

A girl looks into a store that sells electronics in Dakar, Senegal.



## Consumption

**T**HIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN just outside of Dakar, Senegal from a bus. It represents the impact of globalization and the depths to which it reaches. In the picture there is a small girl carrying a cooler from which she probably sells water or juice to the cars that drive through this town. The girl is looking into a store that sells electronics like DVD players and televisions.

The juxtaposition of wealth is apparent in the picture; the little girl is poor, while the store sells to those who have money. With globalization and the influence of “the West,” Senegalese are racing

to catch up. People immigrate to Europe or the United States to help support their families. There is an expectation that these émigrés make significantly more money abroad. To maintain these beliefs, those who immigrate send home money to their families. Their families purchase new amenities to keep up an appearance of well-being. Appearance is very important in Senegal. With globalization and the idea of “keeping-up-with-the-Joneses” the importance of having a nice cell phone or owning a certain pair of sneakers is beginning to be more important than more traditional

items or clothing. While some aspects of globalization are beneficial in Senegal, such as electricity and irrigation systems, there are also negative ones. Coca Cola and Marlboro can be found in many rural villages that may still lack access to running water. The speed to which globalization is taking hold of this country is not accounting for the basic necessities many Senegalese still lack. With this image of a daughter of Senegal, this unfortunate irony is clear.

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