



Education as Politics: Colonial Schooling and Political Debate in Senegal, 1850s–1914 (Africa and the Diaspora: History, Politics, Culture)

By Kelly M. Duke Bryant

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In 1914, Blaise Diagne was elected as Senegal's first black African representative to the National Assembly in France. *Education as Politics* reinterprets the origins and significance of this momentous election, showing how colonial schools had helped reshape African power and politics during the preceding decades and how they prepared the way for Diagne's victory.

Kelly M. Duke Bryant demonstrates the critical impact of colonial schooling on Senegalese politics by examining the response to it by Africans from a variety of backgrounds and statuses—including rural chiefs, Islamic teachers, and educated young urbanites. For those Africans who chose to engage with them, the French schools in Senegal provided a new source of patronage, a potentially beneficial connection to the bureaucratizing colonial state, a basis for claims to authority or power, or an arena in which to debate pressing issues like the future of Qur'anic schooling and the increasing racism of urban society under colonial rule.

Based on evidence from archives in Senegal and France, and on interviews Duke Bryant conducted in Senegal, she demonstrates that colonial schooling remade African politics during this period of transition to French rule, creating political spaces that were at once African and colonial, and ultimately allowing Diagne to claim election victory.

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Review

“An important book that reveals the centrality of different institutions of education to the history of African politics in colonial Senegal at the beginning of the twentieth century. Duke Bryant revises significantly our understanding of the shifting ideas about race in early colonial Africa and offers an exciting new interpretation of the 1914 election of Blaise Diagne.”—Bruce Hall, Duke University

“A well-researched, well-written exploration of the cause-effect relationship of education and inclusion of Africans into the politics of Senegal. . . . An effective case study.”—*Choice*

“Engaging. . . . Duke Bryant pulls African voices from the archives and complements them with interviews with descendants, to examine what students, families, teachers, and notables thought of French schooling and how they used it. . . . A most welcome addition to the scholarly literature on Senegal, French West Africa, colonial Africa, as well as education within and outside of the French Empire.”—*International Journal of African Historical Studies*

About the Author

Kelly M. Duke Bryant is an associate professor of history at Rowan University. She has published articles in the *Journal of African History*, *French Colonial History*, and the *International Journal of African Historical Studies*.

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