differs between the two, and this has important ramifications for the development process and the individuals and groups being ‘developed’. In general, development activities are created in a framework of modernization, an individualistic cultural model that privileges certain types of information over others. This is not a direct critique of development, but instead an exploration of the development process as an ongoing part of everyday life for these women in Senegal. In this way this research differs from much of the development literature, which tends to take a technocratic standpoint, and it differs from much of the
academic literature, which tends to take some variation of a political standpoint (development as neocolonialism, development as ignoring indigenous knowledge, development as imposed from without, etc.). There is much to be learned from both of these bodies of knowledge, but I assert that modernization, and the development activities carried out in its name, is a just another (very powerful) cultural model which is integrated with other cultural models and frames the way individuals construct their own world views about “the way things should be.” This in turn affects the way things “really” are and the ways in which new information will be interpreted.

From a practical standpoint, an understanding of what cultural models are and how they work is important not only from an academic perspective, but also to policy makers and to individuals concerned about conflict resolution. Cultural models have recently been used to better reveal the complexity of human thinking and behavior (Dailey 1999; Conley 2000; Blount 2002). Long-term problems in the Middle East, and recent war in Afghanistan and now Iraq make it very obvious that there are deeply rooted differences in the way humans perceive their social worlds. Similarly, the debate over whether or not to drill in the Arctic Circle reveals that there are other cultural models at work besides individualism and collectivism that permit us to identify ourselves collectively as ‘Americans.’ We do not even understand each other very well, yet we expect that we can ‘fix’ the rest of the world. As the world continues to shrink metaphorically, the relative and absolute scarcity of natural resources will increase. While it may seem pessimistic to say so, it would seem that at some point the debate over whether or not we should learn about ‘why they do that’ will disappear as that information will become essential for our own survival.
Background Information

I did the fieldwork in the arrondissement of Keur Momar Sarr in the region of Louga in Senegal in West Africa. I chose this site for several reasons, the first being that I already knew people there who were willing to work with me and support my research efforts. A second factor was the fact that there have not been many large-scale development activities carried out in the area, but, at the same time, it is not an isolated, unconnected region. Also, Senegal has little history of substantial ethnic hostility, political upheaval, or overly repressive government. I am often frustrated by literature that extols very specific indigenous knowledge or some great little grass roots organization that evolved in response to some specific, often overwhelming problem. I do not wish to belittle these efforts because the information is important, but my experience has been that for every community that guards some specialized indigenous knowledge or manage to fight the big corporation there are many others that ‘make-do’, and do so more or less successfully. This is not meant to belittle their knowledge, either, as they often have to ‘make-do’ in very difficult circumstances. Such groups may be more representative of a majority of the rest of the world, and, as such, any results the conclusions from the research may be more easily generalized in theory to other groups.

Keur Momar Sarr is located about 250 kilometers northeast of the capital city Dakar. Politically, there are ten regions in Senegal and each region is divided into several arrondissements and then Rural Communities. The village of Keur Momar Sarr is the seat of administrative government for the arrondissement of the same name. It is divided into four Rural Communities: Keur Momar Sarr, Gande, Syer, and Nguer Malal. All the
research took place in the Rural Community of Keur Momar Sarr, most specifically in the villages of Guankett Guent and N’Diba-N’Dame.

The arrondissement of Keur Momar Sarr is located around part of Guiers Lake but also in a semi-arid region straddling both savannah and sahel. It is an area hit hard by the droughts of the late 1960s and early 1980s. Biomass surveys of the Ferlo on the eastern side of Guiers Lake show a marked decrease in vegetative biomass between 1982 and 1984 (Engelhard 1986: 511-516). I was unable to locate more recent comparative information, but all of the women I talked to indicated that, while not as forested as they remember from their youths, the area has rebounded quite well since the early 1980s.

Physical Environment

In the western plains and Ferlo area, soils are sandy and porous and susceptible to wind erosion. In general they are fragile and need special care, such as long fallow periods, to maintain life (Pelissier 1966, Harlan 1976). The Senegal River, located in northern Senegal and running through the Sahel region bordering Mauritania, receives 200 to 400 mm of rain annually, leaving the populations dependent on its irregular flooding for their annual agricultural needs until recently (Nelson et al: 1973; Engelhart 1986). Scrub trees and grasses mark the landscape outside the floodplain, and the soils, which receive none of the rich flood deposits, tend to be fragile. Increasing population, changes in land laws, increasing need for cash money, self-serving political decisions, and bad climatic turns have led to severe land degradation everywhere in Senegal, but especially in the northern, more fragile regions. Extensive agriculture, which once meant leaving some fields fallow while moving on to others, now means simply reworking the same old fields over and over again as new fields become more difficult to obtain. Less
productive fields are thus no longer abandoned to lie fallow long enough for their soils to regenerate. When asked, several women said that they only left fields for about two years now, as opposed to ten or fifteen as their parents did.

_Land_

There are three main soil and ecological zones in the arrondissement: the _waalo_, the western Ferlo, and the _djiery._

1. The _waalo_ is made up of the lands closest to the Lake. The soils are alluvial-clay and are good for irrigated agriculture, if they have not become too saline. In the past the rise and fall of the water table kept the salt level regulated. This is no longer the case and much of the land formerly cultivated on the lakeshore is now too salty to use.

2. The western Ferlo is the flat, dry, pastoral zone located to the east and south of Keur Momar Sarr in the Rural Communities of Syer and Gandé.

3. The _djiery_ are the lands found to the west and south of Keur Momar Sarr away from the Lake. They tend to be sandy and are used for the _nawet_, or rainy season, crops of millet, cowpeas, melons, and peanuts (ASREAD PEGRN)

_Water_

Rainfall is scarce and irregular, especially as one heads north. The average rainfall in the region of Louga, which includes Keur Momar Sarr, between 1923-1964 was 445 mm during approximately four months of rainy season. The average number of days of rain was 34, and the average amount of rain necessary for agricultural purposes was about 25-30 mm per month. However, these averages mask the differences in daily intensity. On August 21, 1933, for example, the town of Louga received 216 mm of rainfall. The
annual differences are important also: 202 mm in 1942 versus 899 mm in 1952. (Sar 1973). The more pertinent numbers for Keur Momar Sarr only exist since 1977. The average rainfall between 1977 and 1998 was 261 mm, marked by a high of 427 mm in 1988 and a low of 63 mm in 1984 (Field Notes from CERP KMS).

Guiers Lake is the only permanent source of freshwater in the region. Long and narrow looking on a map, the Lake reacts to water changes much like the Senegal River, and until recently residents living on its banks waited for the annual recession of the waters in order to plant their crops in the uncovered, rich soil. However, in the 1980s a grand scheme to control the flow of the Senegal River put an end to the recession and the water is now maintained at a full level year round. The Lake is the largest source of surface freshwater in the country and the water processing plant is located in Gnit, about 35 k from the town of Keur Momar Sarr. This water processing plant supplies clean drinking water to the inhabitants of Dakar and Thiès (thanks to the 2000 political elections, Keur Momar Sarr now also has access to clean water).

There is little management of water otherwise. The inhabitants of Keur Momar Sarr use water directly out of the Lake for drinking, bathing, laundering, washing (people and animals), cooking, and anything else for which water is needed. Those who live further away from the banks of the Lake send couriers on donkey back to collect water in old truck tire inner tubes. They also rely on wells and temporary “lakes” formed after rainfall.

The end of recession agriculture

As stated above, the Lake is really an extension of the Senegal River, connected by the Tivouey canal in Richard Toll to the north. The rise and fall of the river have been dramatic, and historically the Lake has extended far further south than it currently does,
and also has completely, or nearly completely, dried up even during the past one hundred
years (Field Notes, Gankett Guent History). In 1956 a small dam was constructed in Keur
Momar Sarr in order to create a permanent reservoir of fresh water for not only human
consumption in Dakar, but also for industrial consumption by the sugar factory in
Richard Toll. The dam was opened when the water level in the River got too high. Thus,
people living south of the Keur Momar Sarr dam knew only a very short flood season, if
at all. In 1989, this dam was enlarged to handle a larger capacity of water that resulted
from the damming of the Senegal River in St. Louis and Kayes, Mali. Now the ancient
riverbed to the south of the dam has permanent water for at least 30 kilometers and the
plan is to increase that to 100 kilometers. As a result, the water is maintained at a high
level year round and recession agriculture is no longer possible.

In the mid-1960s the governments of Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal formed a
commission to manage better the waters of the Senegal River. In the 1980s two dams
were built: Manatali (1988) in Kayes, Mali, which is intended as a hydro-electric power
source, and Diama (1986) near St. Louis, Senegal, which is a desalinization dam built at
the mouth of the River. The permanent high level maintained in the River and Lake has
had positive and negative effects on local populations. Much has already been written
about the large-scale development projects undertaken by government parastatals during
the 1980s and 1990s (Ba 1983; Mathieu and Niasse 1986). While many people living on
the banks of the Senegal River have suffered, both physically and financially, many
people living “down river” on Guiers Lake, like the women of Keur Momar Sarr, Gankett
Guent and N’Diba-N’Dame, are generally happier. One woman in Gankett Guent said
that the recession had not been good, regular, or effective for many years prior to the
change anyway, and having a source of permanent fresh water is priceless to her. Both Gankett Guent and N’Diba-N’Dame had at least one well, but the water would occasionally dry up, and often became too saline to drink. The women would have to travel daily to the small dam near Keur Momar Sarr, a distance of three to six kilometers to fill containers with water for the household consumption. Several women also claim that fresh fish is now available, at a decent price, most of the year, although the fish from the southern side of the dam are smaller than those from the other side.

However, women also complain about the plants growing near the river (cattails). They make the water taste bad and impede entry into the Lake. Mosquitoes are now a problem. They did not breed in the often saline, short-term water that was previously available. Also, many of the potential fields near the lake are becoming too saline to use for agricultural purposes. Diesel water pumps allow them to work fields that are a little further away from the shores of the lake and avoid some of the problems due to salinity. Also, this far south, the Lake does not suffer from the same degree of chemical pollution, parasites, and life-choking weeds as it does further north (Carl Brothers International 1999).

**The General Development Context**

Prior to independence in 1960, Senegal was subject to French development strategies aimed at increasing peanut production for export. The new government relied on state centralized planning which still focused primarily on cash crops, but also emphasized the primary food crop of millet. This development planning included the creation of national development plans and regional development agencies responsible for financing agricultural projects, technical training, and the overall rationalization of the bureaucracy.
The new government set up a national system of rural cooperatives to facilitate related activities at the local level and dismantle the former exploitative economic system by incorporating the peasantry into all aspects of development. The Animation Service was created explicitly to:

“spread the mystique of development and mobilize the rural masses through non-coercive, educational means…By increasing peasants’ awareness of their own collective capacity for self-improvement, subsequent communication and collaboration between technical agents and villagers would be conducted on the basis of discussion, explanation, and contractual agreements instead of hierarchical directives breeding mistrust and suspicion” (Schumacher 1975: 98).

This mission thus also underlined the importance of the *Centres d’Extension Rurales Polyvalents* (CERP) as stimulators of grass-roots communication and education. CERP agents were, and are, government employees. Here one finds an agricultural agent, a forestry agent, a veterinarian, a home economist/rural animatrice, etc. Each of these individuals works for the CERP, but they are also responsible to the different ministries from which they hail, which can sometimes cause problems. The CERP differs from the regional development agencies in that, in principle, the agents live and interact with the populations that they serve. The CERP is the arm of the federal government that promotes economic, ecologic, and social development. It is the technical council to the various government representatives. Its agents currently organize *Groupement de Promotion Feminines* (GPF), the cultural and sports associations (ASC), and the Economic Interest Groups (GIE). Agents discuss local problems with the communities, consider the whole problem, which means including social factors, and they look for solutions together with the local communities. However, the CERPs were, from the start, not well prepared to do their job. Lack of resources and appropriate training has left them a force often in name only.
The institutions created to ‘do’ development in Senegal underwent a variety of name changes, reformations, and re-rationalizations to improve their efficacy, but climatic changes leading to production declines, a decline in world market prices for cash crops, poor terms of trade, and internal corruption caused many farmers lose confidence in the development mission. At the same time, the regional development organizations actually contributed to land degradation. Green revolution technologies were often inappropriate. Intensive use of chemical fertilizers with insufficient water, felling of all trees in a field to allow for mechanical plows, As conditions worsened, both economically and environmentally, farmers became increasingly indebted to both the cooperatives and private lenders for money to buy food. As a result, many farmers defaulted on public loans (Waterbury 1987; Schumacher 1975; USAID 2000).

The first Structural Adjustment Program was implemented in 1978. The state marketing board was dissolved because of the high rate of loan defaults. The regional development organizations either closed or scaled back their operations. It was not until the mid 1980s that any real development direction again emanated from the government. The New Agricultural Policy (NAP) of 1984 had as mission the empowerment of local people and the better integration between farming, livestock grazing, and natural resource management. “A critical failing was that the empowerment was simply declared rather than nurtured. It also occurred in a policy vacuum because it was not accompanied by suitable measures to enable the effective empowerment of the farmers” (USAID 2000: 8). Problems obtaining credit, inputs, and transportation continued.

In general, Senegal has followed international development models quite closely. The current focus is on decentralization and democratization as the means to revenue
generation. However planning is still overwhelmingly top-down in fact, stimulated by donor demands and international expectations.

Keur Momar Sarr

The arrondissement of Keur Momar Sarr has been growing since 1963. Data from then show no paved roads, a population of 16,280 inhabitants, and little infrastructure (Sar 1973). Sar’s analysis of the development problems facing the region of Louga in 1973 include an aside that the northern half of the arrondissement of Keur Momar Sarr is so sparsely populated that the market in the town of Keur Momar Sarr was situated as far north as was viable. This market affected over 100 villages, and on any given Saturday Keur Momar Sarr watched its population double “to reach 600 inhabitants” (Sar 1973: 214). By contrast, the population of the town of Keur Momar Sarr alone is today somewhere between 1500 and 2000 people. The new census is not final, but estimates put the arrondissement population at over 40,000 people The market is in several tourist guides and now attracts several thousand people, including vendors from all parts of Senegal.

However, until recently Keur Momar Sarr has attracted only scant attention from the international development apparatus. It is located in the northern fringe of the peanut basin, thus it is less important financially. Other than aid funneled through the cooperatives by the regional development agency during the 1960s and 1970s to increase what limited peanut production there was, there was virtually no concerted effort to improve either the environment or the economic infrastructure of the area until the mid-1980s. In 1986, the CERP reported that agricultural revenues were very week, demands for land near the lake were high but that there was little account of it being put to good
use, and that their was a lack of good management policies for conflict resolution between farmers and herdsmen. It also reported that the local people lacked “sensibilisation” about their natural resources and local leaders were ignorant of the needs of their constituents as well as the limitations of their natural environment (Minstre de l’Intérieur 1986).

The first non-governmental organization (NGO) to appear in Keur Momar Sarr was Church World Service (CWS) in 1983. CWS is an American NGO sponsored by the National Council of Churches. It finances participatory projects that target the most marginalized peoples in a community. The CWS team set up the Integrated Development Project (PDI) and then the Enlarged Integrated Development Project (PEDI). Activities included the food-for-work program already mentioned, as well as programs for reforestation, literacy (in local languages), market gardening, appropriate technology, women’s activities, youth activities, and primary health care (Derenoncourt and Dia 1987). The goal was to pass on ownership of all facets of the project to the local people at the close of the project. CWS personnel worked together with CERP personnel in 10 villages. In 1986 it was determined that the local people were not prepared yet to take on management of the project themselves so the closing date was extended by one year, at which time CWS and CERP ended their technical, financial and management assistance, with limited success. Other projects sponsored by CWS followed:

- **Le Projet Banques Céréales (PBC) 1986-92.** This project involved 14 groups for a total of 3150 household/members. The goal was to prevent shortages of food stocks during bad times or when stocks ran out before the new harvest. The groups sold subsidized food stocks and then restocked themselves regularly from their own stocks. The total revolving credit funds of these groups was about 35 million FCFA (approximately $140,000 in pre-devaluation francs). This project is often cited as one of the best cereal bank projects to have been executed in Senegal. (Financed by CWS and Bread for the World (Germany).
Le Projet d’Appui aux Eleveurs (PAE) 1990-93: contributed to the development of Groupement d’Intérêt Economique (GIE) Unions of herdsmen in each of the four rural communities of the arrondissement. CWS and CERP trained a total of 27 herdsmen GIEs totaling 964 members. The domains of intervention of this project include livestock feed, animal health, fighting forest fires and education/training. Financed by CWS and Bread for the World (Germany).

Le projet Agro-pastorale de la zone de KMS 1990-1993: This project was supposed to train 31 youth groups, 11 in market-gardening and 20 in animal fattening. The objective was to create 770 unsalaried jobs to benefit youth. The members were to contribute their labor and the materials were to be given by the project. As of the writing of this dissertation there is very little to show for this project. It was supposed to be financed by l’Agence d’Exécution des Travaux d’Intérêt Public contre le sous emploi (AGETIP) that has not yet mobilized the funding necessary to purchase water pumps and other inputs.

ASREAD

In 1989 a new NGO was created by some of the CWS employees as part of the CWS emphasis on training local people to develop their own institutions of support in order to avoid having to rely on government help in the future. L’Association Sénégalese de Recherche, d’Etude et d’Appui au Développement (ASREAD) was created and officially recognized as an NGO by the Ministry of Women, Children and the Family in 1993. ASREAD worked informally with CERP at first, but in 1996 signed what may be the only formal protocol agreement between an NGO and a CERP in Senegal. This agreement laid out the obligations and responsibilities of each party to the other in order to assure “the correct execution of development activities initiated by ASREAD” (ASREAD). Most NGOs operate independently of CERPs, and often the local CERP does not know what a particular NGO is doing. This agreement helps define roles and obligations, as well as create a means by which information is flowing between the two agencies. This helps limit duplicate effort. Since its birth ASREAD has implemented three new projects:
Projet d’Appui aux Groupements de Promotion Féminine (PAGPF) de Keur Momar Sarr 1995-1998. Originally 350 women members of 16 GPFs were to benefit from this project, which was cut to 9 GPFs in the first year. The objectives were to increase revenues created from local natural resources, to restore the seriously degraded ground cover, and to reinforce the abilities of the GPFs in organization, management and technical development of their activities. The activities consist of arboriculture and market gardening or sylviculture and animal fattening, and information-communication-education (ICE – rural animation). This project was funded by USAID.

Le Programme d’Environnement et de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles (PEGRN) 1996 – present. This is the first project in the area that explicitly states its intention to protect the environment, although there is a strong economic component as well. It is a rather all-encompassing project targeting men, women, and young people, including children in the schools. Financed by the Inter-Church Organization of Cooperation and Development (ICCO) out of Holland, CWS, and the Canadian Center for International Study and Cooperation (CECI).

Le Project d’Appui aux Jeunes Maraîcheurs (PAJM) 1996 – present. This project targets young people with the goal of keeping them from migrating. It revolves around market gardening and raising fruit trees, as well as small commerce and animal fattening. Financed by the Inter-Church Organization of Cooperation and Development (ICCO) out of Holland and CWS.

ASREAD has also been pivotal in creating a local mutual savings and loan organization. The mutual is currently located in the ASREAD offices and staffed by an ASREAD employee. However, the mutual itself is funded through local farmers, fishermen, and herders, who have their own elected officers and who make their own rules. There is also a mutual savings and loan which ASREAD created specifically for the women’s groups. The president of ASREAD is also the president of this mutual. The main goal of these community banks is to offer credit opportunities to members of the community that would otherwise find it impossible to obtain credit through normal bank channels, mainly because they lack collateral. In this case, individuals form groups to obtain loans and the group acts as social collateral for the member-individuals. The banks also offer an alternative savings plan to individuals who are accustomed to saving
through the purchase of livestock, jewelry, or through entrusting cash money to other individuals. While no one indicated that he or she was willing to give up these alternative savings plans, many indicated that, in theory, it might be prudent to add yet another means of saving to the mix. The banks are still quite new and have just started making loans recently so it is too early to tell what effect their activities will have on the local communities.

I often asked the women of Gankett Guent and N’Diba-N’Dame why they had not kept up with the early projects of CWS. Some of these “women’s projects” included learning to sew, crochet, and tie-die, raising small livestock for resale, and market gardening in a collective plot. I heard a variety of excuses: the means for buying materials vanished with the project, the sheep died, or there was not enough water or it was too hard to water the field. Many women had participated in literacy courses and were proud to show me their books and certificate of participation. Yet they could not read and write, mostly because “we women have too many other things on our mind to learn very well. We are not very intelligent in this.” However, they are all looking forward to the next project and the next literacy class.

Methods

I employed several different methodological activities to unveil individual women’s cultural models in Keur Momar Sarr. These included archival research, semi-structured interviews, pile-sorting, proverb analysis, and a photography exercise. The primary methodological tool that I used in my research was participant observation. The other activities flowed from my regular interactions with local people. Data analysis consisted of reviewing the archival and interview data for consistent key themes, similar to
Blount’s use of key terms (2002). I sorted out responses to questions regarding the quality of women’s lives today versus the lives of their mothers, questions regarding decision-making and problem solving in their private lives as well as within their women’s group, and other miscellaneous questions that allowed different women to expound more openly on their lives. I looked for terms and ideas, as well as tone of voice, body language, and situational context that reflected other or self-orientation, or greater dependence or independence of the individual in the group. It was only through prolonged cohabitation among these women that I was able to understand the “tacit” cultural meaning embodied in certain clucking sounds, hand movements, or tones of voice (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002).

My approach to participant observation is one of immersion. For the first three months I lived with a family in Dakar and studied Wolof at a school run by an ex-Peace Corps volunteer. A widow headed the family with whom I lived. She had seven children and her own mother to take care of. Neither Aida, the widow, nor her mother, Maam, spoke French (although everyone else did) so I spent a lot of time with them trying to get the language down. I cannot stress enough how important language acquisition is to fieldwork. While I never worked with an official interpreter, I learned in the times when I did require interpretation (as well as when I was required to act as interpreter) that it is too easy to miss subtle meanings. I found that I could get a better feel for what people meant by what they were saying if I did the interviews myself. This does not mean that I always got all the details correct, but there were a lot of emphatic words that one does not normally translate in oral interpretation that gave me more of an idea of intent and personality.
For the next year I lived with the project personnel on the ASREAD compound in Keur Momar Sarr (KMS). When I was there in 1996 there had been no electricity or running water. Now there was electricity and the promise of running water. I had no official purpose there so I volunteered to serve as typist and token ‘tubab’ for ASREAD. I was involved in all of their everyday activities including attending participatory rural assessment (PRA) sessions with the PEGRN project staff and assisting with incoming interns and volunteers from Senegal, Israel, and the U.S. During this year I spent a lot of time reviewing ASREAD documents, visiting different villages to pick out those that I wanted to use for the research, and typing documents for both ASREAD and the Sous-prefecture. I continued to learn Wolof, work with the PEGRN project, and plan for the next year.

In the second year I moved in with a local KMS family. These people were already my friends and there were a lot of advantages to living away from the ASREAD compound, including increased privacy (an individualistic need), more intense Wolof immersion, better food (I was now able to eat like the ‘poor’ people), and increased access to local gossip. During this time I planned the semi-structured interview and decided to work in only two villages instead of four. Transportation was a constant problem, as was consistent access to clean water. I chose two villages that were within walking or donkey-cart distance of Keur Momar Sarr – Gankett Guent and N’Diba-N’Dame. Both were initially chosen as villages to participate in the PAGPF program, but Ndiba-Ndame was cut as part of the reduction in number of villages mandated by USAID. Gankett Guent was often used as one of the showcase success villages when official visitors came through town. N’Diba-N’Dame only received funding for a project in 2001, four years
after the PAGPF project ended. In this way I was able to compare the knowledge of a women’s group that had received direct aid from an external development agency to a group that had not. There were indeed subtle differences between the two groups, but degree of external aide is only one factor in these differences.

As part of my participant observation I spent long hours in each of the villages and accompanied the women to their personal fields, their project field, and the pilot-farm where they worked for wages. I also attended numerous baptisms, weddings, funerals, and teas. I continued to work at ASREAD in the mornings as their typist. All of these activities allowed me to experience local life through the five senses, in keeping with Gatewood’s (1985) spatial and temporal learning process. I certainly know that my explanation of how to make millet flour for couscous will not be sufficient for anyone else to learn how to do it. Simply, it is something one must do to understand. In the end I asked ten women in Gankett Guent if I could return to ask them more questions in a few years. They seemed interested by the idea and I can refine my interview strategy for the next time.

I was able to avail myself of all ASREAD documents I could find. Besides those I was responsible for typing, I also went through dusty boxes of old records dating back into the 1980s. Many of these were carbon copies and half ruined by weather and mice. The head of the CERP also gave me access to some records there, but they were in worse order so the information I got from the CERP was limited. In Dakar I took some time to go to the National Archives and review information about the region, only to find that there was not very much at all. I also used the archivist at CODESRIA (The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa), and the library at the research center
ENDA (Third World Environment and Development) and the Ministry of Women (MFEF). There was a lot of general information but very little about the arrondissement of Keur Momar Sarr specifically, or its history. MFEF, however, did have some important documents concerning the proposed ideal state of women in Senegal. The Institute of Environmental Sciences at the Cheikh Anta Diop University was able to supply me with a document that had been written in the early 1980s by an anthropologist about the cultures of the people living in the region of Guiers Lake. I went to see Professor Niang in his office before I left only to find that he is no longer working on anything related to the environment or Keur Momar Sarr. He was, however, one of the nicest people I met in Senegal.

I paid a temporarily out of work Wolof teacher in Keur Momar Sarr to transcribe my interviews for me. I had planned originally NOT to use a tape recorder, but to take only notes. In the end I was very happy that another researcher in Dakar had an extra tape recorder that I was able to purchase. I found that transcribing the data was too difficult for me and was fortunate enough to have a resource readily available locally to do so. When I returned to the U.S. I started to type the transcriptions into the computer in Wolof for future use. When my computer and the back up disk were stolen, I reverted to typing translations directly into the computer. Thus, I did all the Wolof and French translations, and any errors in these translations are entirely my fault. It took me a while to figure out what to do with all these interviews and I have ended up sorting them out by specific questions or groups of questions asked in order to look for key words and meanings related to the themes of individualism and communalism. I used the same process with much of the documentation in the dissertation as well.
Research Limitations

There were several important limitations to this research. First, and foremost, the research questions were not fully defined before beginning the work. While my initial proposal clearly hints at a theme of cultural models, I never used those exact words and this limited my thinking about what it was I was trying to show. After returning to the U.S. and talking with my advisor and reviewing more literature I realized that I had missed out on an important body of knowledge that applied directly to my ideas about where my research should go. Thus I had a lot of catch up to do. When I had read as much as I could about cultural models in anthropology and social psychology, I also realized that my interview questions were not specific enough to test scientifically, which is why I choose to call my research exploratory rather than truly empirical.

A second limitation is that the data are highly qualitative and thus subjective, and it is limited to two groups of women, a very small sample size. It was also clear in several instances that the women told me, not necessarily what they thought I wanted to hear, but what they thought might help them get a project or outside help later on. I lived and worked among them, but I could not escape the fact that I was but a temporary participant in their lives, a temporary participant who was (and still am) a potential link to more good stuff, whether it was gifts, projects, money, or visas.

A third important limitation was the fact that I had to work in two foreign languages. Although I believe I got quite good at Wolof, and never hesitated to ask for translation help, I clearly missed a lot of detail especially at meetings where everyone ended up speaking at the same time, and often emotionally. I do not think this is an uncommon
problem among researchers working in languages other than their own, but it does limit the quality of the data.

**Summary**

In Chapter 2, I discuss the nature of cultural models: what they are, how they work, and why they might be important. What is most important are the characteristics of cultural models that make them durable and motivational. Further, I examine two ideal cultural models, individualism and collectivism, that are at the root of widespread cultural misunderstanding.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the dominant development model, which is based on an individualistically oriented cultural model I refer to as modernization. Within this discussion, I will also discuss how women are viewed in the development process. I pay special attention to World Bank discourse because it is the World Bank and other large multinational development organizations that have power within the dominant modernization paradigm. Most importantly, I problematize the ideal model by showing how it is influenced by new information flows from collectivist contexts.

In Chapter 4, I continue the contextualization of the ideal models through a discussion of how aspects of collectivism are reflected in Wolof culture and how aspects of individualism are incorporated into the worldview. I make use of literature and proverbs to get at the nature of what it means to be Wolof. Using the environmental and social history of northern Senegal as example, I assert that one reason for the durability of a collectivist world-view is the presence of long-term, widespread uncertainty about the future that years of development efforts have not been able to change in the intended
manner. Its durability, however, is contingent on its ability to integrate new information emanating from the dominant development paradigm.

In Chapter 5, I continue with an assessment of collectivism among women in two women’s groups in the arrondissement of Keur Momar Sarr. Using the data from Senegal I will show how key themes that arise over and over again reveal the prevalence of a collectivist cultural model and how that motivates behavior. I used three tools with them: semi-structured interviews, pile-sorting, and photography. The results reveal that these women are not opposed to increased material comfort and more hard work, but that they continue to interpret ‘modern’ aspects of their lives – banks, credit, projects, etc. – in terms of their own world-view.

In Chapter 6, I conclude with a discussion of the potential importance of cultural models in the larger, practical world, specifically noting the growth of microcredit programs and the obvious paradox they suggest in their application. I use cases examples from the literature to show how a ‘cure’ to poverty proposed by the individualistic development apparatus is integrated into collectivist societies in ways that are sometimes deemed improper or corruptive or demeaning to their original targets, and sometimes not. What emerges are not new models of collectivism and individualism, but perhaps new understandings of what they might mean in specific contexts. I end with some recommendations for future study and application.
CHAPTER 2
CULTURAL MODELS

This chapter of the dissertation will examine what cultural models are and how they work. The literature on this subject is rich and broad, coming from several different disciplines, including anthropology (Strauss and Quinn 1997; D’Andrade 1989; Tyler 1969; Blount 2002; Dailey 1999; Quinn and Holland 1987; Casson 1983), social psychology (Triandis 1994; Markus and Kitayama 1991; Reykowski 1994; Schooler 1990, von Cranach 1992; Greenfield and Bruner 1969), cognitive science (Tienson 1990), and even business (Earley et al. 1999; Erez and Earley 1993). My approach is to discuss the literature that is most germane to my analysis of cultural models of individualism and collectivism in the context of development activities. The goal is not so much to understand the culture of a people as it is to understand the organizing principles that appear to motivate their behavior. The following sections discuss not only the mechanics of cultural models, but also the importance of cultural models to anthropology, attributes of individualism and collectivism as cultural models, and the importance of models of individualism and collectivism.

Theoretical Framework

Individualism and collectivism are two cultural models that make up integral parts of the “filters” of two different world-views – different but not necessarily always opposing. For the sake of definition;

“Cultural models are presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared (although not necessarily to the exclusion of other, alternative models) by members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behavior in it” (Quinn and Holland 1987: 4).
Information processing goes on in the brain and is “mediated by learned or innate mental structures that organize related pieces of our knowledge” (Strauss and Quinn 1997: 49). Many general-purpose cultural models interconnect to form a world-view – a concept about the ways things should normally or naturally be. The individual develops mental structures though interaction with the external environment, both physical and social, which act as filters through which all experience in mediated. These filters are abstract, higher level culturally shared models which persist over time, allowing individuals to go about their daily business of differentially interpreting the world around them while adhering to a larger, collective world-view (D’Andrade 1989; Strauss and Quinn 1997; Casson 1983; Tyler 1969; Holland and Quinn 1987; Bloch 1998). This notion of world-view is “not restricted to cosmological principles…but will also be expressed in such institutional frameworks as divine kingship, schemes of social classes, legal systems, and types of kinship, and also such cultural values as paternalism, the glorification of war and individualism” (Hallpike 1987: 290). Flannery defined world-view as “the human population’s ‘cognized model’ of the way the world is put together” (Flannery 1972: 409). In a very simplified term, cultural models are an amalgamation of prototypes of reality that our minds create through regular and constant interaction with the external environment, and a worldview, again in a simplified term, is the amalgamation of many large-scale, general-purpose cultural models.

This model is based not only on functional concerns, like food and clothing, but also on ideological values. Wenke, like Flannery, proposes that information processing is the key agent of change. As more and more information is necessary to enculturate members of society;
“…a point must be reached at which the amount of information necessary for the full individual complement exceeds that which can be efficiently accomplished through mainly parent-child and interfamily relationships, and, at that point functional differentiation may arise in selective environments” (Wenke 1981: 114).

While both of these noted scholars are discussing increasing complexity and the rise of the state, the idea that information is the determining factor in changes in a particular world-view is directly relevant to the thesis that change is inevitable and persistent. As more information enters the social networks that make up society, more people are needed to do the processing and transmitting. Since all individuals who share a similar world-view do not internalize all information in the same manner, there is lots of space and time for information “mutations” (Hallpike 1987: 21).

The following sections examine the characteristics of cultural models that allow them to process and interpret information. Most importantly, cultural models are hierarchically nested, psychologically embedded, durable, and motivational. It is the combination of these characteristics that creates cultural models that are both flexible and enduring at the same time.

**Cultural Models are Hierarchically Nested**

An important aspect of cultural models is that they are arranged hierarchically and they are often linked to one another. One cultural model may be part of another, larger model. D’Andrade offers the example of money: one associates money with many models, including those of *buying, interest, banks, salary*, etc. (D’Andrade 1989: 809). Models at the highest level represent abstract concepts, and those at the lowest level represent the most specific concepts. They can be thought of as prototypes, or generic representations of reality against which all stimuli must be compared in order to evaluate their “fit” (Casson 1983: 434). The more generic the model is, the easier it is to make
new information fit into the world-view. More specific models require that new information met a higher standard of data fit as they are much more concrete, but at the same time, according to Casson, these “variable constraints” also create “default values” to fill in the gaps when all pertinent information is not available. For example, In the U.S. one would assume that in a BUYING and SELLING model that MONEY exchanged hands even if one never saw the actual transaction (Casson 1983: 432). These default values are created of the “normal” or “average” values expected in certain circumstances. Thus, these models are flexible enough to fill in the missing information. This is one of the basics of marketing: one makes many inferences from an advertisement that has nothing to do with the object being advertised. An advertisement for beer, for example, stimulates the viewer to make assumptions about who the people in the commercial might be, what social class, what income level, what hobbies they might have, etc., but this information is not revealed in the ad at all (Strauss and Quinn 1997). This phenomenon is also in conversations between people who know each other or a subject well: “Do you remember that movie with that guy?” with no other explanation can actually evoke a correct response with the right people at the right time.

There are different kinds of cultural models, all embedded within one another. Higher order, higher- or upper-level “tend to be general and goal embodying, and [they] “recruit” hierarchically lower schemas in order to accomplish specific situational tasks (Dailey 1999: 298). The abstractness of higher-order cultural models allows for them to be shared by many different people in a society. They can be applied in a variety of situations, and are thus considered general-purpose. Dailey’s model of Progress subsumed other models of civilization and domestication, two abstract higher-order models themselves, and other
models of a more practical nature, such as how to sharpen an ax. Lower-level cultural models such as this are far more concrete and specific. They are also much easier to change because they usually can be explicitly learned, and thus relearned or unlearned. However, they are inextricably linked to higher-order models and do not function independently of these larger models. In a highly integrated world-view, the cultural models are closely related and will consistently evoke one another. For example, “a person with a highly integrated belief system opposed to killing will more likely be vegetarian and opposed to the death penalty” (Conley 2000: 28). A highly differentiated world-view, however, consists of distinct cultural models, which may only be loosely connected, if at all: “Taking a variety of considerations into account may open up new options and lead to what may seem to be inconsistent choices” (Conley 2000: 29).

**Cultural Models are Psychologically Embedded**

Cultural models act, in a way, as information filters. Assimilated information is knowledge. So, in order to understand why people do the things they do, one has to understand what knowledge people have and what knowledge is important to them. People cannot typically, however, describe their most basic cultural models – they are like “a well-learned set of procedures rather than a declarative body of recountable fact” (D’Andrade 1989: 809). Much knowledge of everyday life is embedded in local social, cultural, and historical context. Even when such knowledge can be verbalized, its representation is often ideal, distorted, or lacking – try to explain how to drive a car to someone who has never driven or even been in a car. However, through an examination of specific discourse – what people say- one can glean some idea of the models by which people live: “It is in communication that persons, events, relationships are cognitively
and verbally constructed. It is also by verbal communication that social representations are negotiated, questioned, and confirmed” (Kruse 1992: 24). One way to understand how others perceive the world is to construct the models they use as filters. This can be done by analyzing individual’s words as they talk about specific domains (Strauss and Quinn 1997; Blount 2002; Bellah et al. 1988) and by analyzing what people have written with regards to specific domains (Dailey 1999). Since it is impossible to attend to all the information streaming into our minds, what we say or do not say in regards to a certain domain says a lot about what we know and think about that domain. It is this filtering process that makes the “whole rich world of variability” manageable (Tyler 1969: 7).

Another way of understanding cultural models is through observing and participating in the behaviors related to the domain of inquiry (Gatewood 1985). Individuals also incorporate spatial and temporal applications of their physical senses into their cultural models. Gatewood presents his experiences working on a fishing boat to explain how it is impossible to represent all actions verbally, either publicly or internally. His cognition of his own work model associates the space timing of each task to its physicality. Different actions evoked different physical and emotional feelings, and it was impossible for a narrative account of the action to reflect anything more than a general collective representation of that activity. The individual representation could not be expressed in words, only in action: “Personal representations organize actions, not narratives” (Gatewood 1985: 212). Similarly, observations of body language, social setting, and the manner in which one communicates reveal a lot more information than do words alone.

In general, whether spoken or felt, one cannot account for why certain behaviors should exist as opposed to others because the models are deeply embedded in the
individual’s psyche. One important U.S. cultural model emphasizes self-reliance. Parents even spend a great deal of time and energy purposely training their children to be self-reliant. However, a particular American would find it difficult to explain why she behaves in such a manner, or how she purposely trains her children, even though she uses both verbal and physical cues for transmitting information regarding her own and others’ behaviors (Strauss and Quinn 1997). She might be able to offer a general narrative on the importance of self-reliance, but would not necessarily equate summer camp or separate sleeping quarters with attributes of self-reliance.

**Cultural Models are Dynamic**

Once it is clear that cultural models are hierarchically interconnected and psychologically embedded, it is more obvious how these models might be both durable and flexible at the same time. Dailey metaphorically refers to cultural models as “leggos” in that they “are always busy unzipping and repasting themselves in new combinations in order to best serve the immediate circumstances” (1999: 13). Lower-level, more practical cultural models, such as how to eat with the right utensils, are ultimately tied to mid-level models, such as the routine for dining out in a fast food restaurant versus a five-star restaurant. Both models are ultimately linked to more abstract models, such as what it means to be middle-class. The linkages may not appear evident until they are called up by a specific situation, and they may be linked differently in different situations or under different emotional states. The larger world-view can stay the same while many of the lower- and mid-level models change over time as individuals and societies integrate new information. His analysis of cultural models of forests and ecological change in Appalachia from 1750-1840 shows how the same abstract models of progress,
civilization, and domestication came to be applied to poor whites by the end of the study period as the number of Native Americans, the original targets, dwindled (Dailey 1999). The specific context had changed, both physically and socially, but the abstractness of the larger models allowed for increasing variation within the models.

New information can be integrated into these general-purpose models easily. For example, individualism as a cultural model can apply to different unrelated situations. The belief that to choose one’s spouse based on ideals of romantic love is mediated by individualism, as are ideal marketplace decisions. One assumes that the ideals of love and those of the marketplace are completely unrelated. Yet both of these models are deeply embedded in American culture and both depend on the individual’s right to satisfy herself, emotionally, physically, financially, etc. (Bellah et al. 1996). Self-satisfaction feels good, right, and worthwhile and thus reinforcing the legitimacy of the model in the individual and in others with whom the individual interacts:

“…when people are motivated to enact and reenact the schemas they have learned from their own experience, they recreate the public world of objects and events that they knew, reproducing patterns of experience from which the next generation learns” (Strauss and Quinn 1997: 112).

Another means of maintaining a cultural model, regardless of the level, is through its purposeful reinforcement. This is happening in American society with the many public idolizations of the family model of the 1950s, both in popular culture and in national level politics. The "Leave it to Beaver” ideal of the working dad, the stay-at-home mom (in a nice dress and high heels, no less) and two well-adjusted kids is the real cultural model against which political pundits and average Americans measure their society and themselves (Coontz 1992). That the model is only loosely rooted in reality does not shake or diminish its legitimacy; it is consistent with other important models- self-sufficiency,
success, and order, for example— and reinforces the greater model of individualism. Similarly, advertising has been used to reinforce the ideal of the family sit-down dinner (Strauss and Quinn 1997: 115). Once private things, family and dinner, are made public, their models then become reified through those public statements. This does not mean that such models are inevitable or unchangeable. Strauss and Quinn also point out that the mere fact of labeling a particular model, or aspects thereof, makes it explicitly known and thus fodder for change. Women, for example, are not likely to give up their careers and return to the home, even if they believe that this model is inherently the “right” one. They may feel torn, frustrated, anxious, but in many cases they get self-satisfaction from their work and this overrides the negative feelings, and it is consistent with the higher-level individualistic model, which may be more motivational because it pervades so many other models.

Models learned in childhood are especially durable because they can be widely applied to new experiences: “since human infants start with a grossly undifferentiated understanding of the world, the very first associations they make serve them as models for much of their later experience” (Strauss and Quinn 1997: 119). Individualism is fostered in children in the West through the early stressing of self-reliance and separation. Infants sleep in separate rooms from their parents and are put on feeding schedules. Toddlers are taught to take care of themselves and their things. In neither of these cases is the teaching formalized. Children learn through observance and trial and error, which cannot be articulated in words, similar to Gatewood’s (1985) experience learning to seine properly. It was the feel of the movements, the unspoken corrections received by fellow
fishermen, and the feel of his own body that led him to understand how to fish, things he could not explain in words.

Cultural Models Motivate Behavior

Ultimately, this is the most important aspect of cultural models. If they were just floating around “out there” then their study might be considered wholly academic. However, cultural models motivate behavior, both “good” and “bad”, on many levels. Models are data processors, not just data structures. This means that they interpret experience, not just receive it passively (Casson 1983). Some human actions appear unconscious while other action appears purposeful. While some human behaviors are learned habitually, such as Gatewood’s fishing boat experience, and thus seem to be the only way of doing that activity, a more dynamic model of what transpires in the neural network (the mind) would include “propositions that what one perceives affects what one thinks, which affects one’s feelings, which affects what one wants, which affects the things one aims for (D’Andrade 1989: 825).

Cultural models are often based on implicit, culturally-learned values, which are also strong motivators because they are directly linked to notions of social evaluation: “Typically cultural systems not only label what is a good thing to know or do, they also classify and label the kinds of errors people make” (D’Andrade 1981: 187). Gatewood states that each “segment”, or individual, model of action has “a characteristic emotional tone or ethos” (1985: 214). Individuals who share a particular cultural model may consider it to be authoritative or expert and thus consider it useful (Quinn and Holland 1987).
Childhood socialization also influences perceptions about the way things should be, thus influencing wants and aims. Children often learn through imitation and they imitate those around them who are “perceived to be powerful or prestigious, skillful and nurturant” (Strauss and Quinn 1997: 105). They imitate other people that they feel represent “good” models, thus hoping to achieve positive social evaluation. These behaviors, however, are not conscious, especially at very young ages. They are reactions to their world based on the cultural models present throughout their society.

In general, feelings and emotions are related to motivation. For example, there is usually a desire to seek pleasure and avoid pain and the activities that occur in this process. Social evaluations in particular play a strong role in motivating behavior in that “any emotions associated with these ideas and the motivation to act on these emotions attach more force to that experience than it would normally have” (Strauss and Quinn 1997: 104). This is another example of how situational context can shift the weights of certain models. Humans are motivated to reinforce “good” emotional experiences and avoid “bad” ones as deemed so by the social context. This “emotional arousal” works to “strengthen the neural connections that result from that experience”, which motivates individuals to repeat certain behaviors over time (Strauss and Quinn 1997: 93).

How Cultural Models Work in the Mind: Cultural Models and Connectionism

This section analyses the more technical nature of cultural models. Connectionist models are heuristic tools for understanding how hierarchy, linking and combinations thereof work. Cognitive scientists use them to study artificial intelligence in order to model for the computer what goes on in the human brain. A connectionist model consists of “a network of simple, neuron-like processors, called nodes or units. Each node has
directed connections to several other nodes, so that it gets signals from some nodes and sends signals to some nodes, possibly including the ones from which it gets signals” (Tienson 1990: 386). Some links between nodes are weaker than others, but all nodes have two values: on or off. The strength of the relationship between two nodes varies depending on experience. All nodes are not activated at the same time and different nodes may respond to different contexts at different times. Strauss and Quinn view the networks of neuron links as layers:

“In each layer beyond the first, all a neuron does is receive excitatory and inhibitory signals from other neurons, combine them, and, if it is excited past its threshold, send excitatory or inhibitory signals to other neurons. No single neuron knows much, but thousands of them working parallel produce intelligent action” (Strauss and Quinn 1997: 51).

New knowledge does not change the order of neurons, but it does change the relative weights between connections.

Connectionism reveals how cultural models can be dynamic, embedded, motivational, etc.: “Meanings generated by schemas, in connectionist models, are mental states but are shaped by the learner’s specific life experiences and are sensitive to activity in a particular context” (Strauss and Quinn 1997: 50). Experience, then, partially determines which neurons will activate which other neurons in the future. Example: (a) I am eating a bowl of ice cream. It is hot outside. I think about how refreshing the ice cream is. The ice cream tastes good; (b) I am eating a bowl of ice cream. It is hot outside. I think about how refreshing the ice cream is. I see a Victoria’s Secret catalog. The ice cream is no longer refreshing, but now it makes me think about getting fat. The same ice cream no longer tastes good. New information, the catalog, changed the weighting of various neuron relationships in the brain (based on a widespread, generalized, American cultural
model of how a woman’s body should look). However, new information does not completely erase the patterning of connections that previously existed, especially if those patterns developed over time in a given cultural context. Here two powerful models compete for control: the tasty comfort food model versus the American Barbie Doll model. This may also help explain how humans can hold two contradictory beliefs as true: in certain contexts the weighting shifts to favor one over the other. Similarly, a second person, perhaps from Senegal, whose cultural model regarding ideal body type is quite different would not be affected by the catalog at all and would continue to enjoy the ice cream. This example, however limited, may nonetheless help explain the booming diet fad business, links to anorexia nervosa, or even changes in the fashion industry.

Connectionist models also help explain how humans are able to assess and make use of incomplete information. Tienson (1990) points out, in his discussion of artificial intelligence, that humans do not and cannot take into account all the information available to them on a given subject. Lack of time, information overload, incomplete and/or inaccurate information, or even brain damage affect how humans process data. However, unlike computer systems, humans still manage to perform, albeit not always perfectly. Connectionist mental structures do not depend on a central processing controller; instead they are localized, perhaps by experience, and operate simultaneously, talking into account at the same time all available relevant factors about a given subject. Straus and Quinn (1997) use U.S. name greeting as an example. How does one know how to address another person in a specific context? The model takes into account age, status relationship, profession, gender, etc. between the two people, as well the relative importance any of these factors may have in that time and space. Even without every
single piece of information the model can use what it does have to connect the neurons and make a best guess as to what the proper form of address should be. Most of the time the guess is correct, or correct enough. Occasionally it is not, as the authors reveal in an aside about a graduate student from India who could not figure out when it was appropriate to use Ms., Miss, or Mrs. (Strauss and Quinn 1997: 72). Experientially learning how to maneuver around missing information prepares individuals to process new information in a similar manner, the neural nodes are just activated in different combinations or strengths of combinations based on past experiences. Over time one acquires something that may be called common sense, which can be used in a variety of situations to judge new information (Tienson 1990). However, this common sense is inherently biased because every individual assesses the validity of incoming information streams differently. Thus some data are ignored, rejected, or selected over other data (Conley 2000).

Cultural modeling improves the concept of connectionism by expanding it to try and understand how information is selectively accepted or rejected, and also the role that emotions and feelings play in stimulating neural learning (Strauss and Quinn 1997). Selection and emotions play a role in the dynamism and motivational force of cultural models and connectionism is a means of modeling how such hierarchically nested models might be activated, even if they cannot explain why.

**Importance of Cultural Models to Anthropology**

Cultural models may be one way of redefining and recapturing the concept of culture in anthropology. Traditionally, anthropologists defined other cultures in terms of their own worldview. For example, the separation of magic and religion in anthropological
discourse and the classification of magic as false science continued until recently (Apffel-Marglin 1996). Early concepts of culture in anthropology have been found wanting. They were too rigid, universal, and progressive. Proponents of social evolution in the late 1800s assumed all societies move along a continuum from savage to civilized, simple to complex, but were unable to account sufficiently for cultural variation (Bohannan 1988; Harris 1969). Kroeber tried to explain cultural variation with his concept of culture cores: centers of development from which cultural traits diffused to other societies (Bohannan 1988; Harris 1969). Malinowski, and then Radcliffe-Brown, tried to prove that cultural traits exist because they serve some need or function. Malinowski emphasized the individual’s needs while Radcliffe-Brown focused on how cultural traits serve to maintain specific social structures (Radcliffe-Brown 1952; Bohannan and Glazer 1988). From the late 1920s through World War II, several anthropologists studied the relationship between personality and culture, working to show the essential personality of a given culture (Kroeber 1944; Benedict in Mead 1959). At the same time there was also a resurgence of evolutionism with White’s hypothesis that a given culture advances as it harnesses more energy (Bohannan and Glazer 1988; Harris 1969). Early cognitive anthropologists sought to explain cultural phenomena in terms of cognitive processes in the mind, but still sought universal principles - Levi-Strauss’ (1966) concept of oppositional pairs seems very rooted in the dualistic worldview held by most Westerners. Cultural ecology explained cultural adaptation in terms of natural selection: only the best adapted cultural traits survive over time, and, implicitly, that all cultural traits serve some adaptational purpose (Rappaport 1968). More recent approaches to explaining cultural phenomena include political ecology and economy, which assert that it is unequal power
relations between nations or regions which forces cultural changes, and postmodernism, which theorizes that there is no cultural homogeneity to know, thus there can be no universal cultural theory to apply to everyone. It is therefore impossible, without some standard frame of reference, to describe cultural phenomena objectively (Harvey 1990).

This is a very brief overview of some of the leading theories in anthropological history. Most tried in vain to come up with theories that were universal enough to be generalized cross culturally, but they missed the essential complexity and flexibility of culture. It is not created *sui generis*, as Boas suggested (Harris 1969). Instead it is made up of its members shared interpretations of incoming information flows, their shared categorical divisions of the external world, and these concepts are neither spatially nor temporally bound (Strauss and Quinn 1997). Thus, ‘culture’ may give the appearance of being ‘out there’ on its own dictating human behavior, but it is rooted in the experiences and interpretations of experiences that individual humans share. Applying the concept of cultural models to ethnography is one way of bridging the gap between the presumably scientific, fact-based efforts at logically describing culture and throwing the whole concept out altogether. I like Geertz’s explanation best:

“As interworked systems of construable signs (what ignoring provincial usages, I would call symbols), culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly – that is thickly - described” (Bohannan and Glazer 1988: 539).

The operative word in Geertz’s discussion of culture is context. Cultural models themselves are not “culture,” or perhaps it is possible to say that “culture” is the sum total of all possible cultural models, but that is unknowable so irrelevant. Cultural models are powerful, but only in that they motivate individual human behavior *in particular*
contexts. They do not dictate or cause specific behaviors. In certain contexts, when certain mental nodes are stimulated, in turn stimulating other nodes, a behavior occurs. The context itself may be both temporal and/or spatial and the stimulation may be weak or strong. Since cultural models are nested in other cultural models, the context itself shifts over time and space- no two situations are ever exactly the same so the respective weighting of node-triggering stimulation also varies over time and space.

Thus cultural models are more like windows into the mental processes that create world-views: “Behavioral environments, consisting of complex messages and signals, rights and duties, and roles and institutions, are a culturally constituted reality which is a product of our socially transmitted information pool” (D’Andrade 1981: 180). No one cultural model makes up a culture. Instead, culture is continuously created and recreated through constant analysis of information flows. Cultural models, then, are like mental structures that develop over time in order to process efficiently those information flows. Both Bloch (1998) and Gatewood (1985) emphasize that, in order for them to work efficiently, these structures are not linguistically-dependent:

“What seems to distinguish the expert from the novice is not so much an ability to handle complex strategic logico-mathematical rules, but rather the possession, in memory, of an amazingly comprehensive and organized store of total or partial chessboard configurations, which allows the expert to recognize the situation in an instant so as to know what should be done next” (Bloch 1998: 9).

This is why, then, we often know so much more than we can explain with words.

The two higher-level cultural models I will examine are those of individualism and collectivism. Both exist in all individuals and cultures, but the degree to which one or the other dominates the individual’s or group’s world-view has important consequences on their behavior. Triandis (1994) points out that individuals “sample,” or choose from, the
cultural model that fits the particular situation. Individuals in collectivist societies are
more likely to choose a behavior that from that model and vise-versa. He also points out
that all individualistic societies contain some members who are collectivists (allocentrics)
and all collectivist societies contain some members who are individualists
(idiosyncratics). How then do collectivism and individualism fit as cultural models?

**Attributes of Individualism and Collectivism**

Individualism and collectivism have been studied to a large extent as psychological
models. Harry Triandis’ (1993) work with *cultural syndromes* implies that these are the
two major themes around which cultures define themselves. This is not to say that these
themes are the only two that are important to a given society, but they are distinctive and
not always well understood. As highly idealized models, individualism and collectivism
are presented as opposites. In the following chapters, however, I will discuss how, in the
real world the two models are related in complex ways, often overlapping both in the
ways they are internalized and expressed.

Triandis defines culture as “shared attitudes, beliefs, categorizations, expectations,
norms, roles, self-definitions, values, and other such elements of subjective culture found
among individuals whose interactions were facilitated by shared language, historical
period, and geographic region” (Triandis 1993: 156). His definition is in some ways
similar to Tyler’s commonly accepted definition of anthropology (Harris 1993), but
more specific in that he includes the contextual factors of time, space, and language. Such
attitudes, beliefs, etc. are learned as members of a society through intergenerational
socialization and in their most basic form are necessary tools to help each individual
adapt to his social and physical environment.
In turn, a *cultural syndrome* is “a set of elements of subjective culture organized around a theme” (Triandis 1993: 156). Triandis posits that a cultural syndrome exists if, empirically, one can prove that:

a. there are correlations among the elements of subjective culture that are organized around a theme;

b. there is less variance in these elements of subjective culture within than between cultures;

c. there is covariation between geographical regions and subjective culture.

Individualism and collectivism, he asserts, meet these criteria, which are similar to characteristics of cultural models already described: durability, sharedness, and the fact that such models develop out of the interaction of individuals and groups with their particular environments. There are, according to Triandis, “universal dimensions” of individualism and collectivism that have been measured and tested and found to be statistically relevant (Figure 1). Thus, “individualism and collectivism are not just intuitive, theoretical entities” (Triandis 1995: 44). As cultural models, they may provide a means of linking what goes on in the mind with concepts of culture.

It is important to first point out that all individuals exhibit characteristics related to both individualism and collectivism. Historically, cultural psychology has made some of the same errors as anthropology in assuming that the two concepts were diametrically opposed or that there was some evolutionary movement from one to the other, specifically collectivism to individualism. Today, most cultural psychologists and anthropologists agree that the reality is much more complex, and that individuals, as well as societies, may draw on different attributes of their individualistic or collectivist selves depending on the particular context. The exact definition of what it means to be
individualistic or collectivist may also differ cross-culturally as well as within cultures between individuals.

**Figure 1. Triandis’ Universal Dimensions of Individualism and Collectivism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Individualism</th>
<th>Collectivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Definition</strong></td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Interdependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal vs.</strong></td>
<td>Not aligned</td>
<td>Closely aligned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communal Goals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognition</strong></td>
<td>Focus on attitudes, personal needs, rights,</td>
<td>Focus on norms, obligations, duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and contracts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td>Rationally analyzed in terms of advantages</td>
<td>Emphasis is on relationships even when they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and disadvantages</td>
<td>are sometimes disadvantageous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Triandis’ dimensions present the idealized representations of the two models. The contrasts should be viewed as tendencies, which, when maximized, give results similar to those in Figure 1. A model of collectivism infers that the importance of the group outweighs the importance of the individual. Generally, collectivist cultures consist of tightly bound collectives of individuals with specific boundaries between in-groups and out-groups. In-groups are social networks with which the individual identifies. The more tightly-knit the in-group, that is, when many people within the network know and associate with each other, the more likely it is that the network will agree on norms and also exert pressure on one another to conform to those norms (Bott 1957). Bott also
presented qualitative data to support the hypothesis that in-group tightness is positively related to a greater degree of sexual-division of labor within the household. Out-groups are people outside of that closely-knit social group. In-groups and out-groups exist in individualistic cultures as well, but the boundaries are much more fluid, and the groups are much less tightly knit. At the individual level, the self is defined through the internal attributes of the individual, or through relations to other individuals. The “more-or-less” depends on the process of socialization as well as individual experiences over the life course.

It is also important to add that one model is not inherently better or worse than the other. It is too simple to assume that collectivist societies are harmonious and egalitarian while individualistic ones are selfish. There are both negative and positive attributes in each model. Extreme collectivism, for example, can lead to such atrocities such as genocide, while negative characteristics such as child abuse and high rates of crime can be linked to extreme individualism (Triandis 1993). An understanding of the differences between the two models is important in order to better understand the meanings behind why individuals, and societies, do what they do (or do not do what they do not do), not to necessarily make them over in some “better” image. Constructing specific models of individualism or collectivism in terms of the individual’s own knowledge and categories creates a window through which outsiders can observe other realities, other “ways of knowing” which have important consequences on behavior.

Westerhof et al. (2000) constructed cultural models of individualism and collectivism regarding the personal meaning systems of elderly adults in the U.S. and Congo/Zaire. They used a sentence completion questionnaire and then the results were categorized by
key terms and themes that were then classified according to attributes of individualism and collectivism as discussed above. Both sample groups answered questions from both individualistic and collectivist points of view. The difference was in how they defined individualism and collectivism. For example, in a question about autonomy American elderly focus on self-reliance while Congolese elderly focus on living according to one’s own standards. From a collectivist perspective, when they refer to social roles, Americans mostly use family terms (parent, grandparent). The Congolese also mention family terms, but also terms referring to gender, occupation, or “being seen as a witch” something that they really fear as they get older (Westerhof et. al. 2000: 666). The researchers caution against generalizing the results to the entire culture: “…culture is not a system of abstract values that exists independently of individuals, but is realized or appropriated in the attribution of meaning to oneself in relation to the context one is living in” (Westerhof 2000: 672).

Another study researched the importance of social networks on behavior in Korea (Han and Choe 1994). The scientists interviewed over 500 people with questions requiring the respondents to make value judgments and indicate how many kyes (associations) they belonged to and how many meetings they attended. They found that network prone attitude and network activity do not correlate. Those with high approval attitude, older, less-educated, poorer people, were not as network-active as those with lower approval-attitude, well-educated men (Han and Choe 1994: 223). They found that the survey instrument failed to take into account the difference between the need for affiliation (individualism- can be anyone), sought by the activists and the need for intimacy (collectivism- requires specific in-groups), sought by the elderly.
These are just two examples of the kinds of studies that have been carried out in research related to individualism and collectivism. With regards to the perspective of the individual, Markus and Kitayama hold that individuals in different cultures have different ideas about the self, others, and the relationship between the two (1991). Understanding how these different “construals” of the self influence human cognition, emotion and motivation may help to “better specify the precise role of the self in mediating and regulating behavior” (Markus and Kitayama 1991: 225).

The self-construals are defined by the extent to which the relationship between self and other is interdependent or interdependent. This is collectivism and individualism on the individual, as opposed to the societal, level. Whether the self is independent or interdependent has important consequences on emotional expression and behavioral motivation. The role that emotions and feelings play in motivating behavior has already been discussed. It logically follows that independent and interdependent individuals will be differently motivated to act, even when presented with the same stimulus. Generally, independent selves are motivated more by internal factors: self-esteem, personal achievement, affiliation, self-efficacy, cognitive conflict avoidance, etc. Interdependent selves are more other-focused, thus “agency will be experienced as an effort to be receptive to others, to adjust to their needs and demands, and to restrain one’s own inner needs and desires” (Markus and Kitayama 1991: 240) Figure 2 lists some of the idealized characteristics of individualism and collectivism in the individual (Markus and Kitayama 1991; Kim et al. 1994; Triandis 1995). These characteristics are maximally contrasted and I will refer to these in later chapters for the purposes of illustration.
Figure 2. Idealized Characteristics of Individualism and Collectivism

**Individualism**

- Fundamental Attribute: Reason

  - Rights and Principles
  - Individuation
  - Self-fulfillment
  - Uniqueness
  - Individual as moral unit

**Collectivism**

- Fundamental Attribute: Relatedness

  - Collective Welfare
  - Identification
  - Assertiveness
  - Similarity
  - Group as moral unit

**Internal I**

**Social I**

**Internal C**

**Social C**

- Regulations, Rules, Laws
- Independence
- Freedom of choice
- Fluid group boundaries
- We vs. They
- Rigid group boundaries

- Roles, Duties, Obligations
- Interdependency
- Nurturance
- Compliance
- Self-deprecation

Internal I

Social I

Internal C

Social C

Fundamental Attribute: Relatedness
From a similar perspective, Reykowski’s research in Poland and Germany emphasizes the difference between _individuation_ and _identification_. The former contributes to the development of a world-view consisting of a number of separate individuals and a separation of the individual from her environment. The latter contributes to a world-view that “blurs the boundaries between “I” and “they” and fosters a conception of the self as similar or identical to others” (Reykowski 1994: 279).

The desire to do well for oneself, to achieve certain goals, then, may be motivated not by the need to differentiate oneself from others, but instead to connect more fully to others. Reykowski’s research on social involvement found that; “…people with high and low levels of individuation do not differ with respect to the strength of the involvement, they differ in motivation: low-individuated people tend to be motivated, first of all by normative considerations (i.e., they help because they have internalized the group norms related to helping), whereas high-individuated people are likely to be motivated by genuine concern for others” (Reykowski 1994: 292). In the same way, getting a good job may be motivated by a desire to enhance family status instead of as a response to an individual’s own internal desire to succeed. In order to “fit in” to many different social contexts an interdependent self will place a high premium on being able to control his or her internal feelings and emotions in order to better respond to different interpersonal contexts. Effective self-control may actually boost self-esteem and is seen as a positive trait and not something someone _has_ to do in the name of good manners. “Social reality is construed and actually constructed in such a way that it does not lend itself to the strong experience, let alone the outburst, of negative, eco-focused emotion, such as anger” (Markus and Kitayama 1991: 236).
The Importance of Individualism and Collectivism as Cultural Models

Cultural models relating to individualism and collectivism are important to this study for two reasons. First, the rate of development failure is very high. Even projects that claim success on paper often hard pressed to show long-term results on the ground. One reason for these failures is a continued inability, on the part of development planners, to understand core differences in world-views between various peoples, and especially as they might relate to the dominant development paradigm of economic growth and modernization. Second, many studies have shown that women tend to be more interdependent and value relationships differently than do men (Gilligan 1986; Scott, H. 1984; Scott, C. 1995). Since women are overwhelmingly targeted by development efforts a better understanding of how they may be thinking and evaluating new information is vital to the success of any project. Markus and Kitayama assert that individualism and collectivism are among “the most general and overarching schemata of the individual’s self-system” (1991: 230). Therefore, any understanding of human behavior should be based on at least a cursory examination of these particular cultural models.

Typically, all things ‘communal’ or ‘collectivistic or ‘interdependent’ are considered ‘traditional’ or ‘old-fashioned’ and thus need to be ‘modernized’ and ‘developed.’ It is as if the people to be ‘developed’ are somehow their own worst obstacles to this development, while at the same time they also are considered to be the solution to their own problems. Hence, in Senegal at least, there has been a great proliferation of NGOs, most targeting women and natural resource management, in large part through components of “capacity building” and “education and communication.” Project planners often belittle or ignore many of the institutional mechanisms people use to stay
connected. Baptisms, marriage ceremonies, funerals, tontines, etc. are considered a waste of resources (financial) and time. Yet they persist, and may be one of the ways individuals, especially women, maintain social networks and power relationships that are vital to their and their children’s continued existence.

Kagitçibasi, a psychologist, argues against using the models of individualism and collectivism as evolutionary examples, as often occurs in anthropology with the ‘modern’ vs. ‘traditional’ debate. The major social changes that occurred in the 1960s led psychologists to examine the psychological characteristics most conducive to modernization. Some of these included positive attitudes toward achievement over ascription, self-reliance and personal efficacy, and individualism. The trend toward urbanization common during this period also contributed to the idea that certain people seemed more psychologically able to adapt to this social change. However, Kagitçibasi points out that there is no evidence of a shift from “traditional” to “modern” in the sense that the former will be erased by the latter. Instead, certain attitudes change with the need to adapt to new environmental pressures, namely those due to urbanization. Psychological processes related to collectivism “that do not conflict with urban living conditions need not change, nor new types of collectivism (or individualism) may be created alternatively or at the same time, and these may coexist” (Kagitçibasi 1994: 58).

In fact, ‘traditional’ relationships, or perhaps it is better to say that ‘traditional’ ways of developing and maintaining relationships and the importance thereof, are not eliminated by the onslaught of modernization. Instead, it may be that the majority of relationships with ‘modern’ emphases (including rationality, objective recruitment, limited liability, and avoidance) are newly created and have functions which do not
necessarily compete with those of the older types, but may constrain or limit them over
time (Levy 1972). More importantly, when traditional relationships begin to break down,
they are not likely to develop into a new, modern style relationship. The trend is not from
a traditional, broadly construed relationship to a modern, limited relationship, but rather
some other kind of broadly construed relationship will develop: “If you are not supposed
to hire your relatives for a job, you do not ordinarily deviate by selecting people
impersonally but rather by substituting other personal criteria. You switch from one
traditional justification to another, not ordinarily from a traditional justification to a
rational justification” (Levy 1972: 124). Ultimately this is because maintaining
relationships is often more important than the bottom line. This, of course, does not mean
that all relationships are equal, for they are not. Even ‘modern’ relationships can become
very important and highly cultivated in a ‘traditional’ culture, but the relationships are
often an end to themselves, and not always a means for obtaining some personal goal.

The Development Context

In 1985, The World Bank evaluated the historical success of its own programs and
discovered that overall 12% had “failed to achieve their objectives” but that the failure
rates in West Africa (18%) and East Africa (24%) were much higher (Harrison 1987: 46).
More importantly, many of these projects were deemed successful when they reached
term, but after several years were no longer benefiting their target populations. The
causes of failure are also the bases by which new projects are determined: environmental
degradation, erratic climatic conditions, increasing population growth, the urban bias of
government policy, corruption, oppression of women, etc. These problems typically are
defined and addressed by professional experts who are external to the societies being
evaluated. The solutions prescribed are generally wrapped in a rational, objective, neo-classical economic approach, an approach derived in the relatively individualistic, impersonal cultural models of the West. Even when local participation is espoused it is promoted only in a context where objectivity, rationality, and increased market productivity are the goals.

This is not, of course, to say that development experts are ‘bad’ or even ‘naïve.’ However, development theories and activities unfold in a particular context, a context defined within cultural models about how things should be, even if only ideally. The social, moral, political, economic, etc. context also feeds back into the models thus creating variation in interpretation and change over time. The particular models within which most of the development experts exist are relatively more individualistic and science/technology dependent than are those of the people to be developed, and these models are very persuasive and powerful. Such cultural knowledge is learned starting in childhood both through formal and informal means, and Bloch demonstrates how repetition of both physical and mental tasks over time leads to the development of “a cognitive apparatus dedicated to cop[ing]” with the particular task at hand (1998: 11). Once established, this cognitive apparatus, while flexible, is limited by perceived possibilities in its ability to improve the efficiency of the task. These apparatuses form lower level cultural models that form a network of possible models in a highly interconnected cognitive system. Over time, as different nodes in the cognitive system activate others, sometimes strongly, sometimes weakly; “The person would be creating connected networks dedicated to specific domains of cognition, and procedures which,
once set up, could be accessed quickly and efficiently by multiple parallel processing” (Bloch 1998: 13).

Thus, certain models of how things should be become taken-for-granted knowledge, or common sense – knowledge that no one would second-guess or question. New experiences are judged based on their similarity to past experiences and their fit to the model. For example, promoters of modernization are able to incorporate much of the criticism leveled at its application through development. Some criticism attempts to show that, contrary to popular belief, “traditional” systems are as rational as any other possible system, they just have a different set of variables with which to contend (Banuri 1990; Bartlett 1980; Colson 1979). However, in reality indigenous knowledge is only valued to the extent that it can be cognitively translated into the language of the expert. Thus, development experts can integrate ideas about indigenous knowledge and other variables into their models of modernization without “corrupting” the essential qualities of individualism, rationality, and economic growth (Ba and Crousse 1985; Blumberg 1989; Braidotti et al 1994; Tinker et al. 1976).

Women in the Development Context

There are, however, that there exist other ways of defining the world and individual experiences in the world (Apffel-Marglin 1996; Marglin 1990; Banuri 1990; H. Scott 1984; Shiva 1989). While modernization values rational and objective (thus impersonal) market-based decision-making, it also devalues ‘non-productive,’ relationship-based decision-making. Hilda Scott, in her analysis of women’s poverty in both ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ societies, states that there is a qualitative difference between men’s and
women’s work that mere equal pay does not and cannot address because it is men’s work that defines the organizing principles of society:

“Women’s unpaid work, her productive and reproductive labor for which she receives no remuneration, underpins the world’s economy, yet is peripheral to the world’s economy as men define it, and therefore has no value. It is this that makes women a category of persons who are economically invisible, whose work is non-work, who have no experience or skills, who don’t need a regular income because their husbands support them” (Scott 1984: x)

In her discussion of what poverty means, she points out that it is defined by more complex factors than by who has control over and access to strategic resources. It is defined through social values that make money values and institutionalized economics primary, thus only considering variables that can be made into commodities and sold. Schumacher discusses the same phenomenon as it is applied to ‘nature:’ “…what is worse, and destructive of civilization, is the pretence that everything has a price or, in other words, that money is the highest of all values” (1973:45-6). Things that cannot be priced, cannot be valued, and thus can be ignored. In much the same way, knowledge that cannot be translated into the expert’s way of thinking is ignored, marginalized, or considered an obstacle to be overcome.

Both D’Andrade (1981) and Wenke (1981) have pointed out the fact that the information flow between generations that is required to properly “educate” individual members has grown exponentially. People need ways by which they can process this information quickly and efficiently. Boesh theorizes that information only becomes knowledge when it is assimilated by the individual. The assimilation process requires “selective perception” and “transformation and integration” on the part of the individual (Boesh 1992: 89). Out of the tension between the need for cultural stability and the tendency toward cultural variation inherent in the distortions of information transmittal
arise “cultural rules” that help regulate the way in which information is transmitted and received by the individual. These cultural rules, which Trigger refers to as cultural traditions, are models which: “provide the guidance without which human beings would be unable to cope with their environment, an inertia that opposes change, and the intellectual material that is transformed as individuals and groups seek to cope with external challenges or to achieve new goals…” (Trigger 1991: 560). The emergent worldview, comprised of interconnected cultural models, “fundamentally affects” human behavior, enabling people to make sense out of their environment and maintain their means of subsistence (Hallpike 1987: 126). Among individuals who share a highly collectivist worldview, there exists strong pressure to conform, pressure that becomes the internal referent as well as the group referent. This pressure is the “inertia that opposes change.”

However, because groups are not static – old people die, young people replace them; information flows change; the physical environment changes, etc.- they must organize themselves in such a way as to be able to manage the conflict that arises out of increasing variation. This struggle between change and stability defines the way in which people organize themselves. There is no ideal, stable, basic social organization. Cultural models, then, both help maintain the status quo while at the same time creating avenues by which change can be accepted and internalized within the realm of perceived possibilities. In this way, even highly individualistic models related to development can change over time to incorporate new, more collectivist elements.

The same qualitative differences exist between societies that see the world through individualistic cultural models and collectivist cultural models. A collectivistic society
may be considered ‘irrational’ in that it values social relationships over market relationships. While individuals who prioritize individualistic models see the world as neatly (more-or-less) divided up and bounded into discrete entities for study and valuation, individuals who prioritize collectivist models see all sectors of life as interconnected (more-or-less). Thus, economic aspects of life are not separate from social aspects of life, nor are they necessarily more important: “Objects in and of themselves have no intrinsic value. Their value arises out of cultural arrangements internal to social organization…and whatever is produced necessarily has value” (Ellen 1982: 253). Bloch points out that to understand the meaning of formal education and literacy in Zafimaniry society (Madagascar) one must also understand how local knowledge is “completely linked with the way such things as the body, gender, maturation, the nature of the living world and the understanding of productive and reproductive processes are all envisaged” (1998: 180). Similarly, the importance of economically ‘wasteful’ social gatherings in Senegal – baptisms, marriages, funerals, religious festivals – can only be understood if one takes into account the complex social relationships that are maintained through these ceremonies, and the environmental context that reinforces the desirability of maintaining social networks in the first place.

Clearly, no one cultural model wholly determines an individual’s personality or culture. Abstract models related to individualism and collectivism “shape individuals’ attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors” and even members of a collectivist society “possess characteristics that are often unique and self-directing. They often accept, select, or reject cultural influences” (Triandis 1986: 5). However, as D’Andrade emphasizes: “Cultural knowledge is not just shared, but institutionalized. It’s what you are expected to
What one is expected to know is a product, at least partially, of cultural models like individualism and collectivism. Further, failure to know what one is supposed to know often results in some kind of negative sanction by the greater community. Consider how we might treat someone who continues as an adult to eat all his food with his hands instead of cutlery. It is his choice to do so, but he probably will be ostracized on some level from the rest of society. In short, cultural models help individuals to know what is right and good in their society (and conversely, what is wrong).

Summary

Cultural models are important as a means to understanding important knowledge that is embedded in complex social, cultural, and historical contexts. In the context of development of countries that do not share the same greater world-view – or conglomeration of cultural models – some analysis of local cultural models might improve (subvert?) the application of the dominant modernization model. At the very least, it would alter the effects of the development enterprise through aiding change agents to more beneficially co-opt indigenous knowledge and participation.

One can begin to understand cultural models, or at least parts of cultural models, through analysis of talk, written words, and participant observation. Cultural models are complex and different situations can trigger different relational parts of a particular model. Connectionism is a way of modeling this complexity by showing the relative strength of related models, weighted by contextual factors. Ultimately, cultural models are dependent on relations between neurons in the brain. Some aspects of a given model are stronger or more durable than others are because of the way humans learn their
models; thus, the overall abstract model can endure over time while the strengths between relational parts of the model can and will change. The change in strength between different neurons affects the way that information is filtered and internalized. In this way new information can be internalized without weakening the dominant model.

Social psychologists and psychological anthropologists believe that there are two abstract models – individualism and collectivism- shared by all peoples of the world to one degree or another. There is no one society or individual who does not “sample” from both models, but all societies and individuals tend to sample more from one than the other. In ideal terms, the models of individualism and collectivism are discrete opposites. In real life, however, they are filters that commingle in individual minds depending on particular circumstances.

Durkheim wrestled with the question of how societies can exist at all and his well-known concepts of mechanical (homogenous, non-urban, group values more important than individual ones, unity based on shared experiences) and organic (heterogeneous, urban, individual values important, unity based on skill specialization) solidarity mirror generalizations of collectivism and individualism. However, it is Durkheim’s conceptualization of the *conscience collective* that best reveals the complexity of cultural models in general. Here he defines culture as the place where the individual meets and interprets experience, or “*the process of representation*” (Bohannan 1960: 79). An individualistic world-view tends to separate the process of knowing something from the knowledge itself. The opposite is true in collectivist societies. In his *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (in Bohannan and Glazer 1988) he points out that what is sacred is necessarily socially defined. As such, it is impossible to separate the thing itself from
those who are defining it. The individual definer and the sacred thing being defined mutually create and recreate each other in the process of representation. The sum total of the collected representations is the conscience collective. In a collectivist society, the conscience collective is a great motivator closely associated with religion and religious rites, social rules, and comprised of values shared widely by its collective members over time:

“Collective representations are the result of an immense co-operation which stretches out not only into space but into time as well; to make them, a multitude of minds have associated, united and combined their ideas and sentiments; for them, long generations have accumulated their experience and their knowledge” (Durkheim in Bohannan and Glazer 1988: 259).

Similarly, Benedict’s concept of patterns of culture relied on the emotions and “drive” of a group of individuals as the creative source of cultural diversity and complexity (Modell 1989). Within this diversity and complexity some dominant patterns arise that give coherence to that group of individuals. However, even though cultural norms, expectations, values, and behaviors are born out of this patterned coherence, the dominant pattern is never completely hegemonic. Instead, patterns, or cultural models of patterns, such as individualism and collectivism, are dynamic. The social institutions that emerge out of such cultural patterning are not able to provide for the needs of all individuals within the group. Individuals filter information differently and, thus, constantly renegotiate and contest their own social rules. This process allows for the dominant models to adapt over time. In Chapter 3 I will discuss the dominant cultural model of development, modernization; to show that it continues to motivate development activities even though it has also changed to incorporate more collectivist elements.
CHAPTER 3

CULTURAL MODELS OF DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter I discuss a broad cultural model of individualism as reflected in the modernization ideology prevalent in development discourse. Modernization is a cultural model in and of itself. It is a particular way of thinking that evokes images of progress, civilization, order, technology, and control over environment. Modernization is a cultural model particular, in general, to the societies most responsible for planning and funding development programs. The fact that it is embedded in the broader model of individualism is reflected in its emphasis on autonomy, self-reliance, efficacy, justice, the future, and its near total reliance on free market economics in its creation. Modernization is more than something non-governmental organizations and states do to people and places. It is part of a greater worldview about the nature of human life and it comes into cognitive play when certain other models are invoked: for example the perceived need to take action in relation to the third World, poverty, or security. This chapter examines the cultural models of modernization and development as they relate to each other, and, more importantly, as they relate to collectivistic models common in many of the target groups.

As discussed in Chapter 2, cultural models are created out of the relationship between individuals and their physical and social environments. Members of a given society thus tend to share similar understandings about ‘how things should be’ in their own society. Because individuals experience stimuli differently, cultural models will change over time. However, they also are highly durable because their abstract nature allows individuals who share them to interpret new information in different contexts in similar ways. Abstract models of modernization (ideology) and development (practice) interact to
motivate people to behave in ways required to bring about the changes necessary to create their known world. Models of development are explicit because they must be spelled out for other people to understand. As such, they must be purposely learned, much like formal schooling. However, the people developing the ‘curriculum’ also are drawing on other embedded models, such as individualism, which dictate the direction of development at a given time.

While modernization is often spoken of in terms of technology adoption and GNP, it is really an ideology born out of an individualistic world-view that informs many aspects of life, including what we eat (fast food), how we entertain ourselves (DVD and video games), how we shop (internet), and how we wage war (dropping bombs from airplanes). Speed, efficiency, convenience, and impartial justice are important individualistic values. Both modernization and individualism are more abstract than development in that they can be applied to much broader domains, and are much harder to make explicit. Modernization is most often associated with the early development years during which development meant increasing technology adoption and creating infrastructures with a fuzzy uni-dimensional idea that life for people will somehow be improved when they industrialize. However, a more comprehensive definition would also make reference to the expected change in world-view of the people being modernized. Thus, modernization appears to be a merely mechanistic application of technological and capital means, when it also consists of considerable expectations for changes in roles, values, and material culture (Divale and Seda 2001; Yang 1988). Implicit in the application of new technologies and organizational strategies was the idea that “a sort of moral force would operate by creating an ethics of innovation, yield, and result” (Escobar 1995: 36). Thus,
modernization can be seen as the process of psychological change that occurs as individuals adapt to external, often forced or inevitable changes. While modernization is generally thought of as “the acceptance of traditionally Western things by a non-Western society” it may be more accurate to describe it as a process that is new to all societies (Yang 1988: 68). Yang points out that there are features of modernization that would not be found in traditional Western societies any more so than any other society, but that the process of modernization began much earlier in the West.

Analysts of modernization have elucidated its many different characteristics. Inkeles and Smith list major elements of the “modern person’s personality:” open to new experiences, openness to innovation and change, tendency to analyze issues in and external to the local environment, energetic acquisition of information and facts, future orientation, planning and organizing beliefs as a way of handling life, mastery of the environment, confidence that the world is calculable and that other people and institutions can be relied upon to fulfill obligations and responsibilities, respect for others, faith in science and technology, having educational and occupational aspirations, and belief in distributive justice (as opposed to fairness) (Yang 1988: 71). Schnaiberg’s scale of modernism contains six dimensions: use of mass media, freedom from extended family ties, preference for nuclear family structure, freedom from intensive religious involvement, extra local orientation, and a suprafamilial economic system (Yang 1988: 73). Divale and Seda developed five hypotheses associating modernization at the societal level with: increased cultural complexity, new opportunities for females, longer periods of pacification, more individual stress, and more social stress (2001:136). There are many other examples of similar characteristics. What is important is the similar theme of
individualism that emerges from them all: Issues of individual control, responsibility and efficacy are prominent. These characteristics contribute to a cultural model of modernization that is exported along with the technology and capital. In fact, the technology and capital have very little meaning outside of the psychological attributes of modernization.

The dynamic nature of models, however, grows out of the tensions between the cultural dimension of society—beliefs, values, etc.—and the social dimensions, which are the real, actual interactions between individuals within and between societies. Even members of the same society will have internalized their similar world view quite differently depending on individual context and experiences—socialization, education, gender, class, age are but a few important variables. Individuals receive increasingly large flows of information that they must process. According to connectionist theory, experience triggers certain neurons, which then trigger others. Over time some of these triggering relationships become very strong and will react out of expectation. Unless something special happens, cultural models continue to filter that information in ways that reinforce expectations. However, they “do not act as perceptual filters, keeping incongruent information out” (Strauss and Quinn 1997: 98). Depending on situation and context again, at any time the individual can ‘all of a sudden’ notice some ‘new’ piece of information cognitively. This is especially true if there is a new experience or context. The experience does not necessarily have to be shocking, although it can be, and the degree of absorption of new information also depends on how ‘hard’ the current neural connection is. In the scenario of the development model, it is not difficult to imagine that one on one relationships with members of the ‘poverty-stricken masses’ would lead to
incremental changes in change agents working in the field. These ‘masses’ might begin to appear less as objects of change and more as fellow human beings. Similarly, increasing contact with individuals successfully living within another world-view often will convince development agents that other ways of knowing are valid and valuable in some ways. The change agent is still influenced by the development model, and the more abstract models in which it is embedded, but some of the reasoning about how development activities should be carried out will shift. In this way, modernization incorporates variables today, like gender and the environment, that it would not have considered forty years ago.

Hence development theory has changed from something very ‘thing’ driven, to something more humane, yet it remains rooted the grander models of modernization, and, thus, individualism. However, not all people will become ‘modernized’ in the same way. They may adopt the similar technologies, but not necessary similar psychological characteristics. Instead, it may be that only those attitudes and behaviors absolutely essential to adaptation to the ‘modern’ world will change. This could be the case as an agricultural society industrializes: very “specific-functional” characteristics, such as those that are common to the same socio-economic type of society, would have to change. General-functional characteristics, however, are more abstract. They are “attitudes, values, or behaviors that are helpful or instrumental in the adjustment of most (if not all) individuals in a society to some aspects or features of social life that are common to all human societies” and thus can be projected onto new situations (Yang 1988: 84). Thus, just because individuals willingly accept new crops and watering technology does not necessarily imply that they will also change the same individual’s cultural models about
the meanings associated with a properly constituted marriage. Because so many projects
target women, one would expect some degree of change in the roles of men and women.
However, unless associated with a large rise in urbanism and isolation, one finds that
ideas of what constitutes proper gender roles to remain fairly constant, even in the United
States (Scott, H.1984). Still other characteristics are unique to a given society and thus
are irrelevant to the modernization process, for example, the using of chopsticks by the
Chinese (Yang 1988: 84). However, it is possible that these characteristics are linked
together in various ways and that their natures can change over time. Thus, it is possible
that chopstick use could become a barrier to transformation of some other specific
characteristic. Similarly, the structure of marriage may change in relation to the adoption
of new farming technologies, which may eventually change the meaning associated with
marriage.

Modernization in Development Theory - Context

Historically, modernization has been viewed as an inevitable and necessary, although
often painful, process by academics and politicians alike (Steward 1977). In the late
1940s and 1950s, as many former colonies were declaring, or gearing up to declare, their
independence, infusions of capital and technology into these "undeveloped" regions was
seen as a means of helping them catch up to the rest of the "developed" world (Steward
1967). Large projects were undertaken to mechanize farming systems (Carney and Watts
1991; Watts 1993), create ‘modern’ infrastructures, electrify, industrialize, etc. these
regions. Rostow's famous "take-off" theory described the five stages of economic growth
all countries would have to go through before they could attain the glorious "age of mass
consumption" (Rostow 1990: 4). Kenneth Little, an economist, stated the “obvious” fact:
“It is generally agreed that the social development of the British West African territories depends very largely upon the adoption and use of the up-to-date methods of economic production and distribution” (Ames 1959: 237). There was a sense of optimism in the air. Truman’s call for: “…a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of the underdeveloped areas” was a call for all humanity to accept its common bond (Esteva 1992: 6). The United States was also entering a period of unprecedented growth and innovation in science and technology that in effect ‘shrunk’ the world for even the average citizen. The space race, the atom bomb, the first commercial jets, and the impact of television all served to end the psychological isolationism of the U.S. and reaffirm American faith in its values and superiority. However, the Cold War was also underway and the need to prove that superiority over and over again cast a shadow over the general optimism. Hence, initial development efforts could be seen as attempts to shore up weak or new governments with infusions of technology and capital in hopes of stimulating Western models of production and consumption. Thus, while Truman’s call for improving the “underdeveloped areas” was couched in humanitarian terms, there was a real political need to integrate these areas into the global market system in order to prevent them from aligning themselves with communist countries.

Development Theory Since World War II

The title of Rostow’s book (1990): The Five Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto said much about the underlying intentions of the Western development planners. Economic growth and technological advances would usher in an age of democracy for all nations. Projects for women were centered on their reproductive
capabilities as mothers and homemakers, including nutrition, mother and child health, family planning, home economics, etc (Braidotti et al 1994). Birthrates were expected to decline as incomes and standard of living increased. Growth would come about through industrialization. Agriculture and industrial development were often the specific foci of modernization plans. Planners were concerned with how to produce more crops with fewer people and how to get people off the farm into the city in order to create the working class necessary to support industrialization. Projects emphasized infrastructure development: dams, railroads, paved roads, ports, communication, factories, etc. (World Bank 2001).

However, some of the earlier optimism was fading. In the late 1950s the Soviet Union, much to America’s dismay, launched Sputnik, the European countries organized themselves into the Common Market, and there were several wars of independence and acts of aggression worldwide. In the early 1960s, the U.S. had to deal with the Cuban Missile Crisis and the construction of the Berlin wall, and Viet Nam was already in the making. These often violent interactions with ‘the other’ changed considerably perceptions about what that ‘other” might be like in development theory. Kennedy saw development as a means to head off “political and social unrest” (Illich 1992: 92). Thus development was used to define the problem: poverty, lack of education, lack of modern technology, etc. From this point, the problem could be attacked rationally through the appropriate applications of technology and capital. The U.S., thus, found itself in the midst of a new war, a war on poverty and all its variables. Economic growth, as measured through GNP, global integration through participation in the United Nations, and democratization were the chosen, rational tools of war.
Van Baal, an anthropologist and former governor of the Netherlands New Guinea, remarked:

“For a successful acculturation ethos, the cultural personality and basic ideals of a people are of fundamental importance. Are their minds confused by envy and distrust, do they indulge in daydreams or expect miracles? Are they encumbered by loyalties to obsolete tribal or family obligations, or are they open to rational planning and prepared to work hard” (Van Baal 1960: 115)?

In another statement he deplored the state of bride-price relations in New Guinea which “strengthen family ties” but impede “economic independence and progress” through entrepreneurship (Van Baal 1960: 112). There may have been a real desire to help these ‘backward’ peoples on the part of the agents of development. But they adhered to a specific worldview that defined development through the individual and his mastery over his environment. As such they were able to dismiss failure of development activities as having resulted from obstacles set by ‘traditional’ society, which was somehow less than rational.

Many ‘developing’ nations, particularly in Africa, emerged from the 1960s in worse shape than they began the decade. Green Revolution technologies had not worked very well across the continent, and droughts and famines plagued many regions (Franke and Chasin 1992). In the 1970s the World Bank, just now coming to prominence¹, continued its ‘war on poverty’ with its emphasis on meeting basic needs, which required the expansion of development into all domains of life, not just development of infrastructure.

In his annual address to the board of governors of the World Bank, Robert McNamara assessed the need for greater development aid based on his definition of absolute poverty: “a condition suffered by relatively few in the developed nations but by hundreds of

¹ Lending commitments increased from $2.1 billion in 1973 to $8.8 billion in 1981 to nearly $20 billion in 1987 (Powell and Seddon 1997: 4).
millions of the citizens of the developing countries..." (1975: 7). McNamara's goal was the eradication of "absolute poverty by the end of this century. That means in practice the elimination of malnutrition and illiteracy, the reduction of infant mortality, and the raising of life-expectancy standards to those of the developed nations" (1975: 27). While this emphasis suggests a growing concern for the ‘other’ as fellow human being, it also served to construct a model of that ‘other’ as a hungry, sickly, unclothed, unwashed, and helpless victim. The poverty problem remained essentially a technical one, to be solved through the application of more development projects, and more training of individuals to think rationally. It was also during this time period that development planners began to emphasize the role of women, and the barriers they presented to the modernization process as marginalized segments of the population. Projects emphasized sewing, tie dying, handicrafts, livestock raising, health and nutrition and other such activities. Green revolution successes and failures also drew attention to widespread environmental problems.

The energy crisis in the early seventies was partially responsible for the turnaround in development policy in the late seventies. The World Bank started implementing structural adjustment programs, or ‘tough-love’ economic-style. Governments were put on fiscal diets and bloated administrations were forced to pare themselves down, state-run industries were privatized, and money for health, education, and projects that were not directly related to economic production were slashed. The goal was to increase a country’s exports in order to get its balance of payments position in order. By the end of the 1980s it was evident that these policies were too severe and not helping the fight
against poverty, which still resonated as an optimal goal within the development community (Cornia et al. 1987).

In the 1990s sustainable development became the watchword, and it was to be achieved through participation, decentralization, democratization, and rational natural resource management. There has been a proliferation of non-governmental organizations, which, in many cases, now receive a majority of their funding through multilateral and bilateral donors (the World Bank and governments). Micro-financing and capacity building are the key tools being used to integrate “underdeveloped” people into the modern market economy. Growth is often smaller, but now it is smarter and more just, or at least that is the goal. It is also more entrepreneurial, thus tapping into the individualism of the developed countries’ worldview. Management of these programs, however, often is still top-down, and there is little true accountability to the target group.

These tools—participation, democratization, resource management, etc.—are interlinked through capacity building. Capacity building, in its truest sense; “is the development of a conceptual framework which reflects the organization’s understanding of the world” (Kaplan 2000: 518). Once this worldview is clarified it can be made operational through establishing the mission of the organization, skills training, material resource planning, and organizational structuring. In practice capacity building often means establishing organizational rules and roles and training members how to carry out their roles. This process is externally driven by donor requirements and expectations, or at least perceived expectations. In many cases the organization is then expected to act like a self-directed organization. When problems arise, especially internal problems, members blame each other, the donor, or some other external circumstance. The emphasis on
micro-enterprises also requires that groups set themselves up like organizations regardless of whether the roles and rules have anything to do with their everyday reality. Micro-finance is the avenue through which the organization often must pass to get financing for its project. In many cases the loans are sanctioned socially, which means that other people, besides those in the organization, have a vested interest in the success or failure of the project. They may also have a vested interest in seeing that the loan is never given. In effect, capacity building, micro-finance, and micro-enterprises are \textit{not} technically neutral. They are all relationship-based but formally recognized so that they cannot be manipulated in quite the same way as informal social relationships. This is modernization at its most subtle, yet most far-reaching. Unlike big projects over which the individual has no control or say so, these kinds of projects are accessible to many different people by their own choice. As they opt into the system for their own reasons, they also subject themselves to new information flows, to which they may or may not attend. Schumacher noted this in his 1973 oeuvre \textit{Small is Beautiful} in which he extols the virtues of small organizations and intermediate technologies that respect both people and the environment:

“It is important that there should be enough work for all because that is the only way to eliminate anti-productive reflexes and create a new state of mind – that of a country where labour has become precious and must be put to the best possible use…this is a dynamic situation capable of generating growth” (1973: 174).

\textbf{Anthropological Contributions to Modernization}

Historically, while modernization theory did not arise directly out of anthropology, it was reflected in explanations of culture change, primarily through the evolutionary theories of Spencer, and then later neo-evolutionists White and Steward. Steward’s concept of cultural core, “the constellation of features which are most closely related to
subsistence activities and economic arrangements” is similar to Yang’s concept of specific-functional psychological characteristics (Bohannan and Glazer 1988: 327; Yang 1988). According to Steward, this core is the result of ecological adaptation and evolution depends on technological change. It is this “core” that is most affected, or at least first affected by modernization. Although the core defines mainly the means of subsistence, it also contains “social, political, and religious patterns” which are interconnected (Bohannan and Glazer 1988: 327). Thus, a change in the technological base necessarily means some kind of change at the ideological level. This is the way in which Yang’s different psychological characteristics are inter-linked. Yet the strengths of the links between technological base and ideology, or between specific- and general-functional psychological characteristics are weighted differently at different times and in different situations.

In the late 1960s, anthropology addressed modernization theory more directly. Marxist thought emerging challenged the distribution of capital between the "developed" and "underdeveloped" countries (Frank 1967; dos Santos 1973). Dependency theory asserted that the central core countries of the West were in an economically powerful position vis-à-vis the peripheral, developing countries. While the core countries were dependent on the peripheral countries for primary materials, they had many such suppliers for many different primary materials. A supply problem in any one country did not hurt the core country. On the other hand, each peripheral country was dependent only on the sale of their primary material to the core. An economic downturn in the core country could potentially ruin the peripheral country. So the periphery was, in essence, a captive supplier, subject to the financial terms of the core. The theory is much more complex in
that it goes into more detail about the production relations that arise in the peripheral
countries themselves. The point is that the periphery’s position of subjugation to the core
precludes any real development of its own integrated industrial sector. Thus, the
periphery remains forever “developing” and never “developed” (Evans 1979). While
dependency theory does not question the need for or direction of development it does
help keep questions about relationships germane.

More recently anthropologists have been looking more closely at the relations of
production in the sense that it is between individuals and groups of individuals that
particular resources and knowledge are valued, and more importantly revalued on a
regular basis. Researchers problematize the concept of the dual economy more readily
through examining the complex web of social relations involved (Berry 1993; Carney and
Watts 1991; Ferguson 1990; Linares 1985; Moore 1993). The most valuable property of
these relational institutions is that they are able to respond better to uncertainty. Neo-
classical economics assumes that each individual assesses his/her own risk factors and
seeks the optimal alternative. Berry suggests that there is an alternative means to
individually coping with risk; “producers might systematically seek to deal with these
problems by combining forces – with one another or with other powerful agents…”
(1993: 11). Furthermore, “… the neoclassical argument that institutions substitute for
imperfect or missing markets doesn’t apply very well to African rural societies in which
market activity is ubiquitous and social institutions play important roles in the
organization of economic activity” (Berry 1993: 13). Thus, investment in the
relationships that make up those institutions is important. So, tomato farmers in Ghana
who cannot depend on local banks for regular financing instead diversify their own
production schemes, borrow from local savings collectors, borrow from other farmers, or form a patron-client relationship with a wealthier person. They also buy supplies on credit from small family run stores. Farmers also form relationships with particular traders, and can borrow from them. Repayment is reported to be very high (Lyon 2999; Fafchamps 1992). Yet in most of these cases, the relationship itself is often based on supposedly irrational variables, such as kinship, ethnicity, status, etc. The relationship itself is important, not just the economic benefit derived from it.

In India loss of institutions of trust and reciprocity has resulted in real degradation of natural resources because they are no longer protected by shared rules and sanctions (Pretty and Ward 2001). In the Gambia, women have been marginalized because of the influx of new cash crops onto their land and a misunderstanding on the part of project planners about the relationships that define land use (Carney and Watts 1991). In the Gambian case, however, women did not passively accept their loss, choosing to withdraw their labor from their former fields and sell it, often to men now short of labor. The cash is then used to support their families. Since this phenomenon occurred, the project has shut down and is reviewing its policies (Van Braun 1994).

It is through these studies that the influence of the ‘traditional’ way of knowing on the ‘modern’ way of knowing becomes apparent. Close contact with the ‘other’ in the ‘other’s’ own territory helps make the cultural models of the development agent more apparent and creates a forum in which information from the ‘opposing’ world-view can be more readily attended to. Rhoades’ work with potato farmers in Peru examined not only the complexity and importance of indigenous knowledge in solving problems, but also the complexity and importance of inter-disciplinary knowledge (Rhoades 1984). He
reveals the importance of anthropology not only to supporting the dominant modernization model, but also to changing it at the same time. The valuation of local cultural models by the foreign scientists and policy makers working at the International Potato Institute goes a long way towards the inclusion of aspects of other ways of knowing in the development process. Similarly, work in medical anthropology to better understand other concepts of illness and treatment has shown that other ways of knowing can be more holistic than ‘modern’ medicine (McElroy and Townsend 1989). The anthropological approach to practical problems, then, can appear quite critical of modernization, but it is through this criticism that new meanings of modernization are negotiated, as are new meanings of other cultural models.

**Social Context for the Rise of Modernization Theory**

As discussed above, modernization is not something that has always existed in American culture, much less any other. The higher-order cultural model of individualism is much older and it is in this that the seeds of modernization could eventually thrive. American belief in the near divineness of the individual, this deeply held part of their self-identity, gave them the power to fight for what they believed in and become an independent country. However this individualism, until very recently, was also embedded in a “context of moral and religious obligation that in some contexts justified obedience as well as freedom” (Bellah et al. 1996: 143). What Bellah calls “modern individualism” existed in nascent form discursively in Locke’s position that society is realized out of individuals’ maximization of their self-interest. However, for a long time that self-interest was kept in check. The general Protestant ethic held sway: work for works sake and the reward comes after death. Prudence and delayed gratification were the norm. Success was
measured not in dollars but “in the creation of a community in which a genuinely ethical and spiritual life could be lived” (Bellah 1996: 29). The emphasis was on the formation of character and not just economic activity. However, the ascetic life allowed for considerable accumulation of wealth, and the growth of the U.S. and the Industrial Revolution exposed individuals to immigrants from all parts of the world, new concepts of work, and new desires (Bell 1976).

By the mid-nineteenth century a more utilitarian individualism was the dominant model in which individual pursuits of happiness were emphasized. Self-efficacy had replaced divine orientation. Dailey’s (1999) analysis of cultural models of Progress and Civilization takes place around this period of time. He comments that within the model of Progress there was a shift from emphasis on human industriousness to efficiency, thus setting up the model for organizational work for the future. He also points out that the negative effects of progress, such as pollution, did not go unnoticed. Similarly, the division between public life (work) and private life (home) deepened. Women’s formerly complementary economic roles disappeared and they found themselves marginalized, especially in cities. There was a further break with the moral codes of individualism in the early twentieth century as buying on credit became widespread. Formerly a tool only of the poor, installment credit became a tool of the masses for achieving instant gratification (Bell 1976). Individual liberation and fulfillment could easily be achieved. It is out of this total context that modernization evolved. Unfettered, individualized capitalism led to the rise of the robber baron entrepreneurs of the early 1900s. A new political liberalism arose as part of the backlash against the inequalities of capitalism and industrialization. This liberalism was more forward looking, speaking out against the
‘traditional’ views often espoused by the corporate economy, thus setting up a modern versus traditional opposition. It was the liberals, in turn, who fought corporations for increases in production after WWII. Liberal economic philosophy was based on economic growth in order to provide the necessary “resources to raise the incomes of the poor” (Bell 1976: 80).

However, very few individuals are extreme individuals, like the robber barons. Bellah (1996) recounts several examples of people who exhibit individualistic characteristics of self-determination, efficacy, individual choice, separation from family, etc., yet who also exhibit moral underpinnings similar to those of many pre-industrial people. There are those who seek to do work that benefits the community and not just themselves and others who find their position in the community more important than their work. Triandis believes that the natural human default is collectivism, and that individualism must be taught and reinforced throughout one’s life.

A Model of Development From the Literature

Development is embedded in more abstract models of modernization and individualism that dictate its philosophy, but not its specific activities. Modernization is an abstract cultural model that motivates the various activities and beliefs we collectively refer to as development. Economic growth plays a large role in development, but the form that growth takes has changed considerably over time. Similarly, as the ‘developers’ continue to modernize, their own perceptions about other people changes in relation to their respect of other individuals. Here I use the words of those who have worked in the development arena to show both what development is to them, and how it has changed over time and motivated specific behaviors. I have added italics for emphasis.
“...I would consider growth as the desired by-product of the Western system of
development, whose prime object is to increase the range of choice open to the
average citizen...To my mind, economic development is an integral part of the
process of social development and social development consists of democratization and
increased personal freedom, which means destroying the power of elites...” Harry G.

“Critics have pointed to the fact that in some countries there has been "growth without
development." On the other hand, there are those who advocate "development without
growth", at any rate for an initial period when the institutional foundations are being
laid, or as an option against the sort of growth that is measured by aggregate figures of
commodity production irrespective of who benefits from the production, in what
conditions and what form it takes. A more appropriate definition of "development"
would begin by identifying basic needs. In many underdeveloped countries the
objective of development would be defined as raising the level of living of the masses of
the people” Paul Streeten, Economist (1974: 5).

“If the non-modern sector is not made the object of special development efforts, it will
continue to disintegrate; this disintegration will continue to manifest itself in mass
unemployment and mass migration into metropolitan areas; and this will poison
economic life in the modern sector as well” from Small is Beautiful: Economics as if
People Mattered (Schumacher- economist-1973: 189).

“What must we do? Growth is a necessary but not a sufficient cause of successful
modernization. We must secure a 6% growth rate...But we must do more. We must
ensure that in such critical fields and population planning, rural renewal, fuller
employment, and decent urbanism, positive policies support and hasten the social
transformation without which economic growth itself becomes obstructed and its
results impaired” World Bank President Robert S. McNamara to the Board of

“There are no peoples, there never have been any peoples, and there never will be any
peoples who fail to prefer to some extent being relatively better off to being relatively
worse off materially (but)...Peoples differ enormously in their horizons of the possible
about being better off materially” Marion J. Levy, Jr., Professor of Sociology (1972:
9).

Clearly, economic growth is perceived as an integral part of the development process.

However, that development process is something much more encompassing than merely
improving GNP. Those who espouse modernization ideals appear also be outlining a
program of moral salvation of humankind.
Poverty, Basic Needs, and Women

The above experts were writing about development in the early 1970s. By the end of the 1960s donors were disillusioned with the development process. Lots of money had been invested with few positive results. Drought in Africa and then a global energy crisis acted to dampen economic optimism and brought to light serious inequalities between peoples of the target countries, inequalities that were the direct result of many development efforts. Widespread contact with other world-views led to increased concerns about social justice and general fairness: basic needs, like education and health, begin to show up in the literature. However, economic growth remains the primary symbol of development: “For a poor country to operate an economy which distributes income among the people more justly, there manifestly must be economic growth” (World Bank 1981: 195). Cognitively, even the sociologist Levy, who is trained to look at the human condition, sees ‘modernization’ as an inevitable, although not always positive, process: “…modernization is a universal social solvent, and hence, however unsuccessful a people may be with this process, it is an utter waste of time to discuss whether or not they should be involved in it” (Levy 1972: 10). Thus, those promoting the dominant model of development never questioned whether or not the things potentially obtainable through increased economic growth – formal education, increased income, modern health care, etc. – were universally desired, they just assumed they were.

It was not only Western men who shared the faith in economic production. The Society for African Culture held an international meeting in July 1972 to discuss La Civilisation de la Femme dans la Tradition Africaine/Civilization of the Woman in African Culture for which there was a section dedicated to women and the economy.
Each article proudly explained how African women had always been important producers in the traditional economy and would continue to do so in the modern economy:

“In principle, monetarisation of the economy should allow for an increase in savings susceptible to be oriented towards productive activities. Such an initiative is unfortunately blocked by local circumstances. Thus, for example, an obligation to take care of one’s parents-in-law precludes the possibility of saving…” (Nzaou-Mabika 1975: 392).

Referring to increased education opportunities for women she continues: “Such a change in mentality has an influence on the economy: increased production of industrial crops…increased and diversified consumption and increased exchanges” (287). The emphasis on increased consumption and industrialization as opportunities potentially hampered by “traditional” relationships reveals the extent to which the educated elite in the target countries had absorbed modernization ideology.² I attended a UNESCO sponsored workshop in Dakar entitled Organizational Development and Putting Together Projects. The targeted participants were women working with women. These women were from four different West African countries and several were highly educated. They were in fair agreement as to the major obstacles that they faced in enacting their development plans:

“We must improve the quality of women’s work, make it professional. Selling oil our of their homes will never make them autonomous. We have to get past the microbusiness …Yes, but women have not yet reached the level of maturity to make the step from microbusiness. They are still too traditional, ethnic, cultural at heart. They cannot yet manage well at the micro-level” (Field Notes 1999).

² See John Meyer (1986) for an excellent discussion of the role of the institutionalization of formal education on self-identification and individualization. He sees formal education as a means of “socialization on a mass scale” and points out that formal education programs appear to be of central importance to newly independent or restructuring nations.
Similarly, the goals of rural education, in the forms of animation and vulgarisation, forms of self-awareness and technical training, are often to “make farmers and citizens,” who can “contribute to the growth of agricultural surplus” (Malassis 1973: 274).

Attention to agriculture during the 1960s led Ester Boserup to write *Woman's Role in Economic Development* in 1970, which revealed how technological modifications (herbicides, plows, etc.) were most often made available to men, as heads of households, and acted to change the division of labor: "Obviously, the adoption of a farming system where the main farming equipment is operated by men entails a tremendous change in the economic and social relationships between the sexes" (1970: 33). Men's labor, then, ended up centering around market crops, while women continued to supply subsistence crops without the aid of improved technology, and often on increasingly marginal lands. She went further, however, than to just imply change in the division of labor. Boserup also brought up the question of women's roles in relation to economic growth within the currently accepted development paradigm. She outlined the methods of development available to the farmer: "expansion by technical means (the plough); expansion by hierarchization of the community (hired labor); or expansion by the traditional method of acquiring additional wives" (1970: 39). Boserup, thus, saw the gendered division of labor rooted in the progressive drive toward increased specialization in the labor force. The problem lay in the unequal distribution of technical knowledge and skills from which women could develop their productive potential:

"It is usually the men who learn to operate the new types of equipment while women continue to work with old hand tools...Thus, in the course of agricultural development, men's labour productivity tends to increase while women's remains more or less static" (1970: 53).
At the same time, women's relative status as agriculturalists declines, and their reluctance to work cash crops in lieu of their own food crops is seen as an "obstacle to the progress from subsistence agriculture to commercial production for the market" (1970: 64). Boserup’s assessment of the problem situates women squarely in the development paradigm of economic growth by showing how they have been left out of the process by which not only the women, but also national economies could benefit. Thus, the cultural model of development through economic growth was widely shared and applied to contexts involving women with respect to individual freedom, social justice, and fairness. At this point in time, development was still top down, so these contexts were determined by those “in charge,” so to speak. The only demands made on the rich countries were made by development institutions, like the World Bank, for more funding.

McNamara stated more clearly in his 1977 address to the Board of Governors the role of development in the war on poverty:

“What are components of those basic needs which must be satisfied if absolute poverty is to become overcome?…they include:

- food with sufficient nutritional value to avoid the debilitating effects of malnutrition, and to meet the physical requirements of a productive life;
- shelter and clothing to ensure reasonable protection against the rigors of the climate and environment, and ;
- public services that make available the education, clean water, and health care that all members of a society need if they are to become fully productive” (World Bank 1981: 459).

Thus, his concern for the social betterment of the poor was based on his perception of the ‘rightness’ of development through economic growth. In the end, basic needs were never defined clearly enough (read: difficult to quantify) to be turned into an operational policy.
Structural Adjustment Programs

Donors were becoming frustrated with the development process yet again. The energy crisis and spiraling inflation and stagnant growth in the developed world affected world prices for the kinds of goods being turned out by the targeted “poor” countries. Debt ratios were getting out of hand and development specialists began to call for structural changes in their economies:

“The basic needs strategy turns out… not to be a development strategy at all. Most versions neglect the most basic of all development needs – the need for structural transformation as well as a quantum jump in modern industry and modern technology. Considerations of equity, indispensable as they are, do not require that the consumption goals be put above all others. A society is entitled to set its priorities for consumption as part of an overall programme for comprehensive change and development, earliest possible attainment of minimum standards of living and a more rapid and secure advance in such standards in the future” (Dell 1979: 291). (Italics my own)

As part of the “overall programme” for change, development called for belt-tightening austerity in many countries, requiring them to become self-sufficient. McNamara held that: “The countries will, therefore, have to make those structural changes in their economies that can enable them to pay from their own resources for increasingly more expensive, but necessary, oil. This can only be done by expanding exports, or by reducing their non-oil imports, or by some combination of the two” (World Bank 1981: 671). While he continued to speak about the need to eliminate poverty and improve the standard of living for the masses, governments participating in structural adjustment programs cut a lot of social expenditures as they tried to trim the fat off their bloated bureaucracies. Dell, in his critique of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), stressed the importance of growth through an increase in GNP because “it is the one aggregate indicator which comes closest to providing some quantitative impression of the
underlying change” (Dell 1979: 293). Again projecting his own cultural models of modernization and individualism he called for the poor to sacrifice today in order to prepare for tomorrow:

“Even at the lowest levels of per capita income, countries in which social morale and sense of unity and purpose are high well deliberately forgo even essential items of consumption including food if they feel that by doing so they can improve the prospects for their children…the greater the degree of austerity required in the interests of setting aside resources for the future, the more important it is to make sure that burden is divided fairly and in some reasonable relationship to the capacity to bear it” (Dell 1974: 296).

Dell adds something new to the development model: delayed gratification, at least for those on the receiving end of development programs. It was new in the sense that satisfying basic needs had been an immediate goal that would lead to economic growth. In this new twist, he was calling for a reversal of that order: painful economic growth today for a better tomorrow.

A.W. Clausen, the new President of the World Bank in 1981, reinforced the emphasis on economic growth: “Intense aspirations for development are widespread in the Third World. In many nations, economic growth is a matter of life or death for thousands of people on the margin of subsistence” (World Bank 1986: 25). Towards the end of the 1970s and through the 1980s, structural adjustment programs set out to “fix” the obstacles to growth in the targeted countries. These programs emphasized “greater efficiency in the public sector” and the encouragement of “private entrepreneurship” (World Bank 1986: 73). Perceived obstacles included increasing population growth, poor management of public funds, poor health and illiteracy. The cure included “growth oriented policies…net resources by commercial banks…and the enhanced participation of the multilateral development banks, including the World Bank and the IMF” (World
The industrialized countries needed to contribute more and remove protectionist barriers to trade, but development was essentially something that each individual country had to do on its own, from within, by following the structural adjustment plan. The goals was to create governments that were more professional, neutral, democratic, accountable, transparent, and, most of all, smaller, more efficient, and as self-sufficient as possible. However, there was no question but that some action had to occur.

**Critique of Modernization from Within**

While the overarching model of modernization still values self-efficacy and self-sufficiency, of both individuals and governments, a cultural model is not a monolithic thing that determines behavior. It does not prevent other information from entering into an individual’s mind, it only shapes the likely response to that information. In reality, individuals sometimes pay attention to information that is incongruous with their dominant cultural models. Often this causes cognitive dissonance as the individual seeks to fit that new information into her own world-view. Sometimes this is possible, and sometimes it is not, and the new information is rejected or ignored at that point in time.

In the context of modernization authors offered up examples, there have always been dissenting voices. Since the 1970s especially, many authors have pointed out both physical and social problems caused by the implementation of development activities. It is through the wrestling from within, as individuals who adhere to the dominant model question its legitimacy, that change can occur in the model itself. For example, in 1977 Shelton Davis wrote about the history of development in Brazil, including the negative impact on indigenous peoples and the massive deforestation of the Brazilian rainforest
(see also Peter Evans 1979 for a more economic review). Aided by the United States, the Brazilian government willfully violated the human rights of indigenous peoples and through and through a development plan to increase economic growth, cut down over 11 million hectares of rainforest. Davis said:

“I have written this book in the hope that international attention will now focus on the issues raised by these organizations (non-governmentals). One of the ways which this might be done, I believe, is through a greater concern on the part of recognized international agencies and national governments with the devastating impact that recent economic development programs are having on indigenous populations, peasants, rural workers, and the earth” (Davis 1977: 167).

John Bodley also lamented the treatment of indigenous peoples by the dominant development paradigm:

“Paradoxically, tribals were destroyed because global technological evolution outstripped social and political evolution in the twentieth century. A more humanistically evolved global culture would control its exploitation of resources while accommodating the existence of autonomous micropolitics such as tribes and would permit great ethnic and cultural diversity” (Bodley 1982: 207).

He details how activities carried out in the name of modernization have actually undermined the political and cultural autonomy of Brazil’s tribal populations: “Any native custom that was deemed seemed immoral, offensive, or threatening was instantly abolished by decree, whereas other customs that were considered barriers to progress were either abolished outright or steps were taken to suppress them” (Bodley 1990: 94). He also emphasizes education as a means of modernization through social engineering.

In Africa, Lloyd Timberlake decried the “environmental bankruptcy” of the entire continent of Africa: “Africa’s plight is unique. The rest of the world is moving ‘forward’ by most of the normally accepted indicators of progress. Africa is moving backwards” (Timberlake 1986: 7). He points to rising population growth rates, climatic problems, management problems, and misplaced priorities as the root causes. In discussing the
causes of African debt he points a finger at structural adjustment programs (fewer soft
loans) and at the governments themselves for having invested earlier loan monies in
“large public investments” that did little to promote economic growth (Timberlake 1986:
34). The results were environmental and social disasters.

These are just three among many possible critiques of the dominant model of
development. They are generated out of first hand experiences with individuals and
situations in the field, experiences that challenge the dominant model. A critical mass of
these instances of cognitive dissonance will eventually work its way in some form into
the accepted dominant model. This is why the environment, indigenous rights, gender
and participation are now important variables in mainstream development activities. Such
was not necessarily the case fifty years ago. An examination of critique is also important
because one generally critiques the more powerful model, so giving it a certain degree of
legitimacy. Also, inherent in these critiques is the idea that development was badly
applied, not that development is bad, and no radical alternatives were proposed.
Economic growth that is more humane is more acceptable, and probably more durable. In
this way, critique can actually work to strengthen the dominant model while allowing
change to occur within it.

It also is clear that the World Bank, as development representative, did not ignore
these critiques and incorporated their concerns into their development discourse. By the
end of the 1980s, the Bank considered questions of indigenous rights and sustainable
environment as central tenets of good policy. In 1981 Clausen mentioned concern for the
environment, but rooted its cause in the reactions of poor people themselves:

“Poverty also puts severe – and often irreversible – strains on the natural environment.
At survival levels, people are sometimes compelled to exploit their environment too
intensively. Poverty has often resulted in long years of mismanagement of our natural resources, evidencing itself in overgrazing, erosion, denuded forests, and surface water pollution” (World Bank 1986: 26).

By the mid-1980s environmental concerns were entrenched in World Bank discourse.

Barber B. Conable, the new President of the World Bank in 1986, addressed the World Resources Institute in 1987 again rooting the cause of environmental problems in poverty itself and calling for the development of a new “planning instrument”:

“I believe we can make ecology and economics mutually reinforcing disciplines. By looking closely at market forces and broadly at all key sectors of development activity, we can identify both the effective and perverse factors shaping a misshaping the environment. I am not proposing make-work research. What I seek from data – much of which is already on hand – is a composite inventory of environmental assets and liabilities. With such a planning instrument, we could move toward establishing the value of those priceless resources – topsoil and grass cover, water and drainage, human skills and traditional lifestyles – we too often consider insignificant” (World Bank 1991: 25). (Italics my own)

By the 1990s, concern for the environment was firmly rooted in Bank discourse. In 1991 Conable again emphasizes Bank concerns by tying environmental concerns to poverty:

“We have learned one invaluable truth from our environmental successes and failures – development and environmental protection are mutually dependent. Population size and growth are an urgent manifestation of this relationship. …More hungry mouths to feed means more pressure on fragile soils and rain forest reserves” (World Bank 1991: 156).

By accepting the Bank’s past mistakes as a matter of fact and moving on to the future, Conable kept the tone apolitical and nearly ahistorical – what happened in the past is over and there is nothing to be done now but move on. There was no mention of the West/North’s role in environmental problems, i.e. its role as avaricious consumer of environmental resources. Clearly, however, Bank discourse is evolving as it is shaped by important experiences a the field level. It is through linking development and environmental protection that he reinforces the discourse of economic growth.
It is also during this period that the Bank began calling for ‘capacity building:’

“To implement the right kinds of policies, Africa needs its own capacities. It needs to strengthen its local institutions and human resource base, and it needs to use those resources effectively. This is a crucial item on Africa’s strategic agenda. To help achieve it, the WB has been working with the ADB, the UNDP, and many other donor and African governments to establish the African Capacity Building Foundation. This foundation will focus on public policy analysis and management skills – those skills so critical to the development process” (World Bank 1991: 169).

In this form capacity building assumed a common standard against which such critical skills could be compared, a standard derived from Western organizational and business work styles. Inherent in the call for improved capacity building was also the ethnocentric assumption that people are poor because they are not capable of taking care of themselves:

“Among the causes of poverty, I am sure, the material factors are entirely secondary – such things as a lack of natural wealth, or a lack of capital, or an insufficiency of infrastructure. The primary causes of extreme poverty are immaterial; they lie in certain deficiencies in education, organization, and discipline. Development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organization, and discipline. Without these three, all resources remain latent, untapped, potential” (Schumacher 1973: 168).

Thus, values of independence, self-sufficiency, and efficacy were paramount, but only in ways defined by and acceptable to those in power. Capacity building, then, was an instrument for improving an individual’s or group’s ability to advance its own ideals, but within particular, individualist models of efficacy, rationality, and self-sufficiency.

The Role of NGOs and Credit Schemes

Non-governmental organizations proliferated in the late 1980s and into the 1990s. Formerly limited in scope to charity work and emergency aid, many NGOs began to reorient towards development programming. The shift came about in part because the
large multilateral donors were looking for more effective ways to channel their funds than through governments. NGOs are often assumed to be more in touch with the local people and more apt to use funds to directly benefit them (Atteh 1999). NGO projects are generally small in scale and include an empowerment-through-capacity-building component, usually through training local communities how to better organize themselves in order to better interact with the larger national and global economic and political systems. Many NGOs are made up of local people concerned with specific issues. Many other NGOs are made up of foreign experts who work with local counterparts. Prior to the 1980s, a majority of NGOs were financed through voluntary contributions. Since then, however, many bilateral and multilateral aid agencies have started funding NGOs directly because they are considered to be more effective than the state in meeting development goals (Powell and Seddon 1997).

NGOs are considered more effective for several reasons. In general, they focus on particular areas or domains and tend to be very hands on so they can articulate local needs better. Also, they are considered less bureaucratically organized and so are more flexible and better able to mobilize local resources when necessary. Most of all, they are considered to be more concerned with fulfilling local needs and less likely to be corrupt (Atteh 1999). An NGO’s localness enables it to know and be known by the target group. In this way, a sort of accountability is required by the NGO. Laban (1995) states that people need to be more than included in natural resource management programs, for example, but also see “…tangible net benefits in terms of products, income, services, and (political) influence or even in terms of confirmation of their feelings concerning moral, spiritual and ethical values” (Laban 1995: 196). He also emphasizes the need for
valuation of indigenous knowledge and group heterogeneity in order to make
development programs sustainable. This kind of knowledge can only be learned through
working in partnership with local people.

One problem NGOs face, however, is that they are more dependent on bilateral and
multilateral aid organizations for funds. This is the case for local NGOs especially.
Dependency on external sources of financing may force the NGO to be accountable more
to the donor than to local goals. This was the case to a certain extent in Keur Momar Sarr,
Senegal. ASREAD wrote a project to USAID specifications, and then was also required
to make many changes in the middle of the project. USAID also had very stringent
reporting regulations that overwhelmed the NGO in paperwork. When certain paperwork
requirements were late, USAID refused to release funds, thus retarding parts of the
project. My one experience with an official visit to Keur Momar Sarr was not positive.
The USAID contingent, an American woman and two Senegalese counterparts, arrived
very late, skipped villages that they had said they wanted to visit, and where the women
had been waiting for hours to receive them, and then proceeded to lecture some of the
ASREAD personnel about their past behavior. In private, the American woman told me
how she had almost closed the whole project down because of the members’ lack of
professionalism, and that she had recommended that a psychologist come and set things
straight. Never once was there even a hint that she was there to work in partnership with
ASREAD. While it is only one experience, ASREAD members told me that USAID
visits were always like that. In short, NGOs exist with one foot in the local context and
one foot in the donor context, which can hinder their efforts to be autonomous, grassroots
driven organizations.
The proliferation of NGOs also coincided with the advancement of microcredit programs worldwide. Based on the Grameen Bank model first proposed in the 1980s, microcredit programs loan small amounts of money to people who would otherwise not be able to get loans from traditional banks, and would instead borrow from local moneylenders at high rates of interest. Peer groups serve as the guarantor for the loan. The Microcredit Summit in 1997 promoted small credit programs as a near panacea for poverty (Johnson and Kidder 1999). The World Bank and other international donors now promote microcredit programs as a tool for combating poverty and increasing economic growth (Mosley and Hulme 1998).

Snow and Buss find microcredit programs appealing for several reasons:

- they “bypass corrupt or inept central governments when channeled through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)”; 
- they “promote free markets, lessening the influence of centrally planned economies”; 
- they “reduce dependency of poor people”; 
- they “promote democracy and a strong middle class; and”; 
- they “are perceived t be cost/beneficial. (2001: 296).

Microcredit programs often focus on women in particular, and there is some evidence that group oriented lending and training may create social capital through repeated meetings, repeated interactions, and repeated discussions about group goals and knowledge. A survey of these organizations revealed that, “fifty percent listed social cohesion as one of the most important impacts they felt their financial services provided” (Anderson and Locker 2002: 102). To find a collectivistic value in an individualistic enterprise may seem surprising, but it is the crux of this dissertation: on the ground
people will interpret new information based on their own cultural models, not the models of the program planners.

Problems often arise when there is a conflict about repaying the loans. In return for a loan, individuals become responsible to the bank, an impersonal institution that, in the long run, is most concerned with recouping its money. Borrowers must learn to use their money efficiently, transparently, and most importantly, with long-term production goals in mind. Short-term consumption goals are of little concern to banks or development programs in general. In many cases, cash from projects or banks takes on a different meaning than cash obtained through other means. While it should not be used for unproductive, or unsanctioned, endeavors without risk of sanctions by the bank and by the larger group that guaranteed the original loan, it often is. In many cases in Gankett Guent, women sometimes used their small enterprise loans for household consumption needs, and then had to find other ways to repay them. In another case, the women turned down a loan from a bank in Louga out of fear of repayment difficulty. They well understood the requirements inherent in bank loans and also their own limits to making the money grow in order to assure repayment.

**Summary**

In connectionist theory terms, the neural connection between economic growth and development are very strong. Laurence Shames, in his analysis of American values during the 1980s, sums up best the reason behind the strength of this model:

“…at least since the end of World War II, simple economic growth has stood, in the American psyche, as the best available substitute for the literal frontier. The economy has been the frontier. Instead of more space, we have had more money. Rather then measuring progress in terms of geographical expansion, we have measured it by expansion of our standard of living. Economics has become a
metaphor on which we pin our hopes of open space and second chances” (Shames 1989: 25).

Thus, even trends in development toward popular participation and capacity building are based on creating ways to expand this frontier through increasing economic growth. The early attempts at creating economic growth depended on improving infrastructures in order to promote industrialization. By the early 1970s it was clear that this approach was not working and the focus shifted to providing for “basic needs” in order to combat poverty as the number one obstacle to development. In the 1980s, a return to stricter trickle-down economics came on the heels of worldwide inflation and donor disenchantment with the progress of development projects to date. Structural adjustment programs required participating countries to drastically reduce spending in the public sector and open up their markets to private enterprise and international trade. An unfortunate part of this process was that funding for primary social services was also drastically cut – education, healthcare, and basic welfare also suffered. International environmental crises, increasing, and more public, environmental problems, and growing social unrest in some of the poorest countries led big donors and experts to reevaluate their plans. By the end of the 1980s, some of the funding for social services had been restored and much of the money earmarked for development efforts began to be channeled through non-governmental organizations, in the hopes of being used more effectively. Concomitantly, greater local interest in the development process and its effects led to a greater emphasis on local participation in project development and execution. One component of this increase in participation was the proliferation of small credit schemes aiming to make people responsible for their own development.
These changes in the development model have all occurred within a larger, abstract, Western model of modernization and individualism which promote economic growth as the paramount goal of development, the only way to solve pressing problems of poverty and environmental degradation. Changes occur in the development model only as they match up to values esteemed in the more abstract model. This model of individualism views the whole world through a lens of Cartesian rationality based in the separation of nature from humanity:

"…we may find a practical philosophy by means of which, knowing the force and the action of fire, water, air, the stars, heavens and all other bodies that environ us, as distinctly as we know the different crafts of our artisans, we can in the same way employ them in all those uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature " (Descartes quoted in Apffel-Marglin 1996: 4).

This objectification of nature meant that “good” and “truth” were no longer inherent in nature (or God), but could only be found through individual human reasoning. This separation of man from nature fostered a dualistic worldview in which reason is superior to nature, which became a resource to be managed. Thus, “only science and effective rational technical action can affect the world…” (Apffel-Marglin 1996: 6).

Scientific rationality combined with economic rationality means that only those parts of nature that can be transformed have value. Useful tree species, from an expert perspective, are valuable. They can be quantified and turned into commodities. For example, tree species that are deemed not useful become weeds to be ignored or eliminated (Apffel-Marglin 1996). Similarly, social activities that are not economically productive to the individual are deemed obstacles to development, regardless of the fact that they exist, thus having value to the people who participate in them. Even the idea of
community is rational only to the extent that it serves to improve the welfare of individuals who agree to band together for some common benefit.

In this sense, even the participatory approach so well lauded in development discourse to day is really only participatory to the extent that it fits in with pre-existing models of “the way things should be” according to the intruding model. The fact that the participatory approach is considered a ‘normal’ part of modernization, however, is due to the interactions of real people on the ground. In this sense, both individualistic and collectivistic attributes negotiate for meaning in practical situations. Similarly, concepts of indigenous knowledge are integrated into the model only to the extent that they can be translated into the language of development experts, but they do find their way in. The next chapter will address the theoretical existence of a more collectivistic model of the world and why it persists in the face of the dominant model of individualism as exported through the development process.
CHAPTER 4

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE “IMPROVIDENT PEASANT”

In Chapter 3, I discussed the application of modernization as a means of examining the individualistic cultural model in a more problematized context with the goal of revealing the complexity of cultural models themselves. This chapter addresses the collectivist model from a theoretical perspective, while Chapter 5 deals more specifically with the data I collected in Senegal. There is considerably more space devoted to the discussion of the collectivist model because, as a person socialized in an individualistic society, I believe its concepts are more difficult to grasp.

Modernization dictates, in part, the kind of development activities that can be invented. Born out of Western individualism, modernization seeks to subordinate nature to human purpose. Yet after forty-plus years of modernization, the development model has only been marginally successful at any of its explicit goals. One reason for its continued failure is that it is often applied in socio-cultural contexts that interpret information differently. Ideally, modernization seeks to efface other worldviews through the development of Homo economicus, the modern, rational human who makes all decisions in an impersonal vacuum based on a fully informed consideration of all the costs and benefits to the individual. It is more than exporting technological change; it is also “a matter of community, morality and power” (Li 1996:510). However, the assumption that the modernization process will do away with the ‘traditional’ worldview fails to understand the complex nature – and strength – of high-level cultural models. In the United States, for example, poor African-American families rely on extended family
and community networks for mutual support. Similarly, in the upper echelons of big business, social status and networks are often more important in determining success than are education and ability. Because of Western emphases on the importance of the individual, the cases wherein ‘irrational’ variables hold sway are not always attended to cognitively or are attended to separately and, thus, do not cause cognitive dissonance until they meet in the same context. For example, the American sense of justice implies that we treat like cases in a like manner. However, recent cases against using race as a factor in university admittance have highlighted other factors, such as legacy, which are used to the same end. Once the two factors ended up being discussed in the same context at the same time, a certain level of cognitive dissonance set in the minds of many people as they sought to justify their support of legacy but not race as an important factor in decision making. Neither are objective reflections of ability.

In the next sections I will continue discussing cultural models by exploring the collectivist model, including an examination of some of the factors conducive to the development of such a model and how the model is reflected in Wolof moral philosophy.

**Cultural Models Redux**

People in other parts of the world are not different from those in the United States in the sense that they all experience external stimuli – information flows – and they filter that information and interpret it in ways that help them live their “normal” lives. Where they differ from other people is in how they filter and interpret that information. One of the most basic factors affecting how information is integrated is the development of the “self-schemata” (Markus and Oyserman 1989). In an individualistic culture, the self is conceptualized as distinct from others, while in collectivist cultures, the self is
conceptualized as connected to others. Markus and Oyserman go further to state that this is also the fundamental (psychological) difference between men and women and socialization of the respective models begins at birth and never stops. In Senegal, Greenfield and Bruner (1969) show how Wolof children react differently to certain psychological tests from American children. They then explain how perceptions of self, other, and the external environment start to be learned in infancy and are reinforced during childhood. Strauss and Quinn (1997) explain a similar process for American children as they learn to differentiate themselves from others and to be more independent. Thus our own concepts of independence and individualism are learned, not innate, and as such are only one way of being. Models learned in childhood tend to be very strong, possibly because they are linked to behaviors related to survival (Strauss and Quinn 1997).

Interaction with modern techniques and philosophies may expand the limits of possibility in ‘traditional’ people’s worldview, but it does not eradicate the original cultural models. Instead, perhaps things ‘modern’ can be seen as additional tools that individual users will assess through their own worldviews for their worthiness in particular cognitive contexts (Quinn and Holland 1987). While Kagitçibasi (1994) and Quinn and Holland (1987) believe that models of modernization will only directly affect behaviors and beliefs related to technical and scientific change, mental and emotional states, such as those related to kinship obligations or marriage commitment, which seem unconnected to such change, will remain “highly resistant to revision in the face of apparent contradiction” (Quinn and Holland 1987: 11). As discussed earlier, high-level
cultural models are abstract enough to incorporate new information over time without losing their motivational force.

One reason for the durability of high-level cultural models over time is that they are generally reinforced in the everyday lives of people who share that particular model. Dailey (1999) showed how even the disappearance of Native Americans from the environment did not change the strength of the model of Progress, but over time poor farmers came to replace Native Americans as the chosen target of Civilization. The high-level model of Progress was reinforced, at least partially, by the economic growth and change occurring in the cities and in modern agriculture. Similarly, a general model of collectivism can incorporate more specifically individualistic technologies and philosophies, but it is also reinforced by continued existence in a precarious physical and social environment that makes too much individualism dangerous, or historically not consistently successful enough to merit replacing other models.

**Collectivism and the Improvident Peasant**

In the era of colonialism, the “improvident peasant” was one who did not prepare for the future by investing in capital improvements to his land. Instead, as soon as his crops were sold, he “wasted” the cash on luxury goods and social ceremonies (Waterbury 1987). When he ran out of money and food, he had to turn to money lenders of one kind or another, who would lend money and goods, usually food, at high rates of interest until the next harvest. Since independence such behaviors continue and development planners call them irrational or an obstacle to real development – behavior that must be modified in order to obtain that goal. In Senegal today, and indeed much of West Africa, these obstacles are social ties, such as kinship, marriage, political ties, and other valued
relationships. Baptisms, marriages, funerals, religious festivals, and a myriad of other occasions for gift giving and borrowing and lending are highly institutionalized. Local participants view these activities as necessary to maintain everyday life. Although they rarely use such terms, individuals do not find these activities irrational or wasteful, but investments in varieties of social capital to be nurtured and protected. Similarly, in most West African societies, delegation or sale of land rights are rarely based on profit considerations alone. Effects on kinship, community, and spiritual relations are always considered (Logan 1995). However, these models are not static. The relations of production of social capital change over time. New relationships are forged with the members and institutions of the state, NGOs, and other outsiders and some older relationships by diminish in importance. But the emphasis on relations between people remains constant. The activities and effects of modernization act to create a larger number of opportunities from which individuals can choose.

By way of contrast, while social relationships are not unimportant in the United States, we tend to downplay and/or separate them from the rest of everyday life, in much the same way as we separate home life from work life. In Senegal reliance on people tends to permeate all facets of everyday life. Modernization seeks to reduce the importance of, or at least the links between, these ties inasmuch as it seeks to increase efficiency through impersonal processes of democratization and industrialization. One reason why investment in social capital continues to be more important than investment in physical capital in many parts of the word is the presence of consistent uncertainty about the future. High levels of uncertainty and unpredictability of both physical and social environments create an environment that makes investments in physical capital more
risky. A more collectivist orientation may prove to be more rational in the long run when risk cannot be controlled, or is perceived as being uncontrollable. Reykowski’s research in Poland revealed that, although Polish youths showed increasing individualism as they grew up, they tended to default to more collectivistic behavior in times of difficulty. The same behavior did not manifest itself in the German sample, thus revealing the more individualistic world-view of that sample (Reykowski 1994).

**Uncertainty and Unpredictability in the Sahel – the Physical Environment**

In Senegal, and across most of the Sahel, adequate food procurement has proved variably difficult over time. Water, especially, is a necessary component of every rural farmer’s existence. Households depend on it for cooking (including fish as a protein source), washing, drinking; animals depend on it for bathing and drinking; crops depend on it to grow and live. Water is not the *only* component supporting subsistence living, soil and seed quality, disease (human, animal, and plant), social institutions, and perceptions about what a “normal” life should entail are also important. But without water, the other components are arguably irrelevant. Historically, the Sahel has been both wetter and drier than it is today. Archaeologists and geologists have been able to outline climatic changes over the past 25,000 years. While Ba and Crousse point to the current day problems of Senegal: “Dunes have now reached the river itself, and sandstorms are increasing in frequency” (1985: 389), records reveal that between 16,000 and 23,000 thousand years ago the region was far more arid: “…the last glacial maximum (approximately 18,000 years ago) is represented by massive aeolian turbidities, indicating that dunes had advanced to the edge of the continental shelf. There is no indication of any flow in the Senegal River at this time,” and “Active dunes extended up to 450 km southward into the
Sahel, blocking the courses of the Senegal and Niger Rivers and probably also crossing the Nile” (Street et. al. 1981: 14-15). Similarly, the Senegal River was at its lowest level between 10,000 and 20,000 (Muzzolini 1985: 13). Even at its most humid (c. 7000 to 6000 BC), the Sahel also had periods of aridity and extreme humidity, attesting to the normalcy of climatic irregularity (McIntosh 1993). The spread or lack thereof of different kinds of aquatic animal fossils and relic populations further supports the theory that the availability of water changed quickly and frequently over time.

Dumont (1982) describes three types of amphibian that have adapted to periodic aridity by digging into the mud and the evolution of a rapid reproductive cycle and tolerance to heat and salinity. He also points to evidence that indicates that the basins of the Niger River the Lake Chad and the Nile must have been connected recently. In discussing the Neolithic humid period c. 6,000-3,000 BP, he indicates that the humidity was not general; it mostly affected the northern and central Sahara. The Southern Sahara and Central Sahel were still arid enough to exterminate those species most dependent on permanent sources of water (Dumont 1982: 20). In some of the most arid regions of what is now Mauritania fishhooks have been found dating back to approximately 5000 BP (Nicholson 1986). Today in the same area one finds only seas of sand. Another analysis of aquatic animal fossils reveal that extreme climatic fluctuations in the Sahel have existed for a very long time, even since as long as 135,000 years ago (Moore 1990).

During the post-neolithic arid phase from c. 3500-2000 BP, the Sahel experienced severe changes including a reduced rainy season and increased production of sand dunes (Muzzolini 1985). Current arid conditions continue this phase, but within the past 3000 years there has been a great deal of variation, including periods much more humid and
more arid than at the present (Nicholson 1986). Lézine found that *Acacia* trees at their maximum extension reached as high in latitude as 400-500 km north of their present locations at about 8500 BP (Moore 1990). Their southward movement of the trees began around 6100 BP and became established at the current range of 13°-19° north around 2000 years ago (Moore 1990). It is important to remember that rainfall and aridity did not come all at once in space or time to the entire Sahel, but there is evidence of increasing aridity since 1800 (Nicholson 1986).

With respect to more modern times, Nicholson charts the magnitude of rainfall fluctuations over time at several different measuring stations in several different Sahelian nations to show the extreme temporal variability. The averages for 1950-1959 and 1970-1984 are vastly different. In Dakar for example, 1950s average is 609 mm while the 1970s average is 308 mm. Similarly, the rainfall for a given year within the period of averaging is often much more or less than the average. Again in Dakar, the rainfall for 1950 was 797 mm while the rainfall for 1983 was only 159 mm (Nicholson 1986: 121). She also points out that the duration and severity of the drought periods are more intense in West Africa than in East and Southern Africa, thus increasing the magnitude of potential impact on human populations.

As mentioned above, at some points in archaeological history the Senegal River was nearly dry. In more recent times the River has flowed without completely drying up, but it has also seen its share of changes. As late as 1841 there is some evidence that the Senegal flowed all the way through Linguere, approximately 100 kilometers southeast of Keur Momar Sarr, but more recently man-made ‘improvements’ have altered the flow of
water at different times, thus leaving a great part of the Lake south of Keur Momar Sarr bone dry most of the year. (Monteillet et. al. 1981).

Besides changes in water availability over time and space, local people have also had to contend with the variable usefulness of the many different microenvironments one finds especially in riverain environments. McIntosh’s research on the Niger River and the microclimates surrounding the city of Jenne shows that some of the long term effects of climatic variation on the “inherently fragile” soils of the Sahel and Sahara include sheet erosion, increased stream turbidity, and a shift from “multiple- to single-channel fluvial morphology in Sahelian regions subject to highly variable but intense rainfall” (McIntosh 1993: 198). Palaeochannels running north-south off of the Niger, Senegal, Lake Chad, the Nile, and other rivers allowed for human habitation, cultivation, and livestock during humid periods and there is evidence that over time people may have migrated up and down these channels, hindered in their expansion by the Sahara Desert to the north and the tsetse belt to the south. Research on current climatic variation between 1980-1995 showed that the southern boundary of the Sahara has advanced and retreated three times, doing a “frenetic tango” back and forth instead of a “steady march” toward the south (Nicholson 1986; Kerr 1998: 633).

The presence of historically worse, from our current, human, viewpoint, climatic periods does not in any way diminish the importance of current climatic difficulties in the arrondissement of Keur Momar Sarr. After all, 20,000 years ago very few farmers were trying to make a living there. The point is that, in this region, humans have evolved socially, politically, and psychologically in an environment that is both unpredictable and precarious across time and space. Whether or not the cultural models that have evolved
are ‘the best’ is, for the purpose of this discussion, irrelevant. What is relevant is the fact that such models exist and are shared by a great many people living in Keur Momar Sarr and other regions.

**The Local Situation**

I sat with a group of older women one day and asked them to talk to me about the history of their village. Bineta Gueye from ASREAD went with me to help translate, but it was almost unnecessary. The stories centered on water, or the lack thereof. They marked their history by the presence or lack of water, and remembered bad times when there was no water in Lake or in the sky.

There had been at least five other Gankett Guent sites. Families kept moving to find access to water. None of the women are sure how long the current site has been inhabited, but the Imam remembers moving there within his lifetime, and he is nearly 100 years old. Mame Djembet Fall, the president of the GPF remembers how hard life was:

“You know, this was very difficult because we would hurry to go to bed, lock the door with the canari to keep others from taking water from it. When you got up you drank water and went to the field to search for something off of which to live. That was hard. You had to go fetch water to take it to the field, go fetch water for cooking. Well! Water was difficult. We dug some wells, but we didn’t have cement or anything. We only bathed for praying. Women who had kids could bathe twice a week, but otherwise only once a month. During the rainy season there were pools of water from which we took water, but dogs and cattle used this water, too.”

In the past, the shores of Guiers Lake reached to the other side of the current road during the flood season, but it would also dry up completely during the dry season. In 1959 the government built a dam near Keur Momar Sarr to keep the Lake full year round. This reduced the effects of the flood on their agriculture and cut off the water for several months out of the year to those living south of the dam. The women of Gankett Guent had to travel several kilometers to Geo to fetch water, sometimes using old truck inner
tubes for containers. They built several shallow wells, but they had no cement or tools for digging deep, and the water soon became salty. The digging of such wells was often made part of the marriage contract – no well, no wife. The droughts during the early seventies and eighties only compounded the problem. Ramata Welle said that from 1982 to 1986 there was no water at all in the Lake. The women could not depend on rainy season cultivation to supply enough food for the whole year, and even flood recession cultivation was only occasionally successful. They migrated to the cities during the dry season to look for paid employment as maids, cooks, or laundresses. Sometimes whole families migrated, leaving an empty house until the next rainy season. Some young people migrated permanently.

Khady Niang said that during the drought, there was only beref, a small melon from which the seeds are used to make animal feed, and the next year there was only millet. Sometimes they ate a couscous made from the roots of the ‘barax’ (Phragmites australis) the tall cattails that grow in the shallow water near the shore. They also had to eat the ‘cox,’ the bran left over after the pounding of the millet that they would normally feed to the chickens or sheep. “But it has gotten a little bit better every year since then until the time that the project came” she added. Mbene Sall was less optimistic:

“The countryside has problems because there are no more trees. They all died; the countryside is no longer green because there is so little rain. There used to be lots of fruit: siddeem (Zizyphus jujuba), daqar (Tamarindus indica), sump (Balanites aegyptiaca) etc. Now, however, there are no more. People cut the trees; rain is no longer plentiful. There was a lot of daakaande (Acacia Senegal, better known as gum arabic) and they felled them. They took it to sell or to do laundry. From here to Geo, it was all gum arabic.”

She added that the woods were so thick when she was young, that that many girls were afraid to walk to Geo alone because of all the spirits that were there. Reforestation plots
in Keur Momar Sarr and Gankett Guent give an idea of what it might have been like thirty years ago.

In the past people adapted to environmental changes by migrating to better places. Sometimes entire villages moved, and at other times individuals or individual families have left. Historically, who left was often determined by hierarchical status within the community. Everyone was allocated land on which to cultivate, but not all land was of equal quality, thus predetermining who might leave in difficult times (Park 1992). Thus, one’s relationship to higher status people could affect one’s livelihood. The importance of such relationships continues today, but the players are changing. The state now has the right to allocate land, through the Rural Councils, which are supposed to do so with no regard to social standing or ethnicity. In reality, different elites who run the rural council often have their own agendas and social networks to maintain, networks which may or may not be anchored in the local community. The knowledge necessary to make the land productive comes from many sources external to the family and village. So the relationships change, but not the meaning behind them because experience proves that nature is still beyond their control, both physically and psychologically.

**Uncertainty and Unpredictability in the Sahel – the Socio-Political Environment**

In the Sahel it is not only the environment that is unpredictable and uncertain. Relationships with outsiders have also shown themselves to be unpredictable over the long-term. In particular, the colonial and then the international development apparatuses, most often generated in Europe and the United States but often unquestionably accepted by African administrations, have been consistently inconsistent in both their ideology and application.
The first major agricultural/environmental developments came just after the official end of the slave trade in the early 1800s, the opinion of which Senegalese historian Barry sums up nicely, “…being no longer able to transport the workers to the work, the ideal solution was…to transport the work to the workers” (Barry 1972: 216). In 1821 “Richard’s Garden,” now the town of Richard Toll, was created by the colonial administration at the confluence of the Senegal River and the Taouey, a branch of the River running south into Guiers Lake. The project was set up to experiment with industrialized agriculture, namely of cotton, indigo, peanuts, and other cash crops. The agricultural techniques introduced included that of total land clearance, the plow, and an irrigation system comprised of ditches and pools created specifically for that purpose.

The garden failed completely and was shut down by 1831. The reasons for the failure included a lack of understanding of the physical environment, especially the flood/recession cycle of the River, and the failure to take into account not only “traditional” systems of land tenure, but also treaties signed regarding that fact by the French in 1819 (Niang 1984). There was a lot of resistance by the local laborers who preferred to work their own land as free men even though the administration offered payment for their labor. Monteillet et al. (1981) refer to a “leveling off of the shelf at Faff downstream from Richard Toll” between 1890-1900 that reduced the height of the flooding and increased the salinity of the water in Guiers Lake down through the Ferlo. Other than that very little effort was put into hydraulic development of the Lake region until after World War II, when the Senegalese River Development Mission (MAS) began to concentrate its efforts on increasing local rice production as a substitute or complement to increasing Chinese imports resulting from the reduction in millet production.
engendered in the push to grow more peanuts for cash. This project, too, never realized its goals.

In the 1950s the colonial administration undertook several large hydraulic projects, including a dam at Richard-Toll, a dam at Keur Momar Sarr and a series of canals including straightening and widening the Taouey which connects the Senegal River and Guiers Lake. These all had for goal control of the most important agricultural ingredient, water, for cash cropping and export production. In the 1970s plans were laid for complete control the flood/recession of the Senegal River. A tri-state commission was formed between Mauritania, Mali, and Senegal (Guinea was also initially involved but withdrew). The Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS) was established out of the remains of the MAS and two dams were built, Manantali in Kayes, Mali, and Diama in St. Louis Senegal. The former was built to control the amount of water and eventually will also give hydroelectric power; the latter was built to control the backflow of salt water so that the water in the River, and consequently the Lake, is always fresh. Both dams opened several years behind schedule and well over budget, and to date there is not yet any hydroelectric power. There are many critiques of the rice project organized by the Senegalese government through the national parastatal set up to improve and exploit the riverain lands (SAED). Thousands of people living along the Senegal River had to be relocated because the water levels are now consistently high. Schistosomiasis is now endemic to the River and may eventually spread to the Lake. Very little of the preplanned reforestation has occurred and soils continue to be left bare. The rice culture program has not developed as planned and many farmers have had to default on loans and, in many cases, lost the rights to their land as a result (Maiga 1995;
Englehard 1986). Wealthy people, with sometimes only tenuous links to the area, are developing large-scale agricultural projects on former small-farmer lands.

The people of the region have been subjected to all manner of “development” efforts, especially over the past fifty years. According to Kane, everything is now development:

“Practically all the techno-scientific writings and African economic and social political discourse during the past years (1970-1990) labels orientations stamped in the political, social, and economic domains in terms of “development” against a tormented reality characterized in Africa by stagnation and even the regression of agricultural and industrial production which enlarges the cycle of poverty in reinforcing dependence vis-à-vis the industrialized countries” (Kane 1997: 209).

In the 1960s and into the 1970s the government saw cooperatives as the best means of controlling agricultural production at the local level. It was through the cooperatives that individual farmers could get loans, seeds, and access to technology and education. Regional development organizations would also buy the crop, most especially peanuts, from the farmer at a predetermined price. Unfortunately, cooperatives were modeled on socialist institutions and imposed by the government into local contexts. Fluctuating market prices for export crops and hazardous climatic conditions, combined with poor management and abuse of power within the cooperatives and the federal government led to the eventual demise of the cooperative system in the 1980s as farmers defaulted on their loans and the subsidized costs became too much for the government to bear.

The Arrondissement of Keur Momar Sarr

There was very little concerted development effort in Keur Momar Sarr until the drought in the early 1980s. Farmers had been members of government cooperatives and had received free peanut seed and other inputs. However, Keur Momar Sarr was never an important peanut growing area. When asked why they do not grow peanuts, most of the men I spoke to said it was because the government does not give free seed anymore and
the seeds are too expensive. This does not mean that no one grows peanuts, but the quantities are very small compared to the peanut growing regions to the south. Local CERP records show that the maximum amount of land dedicated to peanut cultivation in the rural community of Keur Momar Sarr was 4818 hectares in 1977, and that figure has continued to decline. In 1996 only 850 hectares were cultivated. Conversely, millet cultivation, 3315 hectares in 1977, increased to 6215 hectares in 1983 – during the drought- and stayed relatively high until 1985. In 1996 only 2010 hectares were cultivated. Official numbers for market gardening are only available through 1991, but had increased from 38 hectares cultivated in 1977 to 740 hectares in 1991. Personal experience leads me to believe that the figure is now much higher and has replaced peanuts at the main cash crop of the area. All of the current development projects in Keur Momar Sarr have a market gardening component, and the PEGRN has gone as far as dredging a 3kilometer canal to bring water closer to the people in the northern sector of the arrondissement in order to make market gardening possible.

In the 1980s many areas of Senegal were declared at risk for food deficiencies and various programs were put into effect to help out. In 1984 Church World Service, the first NGO to work in Keur Momar Sarr, developed a food for work program to encourage reforestation in exchange for rice. The project also supported lakeshore fields of cowpeas, millet, and melon. However, farmers had to rely on hand watering their fields with water from the Lake. As the drought worsened, the project failed and emergency aid continued. Church World Service developed the PDI – \textit{Projet de Développement Intégré}- in 1983. Its goal was to combat rural migration through the creation of rural employment. The project had several components, including literacy classes and organizational training, to
improve the local people’s capacity to manage their natural resources. The income-
generating component included lakeshore market gardening using a human powered
pump for irrigation, livestock fattening, sewing and dying training, and village boutiques.
While the project claimed to be participatory, one of the problems revealed in the
evaluation was that market gardeners had not been “well-selected”: too much time and
money was spent on men “lacking interest in becoming market gardeners” (PDI 1986: 6).
Other problems included poor timing and distribution of inputs, little to no evaluation of
cultural and physical milieu, poor production, etc. With regards to the women’s part of
the project, the evaluation cites “inadequate involvement of women in the village
operations as part of the work force,” “lack of capacity” to take charge of their activities,
and “poor understanding of the cultural milieu.” Since the CERP was the primary
technical support for the project, the fact that it lacked funds and properly trained
personnel was another negative factor contributing to the failure of the project.

This is not to say that some people did not learn and profit by the project, only that the
results were unpredictable and the external support uncertain. There are very few women
who still dye and sew, mostly, they claim, due to lack of means. There are very few of
those original market gardens still in production. When the project ended and stopped
giving inputs and supplies, most of the income-generation also stopped. Even the more
recent women’s group project (PAGPF) sponsored by ASREAD was not consistent in
either results or support. This project mirrored the PDI but worked exclusively with
women. Most of the agents had also been living and working in Keur Momar Sarr for a
long time, some all of their lives, some since the mid-1980s. They had learned a lot from
the PDI problems, but were still convinced of the project’s potential. Most of the PAGPF
problems, according to Cheikh Gueye, the current project coordinator, were due to lack of capacity on the part of the women to manage their own project. Poor market prices hurt as well. However, a USAID evaluation found many problems within ASREAD itself. It singled out poor management of people, money, and materials as key problems and asked for a psychological analysis of the organization. The psychologist found that the members of ASREAD were subject to the same social constraints as the larger community. Individuals within the organization were using their position to enrich their personal social networks, not just for personal gain but also because it was expected of them by the community. USAID was unhappy with the level of professionalism of ASREAD and required the PAGPF project to hire new employees with diplomas and experience in their particular fields:

“In spite of the considerable increase in resources, ASREAD has not understood the necessity to adapt to these new stakes. These require the recruitment of more educated, qualified, competent, and experienced personnel. ASREAD was obligated to accept the demand from its most important donor, the NGO Support Project – USAID, to objectively and rationally recruit personnel adapted to these new work conditions…ASREAD was confronted with the necessity to modernize its administration in order to be a real NGO…” (Ndiaye 1997).

The psychologist’s report chastised ASREAD for being too much like an association and not enough like a professional organization, stating that its management needed to change to a rational and efficient modern style. In its first year the PAGPF was nearly shut down by USAID. ASREAD had to change many things about itself and the way it administered the projects in individual villages. Another ASREAD document, written by the Executive Board in the same year, questioned the quality of materials used in the fields and the poor management of the project (ASREAD 1996). The president of ASREAD, Makhona Mbaye, was singled out as not being able to handle his job. Yet the
psychologist pointed out that he is most respected in the community for his piousness, his kindness, and his respect of the elders, characteristics that are highly valued in collectivist societies. When I met him in 1996 he was ill quite often and he admits now that this was due to the stress of trying to please too many different people at the same time. By the end of 1996, USAID said that ASREAD needed to eliminate the seven villages that were to be added in the second year of the project: “It is in ASREAD’s interest to prove to the GPFs, and especially to the donors, that it has the organizational capacity to win the GPFs, and consequently the donors can have confidence to fund more projects” (ASREAD 1996).

There were real problems at ASREAD. The older members did not accept the newly hired professional employees. They were initially outsiders, thus not subject to the same rules of reciprocal rights and obligations. They were viewed as less likely to incorporate themselves into the local context because they were more ‘modern’ (educated, urban, professional). Conversely, poor management of resources meant that private individuals felt that they could take advantage of ASREAD. Personal use of the automobiles and telephone increased expenses and money was often moved around from one account to another to cover them. One conversation I had with the secretary/accountant/office manager revealed that he was glad, in a way, to have outsiders come in and force changes. He was a resident of Keur Momar Sarr and was the most recognizable of the ASREAD agents because it was he who welcomed visitors, answered the phone, etc. He built himself up quite a status in the village, but in return he was expected to get a car, hand over the phone, obtain favors etc. from the project for his friends and neighbors. While he liked the status, he realized as well that this was not good for ASREAD. Now
that he can say that he is forbidden from doing certain things, he is under less pressure to comply with village demands. He is also able to smooth the relationships between the village, the administration and ASREAD because of his status in the community. He now can say truthfully that he cannot do certain things for people and not loose face because there is now more accountability within ASREAD, and he no longer has control over all the resources that he did in the beginning.

Problems within ASREAD were reflected in its work. Poor materials and follow up led to disasters in some of the market gardens. At first there was no fencing, so animals got into the fields and ate the crops. The changes in literacy program delayed literacy classes for over a year. The water pumps were of poor quality and broke down often and many young fruit trees died because of lack of water. They had to be replanted, the fields had to be weeded, the water pump had to be attended to. There was also a revolving credit to help finance the campaign and other income-generating projects that coincided with the market gardening, such as livestock raising or small commerce. There was never enough follow up with the women to assure that they were keeping up with all this. In the end, when the revolving credits reverted to the individual villages, some of them used their money right away instead of reinvesting it in capital improvements. The women in Gankett Guent used some of their money to repay loans and some to repair the water pump, but also have tried to keep some of it to reinvest in market gardening purposes.

“Some people came from Louga a few years ago. They looked at our houses, our kitchens, our bathrooms to see how they were. Then they told us how to keep our homes and villages clean,” said one woman, “then we never saw them again.” Khady Niang, the head of the Diara, spoke of some organization that came a long time ago to which they
paid 25,000 FCFA to join and then never did anything did any any follow up. A CERP project in the 1980s allowed them to buy some cows to raise to sell, but they died during the drought years. The GPF had a market garden on the lakeshore with Church World Service in the 1980s as well, but it was poorly managed and had to be irrigated by hand. The lake dried up and the drought continued, so the field was a failure. When asked about the ‘njariñ,’ or usefulness, of the CERP, the government extension office, most of the women could not think of anything. When I mentioned specific people who work at the CERP, they responded more readily. The same happened for the Rural Council and the pilot Farm. They spoke of particular people with whom they had had relationships, but the roles of the institutions themselves were less clear. One meeting that I had with the women of Gankett Guent revealed that most of the women could not differentiate between ASREAD and CERP, although they were clearly aware of differences between individuals in both organizations.

There is social uncertainty in all their relations with outsiders because outsiders do not stay long enough to make their ‘jikko,’ or behavior, known. Development agents come and go and the women take from them what they can in the small amount of time they have. Women continued to migrate during the dry season because they could get paid to do work they would have had to do anyway for free. When ASREAD came, one of the PAGPF requirements was that the women who work the project field must not migrate. Most of the personnel of ASREAD at this time had been living in Keur Momar Sarr for some time and had already developed working relationships with the people of Gankett Guent. When Makhona Mbaye came and told them about the market gardening project they believed in him and agreed to stay. Now that the project is actually owned by the
women themselves, they are organizing their own rules and some women may migrate again as a means of diversifying their sources of income and social contacts, but this time they will not lose their right to cultivate on the field.

**Collectivism as an Adaptation to Unpredictability**

“The contemplation of scarcity may come as a shock to us, but recurrent scarcity was a fact of life accepted by our own ancestors and is still an expected phenomenon among most of the world’s people” (Colson 1979: 18).

In most of the world, unpredictability and uncertainty are the normal variables by which people plan their lives. Colson debates Sahlins’ concept of the “original affluent society,” in which early hunter-gatherers lived in relative ease and abundance, instead demonstrating that erratic climatic conditions generally induced people to prepare for the worst in any given year (Sahlins 1974; Colson 1979). Clearly, a lack of predictability in both the environmental and political-economic sectors makes planning for the future difficult in standard economic terms, which are often based on an analysis of past history and its projection into the future. In the case of the Sahel, “the best approach to development...is one in which lifestyles and support systems adapt to - and where possible, make use of – the region’s climate and fragile environment” (Nicholson 1981: 126). People learned how to mediate risk and passed that knowledge on to the next generation, sometimes directly, as in teaching children about wild foods, and sometimes indirectly in the form of myths or the rights and obligations inherent in ancient social networks. From a functional standpoint, these mechanisms of risk reduction may only be activated in times of stress but be maintained in everyday life by playing other, less urgent, roles (Halstead and O’Shea 1989). Maintaining a broad network of social relationships through marriage, fictive kinship, markets, both monetary and social debt,
etc., is a way of assuring access to some resources in times of trouble and are reinforced through regular social interaction. These relations form the basis of the cultural model of collectivism, and the model is reinforced not only through the activity of social relations but also through the process of identity formation that occurs simultaneously (Kruse and Schwarz 1992; McIntosh 1993; Marcus and Kitayama 1991; Greenfield and Bruner 1969).

McIntosh (1993) theorizes that people in the West African Sahel adapted to their unpredictable environment through the development of webs of relationships on which individuals could rely for aid. Water was the key environmental factor that controlled people’s activities. Rainfall was (and is) erratic over time and space within and between years and people migrated often in search of new water and agricultural resources. On the Senegal and Niger Rivers, people migrated north and south as the numerous channels ran wet and dry. Their movements were limited to a certain extent by the tsetse fly forest belt in the south and the Sahara desert in the north. They learned to exploit different niches in the various microenvironments that were also in a state of flux. New people coming into an area would have had to have a means of interacting with the pre-existing populations. Specialized social relations, such as fictive kinship, myths of historical debt obligations, etc., designated specific roles to first-comers and late-comers regarding ritual, land use, and relations of production. These institutionalized relationships were (are) bound by moral perceptions about the ‘way things should be’ at any given point in time. ‘The way things should be’ was constantly redefined as the past intersected with the present and experiences were interpreted not only in terms of their relationships to other experiences, but also in terms of “their cosmic meaning” (Giddens 1991: 110).
McIntosh does not try to explain why the social institutions that evolved took on their particular forms instead demonstrating the probable relationship between the uncertain environments, social relationships, as they existed, and identity formation (1993). Herders, farmers, and fishers had rights and obligations concerning each other, which served not only to ensure daily livelihood, but also to maintain peace between ethnic groups across the region. Interpersonal relationships, then, can be viewed as adaptive mechanism to uncertain and harsh environments. Perevolotsky (1987) demonstrates that the relationship between herders and farmers in Peru is deeper than the obvious distributive roles. It appears that they are two distinct groups who come together to exchange their surplus products. In reality the two groups are integrated into a complex production system tied together through institutions of kinship, fictive kinship, and ritual celebrations. He also believes that this interdependence was influenced by adaptation to extremely erratic and marginal climatic conditions. Dinerman found similar social interdependence in Mexico, where not only uncertain climatic conditions, but also erratic market conditions, influenced the development of social institutions (Perevolotsky 1987). Inter-clan joking relationships among the Manding people of West Africa are so deeply culturally embedded that not only is mutual aid required and desired, but also individuals are forbidden from “inflicting bodily harm upon one another” (Tamari 1991: 239). Interdependent hierarchies of casted people also exist throughout West Africa. Organized like guilds, caste members specialize in some skill, such as woodworking or metalworking, in which freeborn people may not engage (although casted people are allowed to farm or herd as well as work their trade). Thus, while it is the freeborn people
who fill political offices and allocate land, they also are dependent on the castes in their everyday lives (Tamari 1991; Diop 1981, 1985; McIntosh 1993).

As more people interacted with one another and exercised their rights and obligations with their neighbors, conflict would have appeared inevitable. Seasonal shifting of cattle and crop fields, unpredictable rainfall, and the uses and reactions of the various microenvironments led to different conceptions of landform utility. However, instead of conflict, the relational networks helped to create “cultural institutions of conflict resolution and peaceful regional integration” (Hallpike 1987: 70). These core institutions evolved out of the “constellation of myths and interactions and ideologies, in which ethnic identity is represented in terms of obligations to others” (McIntosh 1993: 208). It follows that these myths were not “undisciplined fantasy”- they contain “important truths about society and the physical world” (Hallpike 1987: 134). It was through these institutions that actions and reactions to change were compared with the larger worldview, assessed and reified. It is also important to point out that these culturally created institutions of conflict resolution only worked because everyone believed in them and obeyed their rules. It seems logical that not obeying the rules might result in death or ostracism, which might ultimately lead to death, so the motivation to follow the rules was probably intense and deeply embedded in each individual’s sense of identity.

A deep sense of rules and obligations, however, did not mean that followers were always happy with their clan leaders or even their kings. Leaders had to “engage in skillful consultation, exhibit wisdom in judicial processes, be evenhanded in the distribution of resources, mediate conflicts, make alliances, and command admiration and respect” (Hopkins 1971: 111; Brooks 1993). If people were not satisfied with their leader
they could leave and join other communities or create their own, and this appears to have happened frequently. However, the new group took with them the “institutional legitimacies” of the parent community that they then used to construct their political and social structure. Facing the same environmental constraints as everyone else, they were most likely to be culturally conservative and ended up reinforcing the values of the parent community, perhaps even more strictly (Kopytoff 1987). Thus a collectivist cultural model would have been reinforced, which meant that the potential despotism of leaders was curbed by their own need for supporters and the knowledge that the region was vast enough for disgruntled people to split off and form new communities. In this context, all members of the society had access to important strategic resources, regardless of their place in the social hierarchy. While elites may have had access to such resources as land allocation, the yeoman farmer, and even the slave, held the power to legitimate the elites’ power. Thus, “as long as a means exists for social entities to define and produce strategic resources, even if they are not the same strategic resources, then an order of social equality exists” (Paynter 1989: 369). The pattern may be seen as a dialectic: the subjects considered the ruler legitimate because they allowed him to rule while the ruler saw the subjects as “latecomers” to a community that he had founded (Kopytoff 1987). What emerged was a society in which stability was essentially based on its inherent social differences and potentials. According to Guyer, it was this “moving frontier of innovation and retreat” that created a space in which networks of specialization were able to successfully feed growing urban populations over long periods of time (Guyer 1996: 23).

“You are my slave, you know,” she said, handing me a bag of cowpeas. I had been given the name Rokhaya Ndiaye. All ‘tubabs’ are given new names to make us fit in.
Her name was Khady Diop. The two names are quintessentially Wolof, and can be traced back to the origin myth of the Wolof in the *waalo* as brothers in the same family (Diop 1995). Name kinship is serious business across most of West Africa, as most of the surnames have counterparts in other languages and can claim the same rights to mutual aid across various ethnic groups.

I spoke to Maguette Lo, the ASREAD guardian, before going to Gankett Guent one day. He told me that someone had died there. I was very concerned. “It’s Issa Ndiaye,” he said; “Just ask him when you get there.” Issa Ndiaye is the husband of Mame Djembet Fall, and although old and sickly, was very much alive. “They were circumcision initiates together,” explained Mame Djembet; “They always tease each other like that.”

Joking relationships, age groups, circumcision groups, etc. permeate Wolof society. I asked a woman once what was the origin of all these relationships, but she had no idea. These relationships form the basis of a strong network of mutual aid. It took me months to realize that when my friend Ndoura Niasse from Keur Momar Sarr begged money from me at baptisms and marriage ceremonies she was actually honoring me, not annoying me. She, as a member of the metal working caste, was ritually declaring herself my slave, who I have an obligation to aid. Of course, it really was annoying, and she begged from many different people, not just me, but they were also socially obligated to pay her. As a member of a casted group, she is often called on to cook for guests or take care of menial chores for other villagers, sometimes with no pay in return. In return, she has he right to turn to her ‘employers’ in times of need.

At a baptism in Gankett Guent I witnessed an otherwise dignified middle-aged woman put on men’s clothing and dance publicly before the other women, especially the new
grandmother. She was the cousin of the new mother and her ‘slave’ for this occasion. She would later get some gifts (and thoroughly enjoyed her comical display). At all baptisms gifts are given to the paternal grandmother through a slave who extols the generosity of the giver to the new grandmother. Cloth, gold, money, bowls, etc. are passed through her hands. Later, the grandmother has the obligation to redistribute the gifts to other women, including her slave. These relationships are not random, and usually involve extended family members. Diop (1995) goes into great detail about the rights and obligations due different family members. The point here is that these relationships function fully in present times and are not artifacts of ‘traditional’ life. Even in the city important relationships are maintained through these processes. I observed my first ritual killing of a sheep while staying with a family in Dakar. Seven grown boys lived there with their mother, and yet it is fully the mother’s job to cut up the sheep and send different parts to different people, the choice of cut depending on one family’s relationship with the other. In Keur Momar Sarr, Ndye, the woman with whom I lived, sent her best piece of meat to Lalla Diouf, a cousin on her husband’s side, to honor her. Ndye and her husband are the poor cousins, while Lalla and her husband have done well for themselves. Lalla is the godmother of Ndye’s oldest daughter as well, and Ndye knows she can depend on help from Lalla if she really needs it.

There are also less institutionalized ‘rituals’ of borrowing and lending that cement people together. Money lent today is not necessarily expected to be returned tomorrow, but it is definitely a loan and not a gift. “I borrow from my neighbors,” said Aissatou Toure, Gankett Guent. “If we both live together in the same place and if I have a problem, I will borrow money if you can lend it to me. When I can I will repay you. If
my family or my friend or my neighbor has a money problem they will come to me and if I have money I will lend it to them.” Neighbors and family seem to be the primary lending sources, but many women also borrow from merchants in Keur Momar Sarr:

“Cheikh Gueye came to ask for repayment of the loan and I didn’t have anything to give him because I couldn’t sell my onions. I will go to my family to borrow money that I will repay when I sell my onions. I also borrow from Modou Marem Thiam’s shop” (Nogaay Dieng, Gankett Guent). In Keur Momar Sarr every merchant has a notebook full of names of his borrowers. Once, when the family with whom I lived had a little extra money, I suggested that they pay back ‘their’ shopkeeper and get caught up on their debts. No one said it was a bad idea, but it never happened. To be indebted, to a certain extent, is at least an acceptable, perhaps even desirable, state of being.

In determining the difference between different cultural models, like individualism and collectivism, it is easy to divide them into two opposing models. It is a distinct characteristic of modernization to try and separate social relations into separate entities so as to examine their specific functions within the society. It is this same characteristic which creates specific, bounded fields of knowledge, such as anthropology or physics, and which separates the public from the private domains of life. Banuri explicitly point out this error even as he must use such a dichotomy to talk about the differences between personal (collectivistic) and impersonal (individualistic) ‘maps’ that people use to internalize information flows. The impersonal map is characterized by the individual “being separate or detached from the social, physical, or intellectual environment…and the environment itself as being divisible into a finite number of partitions” (Banuri 190:78). The personal map, on the other hand, does not bind an individual at all. Personal
identity is instead formed out of social relations that occur in the social, physical, and intellectual environment and therefore must vary according to specific contexts. Thus social roles are important in a collectivist society. Modernization assumes that the impersonal map is right and good, and the personal map is backward and must be changed or adapted. Doing so limits the ability of those change agents to understand the real process of adaptation and change that has always been occurring among their ‘objects’ of study. (Those who share a collectivist cultural model also assume that their world-view is right and good).

This same process is at work in the arrondissement of Keur Momar Sarr, within individual women, between the women’s group and the project, and within individual agents at the project as well. Whereas in the past access to important resources depended on the history of relations between the involved parties and the particular context, now access to important resources requires signed documents from the sous-prefecture and the bank. When personal relations enter into the transaction modernization says it is corrupt and wrong, which does not necessarily prohibit from occurring. Political patronage still exists in Senegal, and it still exists in the United States in various forms (i.e. the ‘good old boy’ network) (Theobald 1999). So people are negotiating the public call for transparency and impersonality in all transactions with their need to maintain important social networks. Perhaps such behaviors can be viewed as resistance to the incursion of one-dimensional individualistic values. People, especially collectivists, do not always outwardly show their feelings. Instead, they may resist more passively by continuing to adhere to ‘traditional’ ways, or simply ignoring the ‘experts,’ or by adapting modern values into their own value system as they deem them relevant or applicable to specific
situations. Taking this perspective, what modernization defines as corruption could be redefined as “the morality and efficiency of traditional communal ownership and extended family welfare” (Logan 1995: 509). In any case, the decision to resist and its particular manifestation are determined more by rights and obligations within social networks than on prevailing market forces.

One network that has become very important to both individual women and the Senegalese development apparatus are the Groupements de Promotion Féminine (GPF), or promotional women’s groups. In order to be an official GPF all the members’ names must be registered and the group must pay annual dues to the federation of women’s groups established in 1987. Once registered, each GPF qualifies to be visited by the monitrice, a kind of social worker, attached to the CERP. Every GPF also hopes that their membership in the federation will result in some kind of project or training or financing source over time.

The head of the CERP has to verify that the group has an income-generating goal. The current head of the CERP, Samba Tall, said that the GPF movement really got going in the late eighties because the government thought there were too many groups of all kinds at the local level. According to Tall, at one point there were over 7500 groups. The government, for development purposes, wanted to structure these groups and now there are village level GPFs, an arrondissement representative, a department representative, a regional representative, and the Minister of Women, Children and Family (MFEF) at the head. The GPFs, then are very formalized, officially recognized institutions. They are not, however, impartial or impersonal. Women in Gankett Guent spoke of the importance of having their names on the official registry because it connects them not only to other
women like them, but also to other higher status women and men. On a practical level, they have also learned that to be officially recognized is the only way to attract outside funding for development projects, which are abstractly practical representations of their own status. One never hears: “Look at this project and all the economic potential it brings,” although this is, of course, important. Instead what is heard implicitly is: “Look at this project and all the important people it connects me to.” It is important to note here that such social connections do not always directly link individuals. In the case of Gankett Guent, for example, it is Mame Djembet Fall who is most highly connected to both outside project and political resources. However, all the women in the women’s group are connected through her.

Mame Djembet explained that they had formed the official GPF in the early 1980s because it was the only way to procure external help. She said getting their names on the list meant that they government knows about them now and the GPF can solicit help at that level. She is also very aware of the fact that the women of Gankett Guent will not be able to attract projects unless they are formally organized: “ASREAD only works with GPFs.” She also admitted that, while she knows more about her local environment than any of the experts that come to Gankett Guent, all knowledge is “good” and helpful and that new knowledge had helped them to access financing, a water pump, etc. Bandañ Thioune added that the GPF will “cause our hearts to cooperate (ànd)…” Rokhaya Niang agreed that; “to work together (ànd) is better.” There is 100% agreement that the GPF is the way to get aid and organize for work projects, but the overwhelming answer to the question “why is there a GPF, what use is it?” had more to do with cooperating with and
helping each other as if the economic pursuits would not be sufficient without the social cooperation.

**The Role of Morality**

“Whereas American social thought ascribes an equal moral status to all persons, and views the individual qua individual, as a supreme value, inherently worthy of respect, Indian social thought emphasizes the differential apportionment of moral value across persons and groups” (Schweder 1982: 47).

Morality consists of the shoulds and oughts that rule a given group. Both Americans and Indians conceptualize morality; that is, they both construct models about what is virtuous and right or ignoble and bad. However, whether or not the society’s world-view is filtered through the individualistic or collectivistic lens affects the form of that morality, and, thus, actual behavior. Individualistic morality is based on the premise that all individuals are equal while collectivistic morality is based on the premise that individual value is dependent on social position within a group. On a more concrete level, the specific values that comprise the moral system are both symbolic and motivational (Schweder 1982). For example, Americans consider polygamy immoral. There is nothing one can do to test empirically whether polygamy or monogamy is ‘better,’ but to most Americans polygamy symbolizes being savage and animal-like, as opposed to civilized and human. Yet in many other parts of the world polygamy is the norm. Such marriages tie many groups of people together in a web of hierarchical relationships that gives meaning to individual members of the web. Such moral values are emotionally charged and must be taught either explicitly or implicitly by others who share them.

Giddens (1991) finds the presence of the explicit moral lens typical of ‘traditional’ societies in which individuals are other referential. In individualistic societies, the moral lens is more vague, based on maximizing individual welfare for which there may be no
clear-cut definition. In Senegal, the collective is highly esteemed by all ethnic groups. For the Wolof in particular, “to lose the esteem and confidence of one’s peers, one’s childhood friends, one’s age group, is to lose a place that cannot be found anywhere else, it is worse than prison” (Sylla 1978: 156). But what, then, does freedom or free will mean in such societies? If the welfare of the group is most important, then it exists in a different context than that with which we are familiar in the West. Real freedom is not the freedom to do what one wants, whenever one wants, regardless of the opinion or interests of others. Instead, real freedom is a moral freedom that reveals itself in actions that are good and useful not only for the individual, but also for the greatest number of individuals. This morality is antithetical to individualism as practiced in the West, where the movie hero consistently jeopardizes the greater social good to rescue his lone friend or sacrifices herself rather than submit to the will of society, as in Thelma and Louise, for example. In a collectivist society the “cultivation of individual voice and vision” are a means to impact social life, not an end in and of itself, as is the case in an individualistic society (Olney 1973: 291). In collectivist societies expressions of uniqueness do occur, but they are socially sanctioned, as is the case among Japanese artists (Markus and Kitayama 1991).

The give and take between individualism and collectivism are evident in all aspects of Senegalese life. In Sembene Ousmane’s God’s Bits of Wood, a story centered around the great railroad strike in Senegal in 1947, one of the union members wants to use toubab ways to try Diara, who informed the French administration about some of the women, thus selling out the in-group to the outsiders. He is an elder and thus normally would not be publicly accused by the younger union man. In fact the union man is little supported
except that Diara’s action was particularly bad. Another elder refuses at first to speak
against Diara, but then does so when the question of punishment arises. He invokes the
social sanction of shame and humiliation as opposed to formal prison. The fact also that a
woman had spoken out against him increased the amount of shame: “He had held the
votive lamp at her christening, and today she had denounced him; she had insulted him in
public, and he that a wound like this would never heal” (Ousmane 1960: 96). This is a
literary example of how the impersonal and personal maps are negotiated in a formal
context. The union members followed the regulations for a French style trial where
individuals who would not normally speak out publicly were given the freedom to do so.
However, the strength of the collectivist model allowed them all to be satisfied with the
punishment, which was a real punishment for Diara, not just a slap on the wrist. The only
other mention of him is that he has become ill. He chose to side with the toubabs over his
own people in order to serve his own personal desires. The tension between his individual
desires and the need to remain part of the greater collective society are a metaphor for the
tensions that arise in the modernization process as the individualistic/impersonal model
and the collectivistic/personal model jockey for power both within individual people and
societies and between people and societies.

It is important to point out that individuals who share in a collectivistic model are not
slaves to their society. They are distinct, self-aware individuals who define themselves in
relation to other people and in specific contexts: “Who I am is defined in and through my
relations with others; I am completed through these relations and do not exist apart from
them. Therefore, my work on behalf of others is simultaneously work on behalf of
myself” (Sampson 1988: 20). Individualism and collectivism coexist in all individuals,
but their meanings are contextually derived and thus vary across cultures and across life stages: “In our view culture is not a system of abstract values that exists independently of individuals, but is realized or appropriated in the attribution of meaning to oneself in relation to the context one is living in” (Westerhof et al. 2000: 672). The means to understand these contextual changes are often institutionalized in different social expectations, obligations, and, often, in proverbs. There is a proverb in Wolof that captures the essence of collectivist morality: *Ku gērēmul nit ŋi doo gērēm Yalla*, which translates to ‘he who does not thank people does not thank God.’ The idea is that human relationships have to be nurtured because we are all children of God, whom we thank for our existence. This nurturing of human relations occurs even in negative situations, or perhaps especially in negative situations.

In Ndiba-Ndam, there are two enterprising young men, Malik and Biran, who managed an irrigated plot where they cultivated sweet potatoes for the market. The irrigation system and inputs were financed by a couple of uncles who live in Dakar, thus revealing the importance of the rural-urban connection. The village chief contributed the land for their endeavor. One of the conditions of agreement was that the two brothers had to accept their cousin from Dakar as a partner.

I arrived in Ndiba-Ndam one day to find these uncles up from Dakar and having a big meeting at the village chief’s house. I was invited to attend and had the opportunity to witness a real *diisoo*, a meeting most often used to discuss weighty matters. The uncles from Dakar were all elders, dressed in grand *boubous* and carrying their prayer beads. There were very few women present – this was a real man’s meeting. The meeting was opened with a demand from the village chief to avoid arguing and then they prayed. As it
turned out, Malik and Biran had a real problem with their cousin, whom they claimed was lazy or could not do the necessary work because of health problems. The oldest brother, Malik, who addressed the elders, was clearly agitated yet remained respectful. The cousin, Cheikh, was not present, but his father was one of the elders from Dakar. Gentle arguing went on for about an hour, with Malik pleading his case and the father of Cheikh defending his son. There was a question of money going to Cheikh, and Malik thought the whole setup was unfair because he and his brother were doing all the work. Other elders from the village were also present and it was they who calmed the meeting, explaining that “we are all one” and that the campaign was nearly over and new plans could be made for the next campaign.

It was clear that Malik was not going to ‘win’ this argument, but it was also clear that the elders were willing to listen to him – they made the trip up from Dakar especially to hear him out. The elders also pointed out to Malik that it was his responsibility to force Cheikh to learn; after all he was just a talibe (literally, a disciple) from Dakar who did not know anything about rural life. Although no one said it explicitly, it appeared to me that Cheikh’s father was hoping to send him to live and work with his country cousins for awhile to ‘make a man’ out of him. The meeting ended with nothing changed, but everyone seemed satisfied. Relations between Malik and Cheikh also appeared to be calmed. Malik, Biran, and Cheikh, who had returned, spent the afternoon talking in Malik’s room. They also consulted with the village chief, who had spoken very little in the earlier meeting, instead letting the other elders intervene. This collective way of dealing with problems keeps all the ‘stakeholders’ informed and also necessitates collective blame in case of failure: “…all those were consulted feel morally responsible
and [they believe themselves morally obligated] to intervene by any means possible” (Sylla 1978: 170). The meeting also served to increase Malik’s status as an important young man who knew how to behave with his elders while getting his point across.

Similar meetings took place on several occasions in Gankett Guent and Keur Momar Sarr. On at least one occasion I witnessed a married couple meet with respected elders to discuss marital problems. On another occasion, I found the entire village of Gankett Guent gathered in the meeting place to argue about the level of gossip and bad talk that had been occurring. The village chief wanted it stopped, and the meeting was a means for people to air their grievances and/or feel ashamed of their past behavior. For the uninitiated it would appear that the village chief and select elders were chastising, in this case, the women. The process was really more complex as there were real problems that had to be made public if people were going to continue living together. At the same time, individuals sharing this collectivist model also internalize certain rules of conduct that require them to voluntarily submit to social obligations and morals in order to maintain the peace. This is reflected in a widely used proverb: Nit, nit-ay garbam, which means, when translated literally, “man is his own medicine,” which means good relations with other people solve all problems. In every single interview with women in both Gankett Guent and Ndiba-Ndame, discussion was the primary means of resolving problems. Sometimes those discussions would last several days, but “we talk until we have peace,” said Ndeye Dieng of Gankett Guent. Peace and harmony among neighbors emerged as a vitally important theme in most every conversation and event in which I participated.

This does not mean that everyone is always happy with the final solution. Dëng ànd ak say mbokk gën jup tàggook ŋoom is a Wolof proverb that means an injustice that allows
people to stay together is preferable to justice that tears them apart. Mina Seck, also of Gankett Guent, is a young mother and has no co-wife or sister-in-law to help her at home. She says that what she just follows what the “mothers” in the GPF decide: “We [the younger women] don’t do anything in the GPF. Only the mothers. They lead and they decide. We observe and follow them.” Fatou Sall, Mina’s contemporary, is less diplomatic: “They don’t ask us; we just go along with what they say. I can’t talk in a meeting.” This came up time and time again when I talked to younger women, but they spoke not out of resentment, but as simply stating an accepted fact. They know that tomorrow they will be the mothers; it is not yet their time. When I asked if they thought this was ‘fair,’ an individualistic assessment, the typical answer was “Yalla baaxna,” which means God is good, and things will work out as they should.

These younger women, in turn, reinforce the distance between age groups. In a meeting in Ndiba-Ndame, Aida Diop, one of the youngest members of the GPF, supervised a meeting with the younger, unmarried girls. I wanted to talk with them about what they wanted out of their future. Aida spoke sharply to the younger girls several times to make them be more orderly, even though I had no problem with them. She also often repeated what they were saying to me as if they could not explain themselves very well. She said “they are young and don’t know anything.” The younger girls were very respectful to her and did whatever she said.

Wolof moral philosophy is most clearly portrayed through its proverbs. They play a large part in every day life and reveal both the nature of a collectivistic society and the individualism that exists within an individualistic society.
**Proverbs as Windows into the Mind**

In Keur Momar Sarr and throughout Senegal proverbs are used to emphasize not only specific points, but also are sprinkled in every day conversation. I heard them most always from older people, and never from children, which may be because they are forbidden from using them in the presence of adults (Penfield and Duru: 1988). They reflect cultural models of the world in that they generalize, and condense, human experience into concrete imagery whose meanings are derived from the relational context in which they are used. They are used to teach children cultural values and proper behavior, and to remind adults of the same in order reaffirm a sense of community. Proverbs are contextually applied and, thus, their literal meanings may not always be true or even logical in every application in time and space (Gibbs 1995). However, the underlying philosophical meaning tends to be generally true so the proverb maintains its motivational weight. Proverbs are especially useful in socializing children in non-literate societies. Most obviously, proverbs teach children the rules of the society. Less obviously, they also may help children develop reasoning abilities as they move from a purely literal understanding to a contextually driven, abstractly based meaning of a given proverb (Penfield and Duru: 1988).

The importance of proverbs for understanding cultural models related to individualism and collectivism did not evolve as an important subtext of the research until after I returned from Senegal. Thus, I did not elicit proverbs from people and discuss their meanings at great depth, although I did hear them frequently. Instead, I rely on Assane Sylla’s collection of proverbs he asserts to be purely Wolof, having first weeded out proverbs common to many cultures. His analysis of proverbs is but one section in his
analysis of the philosophical underpinnings of what it means to be Wolof, but I analyzed the same proverbs in terms of attributes of individualism and collectivism as defined by Triandis (1995), Markus and Kitayama (1991), and Westerhof et al. (2000) in order to determine from which pool of attributes Wolof culture samples more often. Westerhof et al. also led me to understand that definitions of what it means to be individualistic and collectivistic may vary cross-culturally as well.

Penfield and Duru state that proverbs, “attempt to introduce an unchallengeable description of the world through concrete imagery and they link this both to the conversational situation or speech context in which they are used and the rules of behavior specified by cultural tradition” (1988: 120). As such they reflect cultural models that begin to reflect the greater world-view of a particular group. In this section I discuss Wolof proverbs as collected by Assane Sylla, a Wolof philosopher and linguist from Dakar. In *La Philosophie Morale des Wolof* (1994) Sylla groups proverbs into eleven philosophical categories: the need for moral asceticism, saving one’s dignity, a justification of modesty, a condemnation of idleness, social pressure on the individual, prudence before action, imminent justice, peace, a personal humanism, life and death, and education. Translations of specific proverbs can be found in Appendix A. These are not all the possible proverbs used in Senegal, but they represent those most Wolof.

**Moral Asceticism**

These proverbs point to the need to develop self-control, particularly when it comes to the desire for material wealth. Not only are greed and desire sins, they are also unhealthy for the individual who will always come out ahead morally if he waits patiently for
events to unroll. Sall also discusses moral asceticism as a major value in Wolof society as revealed in the concept of *doy lu*, or enoughness:

“The notion of *doy lu* emerges from a rationality that has at its end the search for and maintenance of harmonious social and human equilibriums…It is this articulation that the market ignores, which is why therein the product is more important than the producer” (Sall 1995: 5).

In this way, he considers modernization as a kind of “anti-identity” that exists only in negating the creative spirit of African cultures (p. 6).

**Dignity**

Proverbs in this category teach that the individual must do everything he can to manage his image in the eyes of others through always exhibiting behavior that is dignified and respectable. While his behavior and reputation are of his own creation, they are conditioned by the nature of his familial attachments. Internal dignity is far more important and enduring than external riches or beauty, but external appearance can also be helpful in life.

**Modesty**

The category of modesty continues to describe what a dignified demeanor should be like. A truly dignified person has no need to boast, or to chastise someone else for boasting. Hubris and vanity can only bring eventual shame to the individual and his family when the individual is found out or bested. A dignified, honorable person must work hard to maintain his reputation by being a living example to the community (as opposed to achieving personal success). Any riches he acquires along the way serve only to safeguard his reputation. The more he can spend to help others in his community, the more honor he will acquire. Similar evidence from Kenya reveals that among the Gusii it
also is the norm for an individual to conceal from others any evidence that would make him stand out favorably from his neighbors (Morris 1994).

**Idleness**

The Wolof are a hardworking people, and there are more proverbs warning against idleness than any other type. In *Léebuy Wolof*, another collection of proverbs by Maam Daawur Wàdd (1998) the category of *doxalin*, or the way of doing things, contains the second most number of proverbs (behind the category of people). The Wolof believe in hard work and in reaping a profit from their hard work. These proverbs also reveal that Wolof people believe that other people and God will help individuals who try and help themselves. Several of the proverbs speak to the need for organization and rational planning in all activities. Others speak to the roles one assumes in relation to other individuals as they seek to fulfill one another’s needs. While there are several proverbs that seem to emphasize the individual’s independence from the rest of society, there are several that rein the individual back in. Yes, he is responsible for his own success in life; however, that success is also dependent on the relationships that the individual has cultivated with other people and on the family traditions in which he was raised. Without that solidarity, an individual’s success has no meaning.

**Social Pressure**

To further the integration of the individual into a broader social context, these proverbs remind the individual that he lives under the constant eye of his brother. This social pressure is integrated into every phase of normal life from child rearing through old age and is not always considered a constraint. People still sneak around and do things they should not be doing, according to community values, but the shame caused when the
act is discovered is great not only to the individual, but also to his family, and is one of the main causes of suicide in Senegal (Sylla 1994).

Prudence

In order to avoid problems such as public shame, Wolof philosophy dictates that one be as informed as possible before committing an action. This information is not only related to practical actions, such as watching out for snakes, but also it is related to smooth maintenance of social relations. In short, the individual learns to pay attention to the situation and to not speak until he has fully considered what he should say, if anything. Silence is considered a mark of strength and character. Truth is considered imminent and it will reveal itself in time, but it is not necessarily the obligation of any particular individual to reveal it.

Imminent Justice

There is a deep-seeded belief in Wolof philosophy that every act will reveal itself in time. Sooner or later justice will be served. The individual need only work diligently on maintaining his reputation and creating in himself a certain calm inner-peace and not worry about every one else’s shortcomings.

Peace

In short, these proverbs summarize the essence of what it means to be Wolof. If one is able to live within his means, to do only what he can, say only what he knows, avoid violence through maintaining a moral high ground, etc., and not only do these things, but believe these are the steps to a better life, then he will have inner peace. Ultimately, one cannot accomplish these things alone; one requires the counteractions of other people.
**Humanism**

These proverbs reflect that humanity is the basis of Wolof philosophy. What one does, or does not do, to his fellow man he also does to God. It is up to people to fulfill each other’s needs and it is to other people that individuals owe gratitude for their successes in life. Relationships are more valuable than gold, and God has created humans as incomplete beings in order to foster these relationships.

**Life and Death**

Because life is so very short individuals should live their lives as morally as possible in the pursuit of good deeds and useful work. Every person knows that death is just around the corner so he should live in a constant state of preparation for the afterlife, seeking only the positive recognition of other men and a relationship with God.

**Education**

In order to have a happy and successful adulthood one must suffer as a child. The discipline necessary to live the life described in the other categories must begin in childhood and it is the duty of all those involved in the education of the child to instill in him the proper values and mores required to function as a member of society. Starting at a very young age the child is taught to control his egoism and his moods. He is raised in an environment that gradually increases the number of social ties between individuals over time until values such as friendship, solidarity, sense of honor, and dignity become second nature (Sylla 1994). For a full discussion of these ties see *La Famille Wolof* (1985) by A.B. Diop.
Discussion

When analyzed in terms of Triandis’ universal dimensions of individualism and collectivism (Fig. 1, Chapter 2), the Wolof proverbs reflect a broad, collectivistic cultural model as guide for both individuals and society as a whole. The self is defined in relationship to others: “wurusu mandin, tela xéy du ko maye, yaay ju liggéey-a ko may” – A person’s success in life is due not to his hard work, but to the efforts of his mother to be a good wife and mother. Happy familial relationships affect character and personality development. One cannot be successful in life without other people and one cannot know something outside of knowing other people: “waxu jëgg doyul ndërëklay” – The talk of a stranger is not sufficient proof. Similarly, both public and private goals are closely aligned: “fu ñëpp di say ku sayul, yaa dof” – When everyone else is married, whoever is not married is crazy. Nearly all the proverbs reflect the importance of maintaining norms, obligations and duties. “Ku êmb sa sanxal êmb sa kersa” – Whoever wraps up your millet also is owed your deference; "Yalla, yalla bey sa tool” – Pray to God, but cultivate your field, etc. My personal favorites emphasize the maintenance of social relationships, even disadvantageous ones: “Dëng ìnd ak say mbookë gën jup tåggok ñoom” - A lie that keeps people united is better than a truth that separates them; and, “Lafañ boroomi mbaam lay faral” – He who is handicapped takes the side of the donkey owner. These both reflect the need in Wolof society to maintain harmonious social relationships above all else.

Summary

Modernization emerged as the dominant model of development out of the individualistic West. Governed by concepts of neoclassical economics and belief in self-
efficacy, the dominant paradigm serves to create oppositional dichotomies that separate
the modern from the traditional, man and nature, male and female, usually privileging the
former over the latter. This is not the same as saying that modernization is necessarily
bad or wrong. It is, instead, necessarily incomplete. The majority of the non-Western
world functions in a physical and social environmental context that has proven itself to be
unpredictable and precarious. History of both climatic and social change in Senegal
reveals that human collectivism is highly likely to have developed because of high levels
of uncertainty. Reliance on such social relationships often appears irrational to the
Western expert: rural Senegalese continue to invest earnings in cattle instead of a bank,
women spend what seem like outrageous amounts at baptisms and funerals, huge
religious celebrations take up precious time and money, people make loans that never
seem to get paid back. Everyone seems somewhat poor.

Since these social institutions are often marginalized by outside experts it is easy to
ignore them until they appear as an obstacle to rational development. In reality the local
people view these institutions simply a part of their existence, as part of being Wolof, of
being African. They are parts of a collectivist cultural model in which boundaries
between different aspects of life are much more fluid and temporal. Thus, the
relationships between humans and nature, and humans and God are much less clearly
delineated and thus much more important than in the rational economic cultural model of
modernization.

Historically, the climate of Senegal has been erratic and variable over time. People
have tended to move along north-south river corridors between the Sahara desert and the
more forested tsetse fly zone. Within that region there was a lot of intermingling of
different ethnic groups within which a means of coexisting peacefully evolved over time. 
Islam and colonialism both brought changes to Senegal, but Islam tended to adapt to the prevailing worldview while colonialism tried to change it. Neither could guarantee that tomorrow there would be enough food and water for everyone; so “traditional” means of survival persist as the best way of managing the environment until the present time. These traditional ways include the development of a vast network of social relationships based on real and fictive kinship, a network wherein individual roles are determined by specific context and time:

“If you have abundant rainfall year-round, then you can pretty much produce all the food you need...Contact with the outside world is not essential to survival. But in areas with more seasonal crops, where failures can bring famine, relations with other groups become crucial” (Glausiusz 1997: 30).

It is clear that uncertainty persists in the Keur Momar Sarr arrondissement presently, and the women whom I interviewed corroborated this.

After reviewing the interviews it became clearer that mutual aid (*dimbalante* and social support (*and*) are the backbone of Wolof culture and they determine specific behaviors in specific contexts. Over time they have come to include external aid in the form of NGO projects, but these projects continue to be only a part of the maintenance of everyday life. Models of what constitutes an appropriate lifestyle have also changed, and individuals want more material things than in the past. However, obtaining an object is not an end into itself. It is instead a means of maintaining social status within specific social networks.

A model of collectivism is necessarily concerned with morality – it is not neutral, as the individualistic model claims to be- because it is comprised of multitudinuous social relations. In this case, what one person thinks of another person matters very deeply.
Tensions between young and old, male and female, and individualistic-collectivistic tendencies within individuals are bound up in various rules concerning conduct and attitude that are internalized by individuals who share this cultural model. Thus, peace and harmony are often stressed over a definitive assessment of rightness or fairness. These rules evoke certain strong feelings that motivate the appropriate behaviors or cause stress. Wolof proverbs corroborate the construction of the other-referential individual and reinforce social expectations about behavior and morality in Wolof society. In the next chapter I will discuss how the collectivist model manifests itself more concretely among rural women in northern Senegal.
CHAPTER 5
CULTURAL MODELS OF COLLECTIVISM AMONG WOMEN IN RURAL SENEGAL

In Chapters 3 and 4 I discussed two prevalent cultural models, individualism and collectivism. While development planning continues to evolve out of an individualistic context of modernization, real life experiences shape what modernization means to different individuals. Variations and degrees of both models exist in all individuals and societies in one form or another. Individuals and societies merely tend to draw upon one type of model to a greater extent than the other. The more highly sampled, or utilized, model, then, is the cultural default against which new information or experiences are evaluated. In Chapter 3 I discussed individualism in the specific context of modernization through development. In Chapter 4 I began discussing collectivism from a theoretical perspective especially as it pertains to the Wolof people in Senegal. In this chapter I interpret interview data from Senegal within the development context in order to show how individuals who more readily sample a collectivist model tend to interpret information differently than those who more readily sample an individualistic model. I have spent more time on collectivism for two related reasons: 1) it is the cultural model most foreign to me and the majority of anyone else who might read this paper, and 2) I believe failure to understand the meanings of collectivism is an important reason why development “fails.”
Key Words/Themes

Much like Blount (2002) and Poggie (1992) my approach to analyzing the data revolves around looking for themes in what people say about themselves. The themes are often reflected in the use of key words, which, according to Blount, “provide the organizational framework of discourse” and reflect, “assumed lexical-cultural knowledge” (1992: 15). In short, key words are full of cultural information that elaborates the meaning of the speech without using other words. Poggie’s approach is not explicitly based on the use of key terms, but the results are the same. In his analysis of the “cultural-ecological-theoretical” perspective, he analyzed differed fisherfolks’ conceptions of success and development through key words and phrases and then related those themes to age, social class, and geographic location.

In the following sections, then, I have analyzed speech from three different contexts to understand better the cultural context in which it evolved. The semi-structured interviews were based on general information related to everyday problem solving and individual women’s understandings about their roles in the women’s group and their relations with various development organizations. Second, with a small group of women I did follow-up interviews that included pile sorting photographs of individuals and definitions of some important terms, including *wealth* and *respect*. Finally, I organized a photography exercise as a means of involving women in their own research. I asked them to take pictures that would help explain their lives to “my people” in America, who do not know anything about their lives in Senegal. Each woman discussed her photos after their development. I examined all three categories in relation to the attributes of individualism and collectivism as described in Triandis (1995), Marcus and Kitayama (1991), and
Westerhof et al. (2000). These are not the only three authors who discuss individualism and collectivism in detail, but they are representative of the available literature. Triandis addresses these attributes at the level of society, Marcus and Kitayama at the level of the individual, and Westerhof et al. present a specific case study that elicited key themes regarding individualism and collectivism.

**Background**

Gankett Guent is one of the villages first that worked with the USAID funded women’s projects in Keur Momar Sarr, the *Projet d’Appui de Groupement de Promotion Féminine* (PAGPF). Gankett Guent is a small village about three kilometers from Keur Momar Sarr on the road to Louga. Historically, Gankett Guent has been relocated several times (maybe seven) but has been in its current location for at least seventy years. This is based on oral history related to me by the Imam who is nearly 100 years old. The villagers of Gankett Balla, nine kilometers away on the other side of the lake, are nearly all related to those of Gankett Guent. There seems to have been no crisis that separated them in the first place, just a mutual decision between brothers choosing among scarce physical resources. Many people in Gankett Guent were born in Gankett Balla and came to Gankett Guent as wives and vice-versa.

The most current, but still unofficial census shows 96 men, 101 women, 245 children, and 17 old people in Gankett Guent as of 1999 (Sousprefecture de Keur Momar Sarr). The census from 1989 showed 72 men, 58 women, 124 children, and 19 *inactifs*, or old people who no longer contribute economically to the household. The number of households jumped from 41 to 63. In Ndiba-Ndame the census shows 38 men, 35 women, 9 children and only 1 *inactif*, versus 47 men, 32 women, and 50 children.
respectively in 1989. My own unofficial census places the number of children much higher, especially in Ndiba-Ndame: “Meeting with Aram Lo was very hard to tape and hard to understand: Lots of kids talking” (field notes on January 26, 2000). Aram had at least five children scrambling to be a part of the interview excitement and there were two other households in her concession. A neighboring woman, Adama Ndiaye, had six small children in her family. Official numbers are usually far from reliable, but the recent census seems fairly correct in its inference that there has been a general movement into the region over the past several years as projects, and thus possibilities, have also focused in the region (the slight decrease in Ndiba-Ndame is actually due to two households that are located on the outskirts of the village but who consider themselves politically a part of Ndiba-Ndame).

Until about ten years ago, neither Gankett Guent nor Ndiba-Ndame had a permanent source of freshwater. The villages are located south of the Keur Momar Sarr dam, which effectively used to cut off water from the villages downriver for many months out of the year. Women had to rise very early every morning to go to Geo, about three kilometers north of Gankett Guent near the Keur Momar Sarr dam, to get water and bring it back. Gankett Guent had at different times four different wells, but the water either quickly dried up or became too salty for drinking. All are closed up now. Since the damming of the Senegal River the water in Gueirs Lake stays high all the time and the water on the south side of the Keur Momar Sarr dam is permanent. The women of both villages are unanimously happy about this. Getting water for household use and doing laundry are two of the most onerous tasks they must do regularly. Now they can either take their clothes to the shore of the lake or bring a few pans to the house as they are needed.
The permanent source of water means that no one can cultivate in the flood recession, as used to be the case. In general, flood recession agriculture is perpetually sustainable. When the water recedes, seeds can be sown directly into the rich soil. No other irrigation or fertilizer is necessary because the next flooding rejuvenates the soil. Another problem related to the reduction in flooding is that the levels of salt in soils near the lake are becoming too salty for cultivation. In all the interviews women spoke of the past and the successful way their parents and grandparent cultivated in the empty lake, however all seemed happier to have a permanent supply of water. Mame Djembet Fall, the president of the Gankett Guent women’s group said that the recessions had not been good on a regular basis for many years anyway due to droughts and other official water controlling projects further upriver.

While the one of the goals of the ASREAD projects is to reduce rural exodus, it appears that the number of people living in the arrondissement of Keur Momar Sarr has actually been increasing since the 1960s. Senegalese geographer Moustapha Sar wrote of the Keur Momar Sarr market in 1971:

“This market reaches into the departments of Louga and Linguere. In only receives a few vendors coming from the department of Kebeemer because of its northerly position in the region. However, it is frequented by vendors coming from the river region (the department of Dagana). It reaches about 100 villages, and sees its population double on market day to reach 600 inhabitants” (Sar 1972: 214).

Today the population of the village of Keur Momar Sarr is approximately 1500, and the market is one of the largest in the northern region of Senegal. It can even be found as a tourist attraction in several tour guides (e.g. Fodor’s). Part of the draw may be found in the increase in development dollars available in the region, but another factor also may be the decline of job opportunities in the urban centers. Many young people still migrate, but
fewer stay away permanently. Anecdotal evidence leads me to believe that many people would prefer to migrate out of the country to Europe, and indeed there are villages in Senegal entirely supported by Italian Lire and French Francs. Although this was not evident in the villages in which I worked, individual success stories from the villages of Keur Momar Sarr, Ndiba-Ndame, Loboudou, and other neighboring villages were highly motivational to young people. In short, there are many young people who dream of leaving Senegal altogether, but have no desire to live permanently in Dakar.

While more people are remaining in the villages, more people from Dakar also are making claims, based on kinship or other obligation, on land in the region. Technically, land is never for sale. It is apportioned by the State, through the Rural Councils, based on an individual’s ancestral relationship to the land as well as his development plan. Land lying unused, even for fallow purposes, may be considered poorly used and the state retains the right to reallocate that land. In reality, status and wealth do play a role in who gets what land, and south of Keur Momar Sarr there is already evidence of some land prospecting in light of future plans for development of the fossil valley as fresh water is becoming permanent. The people of Gankett Guent willingly ceded part of their lands to the Senegalese-Israeli Pilot Farm several years ago. They believed that their sons were promised jobs and they were all promised training and new farming technologies. This has not yet occurred, but they maintain their connection through the women who work there regularly, both as hired labor and as middlemen sellers of the produce raised on the farm.

The pilot farm depends on expensive, Israeli drip irrigation. When I asked the farm manager, a Malien educated in Romania, if the technology might not be too expensive or
too technical for the average farmer here, he replied that if they were serious about
developing their farming techniques then they would find a way to afford and learn about
the technology. In the meantime it was his job to make the farm sustainable in its own
right and he was not adverse to working with potential commercial farmers out of Dakar
beginning to sniff around the area for suitable land.

With the influx of newcomers also comes new expectations of what normal is. When I
first visited the arrondissement of Keur Momar Sarr in 1996, there was no electricity,
there was no running water, there was no women’s center, and there was no primary
school in Gankett Guent. Since then all has changed, and villages without these resources
are looking to the future when they, too, shall be “modern.”

The Data

I did not set out to define cultural models of individualism or collectivism when I
began my fieldwork in Senegal. I wanted to understand better the process of
modernization of local women’s groups, and the effects of modernization on local
conceptualization of the environment. I think I expected to find some interesting local
knowledge that was being effaced by formalized development activities, or some hidden
problem (that I, of course, could bring to light) that women were facing as a result of
increased modernization. However, after thirty months living and working day in and day
out with both local women, the project personnel dedicated to helping them, and after a
slew of international visitors to the project I realized that there was some underlying
dynamic at work that created some basic differences in the way I, and other Americans,
Israelis, and Europeans, analyzed a given situation and the way that the Senegalese with
whom we interacted did so. I need to go beyond any specific physical problem and learn
about these differences. I interviewed almost all the women in Gankett Guent and Ndiba-
Ndame, as well as many of the project personnel in Keur Momar Sarr. I also spent a good
deal of time taking tea and discussing life in general with women, and sometimes menl. It
was a good way to learn Wolof, and it taught me an appreciation of how interrelated
people’s lives are in Keur Momar Sarr.

I collected data from the women with whom I worked through three different means.
First, I held loosely structured interviews with both the women in Gankett Guent and the
women in N’Diba-N’Dame. The interviews were held one-on-one with the women in
Gankett Guent, but the women in N’Diba-N’Dame preferred, for the most part, to work
together in groups. While this makes direct data comparison difficult, the women were
more comfortable and willing to talk with me. I had an interview protocol, but most of
the questions were open-ended and I just let the women talk. I was able to tape record
many, but not all, of the interviews. I paid a local Wolof teacher to transcribe the tapes
for me into notebooks. Unfortunately, while traveling in the U.S. two of the notebooks
were stolen so my data is incomplete, especially with regards to Ndiba-Ndame.

Second, I chose ten women from Gankett Guent to further interview, asking them to
define key terms in Wolof and rank individuals in their community according to those
terms. I used the terms cër and alal, which I heard used frequently and which translate,
more-or-less, into respect and wealth respectively. Ranking was a lot more difficult than I
had thought it would be. I had taken pictures of everyone in Gankett, N’Diba-N’Dame,
and at ASREAD and the sousprefecture and numbered the backs of the pictures. Every
time I brought out the pictures a crowd of people, especially children, arrived to look at
them. The work scene inevitably became chaotic and the pictures disappeared and
reappeared several times. Each woman ended up ranking by groups instead of by individual people, with some exceptions. This in and of itself, in hindsight, is useful information for creating a more successful ranking exercise in the future.

Third, I asked eight of the ten women in Gankett Guent to take their own photos with disposable cameras. I asked them to describe their lives in photographs to “my people” back in America who had no idea about anything in Senegal. I used my own family as an example of people who were unaware of Senegalese life. I further explained that after I had developed the pictures each woman and I would discuss them and then I would give each woman her photos.

I coded information from each of these exercises according to key words that arose from each woman’s discourse. I then compared the key words to attributes of individualism and collectivism proposed in the literature to see if they “fit” or were neutral to these attributes. The point is to reveal something about the “cognitive architecture” behind the discourse (Blount 2002). Key words that arise repeatedly and are shared among members of a group indicate underlying cultural models that both create meaning and motivate behavior.

As mentioned above, the arrondissement of Keur Momar Sarr, in particular the rural community of Keur Momar Sarr that includes both Gankett Guent and N’Diba –N’Dame, is currently experiencing a surge of development popularity. The Senegalese government has formed a partnership with Israel to create a series of projects to revitalize the fossil valley south of the Keur Momar Sarr dam. There is currently a pilot farm located between Gankett Guent and N’Diba-N’Dame, and a grazing project located just south of N’Diba-N’Dame. More projects are under development. These new projects are far more
technologically dependent than are the smaller projects of ASREAD or the government extension agency (CERP). The pilot farm, with which I am most familiar, covers many hectares of land and employs drip-irrigation technology manufactured in Israel. While the ideal plan is to teach peasant farmers how Israel turned the desert into farmland, the technology is expensive and can be difficult (though not impossible) for illiterate farmers to manage. There is already an increase in land allocation along the fossil river to wealthy, urban Senegalese who still maintain ties to this region, and informal conversation with ASREAD personnel leads me to believe that in the long run many true rural peasants may lose some land rights to their more prosperous cousins from the city who will use the lands for small to medium sized agri-business. This is mere speculation for the time being, and I should also clarify that, while I am concerned that in the future the rural farmer may end up a day laborer on his former land, most of the people with whom I talked, both men and women, did not think this was a ‘bad’ thing. Many farmers are already leasing out their lands and taking a percentage of the yield as their profit, and to earn a monthly salary is seen as more prestigious, and more certain, than living off the fruits of subsistence agriculture.

While decisions regarding management of limited natural resources need to be made regularly, by whom and in what contexts remains to be clarified. It is my hypothesis, however, that there are fundamental differences in world-view between developer and developee that will affect the way that not only resources, but also management options will be defined and implemented. It is to this concept of world-view that I turn my attention.
Since development is supposed to be all about solving problems I was interested in how individual women perceived their own problems, how they go about solving them, and what effects modernization through formalization of their women’s group had had. I used the semi-structured interviews to talk about four main issues: their views on education, on their daily home economy, on their women’s group, and on their own lives compared to that of their ancestors. The interview questions were open ended to allow each woman to answer them fully.

Many times this interrelatedness was the source of much frustration to me. I found it difficult to accept people’s analytical reasoning. One time I asked some of the women why they all sat together and sold their vegetables for the same price (this happens everywhere). They answered me that 1) it is more pleasant to sit together, and 2) they can more easily watch each other, i.e., what prices each woman is charging, what each woman’s 500 FCFA pile looks like, what products she is buying for herself (thus how much money she must have), what clients she is attracting, etc. “Isn’t it more important to worry about maximizing your own sales so you can purchase what your need?” I asked. The response was a shoulder shrug and a comment about “that’s just the way we do it.”

In a previous example two young men were running a sweet-potato farm in Ndibama, Ndame, yet they had to call up their uncles and grandfathers from Dakar to settle a labor dispute about a third man who was not doing his fair share. My astonishment came not at the need for consultation, but in the calm way in which the two hard-working men accepted the admonishment of their elders for causing a rift in familial relations. It seemed so unjust! At the time I felt as if the elders held these two men in disregard and had not heard one word they had said. In general, nepotism and favoritism in allocation
of resources between people seemed irrational and sometimes mean-spirited to me, but
did not seem to be viewed as such even by those receiving the short end of the stick (in
my opinion). How could people remain on friendly terms with other people who had
treated them poorly? There were people in Keur Momar Sarr that I did not like very
much, so I just did not interact with them very much.

The necessity of maintaining social relationships for their own sake became clear to
me after I lost my temper with one of those people that I did not like very much.
Everyone seemed confused by my reaction as opposed to her behavior. I did not
understand why no one else could see how manipulative and self-centered she was. At
the time, I thought that if I heard “that’s just the way it is” one more time I would
explode. In reality, everyone knew what this person was like. I had to learn more than
just to tolerate this person because we all lived together and needed to be able to depend
upon one another. I did need to interact with her on a regular basis, so I had to work out
something. I considered this a breakthrough moment in my understanding of ‘the way
things are’ during my research.

The Interviews

I conducted interviews with individual women in Gankett Guent and groups of women
in NDiba-Ndame. Overall, I spoke with nearly 100 women in their own homes. I did not
start the interviewing process until I was able to do so without an interpreter. I also did
not use a tape recorder at first, believing that it would intimidate people. I quickly
changed my mind because of the added difficulty of working in a third language.
Although I asked permission of each and every woman, not one ever objected to the
recorder. Initially, I also asked each woman to sign a document granting me permission
to do the interview (Appendix B). The document became a terrible hindrance, not because anyone objected, but because I spent over an hour with each woman going over what I thought was a short, to the point permission slip. Since they see so few documents in their own language, many women were fascinated by the piece of paper itself and wanted to spend time looking at it and clarifying words and ideas, and yet, in the end, most were unable to sign the paper. After the first eight or so women, I spoke with the Gankett Guent GPF President, Mame Djembet Fall, and we agreed that we would hold a meeting in which I would explain the document and then everyone who was able would sign an attached sheet. This worked well, and those who were able to signed it. I then made copies available to anyone who just wanted to practice reading the document.

I worked from an interview protocol that I developed first in English, then in French, and then in Wolof. The interviews took place over a ten-month period of time, during which my Wolof greatly improved and I got to know many people very well. Thus, in the end, I really only used the protocol as a guide. The questions were grouped into categories related to everyday economy, education, the women’s group, the environment, and the different development entities in the vicinity, such as ASREAD, CERP, the pilot farm, the government offices, etc. I tried to make them as open ended as possible, or at least ask follow up questions that would allow individual women to elaborate on the topics in their own way. I generally did one interview a day, usually after lunch from 2:30ish to 6ish. I would often walk to Gankett Guent, but had to rely on some kind of transportation to get out to Ndiba-Ndame. Therefore, sometimes I went very early in the day and spent the whole day there talking to different people. I also spent as much time as possible in both villages outside of the interviews in order to observe and participate in
daily activities. These ‘hanging out’ times also helped me to understand better the village social dynamics – who takes tea with whom and who does not, etc. The basic themes that emerged differed only slightly between age groups and villages. Not every woman answered every question with enough description to yield enough information to analyze, so the number of women respondents to any one question varied.

After gathering basic demographic data – age, number of children, education level, etc. – I was most interested in two categories of information: daily economics and why there was a women’s group.

**Home Economics or “Com-Com”**

In this category I asked many questions related to everyday living, including whose responsibility it is to take care of daily rations, or medicines, or school fees. I also asked each woman if she felt that her life was better or worse than that of her mother’s when she had been the same age. The majority of women in both Gankett Guent and Ndiba-Ndame still rely to a large extent on rainy season farming for at least part of their annual income, although less so for their annual staples than in the past. The women in Gankett Guent also earn some income from their market garden and have been, as of late, selling their labor to the Israeli pilot farm next door. In Ndiba-Ndame, besides rainy season farming, the women also forage for sweet potatoes remaining in their husbands’ or renters’ fields. The majority of women in both villages also have migrated seasonally at some point in their lives. While the women in Gankett Guent say they stopped because of the ASREAD project, in reality nearly all the women in both villages over the ages of 35 or so rarely migrate any more. Many women in both villages also raise small livestock for resale.
The women of Gankett Guent, and to a lesser extent Ndiba-Ndame, put little emphasis on rainy season agriculture. They both claim that it is not as productive as it once was, and that may be the real case. However, upon closer examination, individual women also do not put as much effort into preparing and maintaining their fields as they used to. I passed a local commercial millet field every day on the way to Gankett Guent and was amazed at how beautiful and full it looked. There was a group of young people who stayed there all day to chase away the birds. Not one woman that I interviewed took any steps to protect her rainfed crops from the birds or other insects, and neither did their husbands. When I asked why, the typical response was that it was not worth the effort. In Gankett Guent at least one woman said directly that she would give up her rainy season field for year-round market gardening. However, they all continue to spend hours in the rainy season fields, scratching the soil and dropping in at least a few seeds for watermelon, cowpeas, millet, and hibiscus hoping to raise something to sell in the market.

The next most important means of daily survival was borrowing, either from a husband or close family, or from friends in neighbors. One noticeable difference in the answers to borrowing questions is that borrowing from neighbors is mentioned several times in Gankett Guent, but not once in Ndiba-Ndame. While I believe that such borrowing does occur, there is also a different ‘feeling’ between the two villages that is difficult to describe. There seemed to be less camaraderie between women in Ndiba-Ndame, yet they were always there to help each other at various festivals, weddings, baptisms, etc., i.e. the events that require certain social obligations be met. Ndiba-Ndame also is arranged differently spatially than Gankett Guent. It is really two villages (Ndiba
and Ndame) joined by a short road cutting through the soccer field. The two halves of Ndiba-Ndame are also separated religiously, with Ndiba adhering to the Mouride sect of Islam, and Ndame the Tidjane sect. Women from both sides swore up and down that they were the same and that the religion was the same for them all regardless of the slight differences in approach, however there is a certain reserve between the two halves.

Ndiba-Ndame is also a smaller village than Gankett Guent. By my own count I recognized no more than thirty-five households versus sixty or so in Gankett Guent. The households in Gankett Guent also appeared to be more related, although in groups. In both groups borrowing from family appears to be the preferred route. Many women also separated out borrowing from their husbands from borrowing from other people. In all cases, the length of time of the borrowing was indefinite:

“If we both live together in the same place and if I have a problem I will borrow money; if you can, you will lend it to me. When I can I will repay you. I my family or my friend or my neighbor has a money problem they will come to me, and, if I have money, I will lend it to them” (Aissatou Toure, 39, Gankett Guent).

“Sometimes I will search out someone in my family to lend to us. When we have some money we will pay him/her back” (Fatou Fall, 42, Gankett Guent).

“Sometimes I go to my family or a friend if she has anything. I pay it back as soon as God will allow” (Aminata Sall, 40, Gankett Guent).

Husbands are obligated to supply the rice or millet every day (although there are ‘bad’ husbands here as there are anywhere else in the world). The rest of the meal must be obtained by whichever wife is in charge of cooking that day. Generally, this would include oil, spices, fish, and vegetables. A few women have husbands who work far away. In Ndiba, for example, one young woman is married to a man who works in Italy six months out of the year. He sends her cash to buy the rice or other things. In at least
two other cases, it is the women’s sons who send a bag of rice, or the monetary equivalent, from Dakar on a monthly basis.

Sometimes, however, putting together a meal is very difficult. The husband’s millet supply often depends on the state of the previous year’s harvest. In 1999, the harvest was good, but not great. The average length of time to depletion per family was about four months although everyone could remember some past time when the harvest lasted until the next harvest. Rice, the main staple, always has to be bought in the market place, thus requiring cash or a near equivalent. It is still a woman’s familial obligation to feed the family, even when the pickings are very slim. The most commonly mentioned solutions to the food problem were: working the project fields in order to have produce to sell; raising and selling small livestock; buying and reselling produce from the pilot farm (Gankett Guent); mining for sweet potatoes left in the ground after the main harvest by whoever leased the land (Gankett Guent and Ndiba-Ndame); and borrowing. I cannot overestimate the importance of borrowing. It appeared in every conversation and there was never any shame associated with it. There is, however, a certain amount of shame involved in asking to be paid back, as I personally discovered. A loan is to be repaid “when God is willing.”

I also asked each woman if she thought her life was better or worse than had been her mother’s life at the same stage of life. I thought this was a good question to cross check all the information I had been getting about how hard life is. Almost every woman agreed that her life today is better than her mother’s life was. Why?

“My life is better than my mother’s was because they didn’t have many clothes and I have five grand boubous. At noon we eat fish and rice and other good things. They only ate what they cultivated: millet, cowpeas, porridge or cous-cous,” Fama Gueye 45, Gankett Guent.
“Our life is better. Our mothers didn’t have the mill and we do. They pounded millet by hand. As for water, they had to go far away to fetch water and where we fetch it is not far. We eat good rice whereas they had none. Yes, it’s true that there were more trees. They sold siddeem and sump and it was cheap. But today is better than back then,” Mbene Sall, 30, Gankett Guent.

“Today’s life is better because the life of our parents was tied to their nawet cultivation. They rarely ate anything except porridge and cous-cous. They didn’t have what we have today. I do ASREAD, come back here and have tea. When that’s finished I go back to work. A little work brings money. Food is better for the body today. Back then our parents didn’t know anything about vegetables, only rice, millet and clarified butter. They didn’t have any knowledge. When the water receded they cultivated. Today kids have knowledge, which is why they stay here during the dry season. Our parents didn’t have a water pump and now kids have the smarts to look for a machine to work with the water,” Nogaay Diagne, 40, Gankett Guent.

“My mother only migrated a couple of times. Back then they calmed their desires, while we want everything there is. We want clothes, armoires, beds. Our parents knew only the food they ate and they livestock they bought. There were sometimes difficult years when there was nothing. Family that lived in Dakar would help you, sometimes giving a sack of rice. At that time the lake wasn’t here and you really wanted fish. To buy fish you would end up measuring out some rice to sell in order to have vegetables and fish,” Aminata Sall, 40, Gankett Guent.

“My life is better now because back then I had to go wherever they sent me. Now I stay in my home and work. No one brings any problems. Now I am in my home working and I can fix my own problems/needs,” Bandañ Thioune, 20, Gankett Guent.

There were a couple of dissenting comments. Ramata Welle said that her mother had a much better life because her father had had many servants to do all the work. Khoudia Marem Niang said that her current household is much smaller than her mother’s was, thus leaving her with fewer people to do all the things that need to get done in a day. She misses the hustle and bustle of a big family, too. In Nidba-Ndame, Nene Toure said that she grew up in Fouta on the Senegal River. Water had never been a problem for her mother, and there had always been plenty of fish. In Ndiba-Ndame things are better now that they also have a good source of water and the overall consensus is that having a nearby source of freshwater is more important than the recession agriculture of the past.
Even the men in both villages were in agreement with this. Thus, in both villages, most women think their lives are better than that of their mothers. Water accessibility played a large role in this, as did the dietary change to near complete reliance on rice as opposed to millet. Even though rice costs money, it is much easier to prepare. The millet fields are not as productive as in the past for a number of reasons, and purchased millet often costs more than rice. There were also a lot of references to the increased availability of material goods, especially clothes and household goods, which can be interpreted more in terms of expressions of economic status as opposed to expressions of material desire (Gadio and Rakowski 1999).

The women also made frequent reference to the presence of projects like ASREAD, the Pilot Farm, and increasing numbers of sweet potato growers renting land in their villages.

“There were no projects but they would gather sump or njandam. If the njandam wasn’t ripe, they would sit and wait for it. Now, however, when the nawet (rainy season) money is finished the noor (money from market gardening) money comes,” Aminata Gaye, 60, Gankett Guent.

“There wasn’t good food like there is today. Plus now also we have fields to cultivate watermelons, eggplants, and onions that we can sell to buy other things,” Fatou Fall, 42, Gankett Guent.

“Before there were sweet potatoes we didn’t have anything to do,” Fambaye Lo, 35, Ndiba-Ndame.

Common themes emerged related to increased material wealth, opportunities to earn cash money, and variety. These themes may lead one to believe that these Senegalese women are as individualistic as any American person. However, it is not the mere desire for material things that makes one individualistic or collectivistic. Instead, it is the reasoning behind the desire and the use to which the material wealth is put that are
important. Besides the mere desire to keep one’s head above water in an uncertain economic environment, material wealth also contributes to social status in the community. In this case, more material wealth allows individual women to contribute to the well-being of her family and bestow largesse on her neighbors.

The Purpose of a Women’s Group

“If we work it what we pay into it will create (amal) usefulness. A group is good because cooperating (ànd) is better” Rokhaya Ndiaye, 54, Gankett Guent.

“The group will cause our hearts to cooperate and whoever has good thoughts about it will let them out to make the group make them useful” Bandañ Thioune, 20, Gankett Guent.

“You know we had a community fund until it was finished. The group came after that and we joined because it didn’t hurt anything. We want to add to (the benefits of the community fund). The work is hard right now but in the future it will be good” Aissatou Toure, 39, Gankett Guent.

“We are all one. We have the same desires. If I had an event everyone came to help cook and dance. This is better than each person sitting in her house,” Nogaay Dieng, 40, Gankett Guent.

While almost everyone in Gankett Guent seemed to agree that the GPF was good for improving the community through working together, many of the women, especially the younger women, in Ndiba-Ndame said that GPF did not really do anything, but it was good to ànd (cooperate) with everyone. When I asked what their duties to the GPF were, the number one response was “show up at meetings when called”, reflecting the desire to support one another. However, all of the Ndiba-Ndame women did seem to believe that the GPF was necessary if they were ever to have an externally bestowed project of some kind. They know that they were supposed to take part in the original PAGPF sponsored by ASREAD and they are patiently waiting their turn. I asked them why they had not continued any of the self-help projects started by the CERP and Church World Service
over the past fifteen years, or why they did not save up for their own water pump.

Fambaye Lo (35) of Ndiba-Ndame told me that under the tutelage of the CERP she had learned how to dye cloth but that she no longer has the means to do it. Both drought and salt had destroyed their original market gardening plot. The cows that they were raising for another project died during the drought. When Church World Service first came in the mid-1980s the agent in charge, Daniel, brought a lot of things. When he left, however, the CERP did not continue to give the means, or the means to the means, to the women to continue their projects. I asked in several different ways why she did not reinvest the money she earned from cloth dying into the supplies she would need to continue her work. I did not get a satisfactory answer, only comments about “that’s just the way it is.”

What I can assume, based on observation and general conversation, is that the income was quickly used up on household expenditures and loans to other women and her husband. I asked her why her husband, who wishes her to contribute to the household expenses, did not invest in her dying equipment. She laughed out loud; “he doesn’t think it’s important or real work.”

Discussion

Many woman cited examples of having had to borrow cash or supplies from family and friends. The amount cited as necessary to furnish the daily provisions ranged from 500 to 1500 FCFA. The general response to a question about repayment was: “when God sees to it.” Women consistently borrow and lend with no immediate concern for the actual payback. The act of lending, while not always welcome, and often financially difficult, is socially obligatory and serves as a means of maintaining a relationship with others in the community. Such borrowing and lending, it should be noted, is not
necessarily obligated equally. Social status and caste are two important factors to consider in who can be expected to lend to and borrow from whom. However, the majority of the loans considered here occur most often among family members and between friends and neighbors. Only rarely does it extend to outsiders, such as project personnel or even non-family members in another village.

Following the same line of thinking, although most of the women interviewed initially said that they had to take care of all the household expenses by themselves, they virtually all contradicted themselves within a few sentences by adding that their husbands do contribute at least the rice or millet. In most of the cases, especially in Gankett Guent, women admitted that their husbands helped out with other expenses, including helping them repay their project loans when cash from sales did not meet expectations or was misallocated. More than one woman said that she and her husband formed a team when it came to finances. They each put in what they could. However, in general it appears that men expect women to contribute most of their earnings to the household, but women cannot expect men to do the same, although many men do. Yet women also are entitled to buy things for themselves with their own money. In one case in Ndiba-Ndame, I asked a young woman why she did not borrow money from her husband to invest in a cloth dying business. She replied that he thought that was a hobby and not a real means of earning money. According to her, he dismissed her ideas for improving the family income, but did expect her to contribute by her own means. A similar problem arose when I asked Aminata Der, the president of the Ndiba-Ndame women’s group, why her husband did not lend the group, or her individually, his water pump. Her son works in Italy six months out of the year and purchased the water pump for his father, yet he has done nothing to
help out his mother or the women’s group, not out of meanness, but because he believes that women’s affairs are separate, and less important, than men’s.

The case in Gankett Guent is a little different. There are some husbands there who have no other means of support and who genuinely appreciate better the (new?) roles that their women are playing. Many husbands (according to themselves) urged their wives to take part in the ASREAD project, and some of them even helped the women clear and prepare the original parcel. I also observed all the men in the village, including the chief, turn out to help pull the project water pump out of the lake to save it from inundation. There seems to be a real understanding on the part of the men that this project is about more than just helping their women; it also helps to feed their families.

There is a difference between the men of the two villages in that the men of Gankett Guent are much more dependent on only rainy season farming for revenue generation. Only three families own water pumps for irrigated farming and only one of them was working while I was conducting interviews. In Ndiba-Ndame, not only were there at least four working water pumps, there also were several families that had rented out their land to cash crop farmers from other villages (villages located farther away from the lake). These farmers brought their own water pumps and big machinery to cultivate mostly sweet potatoes, many of which were exported even to Europe. Only two families in Gankett Guent had rented their land out to “outside” farmers. Renting land out for sweet potato farming can be quite lucrative. Maguette Lo, the husband of Maguette Ndiaye Gueye, explained to me that the people who rent his land are from up north and they pay him by working the land and giving him one hectare to harvest. In this case, the renters cultivated sweet potatoes and manioc. Maguette Lo said that this is much better than
dealing with the hassles of water pumps, fertilizers, hired labor, etc. Instead, all he has to do is bag it and sell it. He estimated being able to bag more than 150 sacks at approximately 7,000 FCFA per sack which pays him over one million francs. He was estimating for me and said that he expected closer to two million francs. This averages out to over 150,000 FCFA per month – a very healthy salary, especially for a rural area.

His wife also profits. The renters pay Maguette Ndiaye, daughters, and friends 500 FCFA for each pan of sweet potatoes they carry plus they each can take a pan of sweet potatoes home. Maguette Ndiaye also sells Maguette Lo’s sweet potatoes for him in the market, keeping whatever profit she can get over the expected price. The renters, who live temporarily in the field, also paid one of Maguette Ndiaye’s daughters to cook for them daily.

Since sweet potatoes can only be grown for about two years in any one place I asked them what would happen when that time was over? Maguette Ndiaye replied that the renters would move on to grow sweet potatoes elsewhere, but would grow tomatoes and other vegetables in their place for a few years until the land was “strong” enough to grow sweet potatoes again. Limale Fall (49), a divorced mother living with her mother and father, said that the sweet potato craze was relatively new in Ndiba-Ndame, but that now no one migrated during the dry season, not even the young men. She was not worried about the possible end of the cycle: for today, money is easy, she said, and that is what matters. I asked her about her rainy season field, the field that generally supplies the millet and cowpeas that traditionally fed a family. She said she had no idea how much they cultivated because it was so small it was only for home consumption for a short period of time. There is not much sense, she said, in putting a lot of effort into the rainy
season field because it is so uncertain and we can just buy what we want with the money from market gardening and sweet potatoes. Women whose families did not have rented land in Ndiba-Ndame still had opportunities to forage for leftover sweet potatoes that they then were able to eat or sell at the market, however they generally had to rely on the generosity of their friends, their actual marriage relation to other families, or direct charity for access to the fields. Co-wives Aram Fall and Fatibaba Diba said that, together, they earn between 5000 and 15000 FCFA per week in the market with their foraged sweet potatoes, which is enough to supply most of the weekly food needs for their family. They were able to access sweet potatoes through their husband, who was brother of the village chief. Women without their own land supplied labor to families who needed to harvest their own land. Even when extra labor was not needed, women preferred to forage in groups and would often let their friends or neighbors forage with them for the company, although from an economic perspective this could also be viewed as a strategy to ensure access to goods in the future should the situation change and the shoe be on the other foot, so to speak.

I asked some of the women of Ndiba-Ndame, including Maguette Ndiaye Gueye, why they want an ASREAD type project when they seem to be doing so well on their own? The answer invariably was one of control. Adama Yad, one of the matriarchs of Keur Mody, a two-household village that counts itself part of Ndiba-Ndame, said that a project is necessary “in order to give women power over their own money”. It is not that women need or want to be completely independent from men. While they often spoke disparagingly of the men in their lives, they also explained themselves as part of a household unit with their husbands, who were not independent individuals free to make
decisions independent of the rest of the household. Adama explained that women merely want some maneuvering room within which they are empowered to make some decisions directly affecting their own lives and the lives of their families, families that include husbands.

In Gankett Guent some of the problems between men and women surfaced at a meeting in November 1999. Fields around the country, including the ASREAD field, had produced too many onions and the price was not good. Not all women in Gankett made enough money from the sale of their onions to repay their loans. Often what little they did earn had to be used to pay back the “between campaign” loans. ASREAD had lent 40,000 FCFA to each woman for her to use in the way she felt best suited her economic needs during the time between gardening campaigns. Many women bought small livestock to raise and were able to sell the sheep and repay their loan. However, others did not have so much luck. Some livestock died before being sold; some women frittered away the money without investing it, instead buying clothes or household goods; some women turned the money over to their husbands. Bandañ Thioune lent the entire amount to her husband so that he could fix his own water pump. Then she had to ask him to help her repay the onion loan. In some cases, husbands were unhappy about having to repay the loans. They brought this up in the group meeting as an excuse to become more involved in decision-making related to the market-gardening project. Project personnel attending the meeting tried to better explain how the project is supposed to work: Activities and funds are intended for the use of the women’s group alone; men should not ask their wives to get loans, seeds, or other inputs for them. Women are supposed to run their own project, including making all decisions and maintaining all the records. Men are not
allowed in, period. Daouda Ndiaye, a forester working with ASREAD, explained to me that the men of Gankett Guent are not taking into account that the goods and cash produced by their wives are often put at the disposal of men in one way or another: they eat the food produced, so they are able to pay less for daily food needs; when sales are good, they do not have to buy things for their wives (i.e. clothes) or children (i.e. school fees) that they might otherwise have to buy. In short, he said, what men have to pay in the form of loan repayments is really what they should have been paying all along as their part of household maintenance. He claimed that their outrage over the status of the loan repayments was merely an excuse to try and gain control of funds intended for the women.

However, in reality the women do depend on the men to help them not only with physical chores, but also with decision-making within the group. The women are illiterate, despite their Wolof training, and require men’s (limited) literacy sometimes to help them keep the books for the project. Similarly, most of the women felt it necessary to discuss with their husbands any big financial decisions, like accepting a big loan from the Louga bank. The ASREAD project, and indeed most of the women oriented projects that I have seen and read about, seem to not only target women and seek to empower them, but also seem to somehow target women as if they were completely independent of men. This is not to imply that everyone is equal and everyone happily co-exists. Men are not expected to discuss with their wives every financial decision that they make. Nor do they always take their wives’ concerns and desires seriously. Not all men take seriously their family obligations, but many men do and they consider their wives partners, although more privately than publicly.
The question about maintaining daily life revealed similar avenues in both villages: cash cropping of some sort, rain-fed crops, and borrowing, either from a family member or the husband. The women in Gankett Guent rely mostly on their project field, but also buy produce to resell from the Israeli pilot farm, as well as the production from their rainy season fields. In Ndiba-Ndame there was no project. Instead, women relied on foraging for leftover sweet potatoes and/or working for the sweet potato growers and their rainy season farming. Women in both villages used to norwaane, or migrate, during the dry season to work as maids in cities. Very few women now do so. Initially, the ASREAD project limited its members to those who would discontinue migrating. Now that the women’s group itself owns the project, individual women are free to migrate as long as they make provisions to take care of their plots. No one I spoke to wished to migrate any longer, although most all women had positive feelings about seasonal migration. Aissatou Toure, Gankett Guent, said that seasonal migration was good because she got paid for work she would have to do anyway had she stayed in Gankett Guent. However, because of her children and the ASREAD project, she was quite happy to stay home now.

Similarly, in Ndiba-Ndame nearly all the women used to migrate. However, since the arrival of sweet potato cropping, few people want to leave the main exception being the young women-members who are in their teens but not yet married. I held a group meeting in Ndiba-Ndame with these young women alone. They told me that they wanted to migrate because they wanted not only to earn their own money, but also a chance to travel and see ‘the big city.’

In early 2000, the women of Gankett Guent had partially replaced their market gardening revenues with buying and reselling produce from the Israeli pilot farm. In
1998, the onion production from their project field was good, but there was an oversupply of onions in the country so the price was not always good. After that campaign the water pump had many problems and the women did not plant a second campaign. The field was full of weeds although it did appear that the women tried to maintain the struggling fruit trees as well as possible. They began hiring themselves out to the pilot farm as manual labor for 1500 FCFA per day. After some maneuvering with the manager at the farm Mame Djembet Fall worked with the women’s group to create a twelve pair rotation to ensure that twelve people showed up daily to work at the farm. As things progressed there, the manager also started selling produce to individual women to sell at the market on Saturday. When they received a new water pump in 2000, they began cleaning up their project field, but also continued to work at and buy produce from the pilot farm, thus diversifying their access to various resources.

Two general themes appeared to be attached to belonging to a women’s group: *lîggëey*, to work, and *ân*, to work together, cooperate. First, from a practical perspective, the only way to attract funding or a project is through a *Groupement de Promotion Féminine*, the formalized women’s group. All women, in every village I visited, are aware of this fact. It also is explicit in the regulations for forming a GPF that the focus of the group must be economic in nature. However, the structure of the GPF is modeled on traditional women’s groups. Women have been organized for mutual support and assistance since well before the development era. It is easy to overlook this aspect because emphasis on the economic aspect is explicitly stated, not only in the development literature, but also by women themselves. In reality, even without the lure of project money women would organize in order to create a forum in which individual women’s
troubles can be made public and addressed, in which younger women can learn their appropriate roles, and in which older women can wield power.

Photography Exercise

When I returned to Keur Momar Sarr in the summer of 2000 with Operation Crossroads Africa, I brought with me several disposable cameras. Carla Roncoli, an anthropologist associated with the SANREM CRSP project in Burkina Faso, encourages photography as a means of improving local participation in projects and engendering a greater understanding of the different interacting worldviews (Roncoli and Sendze 1997). Her team presented the photography exercise to the community as a request for help producing “images to teach students and farmers in other countries about their ways of farming and their ways of life” (1997: 27). Village elders selected the participants, although within parameters set by the project, and they all participated in a training session. Each participant received one disposable camera and agreed to focus their attention on problems concerning soil, water, vegetation, livestock, and health. The photos were then developed and the researchers conducted photo-elicitation interviews with each participant. Each participant was allowed to keep their photos and several photos from each participant were chosen to create a community photobook.

To try and understand how the women in Gankett Guent internalize information differently, I set up a photography exercise à la Roncolli. My attempts at this same exercise were less scientific. I did not have a team working for me, nor had I read the exact details about the exercise in Burkina Faso. At the time, I only knew about it from a casual conversation I had had with Carla Roncoli at the University of Georgia. I had already selected ten different women in Gankett Guent that I wanted to follow for long-
term study should the opportunity arise, and I had already talked to Mame Djembet Fall about my selections and she thought they were fine. In retrospect it might have been polite to go through the village chief, but at this point I was limited by time (in reality, the chief had already sanctioned any activity I wished to carry out, but I still liked to run things past him occasionally). I had already been working in the village for over a year and everyone was used to me walking around talking to people, taking pictures, giving away a lot of pictures, and following up on social obligations, like baptisms and funerals, so I went with my selections.

Since I was working with a very small group I did not have a training day per se. I gave one camera to each two women, for a total of eight sets of photos (two of the women were out of town). I showed each of them individually how to work the camera and had them take practice pictures. Each woman took twelve photos and I asked that they take photos that describe their everyday lives so that they could show “my people” – my mother, my teacher, etc. – what their lives were like. The eight women involved were excited to be able to share their own perspectives about their lives with others, and they were very interested in the cameras and learning how to use them. They asked many questions to clarify the assignment: was it just the project I was interested in? Could they take pictures of their children? Since time was limited, I gave them a week to take their photographs so that I would have enough time to get them developed and discuss the results.

The resulting photos varied considerably in content. Only two women took photos of the Wolof literacy class, and there were no photos of the state school or the pharmacy. Only one woman took a picture of the mosque and the men sitting there. More common
themes were related to food procurement and eating, and either nawet or cash-crop agriculture. Both Bandañ Thioune and Ramata Welle concentrated almost exclusively on market agriculture. Bandañ is the youngest member of the GPF and her husband has a water pump and has been part of a CERP-JICA program (JICA is a Japanese version of the Peace Corps). She told me all about the various crops she photographed and hopes that Americans will see the need for more aid for products against illness and insects. However, her final photo was of one of her children in order to show to strangers that what she does now is so that tomorrow will be better for her children. Ramata Welle concentrated her photos on the sweet potato field that her family has rented out to a grower from elsewhere. She took several pictures of the irrigation canal and the water pump to show the importance of the machine for working the land. Neither she nor Bandañ cultivated a nawet field this year, instead choosing to concentrate on the cash crops.

Mbene Sall grouped her photos to tell little stories. She had two showing the arrival of the truck from Geo with fish and an ensuing fight over fish that occurred. In the second photo, Fama Gueye is resolving the argument over the fish. In another set, the Imam has already had an argument with Mbene’s husband. Both men, in separate photos, are lying on their mats sleeping. She explained that her husband is upset because the Imam, with whom he eats lunch and dinner every day, has chastised him for being lazy and not going to the nawet field after the rain. He is so upset that he did not eat lunch. “Jamm,” she said, “is the most important thing.” Jamm is the Wolof word for peace and came up often in discussions of every kind with the women. Mbene also took several photos of people, especially children, going to the nawet fields. “Everyone is happy,” she said, “no one is
going anywhere and that is why it is important to me.” Here she is referring to the common practice of migration to look for work in other places. Aissatou Toure took a photo of Maas Ndiaye, the Wolof instructor, but she praised him not only for teaching them but also for being a good worker: “he can take care of his family.” In another photo of herself and her children working in the *nawet* field she explained: “I have a husband and family and I could sit at home. But I will join them and give them a hand.” In still another photo, she explained that, “every day the older people have to think about where the lunch, breakfast, and dinner are coming from. It’s possible to cultivate and still not have anything. He who has a salary ought to help as many people as possible. There are no salaries here.” Rokhaya Ndiaye took pictures of “institutions” – the mosque and the men sitting there, the women who comprise the diarra, the GPF doing a health survey, and the millet grinding machine and its keeper.

From all the photos common themes emerge: “*dimbalante,*” (to help one another) “*jappante;*” (to give one another a hand) “*yokk,*” (to increase or improve) and “*ànd*” (to cooperate) – all words signifying mutual aid and interdependence, but also behaviors related to the mechanics of living change – water pumps and millet grinding machines become necessities, rice replaces millet, and technical know-how related to market gardening increases. However, these changes do not directly affect the underlying reliance on social networks and the basic unpredictability that individuals face on a daily basis. Machines break down, fertilizers and insecticides are expensive and rare, external help is fleeting, but extended family and community can always be counted on as long as their various roles continue to have meaning.
Throughout all the photos similar themes of mutual aid and cooperation were evident. The majority of the photos contained other people working, playing, eating, fighting, or doing otherwise normal everyday activities. Even after having defined their lifestyles in terms of material betterment, when asked to use photos to describe their lives these women focused on relationships instead of material wealth. There was not one photo of special clothing or household goods. Bandañ Thioune’s photographic emphasis on her husband’s field may be due in part to the amount of time she spent working in his field during the time when the water pump for her project field was broken.

**Pile-Sorting**

I started this exercise in order to understand better village dynamics. I first asked the ten women from Gankett Guent to define the words “cer” and “alal” for me. I heard them often and in different situations and wanted to make sure I understood their meanings. They translate roughly as “respect” and “wealth” respectively, but it was clear from their usage that their meanings were slightly different than what I thought.

For practical purposes, every woman I worked with was illiterate. Instead of names on cards I used the photographs I had taken of nearly everyone in Gankett Guent, Ndiba-Ndame and the ASREAD and CERP personnel. I first asked participants to sort the photographs however they liked. Khady Ndiaye (24), who is employed full time at the Israeli pilot farm and works with the men, not the women, divided the photos into four piles: the people of Gankett Guent, the people of Ndiba-Ndame, the people of ASREAD together with the CERP, and a photo of a regional politician that I had thrown in to see what happened. Mame Djembet Fall (55) made very similar piles: ASREAD, Ndame, Ndiba (she split them into two groups), and then Gankett Guent by family. Mbene Sall
also separated out Ndiba-Ndame and the Keur Momar Sarr people, but divided the Gankett Guent photos into six piles indicating little neighborhoods. “It is who they go to for help,” she said, “and who they might share a cow with at the gammu.” Her groupings were fairly geographical in nature, but also included family members from different parts of the village. Nogaay Diagne (40) initially split the photos into many individual piles in no particular order. To refine the response I asked her to limit the number of piles to three, which was an arbitrary number on my part. She did not put them in any particular order, but she said the three piles represented who works, who and’s, and who is “consistent.” Ramata Welle’s photos were divided into three piles (her choice) defined by “who is old and cannot work any more,” “who doesn’t like to work,” and, “who really thinks about work, what they find they share with us and we work together.” Bandan Thioune sorted by neighboring households, and lumped the Moor women into one pile. While I initially thought that these women chose their piles off-handedly, it may be also that these piles represent the boundaries of their important social networks.

In the second part of this exercise I asked each woman to consider her own definitions of “cer” and “alal,” and to indicate who had these qualities from among the photos. I wanted to see what the relationship between the two might be since most women seemed to consider their lives better than their parents’ lives based on material factors. Instead I found little correlation between the two pile sorts. An interesting element revealed itself as nearly all of the women asked me if I wanted to know who they should respect or who they wanted to respect, suggesting a reflection the difference between ascribed and achieved qualities. The difference does not mean that people who should get respect do not really deserve it; in fact they do deserve it because of the positions they hold or the
roles that they play. The respect is not phony. It is due anyone who holds that social position. On the other hand, there are also other people to whom respect is given freely regardless of social position, based on their ‘achieved’ status with the respect giver. Not surprisingly, husbands, the village chief, the Imam, and other elders in the community made the “should” list, and a variety of other people made the “want” list. Mame Djembet Fall, because of her close interaction with ASREAD personnel and local politicians ranked several outsiders on her ‘want’ list, while Ramata Welle, who knows some of the outside land-renters well, ranked one of them on her list. Clearly, the ‘want’ list is made up of people with whom individual women have developed both friendships and whom they see as good role models.

I then compared to whom the women gave their respect with who had the most wealth, according to the same women. While there was a little overlap, in general those considered wealthy did not appear on the respect list. That is not to say they were disregarded in the community. Instead it implies that the terms on which respect is granted are based on variables other than wealth. Besides associating respect with particular social roles, Mbene Sall defined cer as related to one’s behavior and morality. People she respects are level-headed and good to her. Aissatou Toure associated respect with trust. While all the women ranked wealth based on material factors, Mame Djembet Fall alluded to the importance of people in one’s life: “Money is alal but alal is more than money. It is livestock, buildings, merchandise and people. If I don’t have what I need, but I have lots of people, then I will have what I need. Lots of children is alal from God. What they have, you have.” Nogaay Diagne refused to rank anyone in these two categories because it was not right for her to do so. She did explain her philosophy:
“Money is easy, but if you have people you will always have access to money or whatever you need. Money is good for getting things, but it disappears fast. People are always there.” Only one woman considered alal to be only material wealth. The consensus among all the women was that money is too ‘light’ and it really only is alal when it has been transformed into something else.

True respect is based both on social roles and trust. It may be partially related to possessing material wealth, but not necessarily. Neither the Imam nor the village chief showed up on any ranking of wealth. Fama Gueye was on every ranking of wealth only showed up on one list ranking respect. Material wealth may play a role in that those who have something are able to expand their social networks and be available to help more people. To have something and not share it would be considered very, very bad form.

**Discussion within Framework of Individualism and Collectivism**

From these three exercises – interviews, photography, pile sorting – it may appear that divergent themes exist, and this would be partially true. Collectivism does not preclude the existence of individualism, nor does it mean that everyone is equal and constantly looking out for the good of their neighbor. People do compete, fight, lie, steal, and cheat regardless of what kind of cultural models they share. In Keur Momar Sarr, women in every village are looking out for themselves and their own immediate families. However, they build networks of social relationships to give them access to what they need, as opposed to relying on individual self-sufficiency. It is because of this relationship dependent-context that individuals allow roles, statuses, and obligations to define their behavior and feelings about themselves.
For the purposes of this dissertation, the most interesting attribute of individualism and collectivism is the one related to motivation. When I say that someone is respected for her material wealth differently in a collectivist context than in an individualistic context, what does that mean?

In Chapter 2 I showed that an individual sampling a collectivist cultural model is considered interdependent, or other-referential. The motivation to act in some way will be based on the approval of the appropriate in-group. In the United States this may be the immediate family or group of close, personally chosen, friends. In a largely collectivistic society, the in-group is generally much larger, encompassing whole ethnic or national groups. In a society where one is raised to think of all elders as parents, it is difficult to let down one’s guard even when away from home! Other referential individuals learn to exist kind of like chameleons, learning the appropriate roles to take on in order to blend into one social situation or another. Motivation is directed by the desire to maintain social harmony. Unlike most Americans, a Senegalese person who achieves economic success does so in hopes of enhancing the social status of the whole family, and thus better integrating the family into the current society. This may mean lending more money, thus precluding investment into the capital improvements so loved by development projects, both large and small.

Similarly, I asked some women in the market in Keur Momar Sarr how they paid back their loans from the project. In all cases they managed to pay back the money although rarely from money saved from the original income-generating project. Instead they borrowed money or sold something, a sheep or goat, or maybe some merchandise, or they had to find a way to sell whatever produce was left over from the campaign. In some
cases, money the women borrowed for small commerce they gave directly to their husbands or “ate” in daily household expenses. When onion sales were good in 1997, most women bought some sheep or goats and raised them to resell. When it was time to pay their debt, they were able to sell the sheep to cover the expense, that is, if the sheep did not die or if the market price was good. If not, they had to borrow from family or their husbands to repay the loan.

A young shopkeeper in the village of Keur Momar Sarr told me of difficulties he had faced when he opened his shop. He at first offered no credit to his customers. Soon talk was going around town about what a greedy man he was, how he loved money more than his neighbors. The stress was more than he could bear and he started giving credit, which, like other types of loans, gets repaid when God will it. He understood the need to save money, but he was also motivated by the need to stay connected to his community, not separate from it, either economically or psychologically.

In the process of trying to create more formalized, regulated women’s groups, development projects may in some ways be beating their heads against the proverbial brick wall. Formalization and regulation require a certain degree of separation of individuals from their roles and responsibilities to the larger society. Formal groups are supposed to be egalitarian and just. The larger society is hierarchical and equitable. Berry (1993) points out that the process of formalization in some ways prohibits change that would otherwise occur naturally. When ‘traditional’ rules or laws are written down and made public, they become frozen in time as ‘the’ tradition, at least to those who write them. However, in reality, institutions are fluid and negotiation is “a pervasive feature of social and economic processes…” (Berry 1991: 13). ‘Fuzzily’ bounded institutions that
are constantly negotiated are flexible and subject to interpretation depending on the context. This ambiguity reinforces the importance of social relations and motivates the desire to invest in those relations to insure future access to key resources, whether they are natural, economic or social resources. I suggest that the women’s groups in Senegal are more ‘fuzzy’ than formal. Because of this it is important to consider the basis of motivation behind the behavior.

Summary

Using different methodological tools, I constructed different models related to collectivism from key words and themes emerging from discourse with women in Gankett Guent and Ndiba-Ndame. I held semi-structured interviews with almost one hundred women, coordinated a photography exercise with several women in Gankett Guent, and, with those same women, did a pile sorting exercise with photographs of men and women from Gankett Guent, Ndiba-Ndame, and Keur Momar Sarr. I was most interested in how they secured their livelihood on a daily basis and why membership in a women’s group was important. What emerged were distinct models of mutual aid (*dimbalante*) and cooperation (*ànd*).

To be Wolof is to be connected to other people in much stronger ways than we can understand, and those connections require certain modes of behavior that privilege the relationship over the purely economic. Boundaries between different aspects of life are much more fluid and temporary. There is some evidence that the wave of individualism present in the spread of Western culture all over the world will *not* transform all or even most aspects of the collectivist cultural model (Kagitçibasi 1994; Yang 1988). The women in Gankett Guent and Ndiba-Ndame want to learn new methods to improve their access to potential economic resources. These new technologies will help them better fit into
their community according to society’s terms. Does this mean that they will be unaffected by the psychological aspects of technological change – of course not. Instead, change will be interpreted through a collectivistic lens, and behavior will be motivated by collectivist cues, cues whose meanings also undergo shifts and reconfigurations.

In investigating why certain “non-rational” behaviors occur, outside experts often overlook important cultural differences in meaning: “…people, in their efforts to understand the causes of behavior, suffer from an inescapable tendency to perceive behavior as a consequence of the internal, personal attributes of the person” (Markus and Kitayama 1991: 232. They do this because they interpret information through their own, more individualistic cultural model. Instead, the different women of Gankett Guent and Ndiba-Ndame are socially motivated. That is, personal success is defined through social values: respect for others; fulfilling obligations to family, neighbors, village; continuation of the family line; or sharing with others (Yu and Yang 1994). This suggests that the specific value that motivates individual women varies across time and space. Younger women may try to improve their status by having lots of children. Older women may improve their status through either their own contributions to the family or through the contributions of their children.

Relationships are maintained even when there is no love lost between individuals. After I had earned the trust of the women in Gankett Guent I was privy to local gossip and was even warned away from eating at certain women’s homes by Mame Djembet Fall because they were “cannibals”. On other occasions I heard women complain about Mame Djembets’s leadership style. When I asked, however, why some of these other women did not run for president, an elected office, I got the same answer: “Because she
has always been our president. It wouldn’t be right to do that” (various women in Gankett Guent). To be president is, by necessity, to be more assertive, more unique, and more individualistic, to a certain degree, than the other women in the village. It means standing out which is antithetical to the underlying desire to conform and comply with group norms. While it is socially sanctioned, it is not a status necessarily desired by everyone.

In the concluding chapter I will examine the cultural models of individualism and collectivism at work in the application of the most revered development tool: microfinance.
In 1999 ASREAD launched a new project in Keur Momar Sarr. They opened a mutual savings and loan organization to provide opportunities for local people to save and have small loans. The bank actually has two divisions: MECAPP is an association of farmers, fishers, and herdsmen run by a body elected therein; CRECA is run specifically for the women’s groups by ASREAD. In this final chapter I will discuss the how increasing use of microcredit programs, a direct extension of the modernization model, actually plays out in a collectivistic context. First I will review the concepts of cultural models and individualism and collectivism already discussed.

**Review of Cultural Models**

I introduced the concept of cultural models in Chapters One. One definition from anthropology asserts that cultural models are:

“presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared…by members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behavior in it” (Quinn and Holland 1987: 4).

Another definition from cultural psychology uses the terms cultural syndrome to mean “a set of elements of subjective culture organized around a theme,” based on his definition of culture as;

“shared attitudes, beliefs, categorizations, expectations, norms, roles, selfDefinitions, values, and other such elements of subjective culture found among individuals whose interactions were facilitated by shared language, historical period, and geographic region” (Triandis 1993: 156).
In short, cultural models are mental structures that act as filters that allow human beings to process incoming information flows quickly and, for the most part, effectively, without having to consciously stop to analyze each bit of data.

Cultural models can be very, very basic, such as a mental model of how to stand in line. Or they can be quite complex, such as a mental model of what it means to be American. Practical, basic models may change over time as new information is integrated. For example, it is now commonly accepted that men and women, or African and Caucasian Americans may stand in line together. Complex models are abstract, thus new information can be integrated into them without weakening their very meaning. So while at one time the very thought of African and Caucasian Americans waiting in line together may have seemed seditious, the fact that it is a common practice today has not weakened the meaning of what it is to be an American.

Cultural models, then, also tend to be hierarchically nested, but not unconnected. Connectionist theory proposes one way in which the levels in the nest may be related both horizontally and vertically: they are all comprised of “neuron-like processors”, called nodes, which stimulate other nodes and are in turn stimulated themselves (Tienson 1990). The strength and order of the stimulation depends on a particular context. The influx of new information usually affects only the strength of the connection between various nodes. As we are unable to process all the information streams we experience every day, over time mental structures develop that allow us to process incomplete information based on the general strength of previous nodal stimulation. Connectionist models, then, are not static in time or place. Different contexts, which include feelings and emotions, affect the strength of links between nodes.
However, it is clear that many cultural models have endured over space and time. This is due not only to the level of abstractness of a given model, but also to the fact that many such models are learned informally in childhood and reinforced both informally and formally over time. Thoughts and actions that incur positive emotional rewards are more likely to be repeated until they become the norm by which other thoughts and actions are judged. Learning the norm through observance of trial and error makes the cultural model “second nature” as opposed to something one can clearly spell out. For example, explaining to someone how to drive a car is very different than actually driving a car. The body itself has to learn the model, thus reinforcing the strength between particular nodes in the mental structure governing the model. So reinforced, over time the model just becomes habit, not something one has to think about before doing it.

Cultural models can thus motivate behavior by setting up a definition in the brain of what normal is, thus allowing for a wide range of apparently unconscious behaviors. However, the mind does not just receive information, it filters it through cultural models, that is, models based in culturally learned values. Social evaluation plays a strong emotional role in determining the relative strength between associated nodes. Even very young children learn by imitating behaviors and attitudes enacted in people around them, and all children desire positive feedback from those people. Thus, feelings and emotions are embedded in thoughts and actions in particular contexts. We all are motivated to reinforce “good” emotional experiences, but what is considered good, or bad, is wholly determined by the social context.
Review of Individualism and Collectivism as Cultural Models

This dissertation examined cultural models of individualism and collectivism through the lens of the development process. There are no individuals or societies that are wholly collectivistic or wholly individualistic, both models exist in everyone. However, individuals tend to fall back more readily on one model over the other depending on how they were socialized. Collectivism does not mean that everyone who shares this model loves one another. Nor does individualism imply that every man is out for himself. Instead, collectivists are more other-referential and less self-referential than are individualists. This means that social relationships are differently important to collectivists than they are to individualists. Collectivists are more interdependent and motivated by the need to fit into different interpersonal contexts, thus self-limiting self-expression. Individualists are more independent and motivated by the need for personal achievement and self-expression. Neither model excludes individual achievement or competition, but the motivation behind behavior is interpreted differently. In the collectivism model success is important not for improved self-esteem but instead for improving the status of the family or country. In rural Senegal, for example, marriage is not based on individual notions of love, but on social ties and obligations. This does not mean notions of love do not exist or are not taken into consideration, but they are understood in a larger social context.

I chose to examine cultural models of individualism and collectivism from the perspective of modernization because it is the dominant model motivating all development planning in traditionally collectivistic societies. Those sharing an individualistic model tend to see collectivists as backwards and needing development.
Thus the application of development activities tends to reinforce the ideals of modernization, including self-efficacy and economic rationality. Individuals who do not share in this cultural model are seen as obstacles to obvious improvement, and a typical assumption is that eventually a modern world-view will replace the traditional one, regardless of the fact that the ‘traditional’3, socially based world-view has worked well enough for thousands of years.

Self-efficacy and economic rationality are not necessarily the wrong approaches to take in certain contexts. However, modernization errs in ignoring, or deeming irrelevant, the existence of other ways of understanding the world. Collectivists continue to value interpersonal relationships above the expression of internal characteristics. New, more modern relationships, however, may come to have more importance than do traditional relationships, but only in certain situations. The ability to obtain a loan from the bank does not necessarily motivate a collectivist to isolate herself from her traditional social context so that she may make better, more economically efficient use of her money. Instead, the loan may open up other social opportunities for her as wife, mother, and entrepreneur. These values, in turn, and in time, feed back into the modernization model.

**Individualism in the Development Model**

In Chapter 3, I discussed how individualism is expressed in modernization discourse. Modernization includes not only the adoption of new technologies and formal education, but also how one should think about normal, everyday activities. Speed, self-efficacy, truth, justice, and transparency are but a few characteristics of individualism. Its history is rooted in Western optimism and post WWII nascent globalization. Evidence from various

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3 Traditional does not in any way imply unchanging or fixed in one point in time. See Petter Holm (1995) for an interesting discussion of bureaucratic quagmire that evolved out of the decision to codify “traditional” institutions related to fishing in Norway.
speeches by World Bank presidents over the past thirty years shows the changing
development approaches within the same model of modernization. The 1950s –1960s
technical/infrastructure approach gave way to concerns about poverty and fulfilling basic
needs. The 1980s saw the rise of structural adjustment programs, asking nations to cinch
their belts, cut public spending, and privatize all in the name of pulling themselves up by
their own bootstraps. The 1990s were the decade of sustainable and participatory
development. A combination of the last two decades has evolved into self-sustaining
economic programs that revolve around microfinance and capacity building. All of these
development approaches arose within the same cultural model of modernization, a model
that emphasizes rational economic growth, self-reliance, efficiency, and mastery of one’s
own sociocultural, physical, and political environments. I also showed how over the same
period of time, however, meanings within the model of modernization changed as
information flows from ground-level experiences was valued and legitimized within the
language of modernization.

Collectivism in Senegal

After many years development, little progress under the modernization model seems
to have been made. Many individuals in ‘developing’ countries have either not learned or
refuse to learn how to act like Homo economicus. Instead, they continue to invest in
social relationships instead of capital improvements or savings. Governments are still not
run transparently and democratically; and corruption seems the rule instead of the
exception (Theobold 1999). At the local level, development money intended to empower
women is often transferred to men, or projects do not continue in perpetuity after the
funding agency has pulled out. In short, the stereotype of the improvident peasant persists, but so does the uncertainty related to both physical and social environments.

Modernization does not allow for the rationality of other world-views. It seeks to diminish the importance of social ties that are not based on capability, efficacy, and transparency. It is a cultural model through which individuals are seen as separate entities seeking to maximize their abilities and self-worth. However, while modernization may be the dominant cultural model of development, a more collectivistic model also exists and some of its attributes make their way into the dominant model. One reason for the persistence of collectivism may be the high degree of both sociopolitical and environmental uncertainty that also has persisted over time, especially in the Sahel region. Some theorize that people learned to mediate risk due to uncertainty through the development of extensive social networks based on webs of mutual obligation and aid (McIntosh 1993; Halstead and O’Shea 1989; Perevolotsky 1987). Kinship, fictive kinship, marriage, clan relations, and mythical debt are but a few of the specialized relationships through which such networks were developed. Over time these relationships became the moral institutions through which “the way things should be” was constantly defined and redefined.

The history of the Keur Momar Sarr region of Senegal is fraught with examples of uncertainty, both in the physical and sociopolitical environments. There is significant archaeological evidence to account for vast environmental changes in the region over the past 20,000 years (Street et al. 1981; Muzzolini 1985; McIntosh 1993; Dumont 1982; Nicholson 1981; Monteillet et al. 1981). There is also plenty of anecdotal evidence from the women living in Gankett Guent and Ndiba-Ndame to show the effects of widespread
climatic variability in the very recent past. The sociopolitical history of the region includes the rise and fall of the great Empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhay, incursions of the Almoravids from what is now Mauritania, incursions of various colonial powers (Portuguese, English, French) over several hundred years, slavery, the often debilitating colonialism and internal upheavals of the late 1800s until independence in 1960. Since independence the region has been affected by various governmental and non-governmental development schemes, including several water management programs, peanut growing programs, “voluntary” cooperative programs, reforestation programs, and, more recently, market gardening and capacity building programs. Most all of these programs have been applied from the top down and within the dominant modernization model. Ideally, modernization seeks to do away with the uncertainty in both the physical and sociopolitical arenas, but it has never been shown to do so in Senegal. Poor planning and lack of support and follow through are only symptomatic of the deeper problem of disregard for the cultural milieu into which various programs were inserted. From a purely rational perspective, it appears that “traditional” ways of doing things might be the optimal course for people to follow.

Yet even if such programs could control all the important variables – i.e., could make it rain regularly and evenly and sufficiently – the preference for maintaining social capital instead of physical capital would persist because cultural models, especially abstract cultural models, are more than merely adaptations to the environment. They also are embedded in moral value systems that, while always subject to change, are much more durable than more practical models related to farming techniques. Adherents to a collectivistic moral value system are motivated to satisfy group needs as a means of
maintaining their own self-identity and self-worth. The Wolof moral value system is most clearly reflected in an analysis of its proverbs, which “prove” that even individual success is dependent on that individual’s interpersonal relationships. Without developing and maintaining the relationships, the success has no meaning in and of itself.

Interviews with women in two different villages in Keur Momar Sarr reveal the extent to which both uncertainty and solidarity play a large role in their everyday life. Both villages have relocated several times in order to be closer to better water and soil sources. Both villages have suffered extreme drought conditions and large-scale seasonal migration as a result. Both have interacted with development projects in the past. More recently, only Gankett Guent has worked directly with a market gardening project, while Nidba-Ndame works more closely with commercial farmers renting land in their village. All women in both women’s groups desire their own source of income, yet none see themselves as separate entities isolated from men, the household, or the greater village community.

Individual women’s desire and ability to be a successful gardener or saleswoman varied widely, and some women do better than others. However, the desire to earn money is not the end itself. Instead, material wealth allows women to better take care of her family, including her husband, and strengthen her web of social obligations through increased lending and borrowing of cash and goods. These social ends help increase her social status in the family and village, which is more important than increased income by itself. When asked why they had a women’s group, the Wolof word ànd – to cooperate with, support – was the most common answer. To cooperate with one another, show
social solidarity for one another, and to work hard were common themes in all our conversations.

A second exercise with disposable cameras reinforced the themes of cooperation, solidarity, and hard work. Several women in Gankett Guent took pictures themselves to represent their lives. As one might think, they took pictures of the things with which they were most involved everyday: agricultural fields, people having lunch, and the markets. Each woman explained her pictures in relation to other people: women and children working together in the fields to help each other; women studying together at the Wolof school; women arguing over fish in the local market; praise for a man who knows how to take care of his family; praise for another who rents land in the village. Overall, it was the ties that bind people together that seemed most important to the interviewees.

I asked women to pile sort photographs of their neighbors for a third exercise. First, they sorted as they wished. Second, they sorted by who they cër – respect. Third, they sorted by who has alal- wealth- according to their own definition of alal. Again, similar collectivistic characteristics emerged. Nearly all the women said that they should respect the Imam, the village chief, and certain other important men in the village whose roles or age are deemed important. However, they also easily listed individuals, both women and men, who they can respect because they behave well or are wise. When considering alal, most women clearly defined it in terms of material wealth, but also in terms of the number of people one has: “Money is good for getting things, but it disappears fast. People are always there” (Nogaay Diagne, Gankett Guent). People who were high on the alal list were not necessarily high on the cër list. No one considered the Imam to have much alal in the material sense, but he almost universally ranked for cër.
It is this last point that is most important. Since the women in Gankett Guent are interdependent/other referential they will be motivated to act differently than someone who is independent/self-referential. They are motivated by the need to create harmonious relationships in order to protect their social networks. Therefore, the desire for material wealth is more closely related to concerns about social status enhancement than about personal success. While individual success is acceptable and encouraged, one who is successful and does not share her wealth with her particular in-group may be ostracized from that group. Attempts to formalize women’s groups also inadvertently try to separate women from men and the larger village community to a certain extent. Women’s groups are not new to Keur Momar Sarr, but the notion that no men should be involved at all is.

Why an Understanding of Cultural Models is Important

My original goal in writing this dissertation was to reveal some of the underlying cultural models that motivate individuals and groups responsible for creating and implementing development programs. The models influencing these individuals are more likely to be individualistic and, thus, often incompatible with the more collectivistic models that motivate women in rural Senegal. If behavior results from an individual’s perception of reality, and that perception is socially constructed, then diffusion of new information, new ways of doing things and thinking about things, depends mightily on that new information’s compatibility with the cultural models, including institutionalized definitions of roles and relationships, of the targeted population.

In the case of development in general, the target population is usually seen as both the cause of the problem and the foundation for any solution. The solution is to be found through changing attitudes and behaviors that act as obstacles to change. Thus women in
Senegal, for example, must learn new ways of thinking about organization, taking care of money, their relationship vis-à-vis men, etc. In short, they must become more “modern,” at least in thought. They are also recognized by development agents as appropriate targets of development activities because they are easier to work with than men: women tend to pay back their loans on time, are more responsive to what the agent tells them to do, and they are far less likely to be openly argumentative (Goetz and Gupta 1996).

However, even women-oriented programs flounder and fail and no one quite knows why. Excuses are made: “that GPF isn’t serious, they are lazy”; “that group gave all their money to their husbands; “that group had technical problems,” etc. The fact is that individuals, even those radically embracing the proposed changes, cannot help but interpret the meaning of new information through their pre-existing cultural models. New information is integrated through a process of reshaping it to fit those models. The reshaping process changes both the information and the cultural model, and through it an individual’s identity is created and recreated. Sall refers to modernism as the “anti-identity,” noting the penchant of elite Africans to devalue aspects of their own cultures that are contradictory to modernization (1995).

By way of conclusion I will present a commonly used development tool – microcredit or microfinance- to show how problems arise because development practices privilege individualistic framework over a collectivistic framework. This information is pertinent to Keur Momar Sarr now because a local micro-finance institution has just opened in the village of Keur Momar Sarr. It is really two banks in one: one branch for any one who wants to join, and another strictly for women’s groups. The former will be run by a locally elected administrative council while the latter will be managed by the local non-
governmental organization, ASREAD. Ideally, ASREAD will funnel all its project money earmarked for women’s groups through this bank.

Microcredit as Panacea

Microcredits are small loans given to poor people in order to help them start up their own small business and start saving money. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh was the first formal microlending institution, but its model has been copied around the world. These small loans are usually given in conjunction with some training or development activity, and are viewed by many as the key to eliminating poverty, encouraging environmental responsibility, and empowering marginalized groups such as women (Franz 2000; Johnson and Kidder 1998). At the 1997 Microcredit Summit, U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton said that microcredit was “an invaluable tool in alleviating poverty, promoting self-sufficiency and stimulating economic activity…” (citation in Franz 2000: 45).

In the place of collateral, these programs rely on social guarantees: an individual can get a loan only if he or she is backed by an approved group, such as a women’s group or a cooperative, or in Senegal, a GIE: Economic Interest Group, a group that is formally recognized by the government. It is this group that guarantees the repayment of the loan. These savings and loans typically have development goals in mind. This Community Banking Decree from Nigeria is fairly typical in its listing of bank goals:

- Inculcate disciplines banking habits in the rural populations;
- Inspire the spirit of community ownership, organization, and self-reliance;
- Generate credit from within the communities for enhancing the development of productive activities and improving the economic status of the communities and their individual members;
• Provide off-season bridging loans as a means of breaking the widespread dependence on local money-lenders;

• Formalize the use of communities as effective vehicles for rural change and national development;

• Promote rural activities such as agriculture, commerce, arts and crafts, agro- and mineral-based cottage and small-scale industries, vocational and trade skills, rural transportation, etc. particularly in support of small farmers, microentrepreneurs, women, young people, and cooperatives; and,

• Promote the emergence of an effective and integrated financial system that responds to the needs of the whole economy, from the grassroots to the national level (Onugu 2000: 103). [1992 Community Banking Decree No. 46 from Nigeria]

Savings and loans are typically organized as associations with a general assembly, and committees for administration, credit, and review:

“The savings and loan is an association of persons unified by a common tie, who are grouped voluntarily in order to achieve some common objectives through the establishment of a democratically managed enterprise. Each person furnishes an equitable portion of the capital necessary to constitute the enterprise and accepts a fair participation in the risks and fruits of that enterprise. It is an enterprise that collects savings and gives credit. It is an enterprise that offers to its members a system of insurance and social protection. Functions of the savings and loan include: holding deposits, making loans, and providing training. With the profit it will earn, the savings and loan can create its own social projects, like building a dispensary” [personal notes, ASREAD from a training session for ASREAD and the men who will be running MECAPP, April 13, 1999]

These banks normally seek to make small loans to marginalized social communities, a group into which women fall nearly worldwide. In modernization terminology, these bank seek to empower women through economic development:

“While financially successful, the real wealth of the CARD bank lies in its psychological empowerment, which influences the community in its economic, social, and educational development…Promoters of microfinance projects in Malaysia (and other countries) have concluded that a contributing factor to the success of the projects is the participation of underemployed women. With the financial assistance of AIM, these women can now make use of their available
time to earn additional income for their families...Communities are growing strong because of their creative ideas for local economic development” (Gow 2000: 48-49).

The grandfather of these development oriented lending institutions is the Grameen Bank, started in the early 1980s in India (Wahid 1999). By contrast, the bank in Keur Momar Sarr opened only in 1999. Also in contrast, most of the clients in Keur Momar Sarr are men, while to this day most of the Grameen Bank clients are women. The women’s group part of the bank was not yet up and running when I left Keur Momar Sarr in 2000.

The idea seems sound: lend people small amounts of money through a guarantee group. Because the amounts are small they will not be difficult to repay, and because a social group guarantees each loan, the bank is assured of repayment regardless of the state of any individual loan. Loans are only approved for certain economic generating activities and borrowers are required to make regular payments. The bank charges interest in order to cover its costs of lending and, one hopes, capitalize itself for future loans. The borrower gets enough money to invest in some tools or an animal, thus ideally creating an income-generating project from which she can repay her loan. The World Bank is firmly behind this idea, as are all of the large donor organizations. Every project being written by ASREAD, and many other organizations around the country, has a micro-finance component alongside the women’s component. These types of programs, especially those concerning women are considered very successful based on their high repayment rates. The women who participated in the market gardening project with ASREAD in Gankett Guent achieved 100% repayment for all three of their marketing campaigns.
However, in practice things do not always turn out as planned, and even high repayment rates do not tell the whole story. The goals of microcredit programs for women are to increase women’s productivity outside the household and it is to be income apart from her husband’s income. One of the critiques of microcredit loans is that they are too small to create real productivity so that they, “hardly offer the prospects of building an alternative institutional base to the marital household” (Goetz and Gupta 1996: 54). Women continue to invest their loan money into low-productivity enterprises, like livestock-raising, that do not significantly increase, “women’s rate of market engagement through technological changes or increased employment” (Goetz and Gupta 1996: 57; Buckley 1997). Since many women funnel the loan money to their husbands, Ackerly (1995) counted as empowered only those women who were able to formally account for the input costs, product yield, and profitability for the enterprise undertaken with their loan money.

In Senegal educated women working for different development organizations have raised the same question (Field notes, UNESCO Workshop). The difference between intention and reality is a misunderstanding of the significance of cooperation and interpersonal relationships in collectivistic societies and a misunderstanding of the extent to which every woman targeted by such programs can be or wants to be an entrepreneur. Decisions about what constitutes empowerment or satisfactory use of loan money are distinctly rooted in an individualistic approach to development. It stresses self-efficacy and economic growth of individual women apart from their social contexts: “Embedded in the ‘business’ approach to poverty lending is a social identity through which to accomplish the desired restructuring – that of the self-maximizing entrepreneur”
Ranking 2001: 28). Reproductive, household centered productivity is not considered economically productive even though such activities are the base of all other activities in the household for children, women, and men. Women are more likely to use their loan proceeds to improve consumption standards in some way. Investing in small livestock is but one way of assuring that there will either be cash or food on hand. Also, even if women do funnel their loan money to their husbands instead of using it themselves they often achieve higher social status within the household and the community because of their ability to contribute to the family income. Ultimately, the emphasis on self-efficacy and economic rationality make it easier to blame individual women for project failure instead of looking for institutional flaws.

Kabeer introduces an interesting cultural contrast: an increase in wealth among women in India sometimes causes them to withdraw from the public arena instead of pushing them into it: “Notions of purdah were closely interwoven with local understandings of class, social status and gender propriety so that behavior expressing gender norms were often simultaneously expressive of class hierarchy and social standing within the community” (Kabeer 2001: 69). To work in the open marketplaces is synonymous with being low class and/or poor. Women who are able to observe purdah work from their homes and/or funnel loan money to their husbands. Are they less empowered because they are not actively engaged in the market sector? Gender inequalities in household relationships exist, but the relationships are not always conflictual, which seems to be the assumption in most critiques. While women may be more collectivist in general than men, men are also part of collectivist societies and have obligations to their wives and
extended families. Their reputations and statuses are at stake if they fail to fulfill these obligations.

In Senegal women also funnel loan money to their husbands, or use it for ends other than it was intended by the credit entity, not because their husbands cow them into doing so, but because they see needs in their households that they want to improve. Hence, Bandañ Thioune gave her money to her husband to repair his water pump and she willingly gave her labor to him in his field instead of seeding a rainy season field of her own. Depending on one’s particular world-view, this could be interpreted as an act of male domination, a rational cost-benefit analysis, or an act of dimbalante intended not only to secure rights to future production and/or profit, but also to support her husband, a good man who actively works to fulfill his familial and larger social obligations. Or, perhaps, one could view the act as motivated by some combination of all three factors.

Many other women used at least part of their loan money to fulfill immediate consumption needs within the household: food, clothes, medicines, school fees, etc. They also invested at least part in some savings plan, such as livestock. When it was time to repay the loan, the women resorted to various strategies including borrowing from their families, their husbands, or selling their livestock or some other merchandise. Some men grumbled about having to repay the loans, but they were also proud of their wives’ contributions to the household. Since men ultimately are responsible for household welfare, it only makes sense that women would want to invest in their men’s activities:

“Unequal interdependence within the family, and women’s greater vulnerability outside it, explain why the women loanees sought greater equality within the family as a result of their access to credit rather than greater independence from it. It explains, for instance, the significance they invested in their ability to bring a valued resource into the household and to contribute directly to household income. It also explains the value they attached to improvements in the quality of family relationships as a result...
of the increase in their perceived economic contribution to the household” (Kabeer 2001: 80).

Similarly, Rankin points out that, in Nepal, unmarried Newar women over thirty-five years old have the legal right to part of their fathers’ land. However, this option is rarely exercised because they would no longer be able to lay claim to the protection of related males. To be a dependent – sister or wife – is a safer economic bet than the autonomy of owning one’s own land. It thus appears that the motivation behind individual women’s loan-oriented behavior is based on collectivistic assessments of risk and incentive. If individual women define themselves in relation to other people, that is, as wives, mothers, or daughters of particular age and social statuses at particular times, then they will be more likely to use their loan money in ways that will enhance those roles. At the same time, they will strive to pay back their loans in order to maintain access to that unique resource. If they have not made their loan money earn more money, then they will ask for help from their husbands or other relatives, sell other goods – including household goods that could potentially reduce the subsistence base, such as foodstuffs, or sell their labor.

Having access to microcredit resources is not just about getting cash, either. Women in all the literature and in Keur Momar Sarr as well appreciate the opportunity to learn new things especially in a context that is considered acceptable by their communities. Even though very few of the women in either Gankett Guent or Ndiba-Ndame can read or write, they all spoke highly of the opportunity to study their own language. Unable to attend public schools or go to vocational because of what is deemed appropriate for their sex and age, through development projects these women have the opportunity to learn about many topics outside their normal realm of experience and meet with people they
might not otherwise have had the opportunity to meet with because the Wolof classes were linked directly to their ability to take a loan from ASREAD’s PAGPF project. This may be a positive unintended side-effect to the project, but it also, from the point of view of the project planner, lead to an unintended dependence on the project itself: women may never actually ‘graduate’ or take any steps to replicate the actual reading and writing part of the classes. When the project ends, so do the classes and training sessions. Thus, it is not just the informational content of the classes that attract participants, but also the opportunity to gather socially and make new contacts. The same is true for microcredits: woman are famous for their high rate of repayment, but their reasons for repayment may have little to do with long-term poverty alleviation per se. Instead, they may desire access to opportunities to unite with other women and education, or to help their husbands find better ways of supporting the family.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

E.E. Evans-Pritchard argued many years ago that the purpose of anthropology was not to find or assume some overarching law governing cultural systems. Instead, he said that the anthropologist immerses himself in a context: learns to speak another language, “to think their concepts, and feel their values” as a means of uncovering “patterns, which, once established, enable him to see it [the culture in question] as a whole, as a set of interrelated abstractions” (Bohannan and Glazer 1988: 417). Cultures, he said, could not be understood through the natural science model, which requires “rigid and inappropriate” categorization of observed phenomena (Poggie et al. 1992). Cultural models may be one way of reconciling the two approaches.
It is impossible to know any culture completely, but patterns that reveal bits and pieces of the underlying logic at work in different groups may be discerned through a systematic construction of cultural models regarding particular domains. Thus, Blount (2002) was able to begin to understand how local shrimpers in Georgia structure their environment. Dailey (1999) provides a peek into the development of American cultural values of progress and civilization that persist today in one form or another and continue to inform our sense of identity as Americans. Poggie, taking the most empirical approach in his analysis of cultural models of success among fishermen in Puerto Rico, defines the job of applied anthropology in defining “the distribution of diverse beliefs that people hold about success, as well as the sociocultural correlates of success…” (Poggie 1992: 63). Such understandings, he states, are vitally important in creating policies that will have a positive impact on their intended target populations.

I have only a few recommendations to make based on my own research. From the theoretical perspective, I think that we need more cross-cultural cultural model research with regards to development-oriented domains, including those related to environmental concerns. In my mind this would include constructing models not only of rural Senegalese, but also constructing models important to other scientists in the field and in the donor offices. In this way we might begin to regain a useful concept of culture in anthropology that can integrate scientific empiricism with more qualitative, contextualized understandings of what it means to be human. Similarly, working more often with agronomists, economists, and policy makers is a way of working from within to adjust the dominant development model of modernization to more readily reflect more collectivistic concerns.
A second theoretical recommendation is that we better integrate cognitive studies of brain function with the study of cultural models. Cultural models may be in the mind, but there are limits to human behavior built into our physical selves: “Culture evolved in tandem with, and interacting with, evolutionary human biology” (Poggie et al. 1992: 10). At the same time, culture is more than a response to a given environment:

“If culture is the whole or part of what people must know in a particular social environment in order to operate efficiently, it follows first, that people must have acquired this knowledge, either through the development of innate potentials, or from external sources, or from a combination of both, and secondly that this acquired knowledge is being continually stored in a manner that makes it relatively easily accessible when necessary” (Bloch 1998: 4).

Thus, what we can possibly know about culture can be learned through the study of patterns that reflect the underlying mental structures that develop through biology and acculturation.

It is clear, then, that the possibilities for future cross-disciplinary research are numerous. If development activities are to continue, as I believe they will, indefinitely, then is surely is not rational for them to continue in the same manner. We must find some way to accept other ways of seeing the world as rational on their own terms, without generalizing or freezing them in time and space, or co-opting them into our own cultural models. True participatory “development” could emerge as a meeting between equally valued, but also equally flawed, human groups. To that end I also have two practical recommendations. First, development planners must try harder to make cultural analysis of their projects central to the formation of the project and not just an add-on. Often, this part of the planning comes long after the project has already been decided upon. All the anthropologist can do at that point is point out the inherent problems and suggest some ways to get around them. Early integration into the problem definition itself might help
create a project that better reflects needs and aspirations of the target group, or find a group that better fits the project.

My second recommendation is that all development activities be planned with a longer-term perspective and on a case-by-case basis. This is the only way I can think of for people to create the relationships of trust and accountability necessary for any real sustainable development. This requires a change in attitudes on the part of development agents, who often, in the backs of their minds, still see themselves as the bestowers and not as true partners in a lifelong (perhaps) project of renewal and relationship building. I do not pretend that I think this will be an easy change, but I do think that the momentum is out there, in the literature, among people I have spoken to in the field, for some kind of change in this direction. As part of this partnership, target people have to feel that they have the right to say ‘no thanks’, or negotiate alternative ideas, to offers of development assistance without losing access to important resources, such as political or social connections.

It is easy now to look back with a critical eye on earlier anthropological work in defining the concept of culture. Their theories often appear too rigid, or too all-encompassing to us now. In their time, however, they each pushed the boundaries of their own societies’ cultural models of what normal or standard might have meant. It is they who laid the foundation for the fields of discourse that we use and take for granted today. In the case of cultural models, I think most specifically of Ruth Benedict’s concepts of cultural patterns and her later attempts to understand patterns of national culture. She, too, is often regarded as having created monolithic models that controlled the individual. She was very aware of cultural complexity, but she did believe in some regularity to the
patterns she saw. She never made clear, however, the degree to which the regularity in
turn creates oppositional fields on which individuals fight to control and contest
meanings. Abstract models of individualism and collectivism are not, and cannot be,
internalized the same way by all individuals who share a common culture. Thus, an
individual’s identity is not tied to any one cultural model in particular. We may be able to
identify cultural models related to ‘political cowboyism’ in the United States, but that is
not the same thing as saying that to be American is to be a political cowboy, or at least
not around the same issues at the same time. The same holds true for individuals who are
targeted by development programs. While they may tend to be more collectivistic than
are the deliverers of development programs, they are not necessarily defining
collectivism in the same way as someone else might, nor are they always going to express
collectivistic attributes in all situations, or even the same situations at different times. A
similar approach to understanding the development process can help reveal the intricacies
of the cultural models used to define what development is supposed to be about and those
models used to determine meanings contextually.
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APPENDIX A

WOLOF PROVERBS

The need for moral asceticism

_Mbëggé du mat ngor mat._
Greed is not good enough, honesty is good enough.
Perfect greed and perfect honesty cannot exist at the same time. One must learn self-control or become dishonest.

_Muñë mën muss._
Patience is more powerful than trickery.
One who suffers patiently will win out in the long run over he who, in the end, will suffer from shame because of his behavior when the trickery is unveiled.

_Weësëk dina jogé ba ci njoñ._
Luck will come out of a situation wherein one’s hands are tied behind the back.
No matter how difficult the situation, one must be calm and patient. In the end something good will come.

_Bula ngelaw mayee mbaam; ngelawa la koy xañ._
If the wind gives you a donkey, the wind will take it away.
Always wait for honest results of one’s own work. Creating the illusion of having obtained a result, which may disappear at any moment, only leaves one open to shame once the truth is revealed.

_Nak wu ñul kuk ku ca jëlé meew mu weex tàll daw ba fattu._
Whoever takes white milk from a black cow runs until he is out of breath.
One should be happy with what one has.

Saving dignity

_Juddu bu rafet ndey ak mbaay, faayda boroomam._
A good birth is due to the mother and father, a good reputation is due to oneself.
It is up to the individual to build his own reputation.

_Wurusu mandin, teela xéy du ko maye, yaay ju liggéey-a ko maye._
Gold of the land, getting up early does not give it, a mother who works gets it.
A person’s success in life is due not to his hard work, but to the efforts of his mother to be a good wife and mother.
Good development of the individual depends on the state of his home life. Happy familial relationships affect character and personality development. This proverb conditions the previous proverb.
Lu la réer ci juudu feeñ ci jikko.
What is ignored at birth is rediscovered in one’s character.
The state of one’s birth conditions later character development. This makes sense if one
considers that birth status will affect educational opportunities.

Full-à gën taar.
Respectability is better than beauty.
Nothing is more important than to feel respected by others.

Bukki bu daanee ponkal ca doxin wa la.
A hyena that knocks down a big guy does so because of his way of doing things.
An external appearance of respectability and character can contribute to success.

Tilim di na dem fu saabu mënula dem.
Dirt will go where soap cannot go.
Gossip, accusations, etc. can be done in such a way that no one can establish the truth.
Therefore, it behooves the individual to always conduct himself in a straightforward
manner in the eyes of the greater society.

Justification of Modesty

Nebbon bi ci dënnu tuabér, ba tax ko tê-bëntu, mungi ci xàban te mu ne tek ak moom.
The drop of grease on the chest of the goat causes him to be aggressive, it is also on the
bull but it rests immobile with him.
The goat is a show off, the bull is bigger and stronger, but also modest. When one brags
of something, like riches or strength, it behooves him to remember that there is always
someone out there who is richer or stronger than he who is not bragging.

Xel mi na gase teen bi, la ci keneen di naane.
The same intelligence that leads you to dig a well leads another to draw water from it.

Xaru waay gaynde waay.
One is always the sheep of someone and the lion of someone else.

Yoxëmtiku dina yokk taxawaay, waaye boo sonne dellu.
Standing on your tiptoes increases your height, but when you are tired you will return to
your former height.

Alal fajul dee gàcće lay faj.
Wealth does not cure death, but it does cure shame.
Because of wealth one can avoid the shame of being unable to fulfill acts of hospitality or
charity. When one has very little he must sacrifice greatly in order to fulfill these social
obligations necessary to be considered honorable.
Ku moomul sa alal, sa alal moom la.
Who does not master his wealth will be mastered by it.
Love of wealth for the sake of wealth will render a person unbalanced.

Koo xaar ca la mu gëné bëgg doff-a la fay fekk.
Whoever waits for someone near something dear to that person will see a fool approaching.
To like anything too much is to become unbalanced.

**Condemnation of idleness**

Ku bëré yaay daanu.
Who fights, falls.
One has to try something in order to fail at it. Trying and failing is better than never trying at all.

Ku la jëk yeewu ne la sangal.
Who gets up before you says,"cover yourself."

Ndimmël na ca fekk loxal boroom.
Aid, may it be found in the working hand of the one being aided.

Bu la bukki tooñee dumaal gayndé.
If the hyena teases you correct the lion.

Bu mbey matee faj bàraam des.
When the cultivation is finished the healing of the fingers remains.

Wat gaal ak yëgoo.
Drag the boat and have consideration for it.

Su fukk di gas, fukk di suul, pëndaay bari, waaye pax du fa am.
If ten are digging and ten are filling there will be a lot of dust but no hole.

Am bukki yombëna waaye buy xalama jafe.
To have a hyena is easy but to have one who plays the guitar is hard.

Yalla, Yalla bëy sa tool.
God! God! Cultivate your field.

Nit la mu jëf la du la mu wax.
A person is what he does not what he says.

Wenn yattay sàmm gétt, waaye nit ña ku nekk ak sa yat.
One stick is sufficient to take care of the corral, but each person has to have one.
**Social Pressure on the Individual**

*Ku ñëpp tufli nga tooy.*
Who everyone spits on becomes wet.

*Bët bu rusul tuuru.*
An eye that doesn’t reflect shame will explode.

*Ku amul kilifa jinné di sa kilifa.*
Who does not have a chief (moral role model) then the devil is your chief.

*Nëbbal te ne gisuma kenn, waaye bul wax ne kenn gisuma.*
Hide yourself and say “I see no one,” but do not say “no one sees me.”

*Lu defu waxu, lu xew di jàmbat.*
That which is done is said, what is happening is complained about.

*Lekkal lu la neex, waaye solal lu neex nit ŋa.*
Eat what you like, but wear what is good to society.

*Fu ŋëp di say ku sayul, yaa dof.*
Where everyone is married, whoever is not married is crazy.
Prudence

Yàkamti ak gaawantu bu ŋu juree dom réccu am caw yoon.
To be in a hurry and to when they bear a child, shame there is on the road.

Waxu jëgg doyul ndërëklaay.
The talk of a stranger is not sufficient proof.

Bu la jëgg fenee yobbënté ko.
If the stranger lies send him on a commission.

Dey matteek du matte, bul jox sa loxo.
It bites or it does not bite, do not give it your hand.

Jaan du tuut, saayu màttee boom.
Snake is not small, when it bites it kills.

Ellëk du añ du reer waaye dees na ko sédd.
Tomorrow he will not lunch or dinner but save his portions..

Ku yagg ci teen bi, baag fekk la fa.
Who takes a long time at the well, a bag will find you there.

Gumba tal na leneen ludul têbi teen.
The one who is blind has time for other things besides jumping around the well.

Fal leen bët folli nopp.
Elect the eyes and dethrone the ears.

Bët du yanu waaye xam na lu bopp attan.
The eyes cannot lift but they know what the head can hold.

Tere mu të bayyil mu gis.
Counsel him and if he rejects it leave him to see.

Boo gisee lëf lëfà tax, boo gisee yapp, raba dee.
If you see something something is its cause, if you see meat, an animal is dead.

Ku njëlu di jooy yaa xam ku dee.
Who wakes up and cries, he knows who is dead.

Kuy jaay ker ba takkusaan wara yombël.
Who sells shade should reduce his price when evening arrives.

Daw ba rëcc ci ngoorë la bokk.
To run in order to escape is also a mark of heroism.
Yaayi jambaar amul doom.
The mother of a courageous man has no child.

*Ku fanaane def wara yendo degglu.*
Who spends the night doing something had better spend the day listening.

*Ba laa ngaa toc géméñu sàmm, xaaral ba xam la mu wallis.*
Before you smack the mouth of the herder, wait until what he is whistling.

**Imminent Justice**

*Lù waay rendi mu nacc ciy loxoom.*
What someone kills bleeds in his hands.

*Lù waay goob gar ko.*
What one harvests mill.

*Ku boot bukki xaj bëw la.*
Who carries hyena on his back dog barks at him.

*Naxe ku ca am mbubu, am ca tubay, mbaxana té la ca.*
The trickster who obtains a boubou and pants still needs a hat.

*Dëgg du yendu àlla fanaan fa.*
Truth does not spend the day and night in the forest.

*Yagg du saabu waaye di na foot.*
Time is not soap but it will wash the dirty laundry.

*Lù waay def boppam.*
What someone did he did himself.

**Peace**

*Mak lu dal xelam a koy may yaram.*
The adult, what he attains his intelligence allows him to grow.

*Def li nga mën, wax li nga xam, boo tèddee nelaw.*
Do what you can, say what you know, when you go to bed, sleep.

*Tool bu ñay ruuc, gëléem su koy ji, seet lay mëna woy.*
The field that the elephant grazes, the camel is sowing it, to examine it he should sing.

*Yoonu jàmm du wiir.*
The path of peace does not wind.
Tëru teggee ca aay.
To lie down on a detoured path is not recommended.

Bul mere ku la yakkal ci gaalu xaj, boo ca lekkul mu jar ko.
Do not be angry with he who serves your food in a dog bowl, that you do not eat from it is valuable to him.

Fu jámm yendu nit a fa xam lu mu waxul.
Where peace passes the day someone there knows something he did not say.

Sa bopp lay wax sa moroom.
It is you who speak for your fellow.

Mbañ amul ñakk waxtaan a am.
There is no interdiction, only a lack of discussion.

Ku daa ta xam xamadi xaw laa rey.
Who is and knows, ignorance nearly killed him.

**Personal Humanism**

Yàlla amul palanteer bu mu naan la tollu ma foofu ma jox la.
God does not have a window that he

Ku gërëmul nit ŋi doo gërëm Yàlla.
Who does not thank people does not thank God.

Ku iñaanul ne Yàllak diw.
Who is not envious says “God and that person..”.

*Nit, nitay garabam.*
People are the cure of people.

*Ku am nit ŋi ŋakkoo dara.*
Who has people lacks for nothing.

Yàlla du la jox ŋjëgu saaku ceeb, jox la doole joo ko yenoo.
God does not give you the price for a bag of rice, he gives you the strength to carry it home.
People can fulfill the needs of other people. God gives to some what others lack so that they will need each other.

Yééne néék lë, borrom a ciy fanaan.
A wish is a room wherein the wisher spends the night.
Thoughts that one has, good or bad, about other people become directed at the thinker.
You are, or deserve, what you think of others.
**Life and Death**

*Boo xamoon li lay yoot, nga bàyyi li ngay yoot.*
If you knew what was lying in wait for you, you would abandon that for which you are lying in wait.

*Addina Kendandoo la.*
Life is a journey passed together.

*Addina ndoxum joor la; buy tall mu ngay niis.*
Life is water on sandy ground; as soon as it is stagnant it soaks into the ground.

*Ku sa naq jéék nga aj say koog.*
Who finishes your porridge should hand up your spoon.

*Addina potu ndaa la, ku naan jox sa moroom.*
Life is the canari cup, who is finished drinking passes the cup to another.

*Addina njoowaanu golo la, garab gu nekk lay wékku.*
Life is a monkey’s hammock, he attaches it to any tree.

**Education**

*Lu joy loo xaleela gên lu jooy ku mag.*
What makes children cry is better than what makes adults cry.
A child who suffers to learn his roles in society will become a competent adult.

*Ku mbaanik sa ndaw kàcc sa mag.*
Who lives his youth like half-cream milk will live his adulthood like sour milk.
A child who does as he pleases will grow into an incompetent adult who will suffer the consequences of many failures.

*Xale xamul Yàlla waaye xam na yar.*
The child does not know God but he does know the rod.
While the child cannot act according to elevated ideas, he does understand the threat of physical punishment.

*Yaru maam du yar.*
Education/discipline of grandparents is no real education/discipline.
The permissive nature of the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren limits the ability of grandparent to discipline.
APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the research titled *Modernization of Local Institutions: The Process of Formalization of Women’s Groups in Senegal*, which is being conducted by Mikell Gleason of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Georgia. I understand that this participation is entirely voluntary; I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The following points have been explained to me:

1. The reason for the research is to gather information on the development of women’s groups in Senegal, and their role in the community and environmental management.

2. The procedures are as follows: the investigator will live and work with my community during which time she shall observe our activities and use different interviewing techniques to find out information about my community and its women’s group. She may ask me personal questions about how I run my household or who impacts my everyday life.

3. The discomforts or stresses that may be faced during this research are: No discomforts or stresses are foreseen.

4. Participation entails the following risks: No risks are foreseen.

5. The results of this participation will be confidential, and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without my prior consent, unless otherwise requested by law.

6. The investigator will answer further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

__________________________________       __________________________________
Signature of the Investigator           Date   Signature of Participant        Date

PLEASE SIGN BOTH COPIES OF THIS FORM. KEEP ONE AND RETURN THE OTHER TO THE INVESTIGATOR

Research at the University of Georgia that involves human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding your rights as a participant should be addressed to Heidi L. Roof, M.S., or Dr. C. Michael Moriarty; Institutional Review Board; Office of the V.P. for Research; The University of Georgia, 604A Graduate Studies Research Center; Athens, Georgia 30602-7441; Telephone (706) 542-6514.
WOLOF VERSION

KAYITU DIGE


Faramfaccéel nañu ma ko ci fànna yi :

1. Li taxa jog bi gëstu mooy dajale bépp xabaar bu ajju ci jaar-jaaru mbootaayi ak gurupmaa jìgeen ŋi ak seeni wareef ci seen dëkk.

2. Doxalin wi : gëstukaat bi dina dëkk ci sunu biir ngir mënna topp sunuy yëngu-yëngu.
Dina jëfandiko ay pexey waxtaan yuy tax mu xam numa dëkkin ak sumay kuréel. Dina ma mënna laaj itam lu jëm ci sumay waa kër ak sumay mbokk.

3. Laaj yi waruñu ma indil benn jafe-jafè.

4. Daara mënuma ci fekk.

5. Dina suturaal sumay tont, du leen fësal lu dul ma jox ko ci ndigal, mba yoon.


_________________________________    _______________________________
Màndargu gëstukaat           Suma màndarga

Màndargaal ñaari kayit yi ; dencal been kayit, delool ñaareel bi gëstukaat bi.

La recherche à la Université de Georgie qui implique des participants humains est mené sous la direction de l’Institutional Review Board. Si vous avez des questions ou problèmes quant a vos droits comme participant, vous devez écrire à Heidi L. Roof, M.S., ou Dr. C. Michael Moriarty, Institutional Review Board; office of V.P. for Research; The University of Georgia; 604A Graduate Studies Research Center; Athens, Georgia 30602-7441 ; Telephone (706) 542-6514.