CHAPTER 7

MIGRATION, MARRIAGE, AND ETHNICITY
THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM IN PRECOLONIAL MIDDLE CASAMANCE

Aly Dramé (Dominican University)

INTRODUCTION

Historical narratives have consistently overlooked the role of marriage in the process leading to the Islamization of the Casamance, the southwestern part of Senegal. This negligence is a clear reflection of the minor role played by this region in the historiography of Senegambia as a whole. Instead of exploring the early development of Islam throughout the Casamance, this chapter focuses on the interwoven relationships between migration, marriage, and ethnic identity transformation in the Middle Casamance. Its chronological focus is the period between the first half of the seventeenth century, when the original Muslim settlements began to emerge, and the mid-nineteenth century, when the balance of religious power was dramatically shifting in favor of Muslims.

Since the 1970s and 1980s, the conflicting lines of arguments respectively formulated by Robin Horton and Humphrey Fisher have strongly influenced the scholarship on conversion to Islam in West Africa. In his pioneering model (the Intellectualist Theory) Horton describes the African cosmology as a realm dominated by a higher God and lesser spirits, corresponding to what he terms as the social macrocosm and microcosm. For Horton, the transformation of the basic African cosmology was driven by a set of external and internal crises, culminating in the breakdown of the social microcosm. By suggesting that the African religious universe underwent a change from within, Horton offers a new version of “syncretism” or the so-called mixing between Islam and pre-Islamic African beliefs.
In his "devout opposition" to Horton, Fisher portrays conversions in Africa as a three-step process. The first step, prayer (qaṣīdah), took shape when Muslims who renounced their former beliefs disassociated themselves from "unbelievers" to live in a region inhabited by non-Muslims. The second step, mixing (misrūj), occurred when non-Muslims entered communities of Muslims in religious practices. The third step, reform (ṣalāt), through interpretation and manipulation of the Holy Qur'an. The third and final step, reform, took the opportunity of mixing to introduce non-Muslims when Muslim clerics took the new worldview, Islam, completely smashed and lost its appeal in the Middle Casamance. 2

In contrast to Fisher's approach, this chapter argues that instead of a gradual process. In the lower Casamance, water systems such as the Casamance River and its affluents separated the lower and Middle Casamance. The westward redeployment of the Mandinka of the Mandinka to the Middle Casamance in the thirteenth century, when the wars of Emperor Sundiata's reconquest generated important currents of migration, more particularly after the fall of Mali in the sixteenth century. The Mandinka introduced to the Middle Casamance a hierarchical model of social organization, ideas of highly centralized government, and Islam. In the precolumbal era, however, the Mandinka were divided into two distinct groups: the Nyango aristocracy, who embodied monarchy, spiritual descent, and traditional religion, and Mandinka Muslims, who prospered through trade, cotton manufacture, and, teaching Islam.

This chapter concentrates on the last category of Mandinka. The central character in this process was Fodey Heraba Dramsey, a distinguished Muslim scholar and educator who originated from Daramame, Mali. Patterns of marriage described in this chapter operated at three major phases: exogamous marriage (between Muslims and non-Muslims), endogamous marriage (between Muslims), and the subsequent consolidation of Islam. The cumulative effect of these processes was a slow but progressive change of the spiritual geography of the Middle Casamance from an African religion to Islam.

BAINUNK INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Reconstructing the ethnogenesis of the Bainunk is a challenging task because of the antiquity of their presence in the Casamance. But oral sources are unanimous in describing the Bainunk as the landowners in this region where they predared all other ethnic groups. Driven by land scarcity and, subsequently, the search for better living conditions, the original Bainunk migrated from Guinea-Bissau to the Casamance. They founded their capital at Brikama located on the south bank of the Casamance near the mouth of the Sungurugu River. Most Bainunk kingdoms such as Buguendo, Bichangoro, Jaje, Jara, Figoy, Kasa, and Pakao were strategically located along the trading networks linking diverse population groups in Southern Senegambia. 11

Unlike the Jola and Balant, the Bainunk were not accephalous societies, nor did they have a highly centralized system of government comparable to the Mandinka social system. Nineteenth-century French sources depict the Bainunk political system as a monarchy in which community elders could oversee decision-making processes forming what is now the Mandinka country in the Middle Casamance belonged to the same as the Jola, who wanted to endicate or restrict the risks of invasion posed by aggressive neighbors such as the Mandinka. In the Middle Casamance the Balant, who suspected that the Mandinka were hatching plots to convert them to Islam or sell them into slavery, made consistent efforts to deny them access to their territory until the nineteenth century.

According to some sources, the term Balant derives from balante, which means in Mandingo those who have refused cultural assimilation by relations such as marriage. One Balant community elder said, "The Mandinka married our women who converted. One Balant community elder said, "The Mandinka married our women who converted. Our language, religion, and ancestral heritage. We fought Mandinka Muslims to preserve our cultural and social values. 12

The Bainunk were part of the African indigenous groups who had a positive view of Islam when they first came into contact with Muslims. They exhibited much more of Islam when they first came into contact with Muslims.
MIGRATION, MARRIAGE, AND ETHNICITY

FODEY HERABA DRAKEY:
A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF A MUSLIM PIONEER

Since the early 1970s scholars have paid closer attention to increasing currents of migration from the Niger River basin to other regions of Africa. For Philip Curtin and others, Mandingo-speaking people were the main architects of these patterns of behavior, which accelerated after the fall of Mali in the sixteenth century.26 Their primary motivations and repercussions on the political, social, and economic changes in many areas of Africa have often been linked to long-distance trade.27 But other researchers have mainly associated these trends with the propagation of Islam. For example, Ivor Wilks observes that besides trade some Muslim groups like the Jula migrants to the forest ecological zone devoted themselves to activities such as sonyary work rather than long-distance trade triggered the dispersal of Jahnkânêo like the Islamic learning.28 According to Charles Thomas Hunter and Lamin Sanneh, mystics throughout West Africa.29 Ohomana Levkson also noted that Muslim merchants their dispersal was instrumental in linking isolated African societies with broader com-

planning the seeds of Islam in the midst of non-Muslims through means of action

Fodey Heraba was among the Muslim clerics portrayed as "devout Muslims," who that were markedly different from military jihad.30 Fodey Heraba’s life and time are

examined through the lens of oral narratives and some written traditions such as the holy book of Pakao (Pakao al-Korano or Pakao al-kitâb). This is a thirteenth-century Arabic document written by scholars such as Fodey Sinooko, the leader of Karantaba in the 1840s.31

In these sources Fodey Heraba is consistently depicted as a "household name" or as the "early face" of Islam in the Middle Casamance, because when reworking their oral traditions to help explain key historical outcomes informants go beyond the period before Fodey Heraba only to suggest that during this time the Middle Casamance was not part of the dar al-Islam. In popular memory Fodey Heraba is remembered as a holy man (walâ) whose vocation was proselytization rather than long-distance trade.32 His father, Abd al-Rahman, was a merchant-scholar from Fas, a Mandinka corruption of the town of Fez located in the northwestern part of Morocco. He then migrated to Timbuktu like many merchant-scholars of his time.33 Fodey Heraba’s family had long been affiliated with the Qadr Sufi order founded in Baghdad in the eleventh century by Abd al-Qadir al-ja’âm (1007-1166). In his early career Fodey Heraba was strongly influenced by many core aspects of Qadr teachings, such as the strict adherence to the prophetic tradition (sunna), religious sanctity and the participation in the improvement of public life.34 His father instructed him in the Holy Quran and introduced him to the Qadr Sufi order, long before his arrival in the Casamance with his Qadr wîrd. But nothing indicates that Fodey Heraba had a spiritual master in oral testimonies where his Islamic scholarship is viewed as the product of divine blessing (baraka).35

According to Fodey Heraba’s hagiographers, his mission began when he expe-
inced a frequent divine revelation ordering him to relocate from east (ebe) to west (nijî). This holy mission was to create a new settlement destined to be a step-
ing-stone for the spread of Islam between the Casamance and the Gambia, the two rivers flowing through the heart of the Mandinka country.36 Fodey Heraba left his homeland of Daramane founded by Dramey clerics from Timbuktu on the south bank of the Senegal River, to the north of Kayes, Mali.37 André Brue, the director of the Compagnie du Sénégal, visited the region of Kayes at the end of the seventeenth century. He described Daramane as "a very populous village whose majority were Muslim clerics," and counted Dramey and Yatabâr lineages of Daramane among the most educated Muslim families in this region.38

Fodey Heraba was probably in the middle of his life when he began his spiritual journey by foot, accompanied by his wife (Yassa Tunkara) and by his slave (Man-

sama), stopping in several villages along the way. Oral testimonies suggest that find-
ing a right place to settle was a painstaking experience for Fodey Heraba, because he often lost sight of the "divine light" that guided his nightly meditations when-
ever dawn arrived.39 Nevertheless, this moment of confusion did not crush his spirit because he understood the challenging mission awaiting him from the beginning. The difficulties surrounding the “forced relocation” of Fodey Heraba are often exam-
inied and understood in the light of the predicaments leading to the hijra of prophet Mohammad. Thus, the challenges Fodey Heraba experienced during his spiritual journey are viewed as expected occurrences in oral narratives.40

In the Middle Casamance Fodey Heraba was hosted in Bambajoon, one of the oldest Bainunk settlements located on the south bank of the Casamance. In the first half of the seventeenth century, the populations of Bambajoon were still strongly devoted to their ancestral traditions, including harvesting, sacrificing to ancestral spirits, and drinking palm wine. Bahumba Dafley, the chief of Bambajoon, first welcomed Fodey Heraba with hospitality and admiration, exhibiting excitement when listening to his
Exogamous Marriage: Muslims and Non-Muslims

Exogamous marriage was the first phase in the early development of Islam in the Middle Casamance. This reflects consistent patterns of marriage bonds between early Islamic women who ultimately switched to Islam under the influence of their husbands. Apart from the prestige associated with non-Muslims, three other factors provided incentives for these unions. First, Islamic law (shari'a) allows Muslim men to take wives outside of their religion, but offspring resulting from these relationships must follow the religion of their fathers. In fact, widening the dar al-Islam by bringing in new converts is believed to be one of the highest accomplishments in a Muslim's lifetime. Second, Muslims who resettled in areas inhabited by non-Muslims, such as the Middle Casamance, dramatically restricted their ability to find Muslim spouses in these areas. This led local communities to become the primary "wife giving" groups to Muslims. Third, the frequency of marriage historically was one of the core cultural values among the Bamban. As such, marriage resulted often in important entitlements, including land grants authorizing the settlement of strangers.

According to one prolific oral historian, Fina Fenda Faye, these interfaith unions were mostly arranged marriages between Muslim men and much younger Bamban women, who were showered with many gifts (cloth, cattle, harvest, and jewelry). In some cases the two parties could agree to tie the marriage knot when the wives-to-be reached maturity. Although the Middle Casamance was a lucrative niche for Muslim scholars and merchants, local people portrayed Islamic scholarship and trade as a "door open to wealth accumulation." Given the age difference between men and women involved in these negotiations, women expected to inherit the wealth left behind by their husbands. Research has shown that other Bamban communities in Senegambia followed a pattern similar to the one described by Faye. For example, George Brooks describes a case in which the Bamban authorized traders such as the Lécupés (Afro-Portuguese traders) to marry their local women, who could consequently widen their commercial activities after the deaths of their husbands. A consensus opinion between men and women who participated in my group interviews is to retrace their maternal ancestry back to the Bamban indigenous communities, who hosted their founding ancestors in the Middle Casamance since the time of Fodey Heraba. Traditions recall that Fodey Heraba had so children with his first wife (Yassa Tunkara) when they arrived in the Middle Casamance; he then chose most of his spouses from the Bamban women, including one of Chief Bahumba's daughters (Nemuna Jakumba), who converted to Islam before the founding of Karantaba. One oral informant explains the vital role of marriage (fiaaaw) in the following terms: "Clerics such as Fodey took advantage of their prestigious status to convert the local populations through fiaaaw. This strategy was one of the fastest ways to open up their hearts and minds to Islam. Fodey himself left Bamban after marrying Chief Bahumba's daughter who converted to Islam. Many other Muslim migrants followed in his footsteps." After Fodey Heraba performed many successful prayers for Chief Bahumba, the latter and his daughter converted to Islam, setting the tone for the rest of their community. The chief granted his son-in-law the concession of land, permitting Fodey Heraba to build the first Islamic village harboring the first mosque in the Middle Casamance. This deal did not require the payment of a tax, but Fodey Heraba had to respect the political sovereignty of Bahumba Daffy through his non-involvement in the political matters of Bamban. This widespread tradition echoes arguments about the role of kings as "the early recipients of Islam," to borrow from Levtzion. He postulates that the dispersion of Muslims was the first step in the conversion to Islam in Africa, whereas the second step was the moment when Muslim scholars began to communicate with African host kings. The case of King Mbal (Musulmulam) exemplifies this kind of spiritual change. He embraced Islam and Mbal (Musulmulam) exemplifies this kind of spiritual change. He embraced Islam and Mbal (Musulmulam) exemplifies this kind of spiritual change. He embraced Islam and Mbal (Musulmulam) exemplifies this kind of spiritual change. He embraced Islam and Mbal (Musulmulam) exemplifies this kind of spiritual change. He embraced Islam and Mbal (Musulmulam) exemplifies this kind of spiritual change. He embraced Islam and Mbal (Musulmulam) exemplifies this kind of spiritual change. He embraced Islam and Mbal (Musulmulam) exemplifies this kind of spiritual change. He embraced Islam and Mbal (Musulmulam) exemplifies this kind of spiritual change. He embraced Islam and
The story of Fodey Heraba follows a similar pattern, but in this particular case, di's strong Islamic background, local Bainunk chiefs such as Mankawali and Bambara, the important services, Chief Fanney gave him a wife who converted to Islam. Their union led to the Fanney hiring him for a "series of weekly prayers". In appreciation for di's valuable converted the land of Kajur, who was a bachelor when he migrated to Kajur, he devoted most of his life to preaching and converting many people in the Bainunk community of Kaling where he is buried. Fodey Musa Soly, the progenitor of the Soly clerics of Kan territory, who was a bachelor when he migrated to Kanita from his native Macina, took most of his spouses from the Bainunk local women and converted them to Islam.

When Burama Seyd and his nephew migrated from Futa Arelawo to the Middle Casamance, they became the hosts of the populations of Fanting. Impressed with Seyd's strong Islamic background, local Bainunk chiefs such as Mankawali and Bambara Fanney hired him for a "series of weekly prayers." In appreciation for Seyd's valuable services, Chief Fanney gave him a wife who converted to Islam. This union led to the creation of Njama, the first Muslim settlement in the district of Yacin, located to the north of Sedhiou. The role of Njama as the "entrance door" of Islam to Yacin and the importance of Fanann in this process are emblems in oral narratives collected in this region.

Oral narratives provide many case studies showing that the redeployment and settlement of Muslim scholars in the Middle Casamance through exogamous marriage existed until the nineteenth century. For example, Karamo Kamara, the founding ancestor of Karamo clerics of Sedhiou, was born to a noble and highly educated Muslim family. He wanted nothing but power when he migrated from his native Mali to the Middle Casamance with a group of followers. The local people of Bakum, who hosted Kamara, frequently crossed the Casamance River to meet those of Sandinie. These two groups used to celebrate their common Bainunk identity by drinking palm wine under the shade of a large baobab tree (adansonia digitata). From the crowd Kamara chose a young woman (Yeri Danfa), who became his wife and embraced Islam. As a result of this union, Bainunk leaders of Bakum and Patiabor authorized Kamara's settlement between the two villages, in what is now Morinkunda (Mali quarter) in Sedhiou (a deformation of the meaning six right there in Mandingo). In the political and religious chief of Baj. From his native Jareng, a community claiming ancestry back to Karkanta, Sandu, Sandu migrated to the district of Baj. He was a scholar and schoolteacher whose goal was to help promote Islamic education in this region. After his marriage to a local woman from the Mansaly and Biaye ruling families who hosted him in Bakum, Sandu settled in Diatuma shortly after the creation of the French fort at Sedhiou in the late 1840s. During my group interviews in Diatuma, one village elder made the following remark endorsed by others: "Since the time of Fodey Heraba, sandua has always been a very effective tool in widening the dar al-Islam. No one in this region, including Muslim ancestry or the Bainunk blood flowing in the veins of all Mandinka Muslims." Oral sources are sometimes unclear or confusing about the names of many local non-Muslim women whose marriages to Muslim migrants led to their conversion to Islam. Blame is often placed on the similarity of women's names between many generations. But there is a clear consensus among oral narratives and written traditions, regarding how marriage decisively paved the way for the spread of Islam in the Middle Casamance. The willingness of the Bainunk elite to favor marriage ties between local women and Muslim migrants underlines the prestigious status of Muslim scholars who migrated to the Middle Casamance during the precolonial era.

ENDOGAMOUS MARRIAGE: THE PRACTICE OF SANAWO

Endogamous marriage was the second phase in the early development of Islam in the Middle Casamance. When Muslim migrants resettled in the heartland of the land of the infidelity (dar al-kufuf), they quickly realized the need to rally around the banner of Islam for the expansion of the Islamic community (sumanah). This network of Muslim solidarity strongly relied on the practice of sanawo, a long tradition of cross-cousin marriages and joking relations among the Mandinka in the Casamance. In such a highly centralized society, one primary function of sanawo is to stimulate peace and tolerance by allowing members of the same community to transcend existing social barriers for the good of the community as a whole. According to the available evidence, the roots of sanawo stretch back to two major sources.

The first source is a key historical event that radically changed the relationships between two local groups. For example, oral traditions recall that the two female ancestors of the Bayo and Kuyate clan names gave birth to two babies the same night. The delivery occurred when a thunderstorm plunged the whole community into despair, forcing the nurses to place the babies away from any possible danger. When the two mothers were asked to nurse their newborn babies, they could not identify them in the darkness and agreed to breastfeed them without distinction. In Mandinka social hierarchy the Bayo are part of the high class (kauru), whereas the Kuyate belong to the professional occupational groups (yanuakala). Nevertheless, the remarkable solidarity initiated by these two women resulted in sanawo relations between the Bayo and Kuyate clan names. Since this historic event the customs acquired that all people belonging to these two groups live in peace and harmony by sharing all kinds of jokes. The second source of sanawo is linked to old patterns of intermarriage between people with different clan names, going back to the time of their founding ancestors. In the long run, members of the two groups solidify their relationships until they view in the political and religious chief of Baj. From his native Jareng, a community claiming ancestry back to Karkanta, Sandu migrated to the district of Baj. He was a scholar and schoolteacher whose goal was to help promote Islamic education in this region. After his marriage to a local woman from the Mansaly and Biaye ruling families who hosted him in Bakum, Sandu settled in Diatuma shortly after the creation of the French fort at Sedhiou in the late 1840s. During my group interviews in Diatuma, one village elder made the following remark endorsed by others: "Since the time of Fodey Heraba, sandua has always been a very effective tool in widening the dar al-Islam. No one in this region, including Muslim ancestry or the Bainunk blood flowing in the veins of all Mandinka Muslims." Oral sources are sometimes unclear or confusing about the names of many local non-Muslim women whose marriages to Muslim migrants led to their conversion to Islam. Blame is often placed on the similarity of women's names between many generations. But there is a clear consensus among oral narratives and written traditions, regarding how marriage decisively paved the way for the spread of Islam in the Middle Casamance. The willingness of the Bainunk elite to favor marriage ties between local women and Muslim migrants underlines the prestigious status of Muslim scholars who migrated to the Middle Casamance during the precolonial era.
The central importance of religious tolerance in Fodey Heraba's worldview is often remembered by recalling the story of Koli Jemme, a non-Muslim barred from succeeding his father or brother to the throne in Badibu, The Gambia. When Jemme took the path of self-imposed exile to start a new life in the Casamance and subsequently became the first of Fodey Heraba, he permitted him to harvest palm wine behind Karantaba despite his non-Muslim status. Rather than quarantine themselves from one another, the two men developed peaceful relations until Fodey Heraba converted Jemme to Islam, and prayed for him before he founded Bugnandu (house of honor) on the north bank of the Casamance River.

The second group included itinerant traders and/or Muslim scholars looking for new religious or economic opportunities away from home. It is noteworthy to emphasize the cases of four men because of their prominent roles in the emergence and development of Islam in Karantaba and surrounding areas: Matiaku Dibé, Fodey Musa Soly, Fodey Barro, and Fodey Sakho. By initiating a tradition of _sanaamu_ relationships with most of them, Fodey Heraba was able to guarantee their definitive settlement in Karantaba.

During one of his hunting adventures in the Middle Casamance, Matiaku Dibé helped Fodey Heraba settle Karantaba, but he wanted to return to his native Badibu, The Gambia. Fodey Heraba persuaded Matiaku to stay in Karantaba when he offered him one of his daughters (Muso Dramey) in marriage. Fodey Musa Soly (Soly is a Mandinka corruption of the Fulu name Sow) was a brilliant scholar from Macina who wanted to play a dynamic role in the propagation of Islamic learning. He had long been the practice of _sanaamu_ relationships with all the people leading the official ceremonies (baptisms, funerals, weddings, and charity distribution) and the official investiture of the village chief. People leading the official investitures of the Imam and the spokespersons of Karantaba were chosen from the Solykunda _kabila_. Fodey Barro, who established the Barrokunda _kabila_, assumed the function of Quranic schoolteacher and _muqatin_ (mullah). The descendents of Fodey Sakho, who founded the Sakkohunda _kabila_, were the direct advisers and the right-hand men of the Imam of Karantaba. They accompanied him to the mosque on Friday and during religious rites such as the Day of Sacrifice (bana stalo) or end of Ramadan celebration (sunkar nalu).

This model highlights two factors of critical importance in the Mandinka country. The first one is the gerontocratic, conservative, and male-dominated nature of the Mandinka political system in which religious and political powers were the strongholds of men who relegated women to a subordinate position. The second one is the sacramental principle of landownership for the Mandinka who believed that those who cleared the space to build a community were ipso facto the owners of the land (bansu tyaw). Marriage ties and a system of power decentralization helped Fodey Heraba to create and maintain the cohesion Muslims needed in the Middle Casamance where they were still a small minority in the early seventeenth century.

Fodey Heraba and his companions also agreed to open new Quranic schools in every _kabila_ to promote the demographic growth of Karantaba. In exchange for Islamic education those who sought Islamic knowledge were expected to perform agricultural tasks for their teachers (somanel). Farming activities took place between the two power positions in the Casamance. It is confined to Karantaba, where the practice of _sanaamu_ relationships with all the people leading the official ceremonies (baptisms, funerals, weddings, and charity distribution) and the official investiture of the village chief. People leading the official investitures of the Imam and the spokespersons of Karantaba were chosen from the Solykunda _kabila_. Fodey Barro, who established the Barrokunda _kabila_, assumed the function of Quranic schoolteacher and _muqatin_ (mullah). The descendents of Fodey Sakho, who founded the Sakkohunda _kabila_, were the direct advisers and the right-hand men of the Imam of Karantaba. They accompanied him to the mosque on Friday and during religious rites such as the Day of Sacrifice (bana stalo) or end of Ramadan celebration (sunkar nalu). This model highlights two factors of critical importance in the Mandinka country. The first one is the gerontocratic, conservative, and male-dominated nature of the Mandinka political system in which religious and political powers were the strongholds of men who relegated women to a subordinate position. The second one is the sacramental principle of landownership for the Mandinka who believed that those who cleared the space to build a community were ipso facto the owners of the land (bansu tyaw). Marriage ties and a system of power decentralization helped Fodey Heraba to create and maintain the cohesion Muslims needed in the Middle Casamance where they were still a small minority in the early seventeenth century.

Fodey Heraba and his companions also agreed to open new Quranic schools in every _kabila_ to promote the demographic growth of Karantaba. In exchange for Islamic education those who sought Islamic knowledge were expected to perform agricultural tasks for their teachers (somanel). Farming activities took place between the two power positions in the Casamance. It is confined to Karantaba, where the practice of _sanaamu_ relationships with all the people leading the official ceremonies (baptisms, funerals, weddings, and charity distribution) and the official investiture of the village chief. People leading the official investitures of the Imam and the spokespersons of Karantaba were chosen from the Solykunda _kabila_. Fodey Barro, who established the Barrokunda _kabila_, assumed the function of Quranic schoolteacher and _muqatin_ (mullah). The descendents of Fodey Sakho, who founded the Sakkohunda _kabila_, were the direct advisers and the right-hand men of the Imam of Karantaba. They accompanied him to the mosque on Friday and during religious rites such as the Day of Sacrifice (bana stalo) or end of Ramadan celebration (sunkar nalu). This model highlights two factors of critical importance in the Mandinka country. The first one is the gerontocratic, conservative, and male-dominated nature of the Mandinka political system in which religious and political powers were the strongholds of men who relegated women to a subordinate position. The second one is the sacramental principle of landownership for the Mandinka who believed that those who cleared the space to build a community were ipso facto the owners of the land (bansu tyaw). Marriage ties and a system of power decentralization helped Fodey Heraba to create and maintain the cohesion Muslims needed in the Middle Casamance where they were still a small minority in the early seventeenth century.

Fodey Heraba and his companions also agreed to open new Quranic schools in every _kabila_ to promote the demographic growth of Karantaba. In exchange for Islamic education those who sought Islamic knowledge were expected to perform agricultural tasks for their teachers (somanel). Farming activities took place between the two power positions in the Casamance. It is confined to Karantaba, where the practice of _sanaamu_ relationships with all the people leading the official ceremonies (baptisms, funerals, weddings, and charity distribution) and the official investiture of the village chief. People leading the official investitures of the Imam and the spokespersons of Karantaba were chosen from the Solykunda _kabila_. Fodey Barro, who established the Barrokunda _kabila_, assumed the function of Quranic schoolteacher and _muqatin_ (mullah). The descendents of Fodey Sakho, who founded the Sakkohunda _kabila_, were the direct advisers and the right-hand men of the Imam of Karantaba. They accompanied him to the mosque on Friday and during religious rites such as the Day of Sacrifice (bana stalo) or end of Ramadan celebration (sunkar nalu). This model highlights two factors of critical importance in the Mandinka country. The first one is the gerontocratic, conservative, and male-dominated nature of the Mandinka political system in which religious and political powers were the strongholds of men who relegated women to a subordinate position. The second one is the sacramental principle of landownership for the Mandinka who believed that those who cleared the space to build a community were ipso facto the owners of the land (bansu tyaw). Marriage ties and a system of power decentralization helped Fodey Heraba to create and maintain the cohesion Muslims needed in the Middle Casamance where they were still a small minority in the early seventeenth century.
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: THE PHASE OF CONSOLIDATION

The third phase in the early development of Islam in the Middle Casamance was when Muslims used different strategies to develop the tentacles of Islam from their original settlements. Whether motivated by trade, Islamic education, or both, Muslim migrants to the Casamance often targeted sites located near water systems, commercial crossroads, or in the proximity of non-Muslim local populations. Muslims did so with a strong confidence in the superiority of Islam over African religion. As indicated earlier, these migrants first began to gain social acceptance and recognition by coexisting with non-Muslims. When Muslims were given land concessions to build their own communities in the Middle Casamance, they did so while leaving their doors open to all people who wanted to join their communities. Whether Muslims settled near or away from their host communities, no compelling evidence indicates that Muslims wanted to quarantine themselves to preserve the originality of their faith.

Where proselytism was the driving force behind Muslim presence in the Casamance, clerical figures such as Fodey Heraba would have run a big risk of defeating their own purpose by using the strategy of quarantine. From my perspective, the need to lay the foundation for new community groups whose rules and regulations were in harmony with the tenets of Islam dictated the strategy used by Muslims. Although oral and written sources make clear that tensions could arise from time to time, during the precolonial era in the Middle Casamance religious boundaries were not hermetically sealed to prevent exchanges between Muslims and non-Muslims.

After the building of their own communities, Muslims continued to develop extensive contacts with the Bainunk indigenous communities in the Middle Casamance, including with the political overlords who authorized their settlement. But at the same time they kept intact their original social and religious identity, their religion and language more specifically. Without a doubt, the phases of mixing and reform Fihler describes in his model of conversion to Islam were prominent factors in the propagation of Islam in many areas in West Africa; the Middle Casamance was no exception. In this region, however, ethnic and religious interactions such as marriage, the frequent recourse of non-Muslims to the Muslim art of divination, Islamic learning and the sharing of the same geographic space were incompatible with the idea of quarantine. Indeed, in their early encounters Muslims and non-Muslims in the Middle Casamance understood that they needed each other and consequently did not quarantine themselves from one another.

The direction of religious change I describe moved from African religion to Islam, not the other way around. Men and women involved in exogamous and endogamous marriage, children resulting from these unions, as well as Muslims and non-Muslims seeking "new spaces of religious affiliation" through conversion or Islamic education provided the building block for the early Islamic community in the Middle Casamance. Muslims sought to continuously expand their territory through their dispersed over time and space, the creation of new settlements, the founding of Quran schools, the teaching of the Holy Quran, and the welcoming of new Muslim and non-Muslim settlers. The *Paka al'ikhab*a provides the chronological order of the first twenty-seven mosques built throughout the Middle Casamance and the names of the clerics who established them, beginning with those of Karantaba.

These dramatic developments were a slow but continuous process that stretched from the first half of the seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. In 1849, Bertrand Bocandé was the French resident on the Island of Karantaba in the Lower Bissau and the Casamance such as Mandinka, Creole and Portuguese. Bocandé spent more than a decade crisscrossing this area to learn about the development of French commercial activities and the state of mind of the local communities. For him, the settlement and resettlement of Mandinka Muslims over time and space was a defining characteristic of the history of the Casamance, where the influence of Islam consistently grew until the nineteenth century. Most importantly, Bocandé noted the persistence of marriage bonds between Mandinka Muslim men and local women in the Middle Casamance during this period. He reported that the way Muslim men dressed their new wives according to Islamic customs and traditions fascinated non-Muslim local women who tended to adopt the same dress code.

Another French explorer, Hyacinthe Hecquard, described himself as the first European man to visit Karantaba in the first half of the nineteenth century. He portrayed Karantaba as a Muslim village whose inhabitants welcomed him with a great sense of hospitality when he visited Fodey Setama. Hecquard argued that during his short visit he saw the continuous arrival of Muslims and non-Muslims, and inhabitants of Karantaba and strangers, who showered the "holy man" with all kinds of gifts in exchange for his Islamic education and prayers. Because of this combination of factors, and marriage ties in particular, Islam was becoming slowly the dominant religion of the Middle Casamance before the creation of the fort of Seliou in the late 1830s, marking the beginning of French colonial settlement in this region. During this time, in many areas of the Middle Casamance, such as Suna, Pakao and Balnub, Muslims were already the dominant group before the 1840s when the Pakao jihad broke out.

CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, historical studies on Islam in Senegambia have the tendency to focus almost too exclusively on the period after the mid-nineteenth century. There is no doubt about the importance of this period marked by the beginning of European colonial rule, the emergence of new Sufi orders, and the development of military jihad. However, the period leading up to the rise and expansion of Islam in Senegambia was set in motion long before the mid-nineteenth century. This chapter attempts to show the pivotal role of marriage as a stepping-stone for the Islamization of the Casamance. Although the Casamance is a melting pot where many population groups have coexisted for several centuries, this chapter focuses mainly on the encounter between Mandinka Muslim migrants and the Bainunk local communities prior to the beginning of French colonial rule.

During this time the language for social and religious change used by early Muslim scholars such as Fodey Heraba, Dramey was expressed through policies of accommodation and pacific coexistence with the local populations among whom they settled. Endogamous and exogamous marriage and Islamic education provided the first vehicles for the early development of Islam in this region. This language changed for the first time with the outbreak of the first holy war known as the Pakao jihad in the early 1840s. This war inaugurated the beginning of a new era that transformed
the Middle Casamance into a battleground between Islam and monarchy. Religious tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims lasted until the early 1900s when the French defeated one of their toughest opponents, Fodey Kaba Dumbuya. 

French defeated one of their toughest opponents, Fodey Kaba Dumbuya. The Pakao jihad is the history of the interwoven relationships between three major actors: the French who wanted to incorporate the Middle Casamance into their colonial empire, the Mandinka who took advantage of the expanding dar al-Islam to eliminate the last non-Muslim power centers that existed in the region, and the Rainunk who attempted to resist both projects by redesigning the nature of their relations with the French and Mandinka whom they had previously welcomed to their homelands. The Rainunk coped with these new challenges in three different ways: they eliminated new projects by redefining the nature of communities that defined their original identity, specifically their language and religion. Today the Mandinka language (Mandingo) and Islam are respectively the langue franca and the dominant religion in the Middle Casamance.

NOTES

I owe a debt of gratitude to the families of Al-Hajj MANDING Dramé in Karantaba and Al-Hajj DADDY Sarr in Sedhiou, who were my hosts during my 2003 fieldwork. I would also like to thank all community leaders of the Middle Casamance for their hospitality, advice, and outpouring support.

1. The Casamance is located at the crossroads of four West African states (Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and French Guinea), and as such it is a melting pot where many central and decentralized population groups have coexisted for many centuries. These people are farmers, fishermen, traders, hunters, and gatherers. They speak a rich diversity of languages and practice a variety of religions, including Islam and Christianity. The Casamance is divided into three geographic regions (the Lower, Middle, and Upper Casamance) where the Jola wet rice farmers, the Mandinka and the Fula cattle herders are the major groups, respectively.


4. Fisher’s model presents some similarities with the arguments elaborated by Trimingham, who also used a three-stage process (infiltration, conversion, and assimilation) when studying in the early 1950s how religion changed from traditional religion to Islam in West Africa. But contrary to Fisher, Trimingham argued that African societies only entered history with conversion. See Spencer Trimingham, Islam in West Africa, 33–46.

5. For more insights on the issue see Dramé, “Planted The Seeds of Islam,” 50–63.

6. Fodey is the highest religious distinction in Mandinka religious hierarchy. It could be described as a ‘worn song’ because it usually occurs late in the life of people, who have established clear evidence of their piety, wisdom, and Islamic scholarship. During this important rite, the recipient’s head and chin are surrounded with a long turban and a red hat placed on top of his head. I recorded more than 80 scholars who earned the title of Fodey in the Middle Casamance; all of them were men with most originating from Kam- tabo. This is a clear revelation that among Mandinka Muslims in the Casamance the priority of higher education is given to men, but the search for Islamic knowledge is mandatory for all Muslims, irrespective of gender.


20. Group interviews with the author, Karantaba and Sedhiou, October 22 and 28, 2003. See also Sabo, Culture, Kingship, and Religion, 179–88; it has documented how African talismans were popular in the Portuguese-African world between the end of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century. According to him Muslims and non-Muslims, Africans and non-Africans, were fond of these talismans known as “Boîte de Mandinga” made by Mandinka Muslims from the coast of Guinea.


25. Levitron, “In the Bilad al-Sudan to 1800,” 68.


27. Only a handful of copies of the pakao al-kitaabi are available throughout the Casamance. In the book are pieced together many important events that shaped the history of the Mandinka since their early encounter with the Rainunk landowners in the Casamance. Important sections of the pakao al-kitaabi are based on the life and times of Fodey Heraba Dramé and other early Muslim clerics who migrated to the Casamance. Some portions of the book were ravaged by frequent termite attacks, poor weather, and a series of wild fires in the 1970s. With the help of Al-Hajj Manding Dramé (my host in Karantaba), some experts, and other historical experts, I was able to exploit the content of the book. For more development on the Pakao jihad, see Dramé, “Planted The Seeds of Islam,” 137–97.


29. For more discussion on the role of Timbuktu in the development of trade and Islamic education in Africa, see Hunwick, Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire.

30. One of the oldest Sufi orders, the Qadiriyya was introduced to the Western Sudan in the early sixteenth century by the Kunta clerical network. Ndiaye is the basis of the Qadiriyya in Senegal. Despite the rapid growth of Mursiyya and Tijaniyya, Qadiriyya remains until today the dominant Sufi order among Mandinka Muslims in the Casamance. For more developments on the Qadiri Sufi order see Robinson, Paths of Accommodation, 161–93.


32. Group interview with the author, and private interview with Mansani Dramé, Datuma.

33. Seku Diba, interview with the author, Mansani Dramé, village chief of Diamaré and other community elders, November 11, 2003.
34. Group interview with the author, Mansani Dramé, village chief of Diamaré and other community elders, November 11, 2003.
35. When turning away from the religious persecutions, the prophet Mohammad, and his fidelity to Islam, December 6, 2003.
37. The scientific name of the Tabo tree is Goëaكوردولا according to Schäfer (see Drame, States and Warfare, 51).
40. The following generations are Fodey Heraba Dramé, Sambaya Kumba Bara Dramé, Fodey Bokar Dramé, Fodey Al-Hajj Dramé, Fomemura Dramé, Mannadou Lamine Souley Dramé, and Fodey Almamy Dramé.
42. Group interviews with the author, Karantaba, October 29, 2003.
44. The Holy Quran 2223 and 5:6.
49. Interviews with the author: Al-Hajj Maming Dramé, Karantaba, October 22, 2003; Babacar Dabo, Bambé, December 6, 2003; and Mansani Dramé, village chief of Diamaré, October 25, 2003. According to some oral traditions Fodey had many, which included Touba Tankara, Nenana Jakabé, and Jakabé Barro.
51. Al-Hajj Maming Dramé, interview with the author, Karantaba, October 23, 2003. New scholarly research calls attention to the existence of many similar political arrangements between the temporal and the spiritual in several regions of Africa. A good example is the case of Muslim clerics commonly known as sérên lamb and sérên fakk taal in the Wolof kingdoms of Southern Senegambia, between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. For more information see Babou, Fighting the Greater Jihad, 22–28; Gowlett, Sufism and jihad in Modern Senegal, 46–66; and Searing, God Alones 1 Kings, 18–24.
57. Interviews with the author: Karantaba Soly, September 29, 2001; Fakèba Soly, November 7, 2003; Kemo Soly, October 26, 2003; and a group interview including members of the Soly and the Dramé ruling family, Karantaba, November 7, 2003.
58. Group interview with the author, Njema, September 12, 2001. According to Yoro Tsehali, the name of Njema, which means peace in Arabic, is a clear indication of the warm welcome Bambank local people gave Burama and his nephew when they arrived in the Middle Casamance. Njema, however, means peace in Wolof, not in Arabic.
60. These developments occurred in the context of the expanding French colonial rule in the Casamance. For more information see Dramé, Planting the Seeds of Islam, 3, 19–24.
62. Jeli Mori Keba Kuyatey, interview with the author, Chicago, October 11, 2001. To better emphasize the critical importance of sanawu, during the same interview Kuyatey decided to share his own experience. When he visited Mali in 1992, he was pressed for time and toured near the walls of the National Assembly in Bamako. The last name of the security guard who caught him was Bayo. When he asked for his national identity card and realized that he and Kuyatey were sanawu, he let him go home instead of forcing him to pay a fine or to spend some days in prison.
64. Group interviews with the author, Karantaba, October 23, 2003; and Sedhiou, November 9, 2003.
66. Schurz, Dynies, States and Warfare, 131.
68. Badibou was one of the Mandinka kingdoms located on the north bank of the Gambia River. For more information about the Mandinka Kingdoms see Quinn, Manding Kingdoms of the Senegambia, 29–52.
70. Oral testimonies recall that Fodey Maming Soly fascinated many of his fellow Muslims because of his mastery of the Holy Quran. One tradition recounts that one day a crocodile accidentally took away one of Fodey Heraba’s daughters. Through manipulation and interpretation of the Holy Quran, Soly saved the life of the young girl to the satisfaction of the whole village.
73. Today Karantaba comprises nine different Khalis. Besides the original five Khalis there are also Kan Kumba Sara, Seni Kunda, Kanyu Kunda and Kan Sula. Some of them such as Seni Kunda and Kan Kumba Sara regroup people directly related to Fodey Heraba. Ofh them such as Kanyu Kunda comprise people such as the Sollonds, who resided in Karantaba. Their homeland (Manié) was destroyed during the 1840s Pakho jihad.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Beyond Brotherhood

Gender, Religious Authority, and the Global Circuits of Senegalese Muridiyya

Beth A. Buggenhagen (Indiana University, Bloomington)