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Capabilities, Affective Capital and Development

Application to street child in Mauritania

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ABSTRACT

The capability approach postulates that the well-being of a person correspond to the quality of his/her existence. The objective of this paper is to underline the existence and the importance of the basic capability, which is the emotional capability. Here, we concentrate our study on the well-being of street children in Mauritania. Since, some of them suffer from lack of freedom and violence of several kinds. This physical and purely emotional violence affect the space of freedom of the children's choice. More generally, we show that the affective capital plays a determining role in the constitution of this basic capability, which is the emotional capability. The weakness of the affective capital produces an exceptional restriction in the set of feasible choices. In the first section of the communication, we emphasise on the importance of affective capital and its relationship with the emotional capability. We develop the idea that the affective capital involves an exceptional restriction on functioning. In the second section, we illustrate our theory by using data on street children in Mauritania. We show that, monetary income is not sufficient to understand this phenomenon and that it must be at first considered in relation with the affective capital. In a third section, we broaden the problematic by trying to establish some hypotheses linking affective capital to development. Finally, we conclude on the role that could play the analysis of this capital in a great number of paradoxical situations.

Street children are shocking for one's sensitivity. Probably, that's because they express more than anything a state of distress. Too visible, the authority tries to eliminate them at any cost. Street children can be considered as a reflection of numerous social problems. Father François Lefort noted that: "in each country, street children are the visible part of the hidden social misery" (2002, P 62).

The phenomenon of street children belongs to the third world, even if developed countries are not immunized against this phenomenon. The issue is endemic in Latin America and Asia. If Africa was an exception, the second half of the 80's and the beginning of the 90's has resulted into an upsurge of street children in this continent. This period has been marked by some restrictive politics of the economy, whose effects on the family solidarities have not been neutral (J.P Toto 1996).

In this paper, we propose a general framework analysis, inspired of MC Nussbaum works on capabilities. We will show some elements of the framework by data collected in a survey realised in Mauritania. The survey was led in 2003 with a group of street children in the cities of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou¹. The principal hypothesis we are trying to validate here is the relationship between affective deprivation and the phenomenon of street children. Field observation, discussions with different person, resources and results of different surveys and monographies indeed push to make a hypothesis on the phenomenon: the existence of street children is mainly a combination of income poverty and affective poverty. We must understand by the last form of poverty, an absence or an important weakness of affective capital. We must not deny the role played by income poverty and the lack of materials resources, but contrarily to consider monetary poverty in relation with affective poverty. We can not ascribe the existence of street children to the simple materials ends, at least in a direct manner. Therefore, it is not at least as or more a social phenomenon than an economic phenomenon. More precisely, street children are a result of combination or an articulation between affective poverty and economic poverty.

This article is organised in four sections. In the first section, we put up a general framework establishing the link between affective capital and capabilities. In the second section, we discuss about the main hypothesis by confronting it to others arguments. The third section, proposes an illustration of our hypothesis from data of survey. Finally, in the fourth section we conclude on some relationships and hypotheses to work on affective capital and other forms of capitals and the link which can be made between this affective capital and development.

1. General framework: affective capital and capabilities

In her book *Women and Human Development*, M.C. Nussbaum (2000) proposes a list of capabilities. This list does not have the vocation to build a complete theory of justice, but furnish a basis determining a minimum social in a variety of fields of application. In this sense, the list remains open, can be contested and called in questions. The list has ten capabilities. Among all of them, three particularly retain our attention. We will focus on the third, fifth and seventh capability of this list. The elements of capabilities we are particularly interested on are as follow:

Bodily Integrity. Being able to move freely from place to place ; having one's bodily boundaries treated as sovereign, i.e. being able to be secure against assault, including sexual assault, child abuse, and domestic violence ;...(Nussbaum 2000, p.78).

¹ This survey has been a part of the programme of IRD. It has been led in partnership with the Association of Childhood and Development in Mauritania (ACDM). We thank the members of this association, particularly Mohamed Lemine ould Ahmed Seyver, Atié Mohamed el Michry et Souvi. We also thank Benjamin Vandewiele for his participation in the survey. For more details concerning this survey and results see J. Ballet (2003a,b).

Emotions. Being able to have affection for things and people outside ourselves ; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence ; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by overwhelming fear and anxiety, or by traumatic events of abuse or neglect...(Nussbaum 2000, p.79).

Affiliation. Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction... (Nussbaum 2000, p.79).

Beyond this list, Nussbaum also proposes a distinction between three kinds of capabilities. The first type concerns the "basic capabilities". They are defined in this manner: "the innate equipment of individuals that is the necessary basis for developing the more advanced capabilities, and a ground of moral concern" (Nussbaum, 2000, p.84). These capabilities globally concern physical capacity such as hearing and talking,..., and that infants possess. The second type is those of "internal capabilities" defined as "that is, developed states of the person herself that are, so far as the person herself is concerned, sufficient conditions for the exercise of the requisite functions. Unlike the basic capabilities, these states are mature conditions of readiness" (Nussbaum 2000, p.84). If basic capabilities are necessary conditions for people to develop certain abilities, internal capabilities correspond to the development of these abilities. To retake the illustration proposed by Nussbaum, a woman who has not suffered genital mutilation has the internal capability for sexual pleasure. Finally, the third kind of capabilities correspond at that she calls the "combined capabilities". They are defined "as internal capabilities combined with suitable external conditions for the exercise of the function" (Nussbaum 2000, p.85). Here the accent is put on the combination of internal capabilities with external conditions. Of course, it is convenient to recognize that in this framework internal capabilities operate in an environment which favour more or less or suppress the development of these capabilities. The latter can have sense only in an environment, which, permits their development.

These three kinds of capabilities allow us to propose a general framework of reflection on the relationship between the capabilities and street children.

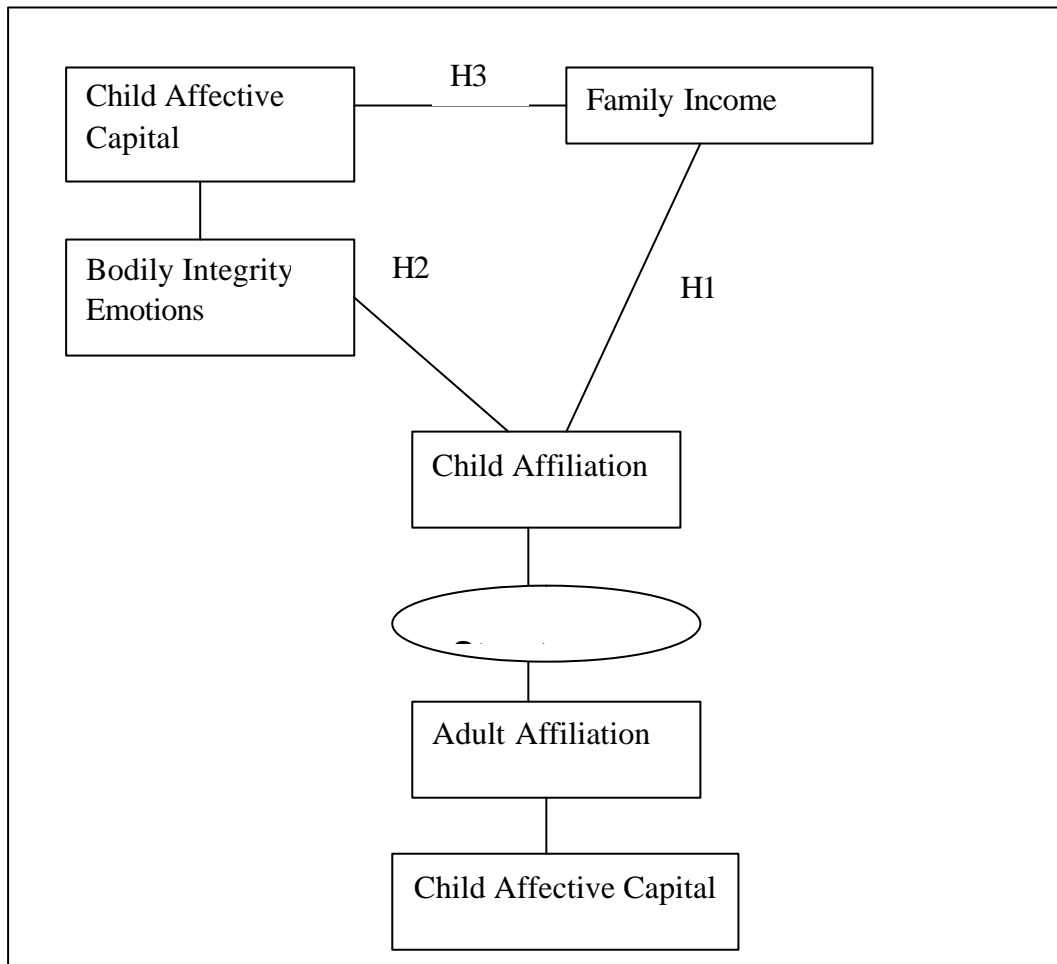
Monetary poverty is often considered as being the main reason of the phenomenon of street children. Yet this hypothesis is not sufficient in the case of Mauritania. There is no question to deny that poverty constitutes a propitious compost of the appearance of the phenomenon but in any case, it can not be the direct principal explicative factor. Here it is convenient to talk about affective poverty. Lack of affective capital seems to be the principal source of the phenomenon. Poverty in the sense of monetary seems to play an indirect role. It could be considered as the main explicative factor outside the combination with affective poverty.

For instance Baron and Hannan (1994), consider that the forms of capital are nowadays plethoric and more often they are metaphor than assets that could be considered as capital. But we do not share their point of view. Affective relations are that we call affective capital. The utilization of the term affective capital is not a linguistic mean to hide the reality of the relationship built more often on maltreatment, but simply we consider that maltreatment is one of the extremes negatives forms that take the affective relation and destroy the affective capital.

We leave behind us the questions relative to physical problems which can limit children development. Our analyses try to go forward and discuss with three distinct hypotheses, but which can be complementary to understand the phenomenon of street children: H1. the phenomenon of street children is a consequence of lack of income; H2. the phenomenon of street children is the consequences of maltreatment and lack of affective

capital; H3. the phenomenon of street children is the combination of lack of affective capital and monetary poverty. These three hypotheses can be represented in a diagram as follows (figure 1) which illustrates the global articulation of the general reflection.

Figure 1.



According to the first hypothesis street children are the result of income poverty. Unfavourable external economic conditions (agricultural shock, unemployment), therefore produce this phenomenon, and in this sense they contribute to limit internal capabilities at early age. According to the second hypothesis, familial conditions and particularly family's neglects and domestic violence push them on the street. Therefore, we can consider that children are badly endowed with affective capital that does not allow a full development of their capabilities. Particularly, the two capabilities "Bodily integrity" and "Emotional" are affected. Finally according to the third hypothesis, lack of income has a direct impact on children's affective capital, which comes to affect their capabilities. The link between income and affective poverty can also be analysed indirectly through parent's time allocation between employment and housework such as children rearing.

In all the cases, the phenomenon of street children reaches more or less seriously the capability affiliation. In relation with these effects on the capability, children will form or not the street children. Of course, children becoming adults (for those who have survived) will experience a deficiency of this capability which in its turn can provoke a mechanism of social reproduction of affective treatment reserved to their children.

The objective of this article is not to study the whole relationship till the mechanism of social reproduction. We will limit our analysis to the three hypotheses that we will check with data from a survey realised in Mauritania.

2. The Discussion: Income Poverty versus Affective Poverty

Before analysing in detail the hypothesis sustained, we will discuss on a hypothesis very often evoked to explain the phenomenon of street children in Mauritania, that is the migratory phenomenon, in particular rural depopulation. A survey led in 1996, (Mohamed Salem 1996), suggested that population mobility due to poverty, notably the arrival of rural migrants in cities could constitute an essential cause of the presence of growing street children. In particular, the settlement problems of rural migrants and nomad in urban milieu should be the cause². According to the evolution of migratory flux between rural zones and cities in developing countries during the last decades, this hypothesis seems to be plausible. Reminding you, the Mauritanian society during 1960's and 70's was essentially nomad and rural, nowadays this part of the population represents a few proportion of the population³. Such an interpretation encounters an opposite argument. First, this is a survey on street children and not on children on the street. Therefore, the population studied is very large⁴. If the problems of adaptation of urban life are imaginable for the population earlier nomad, particularly because this population do not find activities of substitution procuring an income in relation with their previous way of life based on breeding, this does not involve the existence of street children. The survey of 1996, has finally adopted an ambiguous position taking into consideration the argument underlying that 46.8% of the children are born in the city so they can not be associated to the phenomenon of mobility. Without denying the influence that can produce the phenomenon of migration, probably it does not play a great role.

² This kind of explanation is very common in the analysis of social problems. For instance, ghettos of black people in USA are often been analysed as the results of migratory phenomenon of black rural population toward northern industrial cities. The inability of these populations to adapt to urban way of life should be one of the causes of the creation of ghettos according to this kind of analysis. This approach has sometime experienced a dangerous drift according to this scheme: blacks populations do not adapt because they are black. Inadaptability is attributed to ethnic appartenance. For further details in the debate on formation of ghettos, see for example C. Mark (1991) or L. Wacquant (1996).

³ The migratory phenomenon can be in fact, understood in several steps. In the first step characterising in the beginning of the 1960's, the nomad population was quite high, with 76.9% of the population against 13.9% of the rural sedentary population and 9.8% of urban population (recensement des centres urbains 1961-1962). During the mid 60's there is a new tendency towards the settling of the nomad population. There was a declining proportion of the nomad population and rural population reaching respectively 53.6% and 37.3% whereas the urban population remained the same with 9.1% (enquête démographique de 1964-1965). In the third step, there was a tendency toward urban migration. In 1977, the proportion was 33.2% for the nomad population, 44.1% for the rural sedentary population and 22.7% for the urban population (recensement général de la population 1977). In 1998, there is no more nomad population, representing only 5% of the population, whereas the urban population has grown up to reach 53% of the population. This evolution is due to dryness, in particular those who were produced in the 1970's and 80's and have increased the phenomenon. Theses results can be found in Keumaye Iknegongba (1992), *Fécondité et ethnité en Mauritanie*, Bamako, CERPOD, et Observatoire du développement humain durable (2000), *Rapport sur le Développement Humain en Mauritanie*, Nouakchott.

⁴ For more detail on this topic see Y. Marguerat (1997b) and Ballet (2003b)

Having isolated the first hypothesis now, we are going to examine those of poverty. It is generally evoked as the principal cause. The lack of income is generally appreciated by at least two indicators: first, family housing, second parents' economic activity. Therefore, these two factors underline a certain poverty of the population but let open the field to another type of explanation. We must question on the combination of factors and in particular the building link between income poverty and affective poverty. Income poverty would play only indirectly in the phenomenon of street children.

Concerning the housing, the survey of 1988 (Lefort 1998), indicated that only one third of the parents were living in the slump (*Kebbé*) an other 1/3 were outside Nouakchott and the last third were living in a house in Nouakchott. At this stage, income poverty would constitute only one third of the case, whereas one could think that the distance between the city and the parents house involves that children do not come back at home. Here also, one could argue of transportation cost, so lack of income. But, it remains the last third of the sample. Nevertheless, we must keep in mind that this survey pose problem, notably because it does not distinguish the *talibé* children from the others. If, *talibé* children represent a particularity, notably because their fosterage could be due to socio-cultural factors and not economic, so the results of the survey lose of their pertinence. But often, if housing constitute an indicator of poverty, does not mean inevitably that the relationship may be established between income and the phenomenon of children of the street.

The role of bad condition of housing can be interpreted differently, so that poverty is a factor but only an indirect one of the phenomenon. The living conditions in the housing restrict more often to one room in which live the whole family, is a source of promiscuity for certain children who can live it quite badly. This explains the high percentage of children saying to be on the street for the desire of independence (*focus gropue*)⁵. Therefore, it can be less important to know the physical aspect of the housing (cage, hard house,...), surface of the house and number of rooms. Poverty plays a role but indirect, involving a high promiscuity of different family members.

A second indicator confirms the doubt that we can have on the effect on income poverty. Parents of children surveyed have parents in a great majority of cases who work. Respectively, 84% and 71.1% of boys and girls have at least one of two parents are employed in an economic activity (table 1). The proportion of children who have the two parents engaged in an economic activity is not negligible and superior to those who have any parent in any activity. The father exerts his entire time in work (table 2). The unemployed and the daily workers represent just a marginal proportion of parents whose children are on the street. Hence, one can argue of lack of wage. But, a large variety of profession are concerned. If lack of wage is in cause, it is the wage in general in the countries and no the lack of income of certain profession in particular. Finally, we could say that due to lack of income, children behave by their own because parents do not have the financial capacity to take care of them. Therefore, such an argument forget that a great part of those whose income is not much higher take care of their children, and the latter can not be considered as children of the street. The survey of 1996 (Mohamed Salem 1996), noted that 35.4% of children work in order to furnish an income to the family. Here also, they are not street children or children of the street but children on the street, and this result can not be interpreted in the case of children of the street.

Moreover, if mothers exert less often an activity than fathers, in spite of this they are nearly ½ to contribute to the family income by an activity.

Table 1. Sources of income of parents according to survey 2003

⁵ This survey has been completed by the focus group. We thank M. Mohamed Abdallahi Ould Bousseynri of Conseil National de l'Enfance having allowed us to participate in the focus group.

Combination of activity*	Proportions	
	Boys	Girls
The two parents work	28%	22,2%
Only the father work	44%	42,2%
Only the mother work	12%	6,7%
At least one source of income	84%	71,1%
Any activity	16%	28,9%

*The term activity is used because in certain cases, it is difficult to qualify this activity as work. For instance, the case of prostitution. It constitutes nevertheless a source of income et so must be taken into consideration as a work.

Table 2. Professions of father

	Filles	Garçons	Ensemble
<i>Total</i>	7	3	10
<i>fonctionnaire en tenue</i>			
<i>Autre</i>	1	1	2
<i>fonctionnaire</i>			
<i>Total</i>	5	6	11
<i>indépendant</i>			
<i>Total salariés</i>	10	16	26
<i>privé</i>			
<i>Autres</i>	22	12	34
<i>situations</i>			
<i>dont :</i>			
Marabout	1	-	1
Mendiant	1	1	2
Retraité	4	3	7
Sans activité	5	5	10
Décédé	10	2	12
Inconnu	1	1	2
Total	45	38	83

Tableau 3. Professions de la Mère

	Garçons	Filles	Ensemble
Activités économiques	18	5	23
légal			
Prostitution	2	5	7
Mendicité	1	1	2
Décédée	1	1	2
Sans activité	17	32	49
Total	38	45	83

It appears clearly that the monetary factor is not sufficient. Though, the argument of family structure could be used. Here also, the number of children of the chief of the family varies from 2 to 12, with a high concentration around 4 to 5 children which in the context of the country is considered as normal⁶. Moreover, due to the monogamous tradition of the country, the number of legitimate woman is one in 70% of cases. The structure of cost in relation with income is not an explicative factor. The survey of 1996 has raised an interesting questioning. She noticed that in majority (in 59.7% of cases) children on the street are younger. She suggested that the economic choice or educative one of the family is more often on elder children whereas the affective choice is upon the youngest children. The younger is a little bit abandoned. Hence, the affective factor should play an important role.

Another hypothesis than those of income poverty must be highlighted. Surveys data and evidences converge toward the absence of affection, indeed maltreatment. Nevertheless, such a hypothesis can be interpreted at least in two different ways. According to the first interpretation, the explicative factor of the phenomenon of children of the street is the internal factors of the family. Family violence, parents severity, sternness, corporal violence and other kind of brutality (child abuse), that children are victim of, push them out of home. As well, learning by punishment is a kind of traditional education which is another kind of violence. The run away of children constitute in this analysis a refusal of the family model and traditional education. The research of liberty to live without constraint, without family oppression constitutes another explicative factor of abandoning the family house (Matchinda 1999).

In the second interpretation, the link is established between income poverty and affective poverty. As it was noted earlier, parents exert more often an activity. It is not the income poverty, even if it is below the poverty line in most of the cases, which is the essential factor. In return, the hypothesis of the type of activity exerted may have an influence, hence it is a field to explore. Indeed, parents' time allocation is divided within the family between endowed to external activity, source of income, and housework. Therefore, extreme rigidity of allocation of time vis-à-vis of work can involve a neglect of children, provoking a lack of affective capital. It is not the question of income that is problematic, but the rigidity of time endowed to obtain this income. This hypothesis is confirmed easily for certain profession exerted by fathers such as military, guardian, marines. Fathers out of home is necessary for these activities and most of them are absent for long time. As well for mothers, for certain kind of activity as house cleaner, trader, involve long time of work outside the house. The case of small itinerant traders is very revealing. They must be at the strategic places at the right time, meaning at busy times, while they stand at a main place the rest of the time where customers can find them easily. They begin early in the morning and end late in the evening, without having the possibility to visit the house during the day. Their allocation of time is so rigid that they can not consecrate much of their time to domestic activities and particularly to give affection to their children.

The hypothesis of lack of affective capital, hence is joined together with the economic constraint seem to have sense in this consideration. However, a critic of this hypothesis could be formulated. One would consider, that income plays a central role and support the idea that it is not the income owned by the chief of the family but the real income available in the family. Two arguments can support this distinction.

The first argument would consist to say that income of the head of the household is not the income of the family. According to this interpretation, the head of the household is not benevolent vis-à-vis the rest of the family members, and keep the income for his own consumption. He does not share it. For instance, we can imagine the case where, the father

⁶ The gross rate of natality in 1998 was of 43.7% and the synthetic index of fecundity of 6 according to the world human development report 2002.

who spends all his income outside the family circle and not make any transfers of resources to his wife and children. He adopts purely a selfish behaviour.

The second argument would reside in the constraint of wage earning. The head is not selfish but the constraint of salary payment can let the family without income for long time. For example, it is the case of militaries, who are outside home for several months but the salary is not transferred to the family. It is also the case of marines who receive their payment once landing, so they can not send money to their family during the sailing time.

In one or another case, the fact that parents exert an activity does not mean that the family earns an income and it can be supported that lack of income is the essential factors of children of the street. This evidence (possibility) must be taken into serious consideration. Yet, this does not mean that income poverty does not combine with affective capital. On the contrary, this reinforces the hypothesis that children of the street is the product of a combination of economic and affective factors. We take our earlier example, the father who does not want to make transfers to the rest of his family oblige the second parent (mother) to work. Hence, the activity of the second parent is associated with a rigidity of allocation of time, so children will not have parents by their side, accumulating lack of affection from both parents. Income poverty joined together with the affective capital produce the phenomenon of children of the street.

This interpretation can be supported by an indicator those of family's situation. We must understand by family's situation, matrimonial situation of the family and not in term of legislation. Concerning the collection of data, families where only one parent assumes the rearing of children seem to be in this point of view a variable reflecting this kind of combination. Therefore, 76.5% of the families are in such a situation. Income poverty is not the only cause and the lack of affective capital is a factor that merits a particular attention.

3. Evidence: analysis of causes of children of the street in Mauritania

The earlier surveys led in Mauritania had shed the light on the importance of affective reasons, without making it a stake of analysis, remaining concentrated on the analysis of poverty or of misery without establishing the relationship between income poverty and affective poverty. Anyway, they were listing the causes without making any classification.

These surveys were relaying only on the view of children. They asked children to express their situation and particularly to describe the reasons which push them out of home, to live on the street. The new data proposed here is in the continuing of the method of the survey. They re-update the point of view of children. Moreover, due to the work of educators in touch with the children's families, it was possible to express the point of view of families, also those of educators themselves.

Data are given in table 4. Several causes are regularly given by the children's families and educators. For each child several causes can be evoked.

We have regrouped all these causes into three categories: causes of economic nature, causes of affective nature and other causes. The later causes are essentially the fact of psychological problems, diseases affecting them, also influence of gangs or of a friend. Among the economic causes, we distinguish two groups. First, the poverty cause. According to this cause, children of the street is uniquely cause of lack of parental income. Then, the exploitation of children by the family⁷. It is the case where, it appears clearly that family exploit his child in order to gain an income. This level of explanation is closely related to

⁷ According to O. Nieuwenhuys (1996), in South India due to exploitation of children in family enterprises, children particularly girls migrate to the North of India, in order to work and gain an income. Migration permits them to be free of parental pressures. They have the belief to be exploited by their parents because they do not earn money for their work.

affective capital, however we listed it in the economic cause because it was not possible to check for each cases the affective position of the family in relation with the child. In other words, as it was not possible to determine if it was the lack of income which pushes family to exploit the child or a certain malevolent from its part we have classed it in economic condition. Among the affective causes here also, we have three categories going from the simple lack of affection, family neglect or lack of supervision to maltreatment and family rejection. We have three classes corresponding each of them to a degree of high affection for the child.

Table 4. Causes of departure on the street, data 2003

	According to children	According to the families	According to the educators
Causes			
Poverty	18	9	22
Exploitation of children by the family	2	3	6
<i>Total economics causes</i>	<i>20 (25%)</i>	<i>12 (17,64%)</i>	<i>28 (25,45%)</i>
Absence of the father, lack of supervision, familial neglect ...	28	4	38
Rejected by the family	5	10	9
Beaten by the family or the marabout, chained ...	10	4	12
<i>Total affectives causes</i>	<i>43 (53,75%)</i>	<i>16 (23,53%)</i>	<i>59 (53,63%)</i>
Influence of gang, friends...	8	13	9
Problems relying on the child (psychological problems)	-	21	5
Idleness of the child, lack of entertainment, amusement...	4	6	4
Diseases of children	1	-	1
Prostitution of the mother	4	-	3
<i>Total others causes</i>	<i>17 (21,25%)</i>	<i>40 (58,82%)</i>	<i>23 (20,9%)</i>
Without answers	10	18	1
Total responses	80 (100%)	68 (100%)	110

We will present first, the cause according to children, following by those of parents and finally those of the educators. The lecture of Table 4. One observation:

- ? Affective causes are highly dominated in general. They represent nearly 53% of causes argued by children. Economic causes are less evoked and are comparable to other causes. Can we say that children do not see the poverty of the family or on contrarily being aware of this situation they consider that this is not an essential reason? In fact, without denying the role of poverty as a favorable component of the phenomenon, it is clear that they judge with other social elements and affective ones to produce the run away from home.

The analysis of causes evoked by the parents permit a different understanding of the situation. Several observations impose to us:

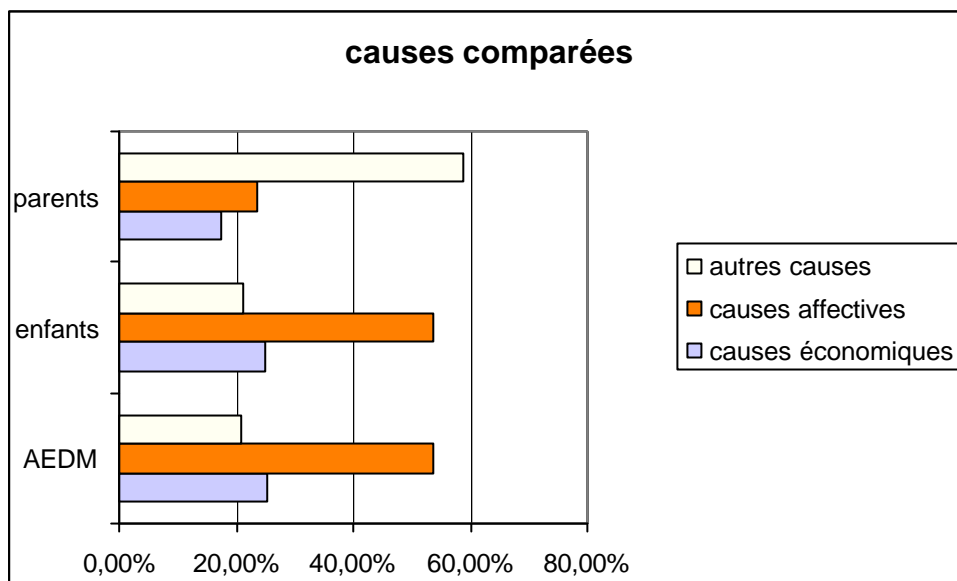
- ? First, obviously affective causes are less evoked by parents. They reject the main fault on children, affected by psychological problems and misbehaviour and also influences of gang and friends of same age. In some rare cases, the family recognises beating the child, enchaining him, but this is justified by the misbehaviour of the child. In the case where, the child is enchained, the family reveal that it has not done that, the child would escape immediately. These few cases reflect the situation of perversity in which certain families is due to the absence of knowledge concerning educative practical toward their children. In other cases, the family declares openly to not being able to bear the child and in consequence reject him. But in this case, it is not a problem of financial constraint but more profoundly it is a matter of lack of affection vis-à-vis of the child.
- ? Then, according to children's declaration, economics causes are less often evoked. They are less than one quarter of causes declared. It must be noted that parents' declarations diverge whether it concerns a boy or a girl. For boys economics causes are never mentioned and the fault is entirely attributed to children and to gangs who influenced them.

It remains to examine the causes of departure on the street according to the educators in order to compare them to the declaration of children and parents.

According to the educators, the affective causes are numerous. As it was the case of the declaration of children and of parents, economics causes are less mentioned, not more than in one quarter of cases. The other causes are also rarely evoked. Of course, this does not mean that the educators do not consider poverty as a worsening factor, but they are aware of the fact that this factor is not sufficient to explain the phenomenon of children of the street. Lack of affection, considering rejection or maltreatment is more obviously at the heart of the problem.

The figure 2 comparative of main causes according to the three observations, those of children, parents and educators of AEDM, permit easily to demonstrate that the point of view of AEDM educators is quite the same to those of children in the whole. This does not mean that for each case, the educators and children have the same point of view, but simply globally in spite of divergences for the specific cases, the point of views converge in the analysis of causes.

Figure 2. Representation of causes by categories according to three point of view



Globally, the analysis of data indicates though the economics reasons would play just a secondary role compared to affective reasons. This does not mean that the economics reasons play just a minor role. Hence, we show that a poor affective capital affecting the emotional capabilities increases the vulnerability of children of the street. We must put in relation the affective causes with the economics constraints. As it was underlined in the earlier section, the phenomenon of children of the street comes from a consideration between income poverty and affective poverty, which merits interest for further exploration. Whatever, street children have to face poverty, none as the cause of the phenomenon but as a consequence. Abandoned to themselves, they have to find sources of income to survive.

4. Some hypotheses on the influence of affective capital

The affective capital could present a certain interest for the economic analysis. Notably, the relation with others forms of capital can be posed. The affective capital entertains a close relationship with human capital. In consideration with some results used here, the affective capital seems to be a precious element in the possibility to acquire human capital. It could facilitate regular school attendance. Without prejudging the results that a child will obtain, it can be therefore be advanced without taking any risk that a child possessing good affective capital is more able to acquire human capital than a child who lacks of this capital. Indeed, A. Leibowitz (1977), showed that school performance of children issued of homogenous family (not divorced parents and educated) had best results in school than children issued of mono-parental household, separated or divorced parents or from household where parents are not educated (Jensen and Nielsen 1997, Emerson and Portela 2003).

In the case of children of the street, this relation involves certainly a revision of educative practices. To eradicate the phenomenon of street children, beyond the immediate curative remedies and emergency which raise all the actors of the field (access to specialized care, reintegration in the education milieu), the assumption which is suggested here is to consider that the priority is first to educate the parents, and to modify the institutional practices, particularly in their conception of child and to his relation with school. The

education whether she is the fault of parents or of institutions is quite often a normalisation built on violence in regards of children. A street child is more often a child who runs away from violence. It is quite symptomatic in Mauritania as this question is raised, many persons, even among social actors in touch with this issue hide behind the argument of affection neglect. According to them, too much affection is also harmful than not enough. However, none of them could say that children of the street they meet suffer of too much affection. But here also, some prefer to see a consequence of the street rather than a profound cause of socio-cultural relation that it is and not only a putting in order of some socio-economic epiphenomenon.

The affective capital entertains as well a strong relation with social capital. The example of children of the street shows very well this relationship. In the absence of affective capital these children look for this affection among pairs on the street and form gangs (Marguerat). Therefore, these gangs constitute social capital. Affective capital is therefore directly linked to social capital. More exactly, we can assume that the form the social capital of an individual will take is strongly dependant to his affective capital. The integration in a network or the construction of a set of relations and the form taken by the network and its relation is in interdependence with the affective capital, in the sense where the relationship with the others and what we construct are the direct outcome of behaviours themselves that depend on affective capital.

The affective capital could also play particularly a strong role in the behaviour of dependence. In the sense, it could permit to highlight the economic analysis of dependence. We must understand dependence as dependence in consideration with subsistence but also in consideration with institutions. Once again, children of the street show clearly this problematic. Shortage of affection drives children on the street where the hardness of their situation pushes them to consume drugs. Hence, they *guinze*⁸ to steal, but also and especially to fulfil the shortage of affection which becomes to them unbearable. "I.B. 15 years old. I *guinze* too much to not to live" was telling a child of the street⁹. The dependence is also expressed vis-à-vis the institutions. Children can not take themselves in charge in a manner fully satisfying, it supposes a capacity of the institutions to take them in charge. By extrapolating, we can consider that the person who has some difficulties to be autonomous and to take themselves in charge also people who lack of affection express their dependency regarding the institutions. They reconstruct in this way a relation in which they can find a comfort and a help, but also in which they get out very painfully.

Next, the usual assumption is to consider children of the street as a result of poverty. The assumption lying on the link between income poverty and affective capital comes to shade the usual hypothesis. The lack of economic capital compared to the lack the affective capital produce the phenomenon of children of the street. But at the same time, children of the street constitute a visible form of lack of capacity accumulation of affective capital for the next generation, which in its turn involve a lack of capacity of development and consequently a high level of poverty. To say it differently and in a caricature way, children of the street are not only a product of poverty, they are also a factor of production of this poverty, forming a phenomenon of poverty trap. Poverty combined to lack of affection induces the phenomenon of children of the street. But the latter is revealing of this affective capital which in its turn wedges the mechanism of development by shortage of human capital and of social capital it engenders. For this condition, acting on poverty in the monetary way is not certainly sufficient to break the circle of poverty and the weakness of development. Modifying socio-cultural and educative practices in regard with children and parents constitute likely an

⁸ The *guinze* is a practice which consist to inhale glue or others products such as solvent.

⁹ Evidences collect by father Lefort (1988) during his survey.

essential way to fight against poverty and sustainable development which till now has been object of extremely shy programmes.

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