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Y'en a Marre! A discourse analysis of music and political contestation in Senegal



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Bachelor Thesis

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“Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it.”

- Frantz Fanon

1. Introduction

Music has often been praised for its power to touch people and to change societies. It allows people to form collective identities, voice their opinion, and their resistance towards what they perceive as unjust. While music has changed and continues to change over time, with new trends and genres emerging, its power to mobilize and unify people has remained the same over the years (Danaher, 2010, p. 811). Music has the power to create collective identities between its listeners (Danaher, 2010, p. 812). Repeating lyrics of songs associated with specific movements, supports this notion of a collective identity, since people internalize these lyrics (Danaher, 2010, p. 812). Additionally, music bridges differences between groups, leading them to interact, and therefore create new relationships (Danaher, 2010, p. 813).

Furthermore, music brings out people's emotions, which has once again a unifying effect (Danaher, 2010, p. 813). Emotions can be used to organize people, feeling these same emotions, and in turn be put into music.

There are multiple examples of music being used in social movements. From as early on as the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, music has acted as a unifying mechanism (Danaher, 2010, p. 813). On the African continent, a prominent example of music transforming and raising awareness about political issues is Ugandan musician and politician Bobi Wine. Musicians like Bobi Wine use the power of their music and lyrics to mobilize people for change (Jennings, 2019).

Hip-hop and rap have been attributed a lot of importance in mobilizing young people. Shortly after hip-hop music emerged in the United States, it quickly spread to other countries, not only giving a voice to disenfranchised African American youth, but to youth all over the world (Fredericks, 2014, p. 133). By the late 1990s, it had spread to Africa, and in the West African state of Senegal, multiple bands and music collectives had been established (Fredericks, 2014, p. 133).

During that time, two young men formed a band, called Keur Gui (KG). They made music about Senegal and its politics and society, thereby calling out government officials over the years. They were sitting in their friend Fadel Barro's home in 2011, when they found

themselves in of many power outages in the country (Boy Saloum, 2013). The three friends, along with other people decided to form a movement, called Y'en a marre (YEM), translatable to "Enough is enough".

Besides their large following, the reasons for YEM's success in mobilizing Senegalese youth, and the role KG played, remain largely unexplored. Therefore, the research question that will be answered in the following thesis is:

How can a cultural phenomenon, like a music collective, such as Keur Gui and Y'en a marre in Senegal mobilize youth to join a social movement?

The thesis is structured in four parts. Beginning with a review of previous literature on the core concepts relevant to the overall topic, mobilization, youth, and music, it goes on to discuss theories inherent to the topic. Following the two first parts, the methodology, including research design, case selection, and data collection will be presented. Lastly, an analysis will be conducted, investigating how mobilization can be linked to a music collective.

2. Literature on rap, youth movements and mobilization

2.1 Youth and the influence of hip-hop and rap

"Youth" can be defined as a social category that has limited influence in some, regulated spaces of a country's society (Fredericks, 2014, p. 132). Especially African youth as a collective has been described by various scholars as rebellious actors after the independence of their states, when it became evident that the idea of nationalist projects failed in large parts of the continent (Fredericks 2014, p. 133). In places where youth manage to mobilize, it is still considered to be widely embedded in the societal context of its states, not having a lot of influence on politics (Honwana & Boeck, 2005). Thus, even where there is mobilization, it does not threaten the status quo, and governments do not feel pressured to change by said mobilized youth (Fredericks, 2014, p. 133). The frustration of youth, conditioned a government that does not recognize them as a threat, can be seen as an important tool for mobilization. When the feeling of being disregarded intensifies, this frustration can mobilize youth, potentially leading to an organization strong enough to contest the government.

The influence of hip-hop culture is one of the main ways of expression for youth since the 1980s. This can be attributed to the fact that hip-hop, and rap are considered as the medium of disadvantaged youth, especially in the African context (Alim et al. 2009; Basu & Lemelle 2006; Mitchell 2001). In multiple African states, including Senegal, hip-hop artists have played an important role in mobilizing youth politically. In addition, popular media play a big role in

youth movements across Africa, especially when it comes to political identity (Barnett 2004b; Hansen 2006). The foundation of this political identity is built by listening to the same music, which consequently moves people to organize around shared grievances. The idea of interconnectedness of music and media has a big influence on African youth and its mobilization as well as their political awareness.

At the time of its emergence, rap gave a voice to disenfranchised African American youth (Fredericks, 2014, p. 133). Today, rap and hip-hop music are more generally associated with being a voice against injustice and domination by an authority (Fredericks, 2014). They often focus on the problems of marginalized groups, thereby highlighting every-day struggles and frustrations and giving people an opportunity for contention and identification with other people (Forman 2002; Woods 2007). Music can provide opportunities to youth to explore different modes of contestation and rebellion. Hip-hop and rap in particular often focus on the problems of marginalized groups, thereby highlighting every-day struggles and frustrations and giving people an opportunity for contention and identification with others (Forman 2002; Woods 2007).

Additionally, urban guerilla poetry is another popular form of artistic political contestation. According to Gueye (2013), this concept is inspired by urban guerilla warfare (p. 27). It can be understood as the use of lyrics to attack government officials, such as politicians and even presidents, without facing consequences (Gueye, 2013, p. 27). Music thus constitutes a somewhat safe way to protest, since it can bypass backfire or repression by state entities (Gueye, 2013, p. 27).

2.2 Mobilization

Most literature centers around collective action, and what it is that makes people join a social movement. These theories, which will be explained in the next section, pay much attention to the mechanisms in a society that make the successes of a social movement possible, and those that hinder their possible emergence. In order to understand mobilization, the desire to join social movements, their emergence needs to be considered. In this paper, the definition of social movements as “conscious, concerned, and sustained efforts by ordinary people to change some aspects of their society by using extra-institutional means” by Shigetomi (2009) will be used (p. 1).

Mobilization can be caused by several events, such as so-called moral shocks, triggering an increased interest in a specific social movement. Cognitive liberation plays another role and can

be explained when looking at the behavior of individuals. Said individuals will not protest or rise up against a regime or the status quo, unless it is perceived as unjust or illegitimate (Shigetomi, 2009, p. 2). According to Olsen (2015), there are different predictors, influencing an individual's decision to join a social movement (p. 53). The first important component is biographical availability or whether the targeted group has time to be active in a movement. Secondly, ideological compatibility plays a role. In order to make the decision to participate in a social movement, an individual's ideals have to be aligned with those of the movement. Thirdly, network ties, whether someone already has connections to others in the movement, can influence someone's decision to participate. According to Olsen (2015), people who already know someone in the movement are more likely to join (p. 53). This is visible in so-called bloc recruitment, where people are active in the movement recruit their social network as a whole.

A prominent feature of mobilization theories is the importance of political opportunity structures. Here, the focus lies on the outsiders' perception of a movement. There is a clear connection between opportunity and collective action, which means that an increased opportunity can either positively or negatively influence the outcome of collective action (Shigetomi, 2009, p. 2). According to Tarrow (2011), movements emerge if the conditions for mobilization, or opportunities, are attainable for the general public (p. 77). It is essential to mobilize resources that are external to the group and to combine these with elements of opportunity that are realized and perceived by insurgents. This combination will, according to Tarrow (2011) lead to the emergence and successful mobilization of a social movement.

Tarrow (2011) defines four opportunities for contention. Firstly, increasing access, can be understood in the sense of having narrow and pre-set ways of participation, that are being opened up. The more these ways are opened up, the more possibilities of contestation and participation are offered. Secondly, shifting alignment is described as a "lack of routinized competition", signaling political instability, in turn opening room for open contestation (Tarrow, 2011, p. 77). Thirdly, a divide in elites shows that the ordinary citizens are not the only ones suffering from an existing regime and are ready to openly contest it. This gives people the opportunity to act against the regime, with the security of being supported by parts of the elite. Lastly, influential allies within the system give the movement access to resources they would otherwise not be able to obtain.

Something that should be mentioned as well are "new technologies of voice ... so-called Web 2.0 (Facebook, YouTube and Twitter)" (Faye 2018, p. 88). These new technologies of voice

enable social movements to not only communicate more effectively internally, but also to spread their message to a broader audience.

3. Theoretical Framework

Numerous theories surround the different mobilization tactics used by social movements. Aspects of these theories can be connected, and they can be applied to the social movement investigated in this thesis.

Firstly, Resource mobilization theory (RMT) focuses on how capable a movement is in mobilizing resources as a first step to gather a following (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). The grievances leading to the emergence of social movements always exist, and social movements are left with the task of transforming these grievances into issues they are concerned about (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). RMT is also relevant for recruitment, motivation, and participation. It is based on a rational actor model, meaning the focus lies on individuals that consider their own costs and benefits of joining a social movement (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). In order for social movements to exist, their actors need to mobilize resources such as grievances successfully (Latuner, 2018, p. 18). The overall argument of RMT is therefore that actors have to mobilize around grievances, in order for a social movement to emerge. This theory focuses more on the importance of actors than classical theories stemming from Marxist ideas. This focus is illustrated in the concentration on the ability of movements to “mobilize and manipulate the environment” (Shigetomi, 2009, p. 3).

Secondly, framing process theory (FPT) takes a constructivist approach and emphasizes the cognitive process rather than resources and opportunities. Proponents do this by arguing that actors in social movements can frame realities in specific ways, thus influencing and possibly changing people’s behavior within and perception of the movement (Snow et al. 1986, p. 39, Shigetomi, 2009, p. 3). These frames are defined picture frames, which focus on specific aspects (Snow, 2019, p. 393).

According to Gamson (1992, p. 69), this theory can be proven consistent, when assuming it is applied to individuals that are free from the objective world, and choose a frame fitting their own perceptions. Furthermore, FPT can be applied to mobilization tactics by looking at nine concepts. These are: collective action frames, master frames, core framing tasks, discursive mechanisms, discursive opportunity structures, frame crystallization, frame alignment, frame resonance, and framing hazards (Snow, 2019, p. 394). Here, the collective action frames are the most fitting. They focus on social movements and their framing activity (Snow, 2019, p. 395).

Through frames, the movement can focus attention, and elaborate the elements within these frames (Snow, 2019, p. 395). Nevertheless, the primary functions of collective action frames are different from other frames that occur every day. Their primary function is to mobilize and activate movements, so-called action mobilization; making bystanders into participants through consensus mobilization; and to engage in so-called counter-mobilization, where opponents of the movement are demobilized (Snow, 2019, p. 395).

Lastly, New Social Movement theory (NSMT) emphasizes the idea of a collective identity needed in order for a social movement to emerge and gather a following (Melucci, 1989). Once again focusing on the cognitive aspects of social movements and how they are understood, the theory assumes individual actors need to come together in a collective. NSMT focuses on controlling the introduction of symbols, and on redefining social roles. These actors are not guided by issues like political positions or divisions within society (Offe 1985, Melucci 1989, Shigetomi, 2009). Additionally, NSMT argues that people only feel grievances when they identify with the part of the population affected the most by them.

In this thesis, it is most reasonable to study the case under a combination of these theories. RMT and the grievances that are its focus, tie in with the framing process theory, and how these grievances can potentially be framed in a way that generates new following for the movement. NSMT, and its focus on collective identity fits the narrative of the other two theories since collective action and its framing is also part of framing process theory.

4. Methodology

In order to answer the research question, a single case study of the Senegalese youth movement YEM, will be conducted. The analysis will entail a discourse analysis of different sources, including the lyrics of two songs by KG, the band that cofounded the movement. The analysis will be embedded in the broader context of publications and two interviews conducted earlier this year.

According to Halperin& Heath (2017), a discourse analysis can take many forms and include many characteristics (p. 336). It is a very interpretive type of analysis, since its focus lies on the meaning and legitimacy given to practices through discourse (Halperin& Heath, 2017, p. 336). Discourse on the other hand can be defined as a collection of ideas and concepts possessing the power to produce and reproduce meaning in particular situations (Halperin& Heath, 2017, p. 335). The aim of discourse analysis is to reveal these meanings and to explain how these meanings apply to the political world and those participating in it (Halperin& Heath, 2017, p.

336). This can be done, as in the case that will be the focus here, through the analysis of different forms of texts such as formal records, as well as informal records like novels or song lyrics (Halperin& Heath, 2017, p. 336). In the analysis, the meanings behind the lyrics of the band KG will be analyzed, and it will be investigated how the lyrics can be put in a political context, and how different actors reacted to the movement and the band's actions.

A part of discourse analysis, Speech Act Theory will be looked at in this thesis. This theory, established by Austin and Searle (1960), follows the idea that words are not only used to say something, but have the purpose of achieving different things, a promise, a threat, or a demand (Halperin& Heath, 2017, p. 337). Speech Act Theory states that certain phenomena become real through language, such as entities, processes, and activities (Halperin& Heath, 2017, p. 337). According to Hardy (2001), discourse is "a system of texts that bring objects into being", constructing social realities by constructing what is knowable, and even doable, depending on a particular historical context (p. 26). In general speech act theory understands discourse as an exploration of language in context, something that is especially visible in the context of YEM and the time the songs were released.

The case of Senegal and YEM specifically, has been selected for different reasons. Firstly, Senegal is and has been for a long time seen as a stable democracy in the region of West Africa (Freedom House, 2020). The country is being described as having a solid multiparty system, something that is not common for African countries in general. Nevertheless, the country has a long-standing history of political contestation, in which youth have often played a big role. The first large protests in independent Senegal were initiated largely by the youth of Dakar in 1994, after multiple strikes from teachers and professors. These protests were followed by presidential elections in 2000, which put an end to 40 years of Socialism. In 2011 and 2012, after growing frustration about the overall economic situation of the country, new protests erupted in Senegal (Schaffer, 1997, p. 1). Then President Abdoulaye Wade's defeat in the 2012 presidential elections can be counted as the first big success of YEM, which was actively campaigning against Wade, during protests and in their songs.

The protest movement YEM and the band KG, have been chosen due to their large success mentioned above. Their work to mobilize the Senegalese population in 2012 cannot only be seen in the protests organized by them, but also in the music released by the band. The single *Faux! Pas Forcé*¹, which has been translated to "Don't force it!" or "Don't push!" was released in 2011, and directly targeted then President Abdoulaye Wade. Since their official stance is not

¹ The complete text of *Faux! Pas Forcé* will be included in Appendix A

fighting for a specific candidate, but for the Senegalese people, the movement did not fade after 2012. KG released their single *Diougoufi*², which translates to “It is still going on” in 2014, two years after the election of current President Macky Sall. Much like in *Faux! Pas Forcé*, *Diougoufi* focuses on political grievances and the fact that not a lot seems to have changed in the two years after Sall’s election. These two songs, as well as an interview with an active member of YEM will be the focus of the discourse analysis that will follow.

The songs will be analyzed to see in which way these songs contributed to the mobilization of YEM. The lyrics will be looked at and put into a historical context of the Senegal in 2012 and 2014.

5. Analysis

This section will be focusing on what KG’s songs and their activism which mobilizes Senegalese society. Supported by the movement YEM, music is only one part of the work they do to raise the population’s awareness about political and social issues like for example nepotism, unemployment, and poverty. They do so specifically by voicing political and societal grievances felt by the majority of the Senegalese population, while doing community work as a movement. There are no official numbers of member of YEM, nevertheless their impact is visible through the numbers of people attending YEM protests over the years, with thousands of people attending in various Senegalese cities³.

The movement’s goal is to establish a “New Type of Senegalese” (NTS) (Y’en a marre, 2021). In order to reach this state of NTS as a people, the movement defines six main issues they have to work on together with the Senegalese population. These issues are the formation of citizenship (CHAFC), reinforcement and observation of democracy (CHROD), the environment and community health (CHESC), cultural and urban issues (CHACUR), issues concerning entrepreneurial, leadership and auto promotion (CHELA), and lastly issues regarding peace and security (CHAPS). CHAFC is covering the idea of enforcing a collective conscience of Senegalese citizens, while CHROD is concerned with the “responsible political contestation” to reinforce democracy in Senegal (Y’en a marre, 2021). CHESC is about raising awareness on health issues, sensitization about illnesses in cooperation with other organizations, while CHACUR is working on enforcing urban culture and art in all its facets, supported by hip hop music (Y’en a marre, 2021). CHELA is working against the fatalism felt by many Senegalese youth. The movement wants to achieve this by supporting young

² The complete text of *Diougoufi* will be included in Appendix A

³ Retrieved from YEM’s official website: <https://yenamarre.sn/>

entrepreneurs in creating their own company, putting projects into place, and guiding them in leadership (Y'en a marre, 2021). CHAPS, the sixth issue YEM is working on focuses on issues regarding the safeguarding and consolidation of the existing peace in Senegal, even in the wake of ongoing conflict in the Casamance region ⁴ (Y'en a marre, 2021). Through this, the movement wants to strengthen communities, while at the same time promoting the movement's ideals.

In order to see how the extended way of mobilization through music by the band KG works specifically, the song *Faux! Pas Forcé* from 2012, a striking example for said mobilization, will be analyzed. The people most likely to join the protest by the movement, are Senegalese youth, people who listened to KG before YEM was established. Additionally, university students and graduates are among the members of the movement. Thiat⁵, founding member of YEM said: "Music is a vehicle of message, mobilizing people, spreading the word, telling people to be active in the change to development".

5.1 Historical background

YEM was established in 2010 by the two members of KG, Thiat⁶ and Kilifeu, along with investigative journalist Fadel Barro, after repeated power outages in Senegalese towns and cities (Boy Saloum, 2013). These outages prohibited people from doing their work, specifically students who make up a large part of Senegal's very young population (World Bank, 2021). In addition to these outages, the economic situation of the country was so dire that professors went on strike because they were not being paid, university graduates were not able to find work, and youth unemployment was exceptionally high (World Bank, 2021).

When Abdoulaye Wade, wanted to run for an unconstitutional third term as president, and at the same time planned a constitutional reform, the country's population erupted into protests (Cissokho, 2011, p. 26). Mainly young people like students and recent graduates engaged in the protests organized by YEM. In the words of Mouhamed Cissokho⁷, YEM "capitalized on the problems we had as students" He went on to say: "We did not need Fadel or Thiat or Kilifeu, but they gave us the opportunity to talk among our peers and exchange ideas". This statement illustrates that the political space in Senegal was not open to youth, which is why they used the channels and spaces offered to them by other public figures.

⁴ Region in the South of Senegal, that has expressed desires for independence from Senegal since 1982

⁵ I interviewed Thiat on May 11th, 2021

⁶ Given name Oumar Cyrill Touré, he will be referred to as Thiat in this thesis

⁷ I interviewed Mouhamed Cissokho, coordinator of YEM on March 11th, 2021

Wade's government was quick to prohibit protests, but the fame and popularity of the founders of YEM had already mobilized a large portion of the youth to speak out against the regime. When YEM was founded, KG as well as journalist Fadel Barro already enjoyed wide popularity among the youth of the country: "I used my fame to change the frame of the picture of my society. When I do my song, I talk about the real issues, and when it comes to the protest, I show my face and tell them to come out. So, they know I will be there. And the people say: 'This guy is representing us in his music, and also representing us in the streets.'", says Thiat.

Abdoulaye Wade did lose the 2012 election and was succeeded by Macky Sall, who in turn enjoyed wide support of the youth at the time. In 2014 however, KG, released the song *Diougoufi*, a direct criticism of Macky Sall. YEM along with KG had been less public about politics after Sall's election, which they were heavily criticized for. Many thought they played a big role in Sall's election success, mobilizing the youth against Wade, which they denied, with Fadel Barro ⁸ saying their only interest was the Senegalese people. The movement never publicly supported any political candidate, and the release of *Diougoufi* strengthened this. Little change in the country's economic and social landscape led to YEM continuing their social work and mobilization of the youth through songs such as *Diougoufi*. Additionally, the movement works in communities with their local branches, to renovate and uphold houses and streets, again stressing their care for the Senegalese people. When asked, why the rappers became active in raising the public's awareness regarding political realities in Senegal, Thiat replied: "It became our duty. It is about being remembered as activists, once you know your duty, you know what to do and what not. Shame on me if the legacy I am leaving for the next generation is talking about my car".

5.2 Faux! Pas Forcé

Faux! Pas Forcé translates to both "Don't Push" and "Don't force it". The title alludes to Wade's attempt at a third, unconstitutional candidacy. The presidential elections took place in March 2012, and YEM released the song in January of 2012. In the text, the band KG, along with other rappers belonging to YEM talk to Abdoulaye Wade directly. As Thiat said: "It was a song by the movement, stating you cannot force the third presidency, and you will not even have the third candidacy". The musicians speak as the Senegalese population: "We are fed up, even more fed up with your mistakes", thereby signaling their frustration with political decisions by those in power. The band stresses the fact that it is representing the whole

⁸ In an interview with Jeune Afrique, on February 13th, 2019

population by using the word “we” numerous times throughout the text. This repetition leads to a sense of community and belonging, and thus explains the big public response to the song.

The song has been described as “an opposition anthem” by both news outlets, as well as by YEM themselves (NPR, 2012). Protestors wore t-shirts with the slogan *Faux! Pas Forcé* during demonstrations in the streets, and when walking around the neighborhoods of their cities. When Abdoulaye Wade together with his government, banned and prohibited protests at the height of the protests, people increasingly played *Faux! Pas Forcé* at gatherings and in popular spots where primarily young people were meeting (NPR, 2012). This allowed the movement and the band to continue to spread the message through their music. The song directly challenges Wade, telling him to step down and that he does not stand a chance in the fight against young people. Prohibiting the protests was Wade’s attempt to stop the organization of the youth. The anger being portrayed in the song can be seen as mobilizing, since it shows that even when the population is frustrated and mad, they do not become violent, but put their frustration into music.

Faux! Pas Forcé is a direct threat of retaliation to Abdoulaye Wade. The rappers address him personally, rapping in their chorus: “Abdoulaye, don’t push! I swear, don’t push, Abdoulaye, keep your word, I swear don’t force it”. This is the beginning of the song and shows what they are accusing him of: breaking his electoral promises and running for president again. Additionally, they call him out for his reactions towards prior protests, during which both police and army retaliated greatly, shooting bullets and tear gas at the protestors. Here, they state: “You give surprise as an excuse, this time you have been warned, we will cope with your nerves, by paying with our lives”. During the protests in early 2012, there were at least 3 deaths among the protestors, all of them young people (CNN, 2012).

In the song, the rappers, more specifically, YEM’s co-founder Kilifeu calls the President one of “scandals” who “divided the brotherhoods, you don’t have a way out anymore”. These scandals, during his presidency led to Wade increasingly losing supporters among the different religious leaders in Senegal, belonging both to the Muslim majority and the Christian minority. In Senegal, the majority of the population belongs to different Muslim brotherhoods, following so-called Marabouts. Marabouts have a lot of power not only regarding religious practices, but also political issues. Being supported by Marabouts, is considered beneficial for Presidential candidates (Babou, 2016, p. 166). Both in 2000 and 2007, Wade had profited from the support of the two biggest brotherhoods of the country, the Mourid and the Tijaniyy. This support faded, when Wade publicly stated before the elections, that he was a Mourid, thus distancing himself

from other brotherhoods. Additionally, Wade lost support among the members of the Mourid brotherhood, over the course of his presidency. This was due to the fact that many members of the brotherhood are farmers, and thus the most vulnerable group suffering from the economic decline of the country (Thurston, 2012).

The sentence “You made the church cry” alludes to the fact that Wade had insulted the Christian population of the country in 2010, when stating openly that Christians worship Jesus, who is not a God (Agoravox.fr, 2010). Following this, Christians grew increasingly frustrated with him, holding demonstrations, and demanding an official apology (Agoravox.fr, 2010). This passage of the song also illustrates the rappers as being a voice for all Senegalese people, since they make it a point of stating that he insulted or hurt both religions in the country. Thus, it does not matter who sings the song, they can all voice their frustration when singing it at a protest.

The song states: “Hearts full of bitterness, Senegal does not deserve this slap”, making clear that he is not only going against the movement, but against the whole country. As continuously stated by the movement, the only candidate worthy of their support is the Senegalese people. This motive of the Senegalese people is inherent to the song, rapping that “our patriotic engagement surpasses you”. This alludes to criticism and sentiment in the population that Wade did not have the population’s best interests at heart.

The rappers do not actively call for violent retaliation by the population, but the song is very aggressive, and focuses on problems mainly experienced by the young population of the country. They sing: “Who can stop these youths determined to have a better future? Disillusioned, we know who we have to go against”. Wade had a large following among young people when running for president in 2000, after 40 years of a socialist regime in Senegal⁹. The youth was disillusioned because Wade did not manage to fulfill his electoral promises, like economic development, not actually solving the prevalent issues concerning the Senegalese youth. The verse also shows that the movement is a youth movement, with the rappers stressing on numerous occasions that young people are determined to go against him to reach their and the movement’s goal. Here, the background of the rappers played into the success of the movement, since both grew up far from the nation’s capital Dakar, in Kaolack. Thus, the general Senegalese population living in the parts of the country that are more rural and less well connected can relate. That also mentioned that the rappers that are involved in YEM have “street credibility”, meaning that “people got your back once you have that. We represent

⁹ BBC news, January 2011

something and someone”. In addition to this, the musicians all had a background in activism and work, preceding their engagement in the movement.

In general, this song can be seen as mobilizing, since it transmits a sense of community between all young people in Senegal, no matter their community, religion, social or ethnic origin. The power of the song to mobilize people is visualized in the group’s music video, where one person is able to mobilize their whole neighborhood to protest. The video shows a young man walking around his neighborhood, telling people to come with him. Before the music starts, they arrive in a square, where YEM’s rappers are already standing, ready to start their song. The movement is working with both the visual and the lyrical message, when they show an older woman joining in the protest, after praying for her son, before he is leaving for the protest. The same woman is seen again at the end of the video pleading with “Abdoulaye”, to not let her and the Senegalese people starve.

The mobilization processes employed here are transmitted through both, the video and the text. The text itself is sung in a rather aggressive manner, which is stressed in the video¹⁰. Making and releasing such a critical song was a risk the movement and the rappers were willing to take, to show that they were not afraid to call politicians out and go to the protests. Thiat stated that: “When I go to the protest, they know I will show my face, it is not ‘slacktivism’ but activism. We represent them in the music and in the street”. Over the years the rappers and members of YEM have been arrested multiple times but were always released from police custody after a few days. The repetition of the President’s name in the beginning of the song and the chorus stress that it is aimed directly against Abdoulaye Wade. The constant focus on “we” and the “Senegalese people” or “Senegal”, shows that the rappers see themselves as speakers of the people, standing with them and amplifying their voices and struggles.

5.3 Diougoufi

Thiat said that when Abdoulaye Wade lost his election, YEM had not yet reached their end goal, prompting them to continue their work over the years: “When Wade lost, it was not even a step in the right direction. Senegal was lying on its belly, now it is beginning to stand. Cheikh Anta Diop¹¹, Blondin Diop¹², they did their part for independence, and they stopped. Then we took over, and one day we will be stopping, and the next generation will take over.” While

¹⁰ The video to Faux! Pas Forcé will be linked in Appendix A

¹¹ Senegalese politician and historian and supporter of Afrocentrism

¹² Senegalese political activist, member of the Marxist-Leninist youth in Senegal and France

Macky Sall was supporting the movement during his election campaign, stating that the young people have to step up and change their country, once he was elected, this positive relationship deteriorated fairly quickly. In 2019, KG released “Sai Sai au coeur”, a song directed towards the president, which was widely criticized by Sall’s supporters and himself, again worsening the relationship between the parties. Nevertheless, the two rappers were not arrested: “We did not mention his name, it could have been every Macky Sall in Senegal, we did not say The President Macky Sall. But we and everyone else were waiting for our arrest”.

The song *Diougoufi* was released by KG in 2014 and translates to “It is still going on”. The song has a less aggressive tone than *Faux! Pas Forcé* but is not less critical of politicians and the poor work they do in Senegal. According to Thiat, the hook of the song: “Always the same monotone and gloomy life, how are we going to get ourselves out of this situation? They have their lobbies, sharing our goods, and don’t hesitate to convict those who dare denouncing them”, is in itself an anthem that was sung at numerous protests against Macky Sall and his government in general.

The first part of the chorus shows the helplessness of the youth, while at the same time highlighting their willingness to act and get themselves out of the situation. This shows that there is a feeling of duty among the Senegalese youth to act and change the country. The rappers also make a clear distinction throughout the song between “us” or “we”, being the Senegalese people, specifically youth, and “them” being the politicians. The second part of the chorus states: “They have their lobbies, sharing our goods and don’t hesitate to convict those who dare denouncing them”. This alludes to both, the arrests of YEM’s lead figures throughout the years under Sall, and to his tendency to imprison his political opponents on what are often said to be fabricated charges.

The song starts with a listing of comparisons, directed at politicians, ending with “the same electoral promises, the same selling of our land”. The promises mentioned allude to promises by Sall to change the deplorable situation the population was suffering from during Wade’s presidency such as continuous electricity outages and joblessness among young graduates

The band continues with “Not even two years and we are already fed up. For someone who is not even fit for local government, how can he lead Senegal?”. Not saying his name specifically, KG criticizes Sall, by explicitly showing that they do not believe Sall was fit for any governmental position he had in the course of his career. Sall was mayor of the Senegalese town of Fatick, before becoming a minister under Wade.

The bad performance of the President and his remaining link to Wade is accentuated by the sentence “One would have to say Prési, trainee of Gorgui”. While “Prési” is a colloquial term for President, it can also be used as “little president”, showing that they do not take Sall seriously. Gorgui on the other hand is a Wolof term meaning “old man” and was a popular nickname for Wade, who was approximately 85 years old when running for a third term. Wade profited from the 40 year-long socialist regime when running for president in 2000, since he offered a more democratic alternative. Wade was a minister under Abdou Diouf¹³ but led the opposition to Diouf’s socialist party over 30 years (Presidency of Senegal, 2021). In 2000, Wade won the presidential elections with 60% of the votes. Wade framed his election campaign around the Wolof word “Sopi”, which translates to change (Quist-Arcton, 2012). The framing of change and making it the focus of his campaign granted him the support by the frustrated Senegalese people, and in particular the youth, that wanted a more independent Senegal, which he promised. Wade’s support by the youth faded throughout his presidency when his efforts to make Senegal economically more independent from France were not as successful as people had hoped.

Sall in turn profited from the frustration of the youth when campaigning for presidency in 2012. Since he became the candidate of several opposition movements, he presented a good alternative to Wade. Sall promised economic development with his plan of “Emerging Senegal”, and other economic changes. When the song calls Sall Wade’s trainee after two years of his presidency, it shows how little difference there was between Wade and Sall. Additionally, it undermines the argument Sall had used during his electoral campaign in 2012 of changing Senegal and giving the young people a future. It also shows how little respect the rappers have for Sall who was priding himself with being a “new” and young politician, relatable to the youth.

The phrase “Social climbers are in power, who don’t even manage to fulfill their duty” refers to the fact that many say Macky Sall used Abdoulaye Wade for his political career. Macky Sall started said career when entering Wade’s party PDS¹⁴ and becoming prime minister under Wade, before becoming President of the national assembly. When deciding to run against Wade, Sall was already a well-known politician and his open contestation of Wade led to many people seeing him as the only alternative to the President.

¹⁴ Parti Democratique du Senegal, the Democratic Party of Senegal

“Could you say it is the old people who ran with Senghor that are leading the country?”, this is a theme that also emerges during *Faux! Pas Forcé* from 2012, where the rappers question whether anyone can stop the youth desperate for a better future. In *Diogoufi*, this has a similar meaning. The criticism is that the politicians in Senegal are so old they could have been ruling the country with Senghor, who was the first president of independent Senegal in 1960. It also alludes to the fact that Abdoulaye Wade served under Abdou Diouf the successor of Senghor, as minister. The verse refers to both Macky Sall and Abdoulaye Wade, since Sall was considered a young candidate when running for President at the age of 51, and Wade was about 85 when running for his third term, making him around 73 when first elected. This again links to the missing opportunity to be politically engaged as a young Senegalese person, and the hopelessness this creates in the young population.

The song continues by telling Macky Sall to “take off!”, which was also told Wade in *Faux! Pas Forcé*. In contrast to the other song, this is the most aggressive and direct attack against Sall. KG brings in the original cause of the foundation and success of their movement YEM in 2012 when stating: “The fights have not ended yet, there is no break. To this day we have outages of electricity and water. No changes, we are still stuck on the same level, no medical care, the education is weak, the graduates are out of work. When is it serious enough?”. As already mentioned, the outages referred to in this verse were the breaking point, triggering Thiat, Kilifeu and Fadel Barro to establish YEM. “The graduates are out of work”, which alludes to the fact that many educated Senegalese people still do not have job opportunities in their field after obtaining their university degree, due to nepotism, and corruption. This is also why a lot of students originally joined the movement, as stated by Moriba Cissokho: “the professors were on strike and we did not have the opportunity to complete our studies”. This shows how desperate Senegalese university students were to have a say in politics in order to be able to achieve something in their country.

“We are all in the same situation, no one remains unscathed. We all have the same problems, and we are all in turmoil”, once again shows that the rappers are speaking for the whole of Senegal, not the politicians and wealthy citizens of the country. Again, this shows that these musicians are part of the people, portraying themselves as ordinary citizens of Senegal, also suffering from what the majority of the population is suffering.

“The leaders cling to power, despite the population’s opposition”, can be connected to this sense of agency in the previous verse. The line illustrates that it is not only the band who is against the president, but the whole country, showing that the politicians are the ones who are in the wrong, since they do not care about the people’s needs and living circumstances.

The last verse of the song goes as follows and highlights again the frustration of the population: “They are all the same, no difference at all. Nothing but broken promises.” “They” constitutes a distinction between the population and the politicians, and that it does not matter who gets elected, they all have the same reasons, power, personal gain, and money, and will change their political behavior sooner or later. It reopens the argument from the beginning, showing how alike the politicians are. And even if someone new enters the political stage, they will eventually end up selling out the Senegalese people for their own political gain. “We are fed up with your obsessions, we are thirsty for change”, shows not only the frustration, but the word “thirst” underlines the gravity of the situation, showing how desperate especially young people in Senegal are for a change. The “obsessions” mentioned here are related to the obsession with power Sall and other politicians allegedly have, doing everything they can to hold on to it.

Diogoufi focuses on the problems experienced by the general public in Senegal. The rappers do not explicitly name the President, and the song is not as aggressive as *Faux! Pas Forcé*. Nevertheless, the rappers get their message of standing with Senegal across and opposing the political leadership. Establishing whether the song mobilized people, is more difficult, since it was not released before or during a protest wave. Yet, the song is one of the most popular ones by KG, which shows that it resonated with the population.

While Wade had largely condemned YEM as a movement, stating they were just drunks that were up to no good, YEM did have a success with the protests, since he retracted the plans for constitutional changes after the protests in 2011¹⁵. *Faux! Pas Forcé* is a widely popular song among Senegalese and remains one of the most listened to songs by YEM, with approximately 167.486 views on their YouTube channel (YEM Youtube).

Diogoufi, is one of the most listened to songs by KG, along with *Sai Sai au Coeur*, both calling out Macky Sall. Both songs together have around 3.5 million views on Youtube (Keur Gui Crew Officiel, Youtube). That the musicians feared retaliation from the president when they released a song, shows that Macky Sall is feeling threatened by their songs and the movement as a whole. It also shows the declining state of democracy in Senegal, even though it has been and still is seen as one of the most stable democracies in West Africa.

The movement has had several successes in the past years and remains active in political engagement in Senegal. KG also remains unscathed by the political landscape in Senegal, continuing their work to mobilize people and raise awareness through songs and on concerts. Nevertheless, numerous people on social media platforms like YouTube are criticizing the

¹⁵ BBC reported in 2011

movement and have been over the years. Furthermore, political figures that are part of Macky Sall's government have used numerous occasions to speak out against the movement.

Nevertheless, the movement does not cease their activities, continuing to speak out against clientelism, nepotism and corruption among politicians.

6. Conclusion

The songs released by KG and YEM over the years have been used to mobilize Senegalese youth and did so successfully. The movement has concrete goals on how to transform Senegalese society, and does so through both, the wide popularity of the songs and community activities. The movement offers not only a safe space to share opinions that might be critical towards the government, but also gives hymns and concrete phrases to protestors.

The previously discussed theories, NSMT, RMT, and FPT, can be tied back to the case of YEM. The movement does mobilize resources, and in its songs, frames the issues of the Senegalese people. Lastly, a collective identity is established by the movement through communal activities.

YEM does not cease their engagement, which becomes evident in their campaign, and song, "My voter card is my weapon". This campaign was used to help people fill in their applications for voter cards, thus contributing to high voter turnout in 2012, and in a referendum in 2019. Initiatives like this show, that the movement is still active and there are more changes to be made in Senegal.

In general, YEM is a prominent example for social movement in the African context. While some movements like that of Bobi Wine have developed into a political party after some time, YEM denies any aspirations to do so. This, again, enforces the notion that they want to reform the state and the political system inherent to it.

Nevertheless, it remains unclear, whether their ideal of the NTS has already been reached by the Senegalese people, something that is going to show itself during the next presidential elections in 2024. Thus, further research into the topic of the NTS should be conducted in order to see how effective their initiatives outside of mobilization are.

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Appendix A.

1. Lyrics to Faux! Pas Forcé (2012)- the song has been translated into French by Thiat, member of Keur Gui and YEM, and into English by me. Additionally, Dr. Mareme Gueye kindly offered her translation of the song from Wolof to English.

Link to the Video : Faux pas force <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCuKAn-T0pk>

Chorus: Abdoulaye don't push!

I swear, don't push

Abdoulaye, keep your word

I swear, don't push

Kilifeu: What good are a donkey's long ears if it cannot hear?

With our institutions you are worse than a monkey on the field

Bad coach driver, you swerve your horse

Our money, you steal it and share it with your clan

You give the surprise as an excuse, this time you have been warned

We will cope with your nerves, by paying with our lives

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth

Simon: Our patriotic engagement surpasses you

Leave through the big gate before you are being chased out

We are fed up, even more fed up by your mistakes

Hearts full of bitterness, Senegal does not deserve this slap

We won't move even a centimeter, father

We will go just to the edge, even kneeling on the ground

Deploy your army and your police, so they shoot at us

Ready for the ultimate sacrifice, it is worth it

Chorus: Abdoulaye don't push!

I swear, don't push

Abdoulaye, keep your word

I swear, don't push

Simon: Who plays with the constitution, finds us along his way
Who can stop these youths determined to have a better future?
Disillusioned, we know who we have to go against
The marabout of Yahou is an outstanding liar
It's clear that you will not escape the godly sanction
Your puppets make you believe you are the messiah, you despise us
You are turning a deaf ear to the teachings of the marabouts, what a joke
We are ready to roll with the punches to block your way
What does it cost to be the remedy.

Xuman: Ali Baba Coumba Ndiombor
If you love your people don't persist in remaining in power, don't shed its (people's)
blood
Without the competence, the spirit, or the power, every mandate is menacing
I swear, you escape a model before you make the constitution your own hell
Abdoulaye, don't look for an alibi,
Don't do it like Ghadaffi if you don't want us to do it like Libya

Chorus: Abdoulaye don't push!
I swear, don't push
Abdoulaye, keep your word
I swear, don't push

Xuman: your auditors are giving you flowers
Their proclamations are nothing more than bait
You exaggerate, a drop more makes the vase overflow
This is why your heirs are leaving your block
Because of you we do not like politics
All these realizations are controversial subjects
We are not intoxicated, we did not smoke 23 joints
It was us in front of the assembly on the 23rd of June

Kilifeu: enough is enough, no more fuck's to give
President of scandals; the dreams of a whole people, and you got rid of them

You have divided the brotherhoods (Mouriden), you don't have a way out anymore
You made the church cry, which will make you fall
We will be present (when you fall) oh, you old punk
You cannot face a standing people
You have looted all our goods and you want to take the last bit
We will tear you up before you rip us off

Chorus : Abdoulaye don't push!

I swear, don't push

Abdoulaye, keep your word

I swear, don't push

2. Lyrics to Diogoufi (2014)- The lyrics have been translated into French by Thiat, and into English by me.

Link to the Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lHq8QyJhyQ>

Always the same cats, the same dogs
The same going, the same coming
The same cases, the same Ends,
The same movies, the same schemes,
The same electoral promises, the same selling of our land
Not even two years and we are already fed up
For someone who is not even fit for local government
How can he lead Senegal?
One would have to say Prési,
trainee of Gorgui
Could you say it is the old people who ran with Senghor that are leading the
country
Or is it the lady?
Social climbers are in power
Who do not even manage to fulfill their duty
A lazy government
That does not have a vision
A permanent mess
No solutions
Take off!
Where is the civil society that has been thrown out of the palace?
The electoral cattle that has moved on?
The fights have not ended yet, there's no break.
To this day we have outages
Of electricity and water
No changes, still stuck on the same level
No medical care, the education is weak
The graduates are out of work
When is it serious?
Chorus: Always the same monotone and gloomy life

How are we going to get ourselves out of this situation?
They have their lobbies, sharing our goods
And don't hesitate to convict those who dare denouncing them
KILIFEU: We are all in the same situation,
No one remains unscathed.
We all have the same problems,
And we are all in turmoil.
Senegal is in a chaotic situation,
The whole world proclaims it.
The people do not stop complaining
This means the situation is critical.
Certainly nothing is easy,
But we will not stop trying to get ourselves out of this.
Work and stop deceiving us
Try getting the country out of this situation
Rather than letting it (Senegal) sink.
The leaders cling to power
Despite the population's opposition.
Actions weigh more than words,
We are aware of the fact that Dakar is not Paris
But such must be our gamble.
They are all the same,
No difference at all.
Nothing but broken promises.
We are fed up with your obsessions,
We are thirsty for change.
Chorus: Always the same monotone and gloomy life
How are we going to get ourselves out of this situation?
They have their lobbies, sharing our goods
And don't hesitate to convict those who dare denouncing them

Appendix B.

Questionnaires of the interviews with Mouhamed Cissokho and Cheik Oumar Cyrille Touré aka Thiat.

1. Mouhamed Cissokho, conducted March 11th, 2021

1. Est-ce que vous pouvez me dire comment le mouvement était établis ?
2. Pourquoi est-ce que vous avez décidé de joindre Y'en a marre ?
3. Dans quel climat politique est-ce que vous avez établis le mouvement ? / Qu'est ce qui se passait pendant cette période au Sénégal ? Quelle était l'objective du mouvement Y'en a marre en 2012 ? Y'a t'il eu des changements ?
4. Est-ce que le mouvement est connecté à un politicien ou une partie politique concrète ?
5. Quelle était l'objective du mouvement Y'en a marre en 2012 ? Y'a-t-il eu des changements ?
6. Quoi a changé/ est restée la même objective ?
7. Quel rôle joue la musique ?
8. Est-ce que la perception du mouvement par le gouvernement a changé ? Est-ce que la perception du gouvernement par le mouvement a changé pendant les années récentes ?
9. Qu'est-ce que vous attendiez de Macky Sall après les élections de 2012 ? A t'il tenu à ses promesses ?
10. Est-ce que la population sénégalaise est toujours derrière ce mouvement ?
11. Quelle stratégie avez-vous opté contre le régime actuel ? Quelles sont les stratégies actuelles prises par le mouvement ?
12. Est-ce qu'il y'aura un changement avec un autre président ?

2. Interview with Thiat, conducted, May, 11th 2021

1. When and why did you decide to make music, specifically music focusing on social and political issues?
2. Do you believe that your music and what you were rapping about helped mobilize people to join Y'en a marre?
3. Did you perform Keur Gui songs at protests?
4. I am analyzing Faux! Pas Forcé and Diogoufi.
Faux! Pas Forcé is being described as a protest song. What about Diogoufi?
5. Is it your duty as a rapper to raise awareness about social and political issues?
6. Your music is mainly in Wolof, why is that? I assume it is to reach more people with your message, and also reach those outside of the big cities?
7. Do you believe Y'en a marre reached its goals when Abdoulaye Wade lost the elections in 2012?

Appendix C.

1. Interview transcript Mouhamed Cissokho, March 11th, 2021

Time: 1:00 pm to 1:53 pm

The interview was conducted in French.

Chadidja Faye (Interviewer)

Mouhamed “Moriba” Cissokho (Interviewee)

Chadidja : Est-ce que je peux enregistrer l’interview d’aujourd’hui ?

Moriba : Oui, tu peux tout enregistrer.

Chadidja : D’accord, merci beaucoup. Alors, je vais juste vous expliquer. Comme j’avais dit, j’ai préparé des questions. Et c’est pour un projet, à l’université dont je dois écrire quelque chose sur un mouvement social. J’ai choisi Y’en a marre, car mon père vient du Sénégal et je m’intéresse beaucoup pour la politique Sénégalaise.

Juste pour me présenter encore une fois, je m’appelle Chadidja Faye, et je viens de l’Allemagne. Et au moment je fais mes études des relations internationales au Pays-Bas.

On va commencer avec la première question si ça va pour vous. Et bien sûr, si vous ne voulez pas répondre à une question, vous ne devez pas le faire, c’est pas grave.

Est-ce que vous pouvez dire, comment le mouvement de Y’en a marre a été établi au Sénégal ?

Moriba : D’accord, je vais me présenter. Je m’appelle Mohamed Moriba Cissokho, je suis programme coordinateur. Je travaille pour un programme « international training » pour un programme que s’appelle « hip hop, Africa, diasporas and decolonial future ». En même temps je suis activiste sénégalais et le secrétaire général du mouvement Y’en a marre qui a été créé en 2011.

Il y avait des coupure d’électricité au Sénégal, et donc on avait des journées pendant des heures et des heures, où les personnes ne pouvaient pas avoir des informations. Alors il y’avait un groupe des jeunes, des rappeurs, des journalistes, des étudiants etc. qui a décidé de former le mouvement. Et comme nom on a choisi Y’en a marre, qui veut dire, on en a marre, ça suffit, on est fatigué, on veut plus de ça, etc. Au début ils sont sortis la première fois le 5 janvier (2011). Donc il y’avait le forum mondial sociale à L’université Cheikh Anta Diop de

Dakar. Et ils ont utilisé ce forum-là pour une ouverture du mouvement sur l'internationale. Par ce que sur le forum il y'a toute la presse nationale et internationale, la représentation et le corps diplomatique, et tout ça. C'était le 11 janvier, et le 18 janvier ils sont allés à la place de souvenir pour une conférence de presse et pour montrer que, voilà, il y'a un pour la voix de tout dans l'espace public et politique.

Alors, c'est ça la fondation, et les membres fondateurs sont Fadel Barro, Aliou Sané, qui est l'ancien coordinateur, il y'a Thiat, il y'a Kilifeu, Sofia, et il y'avait d'autres qui sont suivi.

Et après nous, on a répondu, nous c'est sont les étudiants à la fac. Alors c'est globalement ça : une partie de 7 personnes, et des étudiants avec l'objective d'avoir une voix dans l'espace de la publique et de la politique

Chadidja : D'accord, merci. Et, par ce que vous avez dit que c'est un mouvement de la jeunesse avec des rappeurs, quel rôle joue la musique dans Y'en a marre ?

Moriba : Je vais dépasser le mouvement, mais prendront un groupe venant de l'intérieure du Sénégal, de la région de Kaolack, qui était une région intermédiaire pendant le temps colonial, entre les régions différentes (Ziguinchor et Dakar) et transnationale, mali etc. il y'avait une culture d Apres l'Indépendance elle a perdu son luxe, par ce que les choses culturelles et le trafic ont été arrêter. Les gens portaient la voix, par ce qu'ils venaient d'une région marginalisée et les artistes de la capitale, tu vois, sont eux qui avaient les moyens qui étaient bien habiller et tout et ils ont typiquement représenter les choses et institutions importantes. Alors les musiciens marginalisés ils ont parlé pour les autres personnes, et des choses qui ne marchaient pas, on ne pouvait pas manger... Ils ont déjà eu un public qui répondait.

Maintenant quel est le rôle de la culture ? Les jeunes au Sénégal écoutent surtout le rap car ils portent la voix et les souffrances de la jeunesse et la population en général. Et au Sénégal il y'a le Mballax et il y'a le rap... le Mballax c'est plus folklorique, et le rap et plus conscientisant, c'est active dans la conscientisation et la mobilisation.

C'est ça ce que je peux dire sur la musique dans le mouvement et dans le contexte sénégalais. Et même avec tout ce qui se passe actuellement, il y'a eu des manifestations, mais pas trop des jeunes, mais quand il y'avait des clashes et des morts, un rappeur a fait une chanson et ça les a mobilisés, et a parlé de tout ce qui s'est passé. Et quand il y'avait beaucoup de départ sur la mer, et le deuil national, ils ont fait une chanson. Alors, le rap, joue un grand rôle dans la conscientisation et la mobilisation des jeunes. Voici, le rôle de la musique dans un tel mouvement.

Chadidja : Ah bon, oui merci. Si vous voulez, bien sûr vous ne devez pas, mais est-ce que vous voulez me dire pourquoi vous avez décidé de rejoindre le mouvement Y'en a marre ?

Moriba : Personnellement, je me suis engagé par ce que je pense que c'est un mouvement qui me permet moi-même de me sentir à l'aise. Par ce que pour comprendre le mouvement il faut retourner à sa configuration. Le mouvement c'est un mouvement où l'essentielles et dans l'esprit. Ça veut dire, que l'esprit est autonome, alors quand on a lancé le mouvement on était à la fac, et il y'avait beaucoup de problèmes, il y'avait des professeurs qui étaient en grève, il y'avait pas de logement. Alors il y'avait beaucoup des problèmes. Alors nous, on voulait dire notre propre opinion. Et au début, je m'intéressait pas aux politiques, je m'intéressait pas au « Abdoulaye Wade, dégage », je m'intéressais aux intérêts de nous étudiants et voulais juste savoir comment nous étudiants pouvaient faire notre propre contribution. Et on a suivis tous les rappeurs, comme je t'avais dit, alors on suivait Thiat, on suivait Khilifeu, et nous ont était très « hip hop », et les gens venant de Kaolack, qu'ils nous ont représenté, alors on les a vus d'une façon positive.

Chadidja : Les jeunes, alors, s'ils joindraient, c'est aussi par ce qu'ils ont écouté le hip hop et le rap, et par ce qu'ils ont vu leurs idoles qui s'engageaient beaucoup.

Moriba : Oui, c'est ça, mais comme je t'avais dit, les gens du mouvement, étaient des jeunes à l'époque, alors nos intérêts étaient les affaires politiques et sociales. Et les gens qui pouvaient dire qu'el que chose sur ça c'étaient surtout les parties politiques qui portaient la voix. Alors quand on voulait parler de l'employabilité, on prenait qu'el qu'un de la PDS où de l'AFP et c'étaient eux qui ont parlé. Et après il y'avait ceux de la société civile, et nous, on n'était pas d'une partie politique, alors c'était une organisation qui n'était pas bureaucratique où tout le monde pouvait parler et parler lui-même. Ce que m'a intéressé c'était pas qu'on pouvait parler pour moi, mais que moi je pouvais parler moi-même. Moi, j'avais pas besoin de Kilifeu ou de Thiat ou de Fadel, on est juste venue parler avec nos propres camarades et on a essayé de trouver une solution. C'était le mouvement qui a capitalisé les problèmes qu'on avait à la fac, mais c'était nous comme étudiants ont constitué et de façon efficiente qui ont réagit

Chadidja : Oui, d'accord. Vous avez déjà parlé de Abdoulaye Wade, alors, dans quel climat politique avez-vous établis le mouvement ? Quelle était la situation politique et social ?

Moriba : Je vais le faire en étapes, alors 2007, 2009 et 2011- 2012.

En 2007, l'opposition avait boycotté les élections législative (Parlamentswahlen). Alors Abdoulaye Wade il avait presque toutes les votes, il y'a pas des opposants, alors Abdoulaye

Wade il pouvait décider tout qui était confortable pour lui. Et l'opposition qui était active dans les domaines sociales et économiques n'était pas dans l'assemblée nationale. Alors le président a décidé tout. Et il y'avait un Sénat qui a sert à absolument rien par ce que c'était contrôlé par la partie du président. Alors les deux chambres étaient à la grâce du Président.

En 2009 une vaste entité des syndicats, espace politique, parties politiques, maitres religieux a été former pour rédiger un nouveau contrat social, tu vois ? Un nouveau contrat dont tous les problèmes de 2000 à 2009 ou 2012 étaient mentionnées pour qu'on trouve une solution.

Ahmadou Makhtar Mbow, (favorisé une entité composée des penseurs, et des savants) qui était respectable, qui a essayé de trouver une solution, qui était d'avoir un nouveau candidat ou une coalition des candidats en 2012 avec un projet politique pour le Sénégal.

Et il y'avaient ceux qui ont tourné ça à leurs faveurs et après les élections, Wade a gagné et voulais avoir son fils Karim Wade comme ministre de la Terre, et de l'eau. Il a mobilisé l'organisation de l'Islam, quelque chose comme ça. Et le groupe a utilisé la nomination de son fils comme argument, disant qu'on ne devait pas nommer son fils ministre. Alors ils avaient aussi l'idée de former une association indépendante du clientélisme et de l'oligarchie.

Maintenant ce qui s'est passé, Macky Sall en 2009, il fuit d'être Président de l'Assemblée nationale, et quand il fait ça, il a demandé de destituer le fils du Président, quand il a fait ça, il était exclu de la partie.

On l'a renvoyé de l'Assemblée nationale, et avec le boycott de l'Assemblée nationale, avec les coupures d'électricité et avec la nomination de Karim Wade, on commençait à s'organiser. C'est pas quand il y'a un nouveau ministre, mais quand il y'a une coupe, tu ne peux pas avoir des informations, tu ne peux pas charger ton téléphone, c'est ça le moment quand on se mobilise.

Et en 2011, Wade voulait créer une vice-présidence avec 25% du pouvoir, par ce qu'il a réalisé qu'il avait perdu l'électorat. Et comme vice-président, il a voulu son fils. Et les gens ne voulaient pas un ordre monarchique, alors ils sont sortis, et il l'a laissé. Et avec un groupe, le M23, le gens ont continué de se mobiliser jusqu'à l'organisation des élections, et c'était là que Macky Salle est devenu candidat.

Voilà un résumé quoi.

Chadidja : D'accord, et avec les activités contre Abdoulaye Wade, est-ce que le mouvement est connecté à un candidat politique comme Macky Sall ou une partie politique ?

Moriba : Non, le mouvement n'est pas connecté à aucun parti ou un candidat politique. Alors, je t'envoyer le document, pour que tu peux le lire. On a créé une charte, et ce qu'on dit dans la charte c'est qu'on ne peut pas travailler avec un parti politique. Mais souvent les gens disent : « Vous avez aidé Macky Sall avec les élections, et maintenant vous êtes tellement proche à Sonko. » Mais avec la politique, pour participer à la gouvernance efficace, de la façon électorale, nous ne sommes pas politiques, nous ne sommes pas élus. Mais tout ce qui est dans la sphère politique, nous nous liguons avec des autres entités pour continuer notre mission de la sensibilisation, d'observation et de contrôle, quoi.

Chadidja : Ah d'accord, par ce que j'ai vu dans un documentaire, qu'un des fondateurs a dit qu'on ne se batte pas pour un politicien comme Macky Sall, mais on se batte pour la population Sénégalaise. Alors c'était à cause de ça que j'ai demandé et aussi à cause des manifestations qui se passent au moment.

Moriba : Oui exactement, mais je vais spécifier. Les manifestations qui se passe au moment ils sont un prétexte pour parler de la limitation de Macky Sall sur la justice. Normalement, Sonko, il doit répondre à la justice, comme citoyen ordinaire. Mais, ce que les gens ne veulent pas c'est que la justice est utilisée pour des cas politique par ce que c'est une constante est depuis que Macky est élu, il a souvent coffré ses opposant. Et le pays a des autres moyens de coffrer l'opposition. Et il y'a une loi qui était proposée avant l'Assemblée nationale, 2018, qui a été validé, qu'on contrôle la politique et les personnes qui se présentent comme candidats. Et se sont toutes ces choses-là à cause d'eux les gens sont sortis. Et on demande que Sonko répond à la justice comme un citoyen normal, comme toi, comme moi, et comme le gars qui a pris un poulet, donc ça c'est ça.

Chadidja : Alors les manifestations maintenant, ils ne sont pas pour défendre Sonko, mais surtout pour montrer à Macky Sall, que ce qu'il fait avec les politiciens de l'opposition ne va pas.

Moriba : On ne défend pas Sonko, mais on défend l'impartialité de la justice. Et d'autre chose en faite, Sonko est une personne respectable, mais si Macky Sall appréhende toutes les personnes, les gens faibles seront vulnérables. Et cette instrumentalisation de la justice, sert à des injustices, par ce que Sonko il a plus d'influence, mais si on me voit ici en Casamance parlant avec toi on me dit « Ah, tu parles du mouvement avec qu'el qu'un à l'étrangère » et on me met en prison. Et ce que les gens ont disent, c'est ici, on utilise le pouvoir pour tourner la loi.

Pendant le Covid, c'est une réflexion de ma part. Il a fait des règles de confinement et ils ont profité d'isoler les gens et arrêter les informations. Alors les gens ils s'ont mobilisé pour dire « STOP ; STOP ; STOP » il faut qu'il y'a une séparation nette entre la judiciaire, la législative et l'exécutive. Et voilà, quand les choses sont de retour en normales, on ira faire ce qu'on sait mieux faire, laisser les magistrates faire, et après on verra.

Chadidja : RÉACTION du gouvernement

Moriba : Euh bon, le 25, Mars, 2020, après la proclamation d'état d'urgence, le mouvement a été contacté par le gouvernement pour rencontrer le Président et pour discuter un plan d'action comme, aller aux familles pauvres pendant l'état d'urgence. Le mouvement était représenté par Aliou Sané et Astou Faye, c'est rare qu'un mouvement radical est invité par le Président. Je pense que nos relations publiques avec le gouvernement ne sont pas mauvaises. Par ce qu'on respecte la décision du peuple Sénégalais qui l'a élu, mais il y'a certains messages du peuple qu'il ne comprend pas. Si je dis il ne comprend pas, que nous autant que mouvement, avons une obligation de le dénoncer. Nous sommes amis avec la justice, et quand on reste du côté des masses, du côté du discours du mieux, on n'a pas peur, nous n'allons pas être nommée, alors on n'a pas peur de Macky Sall. Mais il y'a pas une animosité envers le gouvernement.

Chadidja : Qu'est-ce que vous attendiez de Macky Sall après les élections de 2012 ? A-t-il tenu à ses promesses ?

Moriba : Concrètement, je pense que, j'ai parlé avec mes amis. Quand on parle de son premier mandat, il n'a rien accompli. Avec le referendum concernant le troisième mandat, le 14 mars, 2016, et lui avait 25 points. Mais avec notre démocratie, on voit ce qu'il écrit, dit, et après interprété pour créer un troisième mandat qui est successive. Et quand les gens ont diagnostiqué les 25 points, c'était trouvé que c'était l'un des rare referendum où il y'avait une campagne, par ce que c'était pas une enquête de pouvoir, mais c'était pour un troisième mandat, et dans le referendum c'était 18% votant non. Et ce referendum-là a fait la rupture dans le M23 qui était le mouvement de Macky Sall. C'était là que les gens s'ont fui de Macky Sall. On s'a mobilisé pour combattre Macky Sall. Et c'était cette séparation de Macky et des parts de la société civile que ça a commencé.

Chadidja : Quelle stratégie avez-vous opté contre le régime actuel ? Quelles sont les stratégies actuelles prises par le mouvement ?

Moriba : Il y'a un mouvement qui était créer qui s'appelle M12D, depuis l'arrestation de Sonko. C'est le mouvement de la défense de la démocratie. Alors, tu vois, le mouvement est en train de mettre en place une stratégie pour répondre au projet de défendre notre démocratie et notre état de droit. Donc toute les actions d'aujourd'hui sont organisé avec le collectif, et il y'a même l'opposition qu'en fait partie. Mais l'opposition est représentée par la partie du PASTEF. Le marche le 5 mars était lancé par Y'en a marre, mais les parties de l'opposition ont profité pour manifester pour Sonko. Et ce vendredi, il y'a le deuil national, c'est le mouvement qui l'a décidé, samedi il y'aura une manifestation à la Place d'Obélisque (à Dakar). Et ce qu'on a comme idée, c'est créer un grand mouvement qui va dépasser cette situation-là, qui n'est pas limité. Par ce qu'il y'avait plusieurs collectives différentes pour des choses différentes. Alors c'était bien si M12D pouvait rester un collectif.

Chadidja : Ah d'accord, alors il y'a un plan pour avoir un collectif concerné avec plusieurs choses. Et j'ai parlé avec un des mes amis et on m'a demandé si les gens au Sénégal pensent que tout ça va changer avec un autre Président de Macky Sall. Est-ce que vous pensez que la situation va changer s'il y'a un autre candidat comme Sonko ?

Moriba : Nous, nous ne permettons pas d'être optimistes, et de rêver. On a espéré en 2012 qu'après Wade ça va changer, et pendant 9 ans, rien n'a changé. Alors nous ne mettons pas notre confiance dans un politiciens. Il faut continuer, l'exécutive doit écouter à son peuple. Nos états en Afrique sont des état jeunes, ce sont des états avec beaucoup de ressources mais qui ne les gèrent pas comme il le faut. Nous avons 6000 milliards de budget, mais presque la moitié sont des salaires. Est-ce qu'on ne devait pas l'investir pou répondre aux demandes de gens. C'est pas un président qui le fait, c'est une société derrière et une force de proposition. Si on dit « Je m'intéresse à rien, je vais pas aller voter pour des choses politiques, je sors et après je prends mon thé » rien ne changera. Alors il faut avoir une organisation, et aussi voire que le Président et une seule personne, mais il est aussi entouré par des milliers, des milliers, des milliers de gens, qui chacun doit jouer son rôle pour le contrôler. Et pour ça, tous les citoyens, et ceux de la diaspora doivent faire son part, et ne pas tout laisser à une personne, comme le président, ou un ministre. J'ai pas confiance dans les individus, mais j'ai confiance en un projet qui mobilise et qui fait bouger les gens. Si non, on va recréer la même route.

Chadidja : Merci, beaucoup. Je pense que j'ai plus des questions. C'était très intéressant.

Moriba : Maintenant, moi j'ai une question pour toi. De l'autre cote de l'Atlantique, qu'est la lecture que tu fais de la politique est sur tout de la jeunesse africaine qui se mobilisent ? Quelle est l'espoir dans vos démocraties envers ces mouvements en Afrique ?

Chadidja : Bon, moi je pense que c'est très bien que la jeunesse s'engage, par ce que quand je pense au politicien au Sénégal, c'est sont surtout des hommes politiques qui sont beaucoup plus âgés que la majorité de la population. Et quand il y'a une jeunesse, on doit les donner une chance de participer et il faut qu'on donne une chance. Et les organisations et mouvements comme Y'en a marre sont très importants pour montrer à la jeunesse qu'on ne doit pas quitter le Sénégal et partir en Europe, mais qu'on peut faire une différence dans le pays et pour avoir quelque chose. Et c'est suffisant de changer la situation au Sénégal pour les générations suivantes.

Moriba : Oui c'est bien, et je vais juste résumer avant de finir. Ce que fondamentalement, c'est pas une chose individuelle, on peut pas laisser tous les pays avoir leurs propres révolutions, alors le Mali, le Sénégal, Burkina ou Nigeria, mais que la jeunesse africaine voit qu'elle est le moteur du changement et du développement dont le continent a besoin. Et parfois on se bat ou on est en prison, mais on a un espoir, et on doit motiver la jeunesse, c'est notre obligations et mission. Et ça doit être la mission des artistes et des activistes. Et les étudiants d'origine Sénégalais, comme toi, il faut parler de tout ce qui se passe dans le pays. Et si on a la chance de le regarder, il faut venir pour le voir. Comme un médecin ou un biologiste, il faut venir et travailler avec les gens pour faire l'activisme scientifique, informatiques. C'est ça le discours, j'ai dit aux jeunes américaines qui me demandent pourquoi Y'en a marre n'essaye pas de mobiliser tout le Sénégal : « We cannot mobilise everyone, we have to survive first. But come and join. » Et c'est ça la chose importante, mais si tu viens, tu mets toutes tes idées en practice. Et chacun, comme toi tu fais l'activisme au moment, par ce que tu parle avec moi et tu les dis aux gens.

Chadidja : Oui, exactement, merci. Et je voulais demander encore une fois, est-ce que je peux utiliser votre nom dans l'écrit ?

Moriba : Oui, tu peux mettre Moriba Cissokho, et je vais t'envoyer quelques documents. Et si t'as besoin d'autres personnes, je peux te mettre en contact.

2. Interview transcript Omar Cyrill Touré aka Thiat, conducted on the 11th of May, 2021. The interview was conducted in English.

Chadidja: Hello, my name is Chadidja, I am writing my Bacheor's thesis about Y'en a marre and the music by your band Keur Gui, which is why I wanted to interview you today.

Thiat: Okay, yes. Before we begin: Music is a vehicle of message, mobilizing people, spreading the word, telling people to be active in the change to development. And in general, I make a distinction between a citizen who is actively making change, making things move in the country and the resident, who holds the ID, but lives abroad, like in Germany, or the Netherlands.

Talking about social issues and citizens and residents in the music makes people realize we are talking about them, building a community ready for change, mobilized by the message touching them and telling their daily life, Senegalese life, transportation costs, expenses, work, etc. is relatable to the ordinary citizen.

The Senegalese find themselves in the lyrics, people that are mobilized are the ones that are ready for change

They even see us as a role model, that's why it was very important for us to use the music as a tool to deliver the message.

The band is part of the movement, with their own background à street credibility, which means, once you have it, people got your back. You represent something and someone, we all have a background, in working for the community

And when we had protests this year, the arrests were very violent, you can still see the marks on me from when the police beat me up.

Chadidja: yes, exactly thank you. Let's start with the questions.

Firstly, When and why did you decide to make music, specifically music focusing on social and political issues?

Thiat: I was chosen by the music, I am not doing music, it is making me.

I remember, when I was about 9 years old, my mother came home and went straight into her room. And when I asked her, because she would always give me candy, she looked at me and replied: "Blaise killed Tom". And I did not know who that was, so she explained it to me. The next day, when I went to school, I asked my teacher about it, and he asked me to explain what was going on in Burkina Faso. Then I realized that people were listening to me, and I became interested in social and political issues. I asked my mum all kinds of questions, and she told me about, Apartheid, and Cabral, which is why I am always wearing the hat and Lumumba. When we learned about Senghor, I compared him to Cabral and realized that he did not have the same kind of poetry. So in a way, my poetry became my protest against Senghor and other politicians.

In 1996 with the emergence of hip hop, we used it as a way to voice our problems and complaints.

Do you believe that your music and what you were rapping about helped mobilize people to join Y'en a marre?

Yes, definitely. It influenced people. "I used my fame to change the frame of the picture of my society. When I do my song, I talk about the real issues, and when it comes to the protest, I show my face and tell them to come out. So, they know I will be there. And the people say this guy is representing us in his music, and also representing us in the streets."

When I go to the protest, they know I will show my face, doing not “*slacktivism*” but activism. They know I am representing them in the music and in the street. We do live Facebook station before the protests to call people to come out, and then be there first. They say: “I have to go join them.” And know “they are acting on their words”.

Chadidja: Okay, so you show them that you are there too, not sacrificing them to your own cause. Did you perform Keur Gui songs at protests?

Thiat: Sometimes, not all the time. Certain protests we are invited to as Keur Gui, some we go to as private persons. We used to do that a lot in 2011, but it depends on the timing, and if the protest is allowed. If it is not allowed, we don’t perform due to the fear of retaliation by the police, arrests, and police brutality.

Chadidja: So, it depends on the way they are set up. I am analyzing Faux! Pas Forcé and Diogoufi. Faux! Pas Forcé is being described as a protest song. What about Diogoufi?

Thiat: Faux Pas Forcé à protest track directly against Wade by the movement you cannot force the third presidency; you will not even have the third candidacy.

Diogoufi by Keur gui is one of the singles of Encyclopédie but talking about Macky. It is because no one is free, our resources are being stolen, etc. It is clearly about Macky, showing the grievances.

It connects to Macky Sall and the song’s hook on its own is the anthem of the protests against Macky Sall. The way we go to bed, is the same way we wake up, the politicians are stealing our resources, while they lock everyone up who is going against them.

Since we are an “Old school” group à views are split between several accounts, otherwise we would have made a lot of money with the song and the video. Sai Sai au Coeur by Keur Gui was released in 2019, and Macky even responded. We got problems from religious figures, journalists and other public figures. But no one could send us to jail because we did not say “President Macky Sall”, it could have been every Macky Sall in the country.

Chadidja: Is it your duty as a rapper to raise awareness about social and political issues?

Thiat: It used to be a choice but became an obligation for Keur Gui, we cannot do anything else than this. It is easy to ask other people to take responsibility. Our heritage and legacy, we want it to be us being activists. And you know what you have to do and what not. Shame on me if the legacy I am leaving for the next generation is talking about my car. This is a central point of our music. We do not want to be remembered like Michael Jackson, but like Bob Marley, for our words, not our dance.

Chadidja: Your music is mainly in Wolof, why is that? I assume it is to reach more people with your message, and also reach those outside of the big cities?

Thiat: Well, we chose it firstly because we are fluent in Wolof, it is our native language, and our first target is the Senegalese people. The nice things, we are doing that to attract other people through melodies, flow, and catchy hooks.

And whoever wants to know more will put into the effort to translate the songs themselves/ research them

It is also a Protest to not sing or rap in another language. And I know I will never rap like an American using English, but an American will never rap like a Senegalese in Wolof.

Chadidja: Do you believe Y'en a marre reached its goals when Abdoulaye Wade lost the elections in 2012?

Thiat: It is not even a step; Senegal is standing up, now the steps are coming. In 2012, Senegal was laying on its belly, and now it is slowly beginning to stand.

Cheikh Anta Diop, and Blondin Diop, they did their part, for independence, and then they stopped. Then we took over, and one day we will be stopping. And the next generation will hopefully take over.

Chadidja: Thank you very much for the interview, that was really interesting. It helped me a lot.

Thiat: No worries. And know you can send me more questions if you need more information.