School of Oriental and African Studies
University of London

Vincent Foucher

CHEATED PILGRIMS:
EDUCATION, MIGRATION
AND THE BIRTH OF CASAMANÇAIS
NATIONALISM (SENÉGAL)

Thesis submitted for the PhD in Political Studies
November 2002
Abstract

This dissertation proposes an interpretation of the birth of the separatist movement that developed in Casamance (south Senegal) in the early 1980s. Against the usual views which describe it as an outcome of the encounter between modernity, i.e. the state and the market, and the ahistorical, acephalous, self-subsistent Diola ethnic group of Lower Casamance, it is suggested that the Diola have actually engaged with ‘modernity’ to a degree uncommon elsewhere in Senegal: Lower Casamance has long had the highest primary schooling rate in Senegal, and Diola migrants, men and women, are a major component of the population of Dakar, the Senegalese capital. Following Benedict Anderson’s intuition about ‘pilgrimages’ as foundations for nationalism, one can hypothesise that Casamançais separatism means that something went wrong with these Diola ‘pilgrimages’.

The first part of this PhD analyses the development of education and migration in Lower Casamance; progressively, Diola communities have become multi-local, and the literati (the évolutés) emerged as dominant figures. The Diola évolutés, successful ‘pilgrims’ of the state, took the lead in late colonial and post-colonial politics, on a moderate regionalist line - a standard feature of Senegalese one-party politics.

The second part describes the collapse of the Diola ‘pilgrimages’: in the 1970s, when long-term demographic changes and short-term financial crisis combined to curtail the state’s capacity to sustain the training and employment of Diola évolutés, the situation of these évolutés sharply degraded, particularly compared to Diola women, whose low-key informal urban migration was still successful. During the 1970s, in their dealings with Casamance, the state and other institutions engaged in the production of traditionalist discourses, for which the évolutés were a primary audience. In the fragile and complex context of local politics in Ziguinchor, the regional capital, the Diola pilgrims of the Senegalese state, who felt cheated, built on these traditionalisms to formulate a Casamançais nationalism.
List of contents

Abstract – p. 2

List of contents – p. 3

List of tables and figures – p. 6

Notes on transliteration and translation – p. 7

List of abbreviations – p. 8

Acknowledgments – p. 9

Introduction: A WEST AFRICAN SEPARATISM

Emic accounts of conflict – p. 12

“La voix de la Casamance”: the claims of the separatists – p. 12

The state and the rebels: the claims of the government – p. 14

The rebellion as a “jacquerie”: a paradoxical agreement – p. 16

The Casamance conflict and the social sciences: a low-intensity academic conflict – p. 17

Socio-economic marginalisation... – p. 17

... or cultural specificity – p. 18

Specificity versus marginality: a circular argument – p. 20

The Islamo-Wolof model: a political synthesis – p. 21

Structural explanations and the dehistoricisation of (Lower) Casamance – p. 21

Deconstructing Casamance? – p. 23

Towards an alternative account of Casamançais nationalism – p. 26

Contesting the paradoxical agreement – p. 27

Nationalism, modernity, modularity – p. 29

Studying Casamançais nationalism – p. 31

Methodology – p. 33

Chapter outline – p. 35

Chapter I: THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTI-LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Aline Sitoé Diatta, migrant and prophetess – p. 38

Measuring migration with a macroscope – p. 40

The 1955 Dakar census – p. 41

A 1950s statistical view from the Casamance: Louis-Vincent Thomas – p. 42

The 1988 census: the other end of the process – p. 44

Changing lenses: micro-statistical approaches to Casamançais migration – p. 47

Nicolas & Gaye: the local dynamics of migration – p. 47

A comparative survey of Lower Casamançais migration: De Jonge et alia – p. 48

Looking into female migration: Alice Hamer in Thionck-Essyl – p. 50

The demography of migrant communities: the case of Mlomp – p. 51

Statistical conclusions – p. 52

An internalist account of Diola migration – p. 54

Pre-colonial order: the power of the elders – p. 55

Pax Gallica – a changing system of constraints and opportunities – p. 57

The strengthening of the juniors – p. 58

Migration, conversion and the dynamics of age-groups – p. 62

Rural migration – p. 64

The Diola in town: the development of urban migration – p. 66

Making it to Dakar: stories from Selungu – p. 67

The formation of multi-local communities – p. 71

Communities of consumption – p. 72

An open secret – p. 75

Conclusion – p. 77
Chapter II: EDUCATION IN LOWER CASAMANCE, A SILENT REVOLUTION
Formal education and the paradox of anti-hierarchy – p. 80
A history of school in Lower Casamance – p. 83
Factors of revolution: the impact of world religions – p. 87
  Islamisation from below: the failure of the marabouts – p. 88
  The Catholic Church: schooling for the faith – p. 94
Civil service as a pathway to prosperity – p. 98
  Trading diasporas in Lower Casamance – p. 98
  Recruiting for the civil service: a historical window of opportunity – p. 101
  Finding statistical clues – p. 104
  The Casamançais niche in the civil service – p. 106
  A further confirmation: the weakness of female education – p. 108
The figure of the évolué: reshaping the public sphere in the village – p. 110
  The cultural practices of the évolués as a yardstick of success – p. 110
  The évolués as communal leaders: the associations de ressortissants – p. 114
Conclusion – p. 117

Chapter III: LEGAL REGIONALISM AND THE POLITICAL EMERGENCE OF THE ÉVOLUÉS
A nationalist mythology – p. 120
Pre-1945 political life in Lower Casamance – p. 125
  Citizens and subjects: the Senegalese context of Ziguinchorois politics – p. 125
  Mestizo logics: the ‘Portuguese’ community of Ziguinchor – p. 126
  “Le Commerce français” and the economic personality of Casamance – p. 128
  Demands for political representation and autonomy – p. 130
  A closed political arena – p. 130
Post-war politics: the demise of the Creoles – p. 133
  The enfranchisement of African subjects – p. 133
  1945-1947: uprooting the old urban elites of Ziguinchor – p. 134
The next step: the emergence of the local literati – p. 138
  The MFDC, a regionalist group – p. 139
  Regionalism as a national Senegalese feature – p. 141
  Senghor against Lamine Guèye: the fall of the SFIO – p. 142
  A post-mortem of the SFIO in Casamance: analysing the local cleavage – p. 144
  The local literati in politics: “Des hommes pouvant tenir tête” – p. 146
  A Lower Casamançais specificity? – p. 148
Contesting the MFDC-BDS: politics in Casamance after Senghor’s victory – p. 151
  The Mouvement Autonome Casamançais, “a new brood” – p. 151
  The PRA-S and Casamance: an epilogue? – p. 158
Early post-colonial politics: the logics of political representation in a one-party regime – p. 162
  The persistence of political representation? – p. 162
  The strength of legal regionalism – p. 164
Conclusion – p. 166

Chapter IV: THE BREAK-UP OF THE COMPACT
The quest for the golden age – p. 168
The collapse of the compact – p. 170
  Demographic expansion, schooling and civil service in the 1970s and 1980s – p. 171
  Prisoners of the ratchet – p. 176
A community under stress – p. 178
  Portraying a migrant community – p. 179
  Marriage in a time of crisis – p. 181
The sociolinguistics of crisis – p. 184
  Men and women, French and Wolof, attitudes and practices – p. 185
  The paradox of Wolofisation – p. 186
  The évolué and the moodu-moodu – p. 187
The sociability of women, the isolation of men – p. 189
  The roots of female sociability – p. 190
  Isolated elites: “les cadres and les populations” – p. 194
Conclusion – p. 196
Chapter V: FORMING IMAGES OF (LOWER) CASAMANCE
A war of ideas – p. 200
From fetishism to inculturation: the Catholic imagination of Casamance – p. 202
   The Holy Ghost Fathers and the fetishists – p. 204
   The theology of inculturation: a contemporary Catholic traditionalism – p. 208
   The Catholic impact – p. 211
The developmental state and the myth of “mise en valeur” – p. 213
Casamance, a granary for Senegal? – p. 213
   The Catholic connection: Economie et humanisme – p. 217
Tourism and negritude: Lower Casamance from politico-cultural item to touristic asset – p. 220
Casamance as an asset for tourism – p. 221
   President Senghor, negritude and the Casamance – p. 224
The impact of traditionalisms – p. 225
   Tradition and traditionalism – p. 226
   The évolués as a traditionalising elite – p. 229
Conclusion – p. 232

Chapter VI: TURNING CASAMANCE INTO A POLITICAL IDEA
The politicisation of Casamance – p. 234
Esukolal: long-distance scholastic nationalism – p. 235
   From the ARSF to Esukolal – p. 236
   A journal of the évolués, a traditionalist line – p. 238
   From political radicalism to identity politics – p. 240
   A scholastic counter-elite – p. 242
Paris-Dakar: in search of a constituency – p. 244
   A constituency for Kelumak: the évolués in Dakar – p. 245
   The Casa Sport: a mass-cult of autochthony – p. 247
   The transmutation of individual experience – p. 251
   A continuing ambiguity – p. 254
Times of trouble: legal politics in 1970s Ziguinchor – p. 256
   The return to multiparty politics – p. 256
   From Senghor to Diouf: the demise of the barons? – p. 257
   The fall of Etienne Carvalho – p. 258
Autochthony and political competition – p. 260
   Ziguinchor: a city of migrants – p. 261
   Migrants in politics: an African Tammany Hall – p. 262
   The Creoles strike back – p. 264
   A slip of the tongue: from Creole localism to Casamançais autochthony – p. 266
   Casamançais autochthony in legal politics – p. 268
An urban popular culture of dissent – p. 271
   A students’ challenge: the strike of lycée Djignabo – p. 271
   The Usana: a female counter-hegemonic power – p. 273
An epilogue: the “revival” of the MFDC – p. 277
Conclusion – p. 279

Conclusion
   An alternative account of Casamançais nationalism – p. 281
   Some conclusions for the study of nationalism – p. 284
   The future of Casamançais nationalism – p. 285

Bibliography
   Books and articles on Casamance and Senegal – p. 287
   Other books and articles – p. 299
   Newspapers and news journals – p. 302

Appendix I: Map of Senegal – p. 304
Appendix II: Map of Casamance – p. 305
Appendix III: Map of Lower and Middle Casamance – p. 306
Appendix IV: Map of Ziguinchor – p. 307
Appendix V: Pictures of Kelumak in France and Dakar – p. 308
List of tables and figures

Tables
Table I.1: Lower Casamançais and Diola population in Dakar 1926-1961 – p. 41
Table I.2: Diola seasonal migration at the end of the 1950s: origin, gender distribution and percentage of the working population – p. 42
Table I.3: Destination of seasonal migrants – p. 43
Table I.4: Destination of emigrants from the region of Ziguinchor – p. 44
Table I.5: Destination of recent emigrants from the region of Ziguinchor – p. 44
Table I.6: Emigration from the regions of Senegal to Dakar and their intensity – p. 46
Table I.7: Temporary and permanent migration in the arrondissement of Oussouye – p. 47
Table I.8: Temporary migration in four Lower Casamançais villages during rainy season 1974 and dry season 1975, as a percentage of the resident population, according to gender – p. 49
Table I.9: Dry season temporary migration in four Lower Casamançais villages according to age and gender, as a percentage of the age-groups – p. 49
Table I.10: Past temporary labour migration in four Lower Casamançais villages, according to age and gender, as a percentage of the age-groups – p. 50
Table II.1: Regional evolution of the primary school attendance rate in Senegal from 1990-1991 to 1994-1995 – p. 81
Table II.2: Regional literacy rates in Senegal in 1995-1996 – p. 82
Table II.3: Number of classes and population/number of classes ratio in 1955-1956 – p. 87
Table II.4: Comparison of the evolution of agricultural income and wages in the formal sector – p. 103
Table III.1: Origin and occupation of the members of the municipal commission of Ziguinchor in 1930 and 1934 – p. 131
Table III.2: Results of the 1951 elections for the French National Assembly – p. 143
Table III.3: Results of the 1952 elections for the Assemblée Territoriale – p. 144
Table III.4: Results of the January 1956 elections for the French National Assembly in Casamance – p. 157
Table III.5: Results of the 1958 Referendum in Senegal and Casamance – p. 159
Table IV.1: Population of school-age, population at school and civil service in Senegal, 1969-1984 – p. 174
Table IV.2: Census of the natives of a Buluf ward residing in Dakar in 1998 – p. 179
Table IV.3: Education among the adult natives of a Buluf ward residing in Dakar in 1998 – p. 180
Table V.1: Regional distribution of hotels and hotel rooms in Senegal (1976) – p. 223

Figures
Figure I.1. Age distribution of the inhabitants of Mlomp in 1984, including seasonal and permanent migrants – p. 52
Figure II.1: Comparison of the evolution of agricultural income and wages in the formal sector – p. 103
Figure III.1: The evolution of political elites in Lower Casamance 1930’s-1950’s – p. 150
Figure IV.1: Population of school-age, population at school and civil service in Senegal, 1969-1984 – p. 174
Notes on transliteration and translation

The spelling of Senegalese patronyms, ethnonyms and toponyms varies considerably according to sources and maps. At various times, all sorts of conventions have been designed; various decrees, taken between 1971 and 1985, have regulated the orthography of the six official national languages of Senegal (Wolof, Serer, Peulh, Manding, Diola, Soninke), but I will stick to the orthography most commonly used by the Senegalese themselves, which differs substantially. The problem is particularly acute with ethnonyms, whose spellings may differ quite a lot from one another. I mention below the form I will be using, with the most common variants:

Bainunk = Baynunk = Baïnouck
Balante = Balant = Balanta
Diola = Jola = Joola (old variant : Yola)
Mancagne = Mankañ
Manding = Mandingue = Mandingo (Socé is used as a synonym in Senegal)
Manjak = Mandjak = Manjaque = Mandjaque
Peulh = Peul = Pulaar (Fula (plural: Fulani) is the English equivalent)
Serer = Sereer = Sérère
Toucouleur = Tukulëër
Wolof = Ouolof (also Valaf or Volof)

I have translated all texts and interviews in French directly into English, without mentioning the original quote.
## List of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADIB</td>
<td>Association de défense des intérêts de Bignona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANS</td>
<td>ArchivesnationalesduSénégal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANSOM</td>
<td>ArchivesnationalesdeFrance,sectionoutre-mer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARSF</td>
<td>Amicale des ressortissants sénégalais de France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>Association sportive et culturelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDS</td>
<td>Bloc démocratique sénégalais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIRD</td>
<td>Banque internationale pour la reconstruction et le développement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPS</td>
<td>Bloc populaire sénégalais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CINAM</td>
<td>Centre d’études industrielles et d’aménagement du territoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COCARZI</td>
<td>Comité pour le carnaval de Ziguinchor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COREZI</td>
<td>Comité pour la rénovation de Ziguinchor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>Direction des archives culturelles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPHE</td>
<td>Direction du patrimoine historique et ethnographique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDF</td>
<td>European Development Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFAN</td>
<td>Institut fondamental d’Afrique noire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILACO</td>
<td>International Land Development Consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INED</td>
<td>Institut national d’études démographiques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAC</td>
<td>Mouvement autonome de Casamace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFDC</td>
<td>Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCAV</td>
<td>Organisme de coordination des activités de vacances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPR</td>
<td>Opération Productivité Rizicole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDS</td>
<td>Parti démocratique sénégalais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIDAC</td>
<td>Projet intégré de développement de l’agriculture en Casamance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRA-S</td>
<td>Parti du Regroupement africain - Sénégal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS</td>
<td>Projet rizicole de Sédhiou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Parti socialiste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDA</td>
<td>Rassemblement démocratique africain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RND</td>
<td>Rassemblement national démocratique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATEC</td>
<td>Société d’assistance technique et de coopération</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERESA</td>
<td>Société d’études et de réalisations économiques et sociales dans l’agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFIO</td>
<td>Section française de l’Internationale ouvrière</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SICAP</td>
<td>Société immobilière du Cap-Vert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SODAICA</td>
<td>Société de développement agricole et industriel de la Casamance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SODEFITEX</td>
<td>Société pour le développement des fibres textiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOMIVAC</td>
<td>Société pour la mise en valeur de la Casamance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONACOS</td>
<td>Société nationale de commercialisation des oléagineux du Sénégal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONAGA</td>
<td>Société nationale de garantie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUDES</td>
<td>Syndicat unique et démocratique des enseignants du Sénégal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDS</td>
<td>Union démocratique sénégalaise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPS</td>
<td>Union progressiste sénégalaise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgments

This research was funded by a research fellowship from the School of Oriental and African Studies. Some additional travel money was provided by both the School of Oriental and African Studies and the University of London Central Research Fund.

A migrant working on migrants, my constant coming-and-going between France, England, Dakar and Casamance required the mobilisation of many people, who extended their hospitality with extraordinary generosity: in London, Axel and Yasmine, Paul, Christian, Brian and the Edgecombes; in Dakar, Jules, Souleymane, Kathryn and Kinsey, Karim, Tarik and Hélène; in Ziguinchor, Jean-Jacques and Kristell. This hospitality frequently extended much beyond that, and frequently included excellent food and inspirational discussions of aspects of the social sciences or Senegalese politics.

In Dakar, I benefited immeasurably from the help of Momar-Coumba Diop, from the Institut Fondamental d’Afrique Noire – an endless source of contacts, bibliographical references and friendly assistance. Over the years, other researchers provided assistance – among these, I would like to thank Leo Villalon and Fiona McLaughlin (then at the West Africa Research Centre), Victoria Ebin and Charles Becker.

Many scholars of the Casamance were kind enough to engage in the somewhat strange academic game of conflict and cooperation with me; I benefited immensely from their open-mindedness and knowledge; my only hope is that I was able to give them something too. I should like to mention here Ousseynou Faye, Odile Journet, Michael Lambert, Séverine Awenengo, Jean-Claude Marut and Martin Evans. Jean-Claude Marut and Martin Evans played a special part. By writing some of the very first texts on Casamançais separatism, Jean-Claude stirred my interest for the whole affair, and over the years, during endless discussions in Parisian cafés, he let me dig into his detailed knowledge of Casamance. Martin Evans, a fellow University of London student, read various pieces of this research in the most precise manner, providing both analytical inspiration and grammatical orthodoxy; when I was away and he on the field, he provided a reliable contact with Casamance. Geneviève Gasser did a wonderful thing in convening a Casamance roundtable during the Canadian Association of African Studies annual conference in Toronto, May 2002, and everyone there was inspirational.

My entry into the social sciences was largely the result of classes and seminars taught by enthusiastic scholars. I should like to mention here Rémy Leveau, Bertrand Badie, Jean-François Bayart and Denis Constant Martin at the Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris, and Paul-André Rosental, from the Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.

The staff of the Department of Political Studies of the School of Oriental and African Studies further strengthened my interest in the social sciences, and proved an ever-welcoming community for my explorations of identity politics. I should like to thank particularly Sudipta Kaviraj, Julia Strauss and Tom Young. John Sidel was a wonderful research tutor, providing enthusiasm, bibliography, moral support and a lively seminar. Brita Pouget and Catherine Guest, secretaries of the formerly autonomous Department of Political Studies, accompanied the administrative and human developments of this thesis with sympathy and efficiency. Throughout the
years, Professor Donal Cruise O’Brien kept a relentless and benevolent watch over the progression of this thesis; he gave more time and care than most supervisors probably do, read everything in detail, and added inspiration; this research owes much to him.

I shared the burden of writing this PhD with a number of young fellow researchers, africanists and rest-of-the-worldists alike. They provided amiable companionship for coffee-breaks, as well as inspirational conversations. Among them, I should like to thank particularly Lucie Gernigon, Pierre-Antoine Braud, Catherine Atlan and Jean-Hervé Jézéquel; the last two granted illimited access to their knowledge of Senegalese history. Also a member of this small (pariah ?) caste of library-roaming, PhD-writing people, Pierre François did even more than share his knowledge of the social sciences and give time as a friend; he read inquisitively the various drafts of this thesis and contributed immensely to the editing and bibliography; in Maussian terms, I am so “flattened” by his liberality that I cannot think of an appropriate counter-gift. Outside academia, this research has involved many friends, in all sorts of ways and capacities. I should like to thank Olivier, Anne, Romaric, Anne-Hélène, Brigitte and Sophie. Mobilisation in the Foucher family was no smaller, and my mother and father brought unwavering support; ‘Tipti’ and Micheline watched over the whole process and cared constantly.

I have had the chance to meet with a number of important political figures on all sides to the conflict, and many were accessible and helpful. I should like to thank here Mamadou Sané Nkrumah, Father Augustin Diamacoune, Bertrand Diamacoune, Abdoulaye Diédhiou, Lamine Diouf, Abba Diatta, Robert Sagna, Ibrahima Sané, Albert Boissy, Oumar Diatta, Martin Mané and Father Alain Diédhiou. Many other people should be listed here, but have asked for discretion – I thank them warmly. I must make special mention of Bourama ‘Faye’ Badji, Marcel Bassène and Professor Assane Seck, who agreed to repeated and prolonged interviews. Before he was killed in an internal MFDC feud, I have had the pleasure of being the host of Laurent Diamacoune for a few days in The Gambia – he and his family are a kind memory to me.

This research is about people and their histories, and it would not have been possible if many of these people had not agreed to cater patiently for an inexperienced young researcher, and grant him time for interviews. I would like to thank all these people. I have contracted special debts to the families Badiane, Diatta, Diémé, Mendy and Ndoye, in their various component parts, in Dakar and Ziguinchor and in Casamançais villages. I should like to thank more particularly Cheikh Tidiane, Paul-Henri and Barthélémy, Max, Angèle and Jeanne, Mustapha and Astou, for their repeated welcomes. At the onset of this research, Oumar was one privileged contact with Casamance; he became my collaborator during most of this research, and all pages of this text owe something to his enthusiasm, his dedication, his linguistic skills and his amazing networking capacities; as it turned out, Oumar became a friend.

I fear this work may not discharge the heavy indebtedness above acknowledged. In any case, I have the full responsibility for the picture drawn here, and for its possible faults and mistakes. My hope is that this work could contribute something to solving the present conflict, by getting the Casamançais themselves to talk about it.
INTRODUCTION

A West African separatism

On the 26th of December 1982, in Ziguinchor, the capital city of the region of Casamance, south Senegal, several hundred protesters assembled in Mangocouroto, a sub-district of Colobane, a ruralised peripheral section of Ziguinchor. It was early morning. The organisers of the march were coming from their meeting place in Diabir, another peri-urban area; in Mangocouroto, they were met by more men and by many women of the animist religious associations of Ziguinchor, who had spent a night in praying and singing in Mangocouroto. There were several hundred demonstrators overall. The protesters had no weapons; many adorned with gri-gri and palm-leaves; a few placards “Casamance libre” were raised. Some men would wear the traditional gears of the Diola, a major ethnic group in the region. Many women were wearing the indigo loincloths typical of their religious associations; the women were singing, and some of them drummed along on empty calabashes; a few women, carrying calabashes of water, performed blessing rituals. The men were handing out leaflets calling for the independence of the Casamance and the return of 1940s anti-colonial prophetess Aline Sité Diatta. After some time, they left to march to the Escale, Ziguinchor’s central district. Upon reaching the Gouvernance, the governor’s office, meeting only with light opposition from the police, they took the Senegalese national flag down, and flew a white flag, in the name of the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (MFDC). At some point, a gendarme shot on the crowd, and was wounded in the ensuing fight; twelve people sustained light wounds. Later in the day, the demonstration dispersed calmly; the next day, a few MFDC militants circulated leaflets in Dakar, the Senegalese capital.

About a year later, on the 6th of December 1983, shortly before the trial of the supposed leaders of the movement, including a Catholic priest, Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, and a Paris-based migrant, Mamadou ‘Nkrumah’ Sané, three gendarmes were killed during an intervention in an MFDC meeting in a suburb of

1 This description was written from interviews. See also Geschiere & Van der Klei (1987: 315).
Ziguinchor. The 18th of December 1983, another MFDC demonstration in Ziguinchor turned into a street battle with the police and army; the Senegalese authorities reported only thirty casualties, but admittedly more than a hundred persons were killed. The situation remained fairly calm until May 1990, when a group of guerrillas attacked a customs office in Selety, near the Gambian border. After about a year of skirmishes and ambushes, a ceasefire was signed in Bissau on the 31st of May 1991. But peace has remained elusive since then, and the conflict has gone on, a complex succession of unending negotiations and low-intensity violence. This research proposes to shed light on the emergence of this Casamançais separatism.

Emic accounts of conflict

Setting out on this exploration of Casamançais separatism, it is appropriate to discuss the autochthonous (‘emic’) accounts which the sides to the conflict, the Casamançais rebels and the Senegalese government, give of what is happening in Casamance. As will be seen below, these two accounts are like mirror-images, and somewhat paradoxically agree to describe the conflict as the result of a shock between a traditional peasantry rooted in its specific culture and powerful external forces.

“La voix de la Casamance”: the claims of the separatists

The separatists themselves would deny their movement is emerging. They probably would settle for a reemergence: using the classical rhetoric of nationalists, they assert that the political identity which they claim to defend has always been there. This is made clear in “La voix de la Casamance”, one of the earliest elaborations of Casamançais separatism. The pamphlet starts with a discussion of the etymology of the word ‘Casamance’, which is taken to mean “kasamu aku”, the land of rivers, in the language of the Diola Kasa. The text then goes on to discuss the specificities of Casamançais history: the early Portuguese presence, and the hand-over of the territory to the French in 1886 – throughout this period, and under French

---

2 This pamphlet is appended to Darbon (1985).
3 The Kasa is the southwestern portion of the region of Ziguinchor, corresponding more or less to the department of Oussouye. This interpretation implicitly proposes a Diola alternative to the classical (and much more probable) Manding ethimology of Casamance, “Kasa Mansa”, i.e. the kingdom of Kasa.
rule, Casamance is presented as having always preserved its autonomy from Senegal. French rule never was too firm in Casamance, because the Casamançais were always resisting, and there were persistent demands for autonomy. The Senegalese are then portrayed as ruthless pursuers of the French colonial projects; more specifically, they are reproached with trying to break the resistance of the Casamançais by destroying the rice-fields.

Despite an opening disclaimer asserting that the MFDC is not confined to the Diola ethnic group but includes the whole of Casamance, the pamphlet focuses on the Diola and their culture – as seen above, even the etymology of ‘Casamance’ is Diola. “The resistance of the Casamançais, an more particularly that of the Diola” is a recurrent structure (my emphasis). An essentialist portrait of the typical Diola figures prominently:

Every Diola has to be a good warrior, a good agriculturist, a good palm-wine tapper, a good hunter, good with his hands, an artist, a musician, a dancer and a sportsman. (…)
The Diola is the man of law, balance, freedom, independence, and, why not ?, of peace – a peace which he is ready to preserve to the price of his own life 4.

Peculiar mention is made of the activities of Aline Sitoé Diatta, a Diola prophetess of the 1940s; Aline Sitoé is described as an anti-colonial leader, preaching self-subsistence and tradition; she was arrested in 1943 and deported by the French, and the Senegalese government is reproached with having failed to inquire into her fate. Then are described Casamançais regionalist groups of the post-1945 era, which are presented as forerunners of the present movement.

The Senegalese government also stands accused of having deprived Casamance of its rights, but also of having systematically dismembered the Casamance, suppressed its political expressions and sabotaged its economic development. The lack of infrastructure (roads, hospital, fruit processing plants, agricultural development projects) or their embezzlement to the profit of north Senegal, the destruction of the Casamançais forests, land spoliation, the lack of educational facilities are various aspects of this Senegalese policy in Casamance.

The general argument thus consists of a series of specific contemporary social and economic grievances, interpreted against a background of durable historical or cultural specificity. The pamphlet thus draws on a powerful rhetorical contrast between the moral value of the Casamançais (and particularly the Diola) and the way in which they have been treated.

The state and the rebels: the claims of the government

The attitude of the Senegalese state vis-à-vis the rebellion is a complex one. The government has always been tempted to deny all grounds to the Casamançais rebels, for fear of legitimising their claims. At time, the state has described the rebellion as a criminal enterprise, and the rebels as mere bandits; alternatively, the state has indicted the rebellion as the result of the manipulations of a rogue state – at various stages of the chronology of the conflict, Mauritania, the Gambia, Libya, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau and Iraq have been indicted. But the state has also interpreted the upsurge of separatism more thoroughly, and clues about the state’s interpretation can be gotten both from its reaction to the upsurge of separatism and from a series of texts, texts from the Senegalese press or by Senegalese intellectuals acting as organic intellectuals of the state, such as Abdourahmane Konaté (1991, 1993) or Makhtar Diouf (1994).

Konaté worked as a prefect in Oussouye in the early 1980s. For Konaté, the problem with the Casamance clearly is not one of development, but one of culture, as the cover of one of his essays, picturing a Diola initiation dance, demonstrates. Implicitly, Konaté means to exonerate the state - the state has done its job, and if there is a rebellion in Casamance, it is because of a specific segment of the Casamançais population, the Diola, and their culture. To him the question is to know “whether our Diola cousins do not regret having left their forests with their cattle, their palm wine and palm oil and local rice”. Diola culture has thus been unchanged throughout history. Konaté declares explicitly his agreement with Father Diamacoune’s interpretation, arguing that “The skirmishes in Lower Casamance date back for centuries (...). They had come to a halt during the French colonisation (...)."

---

5 In 2001, after a particularly atrocious attack, the government offered a bounty of 140 million Francs CFA for Salif Sadio, an MFDC commander. See Le Soleil, 15 March 2001. Describing rebels as bandits is a classical rhetorical move for established states – compare with the Russian portrayal of the Chechens. There is little doubt that, in both cases, there are economic aspects to the conflict, and that a parallel economy has been developing, were it only for procurement. This should nevertheless not preclude the examination of the rebellions as ‘real’ political enterprise. The present trendiness of the ‘war economy’ approach, as exemplified by the works of Paul Collier, only strengthens this kind of economistic reductionism.


7 See also Ndiaye (1994) and Cissé (2001).

8 In Konaté (1993; 35).
They reappear under Senegalese administration. I ascribe them to culture” . If it is all a problem of culture, one cannot administer the Diola properly without having an understanding of their culture – unsurprisingly, Konaté himself, because of his training in sociology, has the understanding it takes...

When I was posted in the department of Oussouye, in September 1983, I was worried I should fail, because of the 1982 events and my cursory knowledge of sociology: Joola society is plunged in a religious, and even mystic climate, composed, it is true, of order towards an egalitarian functioning of the component groups of this society, of respect for custom, but also of hostility and violence – hostility against all state agency because it is suspected to use constraint to reach its purpose.

Konaté then goes on to explore a Diola myth, that of the python-snake ejuunfur, and other traditional ceremonies, which are supposed to cast a light on the political mentality of the Diola . Throughout his two books, he shows a strong taste for folklore and anecdotes, and he makes an extensive use of the classical ethnology of the Diola, and particularly of the works of Louis-Vincent Thomas .

Makhtar Diouf (1994) proposes a largely similar account of Casamançais separatism: he explicitly rejects the idea that the state could have mishandled Casamance – with statistics, he establishes the high schooling rate of the region, which he takes as a sign of the state’s interest for the region. He then goes on to analyse the particularism of the region: its geographical isolation from northern Senegal, and the cultural specificity of the Diola, an acephalous ethnic group, the long Portuguese presence in the region, the special status granted by the French.

A similar fascination for ethnological matters (or perhaps one could say exoticism) appears in less refined versions, for instance in most of the Senegalese press. Thus, soon after the first demonstrations, the headline of the Afro-Senegalese periodical Bingo wondered in amazement whether Casamance was “seized by the

---

10 Konaté draws the myth of ejuunfur from research by Diola Catholic priest Nazaire Diatta. At some point, Konaté (1993 : 52-53) seems to suspect that his emphasis on culture is problematic; paradoxically, his ground for suspicion is not that he fears he might be legitimising the rebellion by acknowledging a Diola cultural specificity, but because he finds cultural causes unconvincing: why would anyone kill for such things as the myth of the python-snake ejuunfur? And he falls back on one of the usual lines of the state – that of foreigners who are conspiring to the detriment of Senegal, with very little actual information about these convenient foreigners...
11 Konaté (1993 ; 16-17) mentions human sacrifices as a traditional Diola practice. As Baum (1981) has shown, in the case of the Diola, human sacrifices were a colonial myth of the early 1930s, a mere projection of the fantasies of the colonial state, a myth which emerging Diola elites actually used against their local enemies. Pélissier (1989) mentions a similar, and probably related, case of a colonial craze for anthropophagy in neighbouring Portuguese Guinea a few years later: the disappearance of two French pilots in the Diola-populated portion of Portuguese Guinea led to a press campaign in French papers, and a Portuguese military campaign against the Portuguese Diola.
demons of the sacred grove?". A few months later, *Le Soleil* described the 1983 demonstration as that of “exalted and even hysterical elements, trusting in the occult protection of the fetishes with which they adorned”.

The predominantly ethno-cultural nature of the state’s understanding of Casamançais separatism is confirmed by the kind of policy which the state implemented: repression, as well as cooptation and the cultural policies have targeted the Diola ethnic group specifically. Thus from the state’s point of view, the picture is quite simple: the problem lies essentially with the primitiveness of Diola culture, which has not allowed the modernising state to fulfill its mission. The primitive and ethnic nature of the MFDC is clearly opposed to the enlightened multi-ethnic nature of Senegalese democracy.

*The rebellion as a ‘jacquerie’: a paradoxical agreement*

Between these two sets of claims, the governmental discourse on the backwardness of the Diola, and the rebel argument on Casamançais particularism, there is a paradoxical agreement: in both understandings, separatism results from the encounter between a specific culture, that of Casamance (or Lower Casamance) and powerful external forces (the state, the market). Except for a twist in moral evaluation, the stereotypical figure of the Casamançais is by and large the same: the backward particularist Diola peasant of the Senegalese government’s version is, to the separatists, a brave, hard-working and honest agriculturist, a ‘natural’ enemy of the cunning, perverse and corrupt urbanites from northern Senegal. Indeed, both sides agree that the movement is primarily rural, and essentially grounded in Diola culture. Sometimes, the rebel and governmental authors are even found to

---

14 Between 1983 and 1984, leaders with non-Diola names, like Assane Seck, Joseph Mathiam, Bassirou Cissé, Ben Mady Cissé or Mamadou Abdoulaye Sy were thus replaced with a younger generation of technocrats – Robert Sagna, Landing Sané, Pascal Manga. Among the cultural policies devised by the state figure the reappraisal of the figure of Aline Sitoé Diatta, a Diola prophetess cherished by the MFDC and the promotion of the ethnic kinship between the Diola and the north Senegalese Serer. For elements on the ethnic repression by the state, see LD-MPT (1990).
15 Of course, when the state had to deal with the issue, it was not that principled, and played the ethnic factor decidedly by promoting systematically new Diola elites to key political positions as early as 1984. This policy confirms that the state perceived separatism as a problem in ethnic clientelism.
16 The term ‘jacquerie’ was used by a former military governor of Casamance, General Amadou Abdoulaye Dieng, in an interview published in *Le Soleil*, 18 July 1990.
17 Leading figures of the MFDC do insist on their rural roots. Commenting on Edmond Bora, one of the leaders of the MFDC and a former school headmaster, Jean-Claude Marut (1999: 134) reports that “il continue à se présenter comme un cultivateur”.

acknowledge each other’s analyses explicitly. While the rebels find in this rurality a sign of the popularity of their contest, the government interprets is as an indication of its backwardness and illegitimacy.

**Casamançais separatism and the social sciences: a low-intensity academic conflict**

Although the bibliography on the conflict in the Casamance has grown steadily over the years, there has been relatively little written about the origins of Casamançais separatism *per se*, and the issue seems be have led to remarkably little controversy; researchers tend to give more attention to the later developments of the conflict – the international connections, the war economy, the peace process. There are two main lines of interpretation: some authors highlight the socio-economic marginalisation of the region, while others focus on its cultural specificity, and difference from Senegal. In much of the literature, these two lines seem not to contradict each other, and a political synthesis has been offered around the concept of Islamo-Wolof model. More recently, deconstructivist alineas have been added to the broad framework, but have failed to question it radically.

**Socio-economic marginalisation...**

The socio-economic marginalisation thesis falls into two broad sub-arguments: lack of development and internal colonisation. A number of authors mention the rich natural resources of Casamance, with the (sometimes implicit) argument that the lack of development in Senegal at large has been resented all the stronger in Casamance because of this abundance; the vast forest, better rainfall, the abundant halieutic resources, the oil reserves never properly developed. But many authors argue that the state has invested a lot in the development of Casamançais resources; others mention that this wealth of Casamance has been exaggerated, and that the green Casamance, the rice granary of Senegal, is by and large a myth.

A more common view is that while the most promising resources (fish, tourism, tree-gardening) of Casamance have actually been developed, this development has benefited the north Senegalese migrants more than the Casamançais themselves. The

---

18 For instance, Konaté (1993) explicitly acknowledges the validity of Father Diamacoune’s depiction of Casamançais history.
19 See for instance Chéneau-Loquay (1994).
factors that account for this appropriation of local resources by northern Senegalese migrants vary - technical expertise, control over capital, or clientelistic networks and state support have all played a part. Following this line of thought in a brief piece in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Marie-Christine Cormier-Salem (1993), a geographer familiar with the fishing industry in Casamance, insists on natural resources: her interpretation is that while the traditional systems of production have been dislocated as a result of rural exodus and insufficient rainfalls, the autochthonous populations have been excluded from the emerging and profitable sectors of fishing and tourism, controlled by migrants from north Senegal. The Diola are simply putting up a “claim to the priority, if not the exclusive use of the resources of their *terroir*”. In a similar line, Gerti Hesseling (1986, 1990, 1992, 1994), a specialist on law and land issues has highlighted the serious tensions which the 1964 and 1972 land reforms have provoked: in repeated instances, these laws have allowed for the expropriation of autochthonous inhabitants, often to the benefit of migrants or allochthonous investors.

...or cultural specificity

A number of researchers tend to insist on other aspects, and ascribe the upsurge of Casamançais separatism to the cultural idiosyncrasies of the region. This culturalist line is organised in two broad sub-arguments. Most authors argue that the rebellion is merely an re-enactment of a Casamançais (or, more specifically, Diola) culture, confronted to other imported cultures (that of the state, that of the market) – they thus tend to define culture as a blueprint which remains largely unchanged and which is applied in a deterministic fashion. A few authors, implicitly using a less rigid definition of culture, describe Diola culture as a crucial resource for political mobilisation.

A follower of the first line of argument, Mar Fall (1986 ; 78-82) insists on the tradition of resistance of the Diola. The Diola form an isolated, acephalous and self-regulated society, founded on a self-subsistent economy. Fall actually draws on Darbon, who has produced the most substantial illustration of the cultural specificity thesis. In his texts, Dominique Darbon (1984, 1985, 1988) insists on the anti-authoritarian attitude and on the capacity for self-help typical of the Diola, an

---

20 See for instance De Jonge (1979) for a pre-conflict Marxian account of disputes over fishing rights.
acephalous group opposed to the hierarchical societies of Middle and Upper Casamance and north Senegal; as such, they are culturally hostile to centralism, and the state, colonial or post-colonial, never was able to establish proper contacts with them. The present Casamançais separatism is thus the historical re-enactment of a deeply anti-statal culture, a modern sequel to the “fierce resistance of the Diola” to French colonial penetration 21. In the penultimate pages of his published thesis, Darbon introduces a refinement to his culturalist approach: in reference to Jeanne Favret (1967) and her research on rural rebellions in Algeria, he argues that the Casamançais rebellion is a case of “traditionalisme par excès de modernité”:

While traditional Diola culture is favourable to the apprehension of modernisation, the delays of administrative action stirs the reactivation of certain traditional practices which provide the population with ways to ensure themselves their social and economic reproduction, and to bear on the administrative authorities. (...) Because they generate an anti-state culture, [the Diola] are more prone to receive the state culture emanating from external innovation, i.e. more likely to perceive its effects with the greatest intensity. In this way, pro-state and anti-state political cultures mix to produce, from a basis of traditional links changing under the influence of modernity, a demand for state intervention. The lack of such intervention stirs a reaction from the traditional social culture [?]: the oppression of the state is illegitimate according both to this culture and the state’s own modern logic 22.

Darbon here points to an interesting way out of the ‘re-enactment’ thesis, but he unfortunately gives no details about this process whereby pro-state and anti-state cultures mix. When presenting Diola society, he draws mostly on classical anthropology, and gives almost no elements about the historical evolution of the Diola; at no point does he question the historical existence of a Diola self-consciousness nor does he attempt to establish how it came about. Along with a careful observation of local Ziguinchorois politics, Eichelsheim (n.d.) follows by and large the same argument, insisting on the “confrontation between a state with an hegemonic tendency and a quasi-anarchical Diola society deeply attached to a quasi-sacred land”.

The alternative culturalist accounts of Casamançais separatism has been produced by Dutch anthropologists, Peter Geschiere and Jos Van der Klei (1987, 1988) and, more recently, Ferdinand De Jong (1998, 2001). These authors endorse the classical arguments of socio-economic marginalisation, but they insist that it was major features of traditional Diola culture, institutions like the sacred groves and spirit-shrines (Geschiere and Van der Klei), or cultural modes of performance, like

---

secrecy and prophecy (De Jong), that have allowed for the separatist mobilisation. This line of argument is inspiring since it suggests that grievances by themselves mean little, and that one has to look into the political cultures to understand why and how some people react, while others do nothing.

The problem with this second culturalist interpretation lies with the fact that, when discussing the features of Diola culture that have allowed for this political mobilisation, those authors refer exclusively to pre-colonial religious institutions, and make no mention of other aspects of present Diola culture which have become political resources. Though they lay the emphasis on other points, their understanding of culture remains in the end too close to Darbon’s own: if the Diola were able to rebel, it was because of ‘something’ in their fixed and persistent culture.

**Specificity versus marginality: a circular argument**

The distinction between the marginality and the specificity theses seem to have more to do with the academic specialisation of the authors concerned than with any significant disagreement as to the basis of the Casamançais conflict: anthropologists will tend to insist on cultural aspects, like the anti-hierarchical nature of the Diola or their traditional religious institutions, geographers will insist on resources, students of law insist on land rights and political scientists on the functioning of clientelism... And whatever the academic specialisation, in many accounts, the two lines are often combined, with varying degrees of clarity. For instance, most authors thus agree to grant land issues both an economic and a cultural aspect. And most authors usually combine factors: Cormier-Salem (1993), besides her resource-based analysis, draws on Darbon when she mentions the durable tension between the “original, egalitarian and still largely animist [Diola] communities” and the “hierarchical and Islamised societies of the other regions of Senegal”. Christian Coulon and Donal Cruise O’Brien (1989; 158-160) follow Darbon’s insistence on the particularism of the Diola and mention neglect from Dakar and “internal colonisation” by migrants from north Senegal. Even Darbon (1988; 185), who has produced the most consistent culturalist account of the tensions between Diola society and the Senegalese state, mentions both “social marginality” and the “cultural specificity” of the Diolas.

In the literature on the Casamançais rebellion, marginality and specificity are like two sides of the same coin: cultural particularism is the reason for the non-integration of Casamance in Senegal, marginality accounts for the persistence of
cultural idiosyncrasies – a case of circular causality. Alternatively, cultural difference could be understood as the root cause of the conflict, while socio-economic tensions would be its immediate causes.

**The Islamo-Wolof model: a political synthesis**

Geneviève Gasser (2002), noting the compatibility between these two main lines of argument, has suggested a synthetic explanation around the notion of a “Islamo-Wolof model”. The idea of a Islamo-Wolof model does not come from the literature on Casamance in itself, but from anthropological and political approaches to Senegalese politics at large. In various texts, authors like Christian Coulon, Donal Cruise O’Brien, Mamadou Diouf and Momar-Coumba Diop, have suggested that, ever since the colonial era, the powerful Wolof-speaking and groundnut-cropping maraboutic brotherhoods of north Senegal have played a major role in the constitution of the Senegalese state, providing an informal structure for political control and clientelistic exchange. The fact that Casamance, or, more precisely, the westernmost portion of it, Lower Casamance, never was integrated in this shadow state structure and has always remained culturally different, could explain the upsurge of Casamançais separatism. This synthetic approach thus highlights a political side besides both socio-economic and cultural aspects: the lack of responsiveness of the state to the claims of the Diola, due to the exclusion of Lower Casamance from the Islamo-Wolof model; all other symptoms of the crisis derive from this key factor: land disputes, dysfunctional clientelism, socio-economic marginalisation, cultural misunderstanding. For Momar-Coumba Diop and Mamadou Diouf (1990; 46-50), the Diola rebellion is thus the result of the deliberate choice of the Senegalese state to rely on the Islamo-Wolof model; unable to relate to this Islamo-Wolof model, the Diola developed a separatist identity.

**Structural explanations and the dehistoricisation of (Lower) Casamance**

No matter how inspiring, these three main strands of interpretation (socio-economic, cultural and political) actually share in the paradoxical agreement which

---


24 But Diop and Diouf also mention the classical factors - geographical isolation, “traditions de luttes guerrières contre les envahisseurs” and a general defiance towards centralisation à la Darbon. For another example, see Manley (1998).
had both the state and the rebels united. One feels that they are mostly laying the various emic explanations in more scientific terms, transforming the rebels’ idea of particularism and the state’s backwardness model in neater, academic-sounding words. The general picture which they propose does not differ much from what the state or the MFDC have been arguing. All these approaches, lay and academic, rebel and governmental, use a single mechanistic explanatory model: it is always powerful external forces (the state and its laws, the world economy, migration from north Senegal, poor rainfall) which inexorably determine the destiny of Casamance; the Casamançais are just the passive victims of these forces, and never seeming to author their history.

Most approaches implicitly depend on a single figure of the ‘typical’ Casamançais: the Diola peasant, half-naked, with his machete in hand and his tree-climbing belt on the shoulder, walking on a dust-road – the peasant of tourist guides. It seems like this peasant never had a history, or that he never was a motor in his history, he simply was subjected to it, but that nevertheless his essence has been largely preserved. Reading most of the literature, one often has the impression that nothing has happened in Casamance between the time of Sihalébé Diatta, the anti-colonial resistant, and that of Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, the Casamançais separatist leader.

This general tendency to think in structural and ahistorical terms has to do with the nature of the literature available on Casamance, and particularly on Lower Casamance. Researchers interested in the conflict have relied on the oldest and most famous anthropological accounts of the Diola, those by Louis-Vincent Thomas (1958-1959), Jean Girard (1963, 1965 a & b, 1969) and Paul Pélissier (1966). Out of choice or unconscious bias, most of this literature took to describing the Diola as an isolated and rural societies, where traditional religion played a strong part. As Thomas (1958-1959; 793) puts it strongly, “the Diola is a peasant”, and Thomas and Sapir (1967) reject the very possibility of a history of the Diola, arguing that the Diola do not have a dynamic representation of time. Of course, some of these observers had an eye for social change, but still, to borrow from Auguste Comte’s typology, after all this “statique”, there came little “dynamique”; the little “dynamique” that figures in those texts is often limited to an account of the destructuring and degradation of Diola society.
The next generation of academics, French historians like Christian Roche (1979), Jacqueline Trincaz (1982) and Pierre-Xavier Trincaz (1984) tackled Casamançais history under the obvious influence of the lineage elders, Thomas, Girard and Pélissier. The tale they tell is that of the expansion of external forces in an amorphous environment; the local societies appear as essentially passive, mere targets for those forces; change happens against the will of the local societies, whose only form of agency is resistance. Surely the dominance of the twin paradigms of modernisation and dependency, and the quasi-exclusive use of colonial archives, did not help them perceive Casamançais agency in the history of Lower Casamance.

In this context, it is mainly English-speaking anthropologists or historians with an interest in anthropology who have been producing texts with a sense for history 25. Olga Linares (1986, 1992) and Peter Mark (1976, 1978 a & b, 1985) have thus shed light on the process of economic and religious change. Alice Hamer (1981, 1983) has produced a social history of Diola women through the colonial period to the 1980s. Robert Baum (1986, 1999) has provocatively taken up Thomas’ gauntlet, trying to write a history of the Esulalu, a Diola sub-group, from the seventeenth century onwards, using mostly oral traditions, and particularly those about the circulation of spirit-shrines.

Deconstructing Casamance?

It is difficult to tell how much this English-speaking trend of historical research on Casamance inspired the subsequent deconstructionist interpretations of Casamançais separatism, but there is little doubt that the deconstructionist trend which rebelled against the essentialist tendencies that have marked most analyses of the Casamançais rebellion was inspired by general post-modernist critiques of identity formation 26. These approaches have insisted that it was not so much culture or grievances in themselves that mattered, but their perception. In the classical deconstructionist manner, it was demonstrated, against the essentialist assumptions of most of the literature, that these perceptions were fictions or myths.

Ousseynou Faye (1994b) thus proposes an analysis of the MFDC discourse; rightly enough, he disputes the idea of a geographical or historical unity of

---

25 This linguistic divide has been of no small consequence, since most of the literature on Casamançais separatism has been written by French-speaking researchers who have had little access to this English-speaking literature.

Casamance. There are no specifically Casamançais geographical features - mangroves are found in northern Senegal too. There is no separate history either: neither the Portuguese colonial activities, which affected a small portion of Casamance only, nor the French administrative borders, which kept moving, gave any historical unity to Casamance. Also, the resistance of Casamance to the colonial powers has been less systematic than the MFDC argues. Faye’s deconstruction is undoubtedly inspiring, but the explanations he points out seem very classical: he mentions the role played by Joola cultural practices (sacred groves), as well as “the Joola unhappy with the diffusion on a massive scale of the market economy and urban way of life” – again, the problem with the Joola seems to be that they are decidedly hostile to modernity.

Drawing on Jean-Loup Amselle’s critical approach to African ethnicities (1990), Sylvie Pouilly-Tréca (1996) proposes an anti-essentialist account of the birth of Diola ethnic identity, which she takes to be the real core of Casamançais separatism. She proposes to inquire into “the processes through which this group, initially construed by an external gaze (external subjective criteria) was progressively confirmed by new religious and political institutions (internal objective criteria) and, in a parallel, by a sense of belonging which was ultimately vindicated (internal subjective criteria)”, thus shedding light on the current upsurge of separatism. She insists that in the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century, the Diola had no self-consciousness and existed only as a figment of colonial classification. Her deconstruction is indeed interesting, but she does not give elements to understand how this ethnic fiction was finally accepted by the groups designated as Diola. And when it comes to explain the separatist rebellion, Pouilly-Tréca falls back on a bluntly culturalist line, ultimately drawing on Darbon’s description of a permanent opposition between Lower Casamançais societies and the state.

28 A fascinating deconstructionist detail: Pouilly-Tréca (1996; 114) mentions that Emmanuel Bertrand-Bocandé, a French colonial entrepreneur of the early nineteenth century and one of the first ethnographers of the Diola, had a passion for entomology... Studying the development of a similar pigeon-holing discourse in the Philippines during American rule, Finin (1991; vol. I, 40-631), recalls that Dean C. Worcester, one of its key producers and a major colonial official, was a trained zoologist.

29 On that point, Pouilly-Tréca’s argument is curiously self-defeating; thus, while she describes (pp. 97-100) the lively 1950s political life, she ends up arguing that parties have remained unable to penetrate Casamance (p. 394).
Jean-Claude Marut (1999) proceeds to a systematic interrogation of the various models of representation that are applied to the Casamançais conflict. He demonstrates that the supposed structural differences between Casamance and the rest of Senegal are relative, or that they do not overlap exactly... Thus, he demonstrates that Casamance is not a self-evident geographical unity, that its historical unity is disputable, that religion is not a line of cleavage, since Islam has long been a majority religion even in Lower Casamance. After this deconstruction, Marut then points to a series of processes of construction: the curious colonial borders of the region, quasi-separate from the rest of Senegal but for a link with Eastern Senegal, the role of the Casamance river as major communication nexus in the colonial era, the French territorial grid and the administrative peculiarities typical of the region until 1939 all gave flesh to Casamance. Marut insists inspiringly on role of the Catholic Church in the construction of Casamançais particularism from outside. He also asserts that the state, colonial and post-colonial, the Church and the northerners all have concurred to throw an essentialist (and possibly racist) gaze on Casamance, and more specifically on the Diola ³⁰. But after these decontructionist pages, Marut moves on to examine the various grievances which the Casamançais have against the government; here, he falls back on the classical elements – the migrants from north Senegal who take control of politics, land and the new developing sectors (fishing and tourism) with the backing of the state.

As a theoretical and methodological impulse, deconstruction has done much good to the study of the Casamançais conflict. It has inspired researchers with a greater caution vis-à-vis the classical ethnography and the emic perceptions of both rebels and government, which had hitherto shaped most academic accounts of separatism. Against the classical structural accounts of the conflict, deconstructionists have insisted that Casamançais identity should not be taken as a datum, that it was as much a result of social process itself as it was a structure for this process; deconstructionists have revealed some of the unsuspected lineages of Casamançais identity and have shown that this identity actually owed much to external forces (the state, the world religions, the market) which they are supposed to resist. But the results of these deconstructions have been somehow disappointing, on two counts. First, the classical problem with all deconstructions has appeared: if all

³⁰Marut insists rightly on the frequent reduction, in much of the literature and opinion, of Casamance to Lower Casamance, and of Lower Casamance to the Diola Kasa “heartland”.
this is texts, representations and myths, and if those texts are the produce of external forces such as the state or the Church, how come that people actually believed in them? Could they be so easily fooled? How could these myths be adopted? Was there no other force behind this movement? In fact (and this is the second problem with these deconstructions), very often, when dealing with Casamançais separatism, researchers with the deconstructionist eye catered for such a thirst for explanations simply by falling back on the classical accounts, using either or all of the culturalist, socio-economic and political lines of interpretation.

Towards an alternative account of Casamançais nationalism

Reading through the academic literature bearing on the conflict, one thus detects a gap. The very real frustrations and difficulties which the Casamançais population went through during the 1970s, the disputable behaviour of many civil servants, the effects of the drought, the lack of industrial development, the cultural specificities of the region, its location as an enclave, probably all contributed, in a way or another, to the constitution of Casamançais nationalism. But one is left with no explanation as to the reasons why these frustrations and resentments were construed and voiced in the form of a nationalism.

The issue here is very close to that which Edward P. Thompson dealt with in his research on food riots in classical England 31. In a sequel to his famous article on the moral economy of the English crowd, Thompson noted that while food riots were frequent occurrences in England at the time, they were absent from other parts of the British empire – Ireland or India, where famines were no rarer. Thus, it was not food scarcity by itself which accounted for the riots, were it only because riot need not “be the only or most obvious form of collective action - there may be alternatives such as the mass-petitioning of the authorities, fast days, sacrifices and prayer; perambulation of the houses of the rich; or migration of whole villages” 32. The occurrence of food riots could thus not be mechanically deduced from food shortages. The question then becomes: how come rioting was a plausible solution for famished populations in seventeenth century England? Establishing that these riots followed a pre-established, quasi-ritual pattern, Thompson answers that they corresponded to a political culture – precisely that which he calls a “moral

32 In Thompson (1993; 263).
economy”, a historical construct of ideas bearing on the regulation of the economy of basic foodstuffs. For Thompson, this moral economy is not the ancestral and ageless practice of pre-modern societies, but it had coalesced in the Elizabethan era, as a result of the action of the rural landed elites and the developing English state, and it was primarily the outcome of history and change.\(^ {33}\)

Following Thompson’s line of reasoning and drawing inspiration from the deconstructionists’ critique of Casamançais identity, this research purports to try and formulate an alternative account of the emergence of Casamançais nationalism.

**Contesting the paradoxical agreement**

Dealing with Casamançais separatism, deconstructionists have failed to provide an alternative to the paradoxical agreement that seems to have rebels and loyalists, academics and journalists, united in describing the conflict as a result of a confrontation between the Diola peasants and modernity. To find a way out, one might go back to the noted ethnic component of Casamançais nationalism. In this text as well as in the other discussions of Casamançais separatism which it mentions, the reader will have noticed an hesitation between Casamançais and Diola. This hesitation is firmly rejected by the separatists themselves, who explicitly refer to Casamance as a whole, and refuse any ethnic ascription. In fact, they go some length to justify the visibility of the Diola in the MFDC struggle: among the various justifications given are the fighting skills of the Diola, the use of the rest of Casamance as a financial basis, and the topology of Lower Casamance, with its marshes and forests, which is supposedly best suited to guerrilla warfare.

But the haste and number of these justifications is suspicious, and there is a (legitimate) quasi-unanimous agreement among observers of the conflict over the fact that Casamançais nationalism is largely cotermious with Diola ethnicity.\(^ {34}\) The geographical extension of the rebellion, the origin of all known leaders and fighters as well as the prominent cultural references of the MFDC, all confirm this Diola inscription. In fact, even the spread of violence in the region of Kolda after 1995, which has hastily been interpreted as an indication of a change in the ethnic basis of

---

\(^ {33}\) In fact, much of Thompson’s article is dedicated to study its progressive demise at the hands of a new culture, that of Classical political economy.

\(^ {34}\) There are of course some exceptional cases: Alassane Diao, one of the signatories for the MFDC of the agreement of Toubacouta in 1991, is a Peul; Vieux Faye, a rebel leader in the district of Bignona, is a Diolaisé Serer.
the rebellion, took place only in the Diola-populated areas of the region of Kolda. The ethno-geographical extension of the rebellion is usually taken as a further indication of the primitiveness of the rebels: while the ethnic groups in Middle and Upper Casamance, Peulh and Manding, seem to have more in common with the rest of Senegal (shared ethnicity, hierarchical societies, longer implication in trade, Islam and groundnut-cropping), the Diola embody particularism, primitiveness and isolation. As Michael Lambert (1998) rightly indicates, this is precisely the reason why the separatists reject this ethnic ascription.35

But the map of the conflict and the map of Diola groups overlap also with a third map – a map which is not that of tradition or the supposedly stable culture of the Diola, the map of schooling. During the 1980s and 1990s, the region of Ziguinchor had the highest primary schooling rate in Senegal. The rate reached an intriguing 101 per cent in 1990-1991, ahead of the region of Dakar (96.6 per cent in the same year); in the same year, the other half of Casamance, the administrative region of Kolda, has one of the lowest rates in Senegal (42.2 per cent); after Ziguinchor and Dakar, the region with the third highest primary schooling rate was that of Thiès, a region which is little more than a distant suburb of Dakar – and the rate in Thiès reached only 61.3 per cent. The region of Ziguinchor thus rated first by far of all other regions of Senegal... The gap is huge, and Lower Casamance, the Diola heartland, thus stands out on another count than that of acephalousness, isolation and primitiveness, a count that jars strikingly with the usual accounts of the conflict, dispelling descriptions of the region as a sanctuary for tradition.

The issue of education actually emerges at various points of most accounts of Casamançais separatism, but it has never been placed at the centre of analyses of the conflict: it is usually mentioned as one of the many sources of Casamançais frustration.37 In the light of the apparent importance of formal education in Lower

35 Lambert (1998: 587) gives a very convincing explanation for the rebels’ preference for Casamançais nationalism as opposed to Diola ethnicity: it has to do with “an underlying distinction in African political ideology between nationalism and ethnicity. (...) To be legitimate, political groups should represent an ethnically plural constituency”. Thus, the rebels and the government share the same commitment to ethnic pluralism. Vail (1989: 1-2) shares this sentiment that tribalism and ethnicity are severely judged in African progressive ideology.

36 See République du Sénégal (1995: 20). It is difficult to interpret this statistical oddity – either it reveals the presence of migrant pupils from The Gambia or Guinea Bissau, or it has to do with the fact that the schooling rate is computed using projections from the 1988 census which may underestimate demographic growth.

37 De Jong (1998: 46-47) is probably the one who makes the most explicit reference to these issues. As seen above, Diouf (1994: 140-147) mentions the high schooling rate of Lower Casamance, but he
Casamance, is it possible, when accounting for Casamançais separatism, to refer primarily to the Diola peasant with his **kadiendo** spade? A substantial portion of the Lower Casamançais population has been to school, and this particularity might well be relevant for our study of the political particularity which we intend to examine... In fact, another unexpected particularity comes up: the literature on the conflict seems to have neglected a whole portion of the academic production on Diola society, which establishes that the Diola have engaged massively in migration, particularly to Dakar.

On those two counts, education and migration, Diola society thus seems in a way much more ‘modern’ than the usual accounts of Casamançais separatism should lead us to expect. How can one reconcile this apparent tension between the ‘modernity’ of Lower Casamance, and the general agreement that seems to prevail over the ‘traditional’ character of Diola society? Perhaps with an examination of the processes through which education and migration affected Lower Casamance, one can give flesh to Darbon’s insufficiently explored intuition about “traditionalisme par excès de modernité”... More than a sign of the continued hold of tradition over Lower Casamance, perhaps Casamançais separatism reveals the depth of the ‘modernisation’ of the Diola?

**Nationalism, modernity, modularity**

In his research on the nationalisms of America, Europe and Eastern Asia, Benedict Anderson (1991 ; 5) mentions a tension between “the objective modernity of nations to the historian’s eye” and their “subjective antiquity in the eyes of the nationalists”, a tension which resembles very much the one with which we are confronted in Lower Casamance. In fact, among scholars of nationalism, there is a broad agreement that, despite the nationalists’ claims to defend a past golden age, nationalism is very much related to sustained social change. Nationalism in itself is a

interprets it primarily as a proof that the state has never mishandled Lower Casamance; in this instance, the ‘proof’ is a bit specious, since, as Diouf himself acknowledges and as shall be seen in Chapter II, the generalisation of primary education in Lower Casamance has more to do with the efforts of the Church and the local population than to any deliberate plan of the state. Among the various elements that point to the importance of education in the conflict is the 1980 strike of the Ziguinchor high school, the presence of ex-strikers and teachers in the MFDC (major MFDC figures as Ansoumana Abba Bodian, Edmond Bora, Simon Malou and Sanoune Bodian are all teachers) and Father Diamacoune’s own implication with the strike and his pedagogical activities.

historical phenomenon, and no ageless force roaming about throughout the centuries – as a style of political thought, it developed in Europe and the European colonies of America during the Classical age, and triumphed in the late nineteenth century. As such, there is some controversy between scholars of nationalism as to the exact nature of the linkage between nationalism and modernisation. But all refer, in one way or another, its sociological and/or ideological conditions of emergence to profound historical trends of the kind that were once called ‘modernisation’ - state-formation, the market economy, capitalism, mass culture.

Another main property of nationalism which Anderson describes is its ‘modularity’: since it coalesced in the Euro-American context, nationalism has travelled far and wide, penetrating into other contexts. The development of the subsequent generations of nationalisms was borne by the same modernising forces that first brought about the creation of Euro-American nationalisms, but it also relied on the strength of the idea itself. Thus, in the colonial world, national identities reflect the nationalist classificatory thought habits of the colonisers, as well as the administrative practices which they deducted from these. Though Anderson does not discuss Africa in much detail, one can readily infer that the usual academic boundary between African ethnicities and European nationalisms is largely artificial: contemporary African ethnicities are largely mirror-images of European nationalisms, and are not a class of their own. Thus, despite the symbolic violence which the Senegalese government exerts when denouncing the MFDC as an ethnic movement and denying the rebels the status of nationalists, we find that we barely need to differentiate between ethnicity and nationalism – their basic principle is the same, that of an autonomous and self-contained political, cultural and economic unit...

39 Deutsch (1969) relates nationalism to the transition between traditional and modern societies – nationalism constitutes with the broadening and intensification of communication inside a large group. Gellner (1983) analyses nationalism as a process of cultural homogeneisation around the high culture of the state elite, which is functional with industrialism; but he also insists that this process leaves room for political manipulation: some elite groups may try to impose their own culture as a high culture and create their own state. Though he insists that they build from older and more diffuse ethnicities, Smith (1986) does acknowledge the constructed and essentially modern character of nations. Hobsbawm (1990) describes nationalism as a product of nineteenth century European state-formation and capitalist development. Anderson (1991) insists on the role of mass culture. For a review on theories of nationalism, see for instance Jaffrelot (1991).

40 Occasionally, the influence of European nationalisms in the shaping of African ethnicities could be quite direct. Linden & Linden (1999: 299-360) argue that anti-Walloon Flemish nationalism nourished Hutu resentment against the Tutsi. Franche (1997) argues that the European proto-national paradigm opposing the Franks and the Gallo-Romans structured to a large extent the solidification of the cleavage between Hutu and Tutsi.
In fact, for the past forty years, analyses of African politics have insisted on a similar linkage between ‘modernisation’ and ethnicities. From the 1960s onwards, British and American scholars have criticised the idea that ‘modernisation’ would lead necessarily to ‘detribalisation’, and highlighted the importance of modern contexts in the emergence or recomposition of ethnic identities. Somewhat later, French authors have pursued this critique of ethnicity, demonstrating that ethnicity was not an ageless force, but that it had a lot to do with modern phenomena. As seen above, this trend in the literature has had an impact on the study of Casamançais separatism, allowing for a deconstructionist line.

**Studying Casamançais nationalism**

We thus propose to study Casamançais separatism as a nationalist movement. As such, paraphrasing Ernest Gellner (1983; 110), Casamançais separatism can be defined as a political principle, which holds that the Casamançais political and the national units should be congruent. The purpose of this research is thus to shed light on the sociological and ideological conditions under which such a principle could gain some credibility in Casamance.

In this exploration, education is more than the grain of sand that blocks the culturalist machinery. In fact, some scholars grant education a major role in their accounts of nationalism. Gellner for instance insists that the state’s organisation of nation-wide homogeneous educational systems has played a major part in the constitution of nation and nationalism:

> The [national] state is above all the protector not of a faith but of a culture, and the maintainer of the inescapably homogeneous and standardizing educational system which alone can turn out the kind of personnel capable of switching from one job to another within a growing economy and a mobile society, and indeed of performing jobs which involve manipulating meanings and people rather than things. For most of these men, however, the limits of their culture are the limits, not perhaps of the world, but of their own employability and hence dignity.

But Gellner’s point, valid as it may be for European nationalisms, seems not so relevant for African instances of nationalism: in Senegal as in most African countries, the limits of culture are not the limits of employability; the state does maintain a standardising educational system, but this system is run in French; civil

---

43 In Gellner (1983; 110).
servants in Senegal are not recruited primarily as representatives of their ethnic community, but in their capacity as French-speaking literati.

Anderson has a slightly different take on the relationship between education and nationalism. First he notes that powerful institutions like the world religions or the states organise vast social and geographical circulations through the territories they control. These circulations Anderson calls ‘pilgrimages’, following Victor Turner (1967, 1974), and insists on their capacity to create a sense of identity (in the original sense: similarity), thus promoting a sense of cultural and political unity and providing a basis for nationalism:

> It is not simply that in the minds of Christians, Muslims or Hindus, the cities of Rome, Mecca, or Benares were the centres of sacred geographies, but that their centrality was experienced and ‘realized’ (in the stagecraft sense) by the constant flow of pilgrims moving towards them from remote and otherwise unrelated localities. Indeed, in some sense the outer limits of the old religious communities of the imagination were determined by which pilgrimages people made. (...) The Berber encountering the Malay before the Kaaba must, as it were, ask himself: ‘Why is this man doing what I am doing, uttering the same words that I am uttering, even though we cannot talk to one another?’ There is only one answer, once one has learnt it: ‘Because we... are Muslims.’

Modern bureaucratic states, more than any other institutions, generate particularly massive and profound pilgrimages, which replace the old pilgrimages of the feudal state, whereby officials attached by birth to a specific locality would go back and forth to the centre of power: in modern states, ‘pilgrims’ can occupy just any place anywhere. The thing that allows for this easy circulation is the constitution of a vast group of permanent civil servants, whose qualification depends on a unified formal education in a single state language, dispensed in a rather homogeneous educational system. Substitutability and circulation are thus bases for the imagined community of the national type.

If one accepts Anderson’s depiction of nationalism, Lower Casamance stands out as an oddity, for the region of Ziguinchor seems to have taken part to these Senegalese national pilgrimages more than most other regions of Senegal... How come then that its incorporation to Senegalese nationalism has failed? Our hypothesis is that it is precisely something in these pilgrimages that has provided the basis for the emergence of Casamançais nationalism: for the Lower Casamançais, at

44 In Anderson (1991; 53-54).
45 Here, Anderson is very close to the Durkheimian depiction of modernity as the age of modularity, which Gellner’s quote above points to: formal standardised education produces what Gellner (1994) calls ‘modular men’, able to fit in all professional environments. Note that Gellner’s use of the notion of modularity (the modularity of man in the modern world) differs from Anderson’s own use discussed above (the modularity of nationalism).
some point, the pilgrimage turned wrong \(^{46}\); somewhere on the road, the Lower Casamançais felt they had been cheated. It is necessary to reconstitute the stations of the Casamançais pilgrimages, giving education and migration their full weight. But our story is not a story of grievance and cheat, it is also about political imagination, and following the steps of the cheated pilgrims of the Senegalese state, we will keep an eye on these aspects. This all leads us to a reformulation of the issue of Casamançais separatism: more than to an exclusion and distance from the state, perhaps Casamançais separatism is related to the proximity that has established between the state and the region?

**Methodology**

The scope of this research, covering social, economic, religious, cultural and political aspects of Senegalese and Lower Casamançais history from the early colonial era to the early 1980s, is vast. The literature on Senegal and Casamance covers certain issues in great detail (national politics, Casamançais migration, gender relations, plurilingualism), but has some important empty spaces (local politics, education). I have thus had to deal with a wide range of topics. When available, I have made extensive use of the specialised academic literature on the Casamance. Otherwise I have resorted to what could be termed methodological pluralism: at various stages of this research, archival research, interviews, ethnographic observation and statistical analysis were mobilised.

Reseaching an insurrection is never an easy matter. In fact, in Casamance, with the very special blend of low-intensity warfare, permanent negotiations, cooptation and political competition inside both the state and the MFDC, research was made particularly difficult: very few people know much, and almost everyone is paranoid about giving information. The fact that my research dealt in part with innocuous topics such as education and migration was very useful in providing a non-controversial starting point for contacts and conversations. But even with this safe entry into Casamançais history, many interviews were difficult; I found that the most efficient way of working was to develop contacts over a long period of time, repeating interviews with the same people. Also, dealing with educated Casamançais nationalists or Senegalese loyalists who all shared in the general interest of the

\(^{46}\) Anderson (1991; chapter 4) does discuss one case where pilgrimages go wrong – that of the Creole nationalisms of Spanish America.

33
Senegalese for politics, I often had to struggle to avoid hours of passionate pro- or anti-separatist justifications, with detailed discussions of historical and ethnological issues; but even these interviews taught me something about nationalism and its relation to education.

This research has extended over a span of six years, with occasional interruptions. Since my first stay in Casamance in 1994, I have spent a year and a half doing field-research: four months between March and July 1997; ten months between October 1998 and August 1999; two months between February and March 2000. Funding from the Paris-based Centre d’Etudes et de Recherches Internationales for a new research project allowed for three more months of fieldwork during summer and autumn 2002.

Some of this time was spent doing archival research; in Dakar, I went to the Archives Nationales du Sénégal, the Institut Fondamental d’Afrique noire and the various libraries of the departments of the Université Cheikh Anta Diop. I also tapped into smaller archives in Casamance – those of the Institut Sénégalais de Recherches Agricoles in Djibélor and those of the Grand Séminaire in Brin; the local governmental archives in Ziguinchor were unfortunately not accessible, though the reason was not readily clear – some (or all?) archives apparently had been stolen or burnt, or the archivist had been transferred to a prefecture, or research on the Casamance was not welcome. A few people granted me access to personal archives, which included a number of MFDC and government documents.

Most of the time of research was spent in interviews (more exactly perhaps, in the quest for interviewees) in Dakar and in Casamance. In Casamance, I would usually stay in Ziguinchor, and from there, go for short periods of time (up to a week) in other locations; during these stays out of Ziguinchor, I kept to Lower Casamance – in various villages near Bignona, Diouloulou and Nyassia. I made three short stays in The Gambia, among Diola migrants there.

The selection of interviewees followed no precise scheme, but I tried to meet with the most varied people, a thing which my ‘toubab-ness’ allowed quite easily: the toubab (white, European, westerner...) researcher never really belongs, and though he is engaged, knowingly or not, in local issues and conflicts, he enjoys a kind of extra-territoriality which allows for this mobility. Of course, in these interviews, there were biases – those of gender, age and language. Senegalese society is not particularly strict on gender separation but, de facto, men and women do not
frequently socialise together. For instance, during meals, food is usually served in big bowls, and men (and guests) usually sit together, while women share their bowls with the children. There is little doubt that my discussions of gender issues suffers from this bias, no matter my efforts to establish contacts with Casamançais women and read the literature on gender in Casamance. The second bias was that of age. Even if young unmarried ‘toubabs’ are not treated as are their Senegalese age-mates are (i.e. disregarded), it proved difficult to socialise with older men. The only context where that proved possible was that of interviews, where I behaved as a disciple collecting the wisdom and memory of the elders. The last bias, that of language, was probably the most problematic. Though I could quickly knew enough Wolof to get around in Dakar, and check out on the translations that were being made for me, I could never have an interview in Wolof. I never learnt more than the basic greetings in Diola. This linguistic bias further reinforced the age and gender biases, for the typical French speaker is a young man. I did a number of interviews with the help of translators, but they never were trained translators, and there is little doubt that important points were missed.

I had started with set questionnaires, but I soon realised they were useless and impractical, all the more as I was not engaged in the production of statistics. I rarely recorded interviews – getting anyone to talk about Casamance is difficult enough, and I quickly formed the impression that taking out my tape-recorder would spoil it all. I usually wrote down everything during the interview.

Aside from all this formal interviewing, as is often the case, a lot was learnt from free, non-directive discussions, and from taking part to the daily intercourse of life – playing cards (though my poor skill at belote made me a burdensome partner), watching football matches or mere hanging around drinking ataaya (Senegalese sweet tea) made life pleasant and often revealed useful information. I also had the chance to attend a series of public occasions – celebrations, parties, political rallies. It is the sum of this pluralist research experience which forms the basis for the present research.

**Chapter outline**

The first part of the PhD, organised in three chapters, describes the process by which the state and Lower Casamance formed an implicit socio-political compact through the colonial era. While Middle and Upper Casamance adopted the model
prevalent in the north of Senegal (maraboutic Islam, mass groundnut cash crop), in Lower Casamance, the compact was based on generalised internal migration and on school. The first chapter describes the generalisation of migration among the Diola. While French peace and peanut trade ruined the elders’ power over the juniors, mass rural agricultural migration developed early in the century. Progressively, and despite the elders’ resistance, villages converted into multi-local communities, with heavy temporary migration of both men and women - and some permanent urban migration too. The second chapter accounts for the emergence of education and the civil service as a privileged pathway to prosperity. Weakened elders and weak Islam were unable to contain schooling, while the Catholic Church promoted it in an attempt to mass-conversion. After 1945, while trade remained under the tight control of the northern Senegalese elites, French schooling and civil service proved attractive for young men, and the literati came to form the most successful class among the migrants, introducing new practices that functioned as yardsticks of achievement in the villages. The third chapter analyses the political emergence of the new literati elite of Lower Casamance, the évolutés. Until 1945 the political stage had been controlled by the French, the Portuguese Creole elites of Ziguinchor and the auxiliaries of the colonial state who came from north Senegal. After World War II, with the extension of the political franchise, the autochthonous évolutés formed a regional party and sided with Léopold Sédar Senghor against the old urban elites of northern Senegal.

The second part of the thesis also falls in three chapters; it analyses the break-up of the compact which Lower Casamance had formed with the state, and the subsequent development of Casamançais separatism. The fourth chapter focuses on the partial collapse of the migratory system. Around the end of the 1970s, a growing divergence could be observed between Lower Casamançais men and women: the male trajectory, based on education, French language and formal employment, became more and more difficult to sustain, while the female way, built up on informal employment and Wolof language, thrived; the crisis of the male trajectory was related both to long-term demographic problems and short-term tensions; cleavages thus deepened between the rare successful migrants and the majority of men; a group of young Casamançais graduates emerged, who discovered their Casamançais-ness in their harsh pilgrimage to Dakar. The fifth chapter describes the concomitant reshaping of ideas about Casamance that was taking place, as a result of
largely unconnected and external processes (tourism, developmental state policy, Catholic inculturation); all these processes had in common a traditionalist attitude toward Casamance, and were widespread among the literati. The sixth and last chapter accounts for the progressive politicisation of Casamançais identity. Building on these traditionalist approaches, political and cultural entrepreneurs engaged in a re-interpretation of Casamançais social and political life, emphasising ideas of tradition and autochthony. The increasingly unstable political context of late 1970s politics in Ziguinchor, the regional capital city, allowed for the progressive constitution of Casamançais nationalism.
CHAPTER I
THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTI-LOCAL COMMUNITIES

My granary, it is the money which my son in Dakar sends over 1.

Teufeldröckh undertakes no less than to expound the moral, political, even religious Influences of Clothes; he undertakes to make manifest, in its thousandfold bearings, this grand Proposition, that Man’s earthly interests ‘are all hooked and buttoned together, and held up, by Clothes’. He says in so many words, ‘Society is founded upon Cloth’ (...) 2.

Aline Sitoé Diatta, migrant and prophetess

In August 1980, Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor gave a talk at the Dakar Chamber of Commerce on Aline Sitoé Diatta, a Diola priestess-prophetess whose cult was brutally suppressed by the French colonial authorities in 1942 3. This talk is often taken as one of the starting points of Casamançais separatism. In his presentation of the role of Aline Sitoé, Father Diamacoune described her as an anti-colonial hero, a staunch defendress of Diola tradition. According to an account of the talk published in Le Soleil, apparently answering questions from the audience, Father Diamacoune had insisted that “(...) from Aline Sitoé’s stay in Dakar, one should not deduce that she was influenced in any way by the Dakarois intellectual milieus. These milieus would rather talk of assimilation. And Aline Sitoé was illiterate” 4. Keen on demonstrating that Aline Sitoé stood for Casamançais/Diola tradition, Father Diamacoune logically denied the influence of modern (and Senegalese!) intellectuals on her. He was surely right about the dominance of assimilationism among the Dakarois elites of the time, and it is quite unlikely that Aline Sitoé mixed with these intellectuals during her stay in Dakar. But it is no less of interest that the priestess-prophetess who, in the mind of Casamançais nationalists, embodies Diola tradition, ever went to Dakar. She spent about seven years there, working as a maid, and it was in Dakar that she married a man from her home village, Kabrousse, and

1 In Thiéba (1984; 23), quoting the chief of Baïla.
2 From Thomas Carlyle’s Sartor resartus.
4 In Le Soleil, 26 August 1980. As Toliver-Diallo (2002; 7) makes clear, Diamacoune was answering to Senegalese leftist intellectuals of the Front Culturel Sénégalais, who released a publication which proposed that Aline Sitoé’s message was revolutionary, almost Marxist, and downplayed her role as a spiritual leader. Those leftist activists were eager to recruit Aline Sitoé as a Senegalese anti-colonial heroine, in a time where those intellectuals saw Senegal as a neo-colonial regime. The use of Aline Sitoé by Senegalese leftists is also noted by Bianchini (1988; 204-205 & 304).
had a child. It was only after this Dakarois episode that she returned to Casamance and engaged in her prophetic activity. At the opening of this chapter, we invoke Aline Sitoé Diatta not as an icon of tradition, but as a symbol of the importance of migration - of a certain measure of ‘modernity’ - among the Diola.

The massiveness and specificities of Lower Casamançais migration have stimulated numerous scholarly studies of migration per se, and since this research does not aim at producing one more such study of Casamançais migration, but rather to inquire into their relation to politics, I will draw extensively on these works in this chapter - adding my own research material where necessary. Interestingly, this strong scholarly interest in Lower Casamançais migration is not reflected in the common-sensical ideas about Casamance prevailing in Senegal (and even in Casamance) - stereotypes of an immobile rural society are dominant. Nor is migration given any significant part in studies of the Casamançais conflict. More exactly perhaps, while immigration from northern Senegal is given a role (the northern ‘invaders’ who are ‘plundering’ Lower Casamance), Lower Casamançais emigration is interpreted only as a consequence and symptom of the supposedly difficult socio-economic situation prevailing in the region in the 1970s - for the Casamançais rebels, merely another wrong to right. One will see that there is more to it than that: migration is an old practice and it developed largely as a result of the will and strategies of the Lower Casamançais themselves; it has affected the whole of Lower Casamançais societies in depth, resulting in a de facto shifting of their centre of gravity towards Dakar; Diola communities have become multi-local.

This chapter will thus examine the development of migration among the Diola, starting from the colonial period. The first section will focus on migration statistics - the main characteristics of Lower Casamançais migration will be identified. The massiveness of the phenomenon will be recognised: from the 1950s onward, almost everybody in Lower Casamance has been involved in some form of migration, rural

---


6 Even for authors who acknowledge the existence of Diola migration, such as Darbon (1988), it is northern immigration which is taken to matter. The title of Darbon’s book is clear enough: L’administration et le paysan en Casamance. The fact that there might be a third partie, such as the Diola migrants, is simply overlooked. Perhaps the fact that studies of Diola migrations have been carried out mostly by American or Dutch researchers, and are usually published in English, accounts for their lack of visibility in Senegalese or French approaches to Lower Casamance; the weight of the Durkheimian tradition in French social sciences might have played a part too. This absence of migration in common-sensical ideas on Casamance, the predominance of a ruralist image of Casamance is an intriguing phenomenon, full with political resonance, and it will be examined later.
or urban, temporary of permanent, with migration to Dakar playing a dominant part. Statistics also indicate intriguing differences in the kind of migration (migration period, age-group, employment niche) according to gender.

In the second part, a qualitative analysis will try to account for those specificities of Diola migration brought to light by statistics. For the social juniors (the cadets of French economic anthropology) of Lower Casamance, rural migration in the early colonial era opened a fantastic opportunity to renegotiate their position. This rural migration, which mobilised both men and women, paved the way for the development of temporary urban migration, relying extensively on community networks. This urban chain-migration imported new goods and practices to the villages; the villages were thus progressively transformed in multi-local communities of consumption.

Measuring migration with a macroscope

Statistics of Casamançais migration fall into two broad types: macroscopic and microscopic. Macroscopic statistics are basically state censuses, while microscopic statistics usually focus on the migration of a single village. Macroscopic and microscopic statistics shed different but equally illuminating light on the issue of Lower Casamançais migration.

The first national macroscopic census to provide usable data on Lower Casamançais migration is that of 1988. Thus, the one national census we can use dates from 1988. But other resources are available: two censuses of Dakar for years 1955-1961 and 1988, as well as a Lower Casamance census of the late 1950s. These

---

7 After 1945, the French colonial state put some effort into microscopic measurement of migrations, and started to collect village monographs, which include quantitative data on migration. These statistics could be particularly interesting, since they discriminate between various destinations (canton/subdivision/Casamance/northern Senegal/Gambia/other), between genders and between temporary and permanent migrations. Unfortunately, with incomplete series and no information on the methodology adopted (who collected data? how? at what time of the year? how was migration actually defined?), one cannot make much sense of these data. See for instance ANS 11D1/182, Dossiers Affiniam, Diatock, Mangagoulack, Boutecol (sic), Mandégane, Elana. Nevertheless, hypothesising that the same methodology was used for the various wards of one village, the data would allow for a closer, micro-historical perspective, which lies beyond the scope of our study: these data often indicate strong contrasts in the patterns of migration between the various wards and sub-wards of the same village – this could be useful to account for the development of early migrations.

8 Prior to the 1984 administrative reform, Lower, Middle and Upper Casamance were lumped together in the administrative region of Casamance. Thus, the 1970-1971 Enquête démographique nationale (République du Sénégal (1974)) is useless. The 1984 reform split the region of Casamance in two (the region of Kolda, corresponding more or less to Middle and Upper Casamance, and the region of Ziguinchor, corresponding to Lower Casamance.

data thus provide us with an early picture of Lower Casamançais long-distance migration, and a late one - the whole of the 1960s and 1970s is unaccounted for. But in the absence of intermediate data, the contrast between 1955 and 1988 is striking enough.

The 1955 Dakar census

The 1955 Dakar census is the oldest published quantitative track to be found of Lower Casamançais urban migration\(^\text{10}\). It includes earlier administrative data which allow for an accurate dating of the beginning of this migration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table I.1: Lower Casamançais and Diola population in Dakar 1926-1961</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source: République du Sénégal (1962; 3, table A.2), and Martin (1968)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Casamançais (^\text{12})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of whom Diola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total African population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Lower Casamançais over total African population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from Table I.1, while null or extremely limited from 1926 to 1941, the Lower Casamançais community in Dakar took eleven years, from 1941 to 1955, to reach 5,000 members. In only six years (1955-1961), it grew by another 5,000 members - the sign of a quickening of Lower Casamançais migration. The 1955 resident community was divided up among 3,000 Diola and 2,000 Mancagne and Manjak \(^\text{14}\). This measurement excludes seasonal workers, who, for the whole of Casamance, were estimated to be 173 only \(^\text{15}\). This figure is very small compared to the whole Casamançais community, and also compared to seasonal migration by

\(^{10}\) See Haut Commissariat de la République en Afrique occidentale française (1958) and Martin (1962).

\(^{11}\) The 1961 figure for the Diola population is taken from an article by Martin (1968), but the administrative census he quotes is unfortunately unpublished.

\(^{12}\) The Casamançais category used in the census excludes the Manding and the Peulh, and groups together the Diola, Manjak and Mancagne (the most numerous ethnies of Lower Casamance), so it more or less equates with Lower Casamançais population.

\(^{13}\) Unfortunately, Martin (1968) gives contradictory information about the 1961 Diola community in Dakar: on page 365, he says that the 3,000 Catholic Diolas form about half the Diola community, and on the next page, he notes that between 1955 and 1961, the Diola community has increased by 60 per cent only (which would mean it would have reached 4,200 members only in 1961).

\(^{14}\) In Martin (1962; 4, table A5).

\(^{15}\) In Martin (1962; 9, table A14). This measure does not suffer from the traditional bias for the measurement of seasonal migration (at what time of the year does the census takes place?), since the census was carried out in April-May, that is before the return of seasonal workers for rice cultivation, which takes place between June and August.
other ethno-regional groups, such as the Serer, for instance - mass seasonal migration seems not to have yet started, but an expanding resident community was there, and the seeds were sown for mass-migration.

The 1955 census also includes some information about the occupations of the various ethnic groups in Dakar. Martin (1962; 18, Table B.6.) reports for instance that 12 per cent of the maids and domestic workers in Dakar were Diola - 22 per cent were Serer. These two ethnic groups were the biggest providers of domestic workers. There is some indication that the (Lower) Casamançais were slightly under-represented among unskilled workers, and over-represented among the police: only 5 per cent of the resident male Soussous and Casamançais were employed as unskilled workers (as opposed to a 12 per cent average for the African resident male population), while 12 per cent were employed as policemen (as opposed to a 4 per cent average for the African male population). Unfortunately, the taxonomy of the census groups together “Soussous” and “(Lower) Casamançais”, which does limit the validity of the results.

A 1950s statistical view from the Casamance: Louis-Vincent Thomas

Probably drawing on unpublished administrative sources, Thomas (1960, 1964) gives crucial information about Diola seasonal mobility, both inside and outside the region around the end of the 1950s 16.

Table I.2. Diola seasonal migration at the end of the 1950s: origin, gender distribution and percentage of the working population
Source: Thomas (1960; 493, note 2) and (1964; 279); average figures for years 1957, 1958 and 1959

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zones of origin</th>
<th>Number of migrants</th>
<th>As a percentage of total working population</th>
<th>Of which men as a percentage of total working population</th>
<th>Of which female as a percentage of total working population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26,500</td>
<td>10.45</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buluf</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huluf</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 One can only hypothesise that Thomas’ data derives from the microscopic state surveys mentioned in note 6 above. Unfortunately, little detail about the means of inquiry and the definition of migration adopted, especially with such massive intra-Casamançais migrations: did migration imply people moving from one village to another, from a canton to another or from a cercle to another?

17 In Thomas’ terminology, Buluf corresponds to the northern shore of the lower section of the Casamance river, and Huluf to its southern shore.
The 1988 census: the other end of the process

At the other end of the period, statistics document the importance and evolution of Lower Casamançais migration in both the new and old communities. Table I.4 indicates clearly the pre-eminence of Dakar as a destination for Lower Casamançais migration, for both permanent and recent emigrants: Dakar attracts around two thirds of Ziguinchor-born emigrants. Kolda is the next most important destination and falls largely in the category of short-range local mobility (out-marriage, rural migration), since quite a few resident Diolas are to be found in the region of Kolda.

---

18 In Thomas (1960; 493). No detailed data on employment for Huluf migrants were available.

19 The aggravation of violence in Lower Casamance after 1990 has substantially changed the situation of Casamançais migration, with many people taking refuge in Dakar, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau or Ziguinchor, and a deepened agricultural crisis. Consequently, in this chapter, we shall not use statistical data after 1990.
Table I.4: Destination of emigrants from the region of Ziguinchor
Source: République du Sénégal (1992; 51, table 3.4 & 53, table 3.6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Permanent emigrants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Recent emigrants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dakar</td>
<td>52,866</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>9,127</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diourbel</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Louis</td>
<td>1,944</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambacounda</td>
<td>1,823</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaolack</td>
<td>3,382</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiès</td>
<td>4,696</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louga</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatick</td>
<td>1,232</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolda</td>
<td>10,797</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>2,404</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78,238</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>15,401</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More detailed data about ‘recent emigration’ is available, which includes useful data on the gender distribution of migration and local mobility.

Table 5: Destination of recent emigrants from the region of Ziguinchor
Source: République du Sénégal (1992; 53, table 3.6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Ratio Male/Female emigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dakar</td>
<td>3,692</td>
<td>5,435</td>
<td>9,127</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diourbel</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Louis</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambacounda</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaolack</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiès</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louga</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatick</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolda</td>
<td>1,308</td>
<td>1,096</td>
<td>2,404</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziguinchor (different department)</td>
<td>7,035</td>
<td>6,283</td>
<td>13,318</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14,199</td>
<td>14,520</td>
<td>28,719</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I.5 indicates intra-regional migration to be the first source of mobility - data on migration to Kolda on Table I.4 already showed something of the importance of local mobility, but the importance of movements inside the region of Ziguinchor was not measured: mobility between different departments of the region of Ziguinchor accounts for 46.4 per cent of recent migration.

Local mobility set aside, migration to Dakar is pre-eminent, since it represents more than two thirds of Lower Casamançais mobility in Senegal. But other

---

20 A “permanent emigrant” is defined as someone whose region of birth is different from his/her current region of residence.

21 A “recent emigrant” is defined as someone whose residence five years ago was different from his/current region of residence.
Senegalese regions are attractive - particularly the important regions of Kaolack and Thiès - major commercial and administrative centres.

Casamançais recent emigration shows intriguing contrasts in gender distribution: while local mobility and the smallish migration to other regions are either balanced or more masculine, migration to Dakar is clearly more feminine, with a sex ratio equal to 0.7 - in Dakar, one finds approximately 147 Lower Casamançais female migrants for every 100 male migrants. Dakar seems to occupy a very specific place in the functioning of Casamançais migration.

But the most interesting thing which the 1988 census allows for is a comparison of the weight of migration in the various regions of Senegal. The question here is whether migration - and particularly migration to Dakar - concerns a large portion of the overall Lower Casamançais population. The best way to measure this importance is to compare the number of migrants with the population of the region of origin. We will thus find out whether migration is (statistically, and also, perhaps, socially) an important feature of the social life of this region. Indeed, as appear on Table I.6 below, Lower Casamançais migration to Dakar is by far the most intense, relative to the region of origin: Ziguinchor-born migrants represent 12.6 per cent of the resident population of their region of origin 22. The contrast with the neighbouring Kolda region is particularly significant, for Kolda-born migrants established in Dakar represent only 1.2 per cent of the resident population of the Kolda region. Even for Saint-Louis, which comes second after Ziguinchor, the rate is a much smaller 8.9 per cent - and Saint-Louis is the former capital city of Senegal (and colonial French West Africa), with long-established ties to Dakar; the third region is Thiès (7.7 per cent), a region which functions largely as a suburb of Dakar. While the region of Ziguinchor is the least populated but one of the ten regions of Senegal, the Lower Casamançais community constitute the third biggest migrant community in Dakar, after Thiès- and Saint-Louis-born migrants.

22 If anything, this measure underestimates the intensity of emigration for the region of Ziguinchor, for while most regions of Senegal do not receive immigrants, the region of Ziguinchor does receive important numbers of immigrants; if one subtracted immigrants to the regional population to measure the impact of migration only on autochthonous population, the case for the region of Ziguinchor would be even stronger.
### Table I.6: Emigration from the regions of Senegal to Dakar and their intensity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diourbel</td>
<td>45,410</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>619,245</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatick</td>
<td>21,627</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>509,702</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaolack</td>
<td>34,793</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>811,258</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolda</td>
<td>7,118</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>591,833</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louga</td>
<td>30,298</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>490,077</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Louis</td>
<td>58,488</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>660,282</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambacounda</td>
<td>9,908</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>385,982</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiès</td>
<td>72,462</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>941,151</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziguinchor</td>
<td>50,308</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>398,337</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakar</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,488,941</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Macrostatistics conclusively demonstrate that Lower Casamançais emigration is important both in relation to the region of destination and the region of origin. The 1955 Dakar census counted 5,000 resident ethnic Lower Casamançais; the 1991 census finds more than 50,000 people born in Lower Casamance living in Dakar (thus excluding ‘ethnic’ Lower Casamançais born in Dakar to migrant families). The specificity of migration from the region of Ziguinchor to Dakar thus appears evident: more than any other region of Senegal, the region of Ziguinchor is engaged in a close relation with Dakar, through massive migration; we can only infer from this that migration forms an essential feature of Lower Casamançais social life. Macrostatistics also raise a number of questions about the inter-play of local and long-distance migration, and about the gender structure of migration: Diola migration seems to be geared towards Dakar, and to involve women in numbers at least as large as men. But macrostatistics are methodologically fragile, and liable to leave out many significant aspects of migration.

Examination of microstatistics will try to go further in the identification of the functioning of Casamançais migration.

---

23 The 1991 migration study uses a simple definition of migrant: he/she is defined as somebody born in a different region than his/her region of residence. Thus neither seasonal migrants, nor children born to migrants in Dakar are taken into account.

24 Since these two data are not homogeneous, nor established on the same date, the ‘ratio’ of the sixth column is not be interpreted as “12.6 per cent of the people born in Ziguinchor now reside in Dakar”, but as “the people born in Ziguinchor who live in Dakar amount to 12.6 per cent of the people residing in Ziguinchor”.

25 The sketchy definition of migration adopted by statisticians of national censuses seriously impairs their usefulness: a migrant is defined as someone whose region of origin (of birth or residence some years ago) is different from his/her current region of residence. This definition has obvious
Changing lenses: micro-statistical approaches to Casamançais migration

Microscopic measurements of migration come in handy as a corrective of the faults of macroscopy. Usually the work of anthropologists, these censuses take most of the time the shape of the classical village monograph. They are thus usually related to qualitative research, but we will focus in this section mostly on the statistical results. On the whole, the data provided by these studies is relatively late, for the oldest ones were published in 1978. They allow for a progressive identification of the main characteristics of Diola migration.

Nicolas & Gaye: the local dynamics of migration

In the early 1980s, in the area around Oussouye, during the course of a development project, Nicolas and Gaye (1985) recruited secondary school students to carry out a demographic survey. Some data on migration was included.

Table I.7: Temporary and permanent migration in the arrondissement of Oussouye

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: Gaye &amp; Nicolas (1985: 58)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporary migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oussouye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalobone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senghalène</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kahinda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djivante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edioungou</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I.7 illustrates the attraction exerted by migration over a substantial section of the population: in Edioungou, up to 27 per cent of the permanent

shortcomings: migrant returnees are counted out; the importance of temporary migration is not known (it all depends whether temporary migrants were present or not at the time of the census); children of migrants born in Dakar are not identified as such; local mobility is often neglected in favour of more distant migration (outside one’s region of birth); only one migration is counted, a serious problem when qualitative data indicate a constant coming and going.

A number of monographs are dedicated to the study of various aspects of Diola migration, such as Enel, Pison & Lefebvre (1989) on Mlomp, Lambert (1994) on Mandégane, Reboussin (1995) on Affiniam-Boutem, Conseil national des femmes noires américaines (1983) on five villages from the département of Bignona (Tendimane, Diagobel, Badiana, Dijimane and Kaparan) and De Jonge et alia (1978) comparing Oussouye, Diatock, Birkama and Baraka. Village monographs on Lower Casamance abound, and some of them include valuable data on migration. Particularly relevant are Nicolas & Gaye (1988) on Oussouye and the neighbouring villages, Marzouk (1981) on Kamobeul and Niandane and Hamer (1981) on Thionck-Essyl.
The population is engaged in temporary migration - the rate is nowhere smaller than 8 per cent. Permanent migration is similarly important.

The over-representation of female migration, already mentioned above, is largely confirmed for temporary migrants - Oussouye being an exception easily accounted for: it is a locally important administrative and commercial centre, with a relatively important allochthonous population. On the contrary, in all four localities, permanent migration attracts men more than women.

Finally, the disparity between the various villages of the arrondissement is worth mentioning - the aggregate rate of migration for Edioungou revolves around 38.5 per cent, while for Senghalène it reaches only 10 per cent. Furthermore, temporary and permanent migration seem to be associated: permanent migration is the strongest where temporary migration is also the strongest (Edioungou) - and the reverse is true, as the case of Senghalène demonstrates (the lowest rate for permanent migrants and the second lowest rate for temporary migrants). Though migration as a social fact involves all villages, each of them apparently reacted in its own way, depending on its needs, networks, constraints and abilities.

A comparative survey of Lower Casamançais migration: De Jonge et alia

The work by De Jonge et alia bears on four villages belonging to different economic and ecological niches of Lower Casamance. It includes no information on permanent migration, a phenomenon not easily measured by village-based approaches. The core of the study bears on temporary migrants - defined as migrants who have left the arrondissement for more than a month and less than twelve months. Three tables synthesise the results of the research.

Table I.8 below illustrates the seasonal character of migration - the dry season allows for substantial temporary migration. Another interesting conclusion of this table is that it confirms the importance of variations in the pattern of temporary migration from one village to another. Comparing villages and identifying the relevant factors is actually one of the goals of De Jonge’s study.

---

27 At the time, there were 1,073 Wolof, Toucouleur, Peulh, Manding and members of allochthonous ethnic groups in Oussouye itself, as opposed to 9 only for the rest of the arrondissement. In Gaye and Nicolas (1985: 60).

28 They do nevertheless mention a 1977 study by Sayers on the parish registers of the Catholic village of Cadjinolle: according to Sayers, 50 per cent of the people alive at the time had settled out of the village - unfortunately, no information about the destination is mentioned, so this figure covers everything, from out-marriage or mobility to a neighbouring village to urban migration.
instance, as a small ‘modern’ city, stabilises its population a bit more - there the contrast between the dry and the rainy season is less clear than in the villages. Birkama is a ‘recent’ village, founded at the beginning of the twentieth century by migrants, and has retained this migrant spirit - it still is an agricultural pioneer front, with successful banana-groves and fish-breeding – and lower migration rates.

Table I.8: Temporary migration in four Lower Casamançais villages during the rainy season 1974 and dry season 1975, as a percentage of the resident population, according to gender  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Oussouye</th>
<th>Diatock</th>
<th>Baraka B/P</th>
<th>Birkama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rainy</td>
<td>Dry</td>
<td>Rainy</td>
<td>Dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male migrants</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percentage of</td>
<td>the male</td>
<td>population)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female migrants</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percentage of</td>
<td>the female</td>
<td>population)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrants</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(percentage of</td>
<td>the whole</td>
<td>population)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole population</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>1,009</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>1,647</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for Table I.9, it shows clearly both the generational character of Lower Casamançais migration - and its massiveness: during the 1975 dry season only, more than 60 per cent of the age-group 15-29 migrated. This generational character seems even clearer for female migrants than for their male counterparts: in Oussouye, beyond the age of 30, there were no temporary female migrants, while male migration was still carrying on, though at much reduced rates.

Table I.9: Dry season temporary migration in four Lower Casamançais villages according to age and gender, as a percentage of the age-groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups</th>
<th>Oussouye</th>
<th>Diatock</th>
<th>Baraka B/P</th>
<th>Birkama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-29</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and above</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total percentage</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29 Birkama and Baraka were the object of an exhaustive census, while the data for Oussouye and Diatock are derived from a poll on samples.
But perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Dutch researchers’ work is to be found in their inquiries about past temporary labour migration, which brings up interesting retrospective data and allows for a rough dating of the process.

Table I.10: Past temporary labour migration in four Lower Casamançais villages, according to age and gender, as a percentage of the age-groups

Source: De Jonge et alia (1978: 86, table 13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age-groups</th>
<th>Villages</th>
<th>Oussouye</th>
<th>Diatock</th>
<th>Baraka B/P</th>
<th>Birkama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-29</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 et +</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total percentage of migrants</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population rainy season 1974</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I.10 confirms that migration had already become a dominant social fact in Lower Casamance in the 1960s: more than three quarters of the age-group aged between 30 and 44 in 1974 (that is, the generation born between 1930 and 1944) in Oussouye and Diatock have been engaged in labour migration at some point in their lives. In Oussouye, more than 90 per cent of the men between the ages of 30 and 59 have been engaged in labour migration.

Interestingly, Oussouye and Diatock show an identical pattern: male age-groups seem to have engaged in mass migration long before their female counterparts. For instance, in Oussouye, while only 12.5 per cent of the women aged 60 and more have migrated, more than 78.8 per cent of the men the same generation have done so - the same holds true for Diatock. Another interesting phenomenon is that labour migration affects a portion of the girls under 15, while no boys the same age are involved. Gender thus appears as an important variable in Casamançais migration: the pattern of migration one will experience is highly dependent on gender.

**Looking into female migration: Alice Hamer in Thionck-Essyl**

Hamer’s 1978 research on the status of Diola women in the village of Thionck-Essyl illustrates female migration through a detailed census of the village. Hamer

---

30 Past temporary labour migrant is defined as anyone who has been away working for at least a month in the course of his/her life.
found that that 15 per cent of the village total population migrated seasonally and 18 per cent of the population were permanent migrants. The predominance of Dakar as a destination was clear (45 per cent), but the Gambia attracted 20 per cent of the migrants. Female migration in Thionck-Essyl took place at a much younger age than male migration - a phenomenon already noted above: in Thionck-Essyl, 67 per cent of the female population between 11 and 20 migrate, while only 43 per cent of the same section of the male population did migrate. Hamer also documents the professional specialisation of Diola female migrants and their fairly strong illiteracy: 84 per cent of the women engaged in waged work were maids; 73 per cent of female domestic workers had no formal education; the rate for the few women migrants engaged in other activities was not very different - 71 per cent. Hamer also established that while 89 per cent of the female single migrant population were domestics, only 31 per cent of female married migrants were maids. The picture of female migration that develops in Hamer’s approach is one of a life cycle: women leave for town at an early age, usually without any formal education; they are engaged in a mono-activity, as domestic workers, and employment usually ceases with marriage, when many come back to the village and settle.

The demography of migrant communities: the case of Mlomp

In 1984, a group of researchers from the French Institut National d’Etudes Démographiques (INED) carried out an extensive demographic survey of the village of Mlomp, in the department of Oussouye. This survey included data on the age-group distribution. This distribution is presented above on Figure I.1 below. Figure I.1. shows a notable deficit for adults - from the ages of 25 to 44 for women, from the age of 30 to 49 for men. This anomaly indicates neatly the generational character of Lower Casamançais migration: in Mlomp, mass migration took off with generations that were reaching an adult age around the late 1950s and early 1960s.

32 Hamer does not make clear whether permanent migrants are included in the total population in the calculation of the statistics.
33 See Enel, Pison, Lefebvre (1989) for results on migration and nuptiality. For other results of this survey, mostly on health issues, see Pison, Lefebvre, Enel & Trape (1989) or Pison, Lagarde & Enel (1996).
34 In Enel, Pison, Lefebvre (1989; 24, figure 3)
The INED researchers also measured the impact of seasonal migration. They found that 38 per cent of the usually resident population of the village had engaged in seasonal migration in the course of the past year 1983. Their comments on the result indicate clearly enough the generational character of migration, and the impact of gender:

Seasonal migration affects both genders, though in different ways. Male seasonal migrants are few (10 per cent or less) before 15. After that age, they form the majority, between 50 and 80 per cent in all age-groups until 60. Beyond 60, the proportion of seasonal migrants rapidly decreases. The maximum, 82 per cent of migrants, is reached between 20 and 40, but the proportion remains high until the age of 60.

As for women, seasonal migration begin earlier, from the age of 10, and cease also much earlier: after the age of 30, only 10 to 20 per cent of women are involved. Between the ages of 10 and 30, migration is massive, reaching a maximum of 80 per cent female migrants for the 15 and 24 age-group.

Migration is thus very much related to age-groups, with a slight generational gap between male and female migration: male migration starts later and lasts a bit longer. These data point to migration as a part of the life-cycle, a quasi-necessary step in people’s life.

Statistical conclusions

The examination of statistical sources, macroscopical and microscopical, first- and second-hand, has produced a number of interesting results. Migration stands out...
as a major and specific feature of Lower Casamancais society. The intensity of Lower Casamancais migration to Dakar sets the region apart from the rest of Senegal; the contrast with the neighbouring region of Kolda, a region with a small emigration to Dakar, is particularly illuminating. In Lower Casamance, the whole population, at one point or another, takes part in some form of migration. Both seasonal and permanent migration seem to be important - and these two types of migration are actually concomitant rather than mutually exclusive.

Insights about the destination of migrants indicate the importance of local mobility, inside the region of Ziguinchor and to the neighbouring region of Kolda; most specifically, rural mobility, often neglected by statisticians, seems to have been massive – and it still partly retains some importance in the 1980s. Apart from this local mobility, Lower Casamançais migration is predominantly directed to Dakar. The beginning of mass urban migration can be dated from the late 1940s and early 1950s.

There seems to be a strong generational character to migration: while some age-groups have almost totally left the village or are recurrently leaving it during the dry season, others are more static. Both genders are equally involved in migration, with some differences though: while female migration starts and ends at an early age (from 10 or 15 to 30), male migration starts later and lasts longer (from 15 to 40 for urban migration, and even longer for local rural migration). Another interesting pattern is that urban female labour migrants are almost exclusively employed as domestic workers. Female migration thus seems to be inscribed in a sort of life cycle, and to be largely related to nuptiality. Finally, migration has led to the constitution of a massive Casamançais community in Dakar, including both permanent and seasonal migrants.

The aggregate nature of statistics does not allow for an adequate measuring of the complexity of Lower Casamançais migration patterns, and the examination of local statistics has shown strong contrasts between various villages - a micro-historical approach comparing neighbouring villages or wards would undoubtedly prove of interest to identify more precisely the functioning of migration. But on the whole, statistics make clear the fundamental and long-standing importance of

---

37 De Jonge et alia (1978) have compared four villages, or more exactly, have measured the impact of macroscopic forces on migration patterns of these four villages, but more precise, micro-historical research would be useful.
migration in Lower Casamance, and they reveal a surprising homogeneity of behaviour, a quasi-unanimity in migration pattern, that requires explaining. In any case, a sociology of Lower Casamance which would not take migration into account would be found seriously wanting. This austere statistical preamble might have read rather tediously, but the lack of interest of most political analyses of Casamançais separatism for Diola migration justifies this insistence: Lower Casamance has known a very specific pattern of out-migration – massive, generational, oriented primarily to Dakar but with a strong flux of local migration, gender-inclusive and functioning over a life-cycle. These traits now must be interpreted.

**An internalist account of Diola migration**

The general tendency in the social sciences is to explain migration in terms of overarching structural and external forces. The preference for this kind of interpretation of migration is often related to an implicitly functionalist definition of human societies as harmonious, self-regulated units, whose normal state is immobility and whose balance can only be troubled by external forces. For an instance of this kind of approach, see the conservative understanding which Louis-Vincent Thomas, the leading French anthropologist of the Diola, formed of Diola migration. In his most detailed piece on Diola migration, Thomas (1960) gives little time to explaining the massiveness of Diola migration; the causes of migration are held as self-evident - and exogenous: Islam, cash cropping, compulsory schooling, the building of roads and means of communication, political life, the attraction exerted by cities. Little attention is paid to the local causes and meanings of migration, though Thomas does make a brief reference to tensions between youth and elders. What Thomas insists on though, are the nefarious consequences of...
migration; he examines at length “Le problème de la dégénérescence sociale et des contacts culturels” - the devastating effects of migration on village life, religious order and familial solidarity.

But other interpretations, equally structural and exogenous, could be offered, for instance in a dependenstist line. De Jonge et alia (1978), who attempted a test of various structural models of migration (Todaro, Amin and so on), came to the conclusion that none of these seemed satisfying. Surely, it was structural forces that shaped the system of opportunities and constraints in which decisions to migrate or not were taken. But describing these structural forces does not get us much nearer to an understanding of migration. After all, these forces were more or less the same throughout Senegal – how come the Diola developed the peculiar and massive migratory system whose traits have been described above?

In order to understand the characteristics of Diola migration, one had better to look into its internal aspects, and how they interacted with the changes of the broader context. It is our contention that the development of Diola migration is better understood with reference to what the Diola themselves have been doing with it, and even more, with reference to how they have made sense of it… Only then can one understand how migration developed from the risky practice of a few innovative and daring people into a fully-fledged social fact à la Durkheim, a practice embraced quasi-unanimously. One way of approaching the phenomena is to draw on the interest of economic anthropology for the internal dynamics of African societies; mestizo heirs of Marx and Balandier, economic anthropologists insist that exogenous structural forces alone did not determine the changes in African societies, but that the internal logics of these societies (the “African mode of production”), and particularly the tension between elders and juniors, were of particular importance. It is thus with a view to the internal factors that we propose to attempt a description and interpretation of the development of Diola migration.

**Pre-colonial order: the power of the elders**

In pre-colonial Diola society as in many ‘traditional’ agricultural societies, the power of elders was built on the control of fields, women and rituals. Pélissier (1966) the Catholic intellectuals so influential in post-war Senegal, and took part in planning research activities. In his texts, political considerations are never too far, as in Thomas (1960: 502, note 1): “Thus extracted from the native milieu, many Diola might be easy game for the propagandists of Marxism.”
was undoubtedly right when he described the Diola as a “rice civilisation”. Dependence on rice-production was high, and the elders’ control over rice-fields proved a peculiarly powerful means of obtaining obedience. Rice-fields were won from mangrove through continued toil over years; they required building up and maintaining kilometre-long dikes, waiting for the rains to wash the salt-burnt soils for several years. The property system combined individualism and collectivism: fields belonged to and circulated inside the lineages (usually the patri-lineage, but in some areas, fields could also circulate inside matri-lineages), and the lineage elders allocated the use of the fields among the various units inside the extended family, which cultivated for their own consumption.\textsuperscript{41} The intensive nature of Diola agriculture went along with a very strong lineage ideology. The elders usually controlled a whole set of lineage-related magico-ritual resources - particularly spirit-shrines (boekin in the Diola language). Finally, the elders exerted a tight control over the allocation of women, through a complex system of delayed reciprocal exchange. Mobility outside the lineage was thus a risky option: beyond the obvious dangers of slave-raiders and attacks by the neighbouring villages, one had to take into account the risks of setting oneself out of the lineage-guaranteed distribution and circulation and lands and women. To obedient (and non-mobile) juniors, the lineage would provide safety and, in due time, land and partners for marriage (and eldership). In many ways nineteenth century Diola society discouraged mobility more than many other African societies, and particularly the various neighbouring states of the Manding, where a measure of political centralisation allowed for trade and migration, were it only in the form of war...

It is worth reminding that the immobility usually ascribed to ‘traditional’ or ‘peasant’ societies is largely mythical and owes much to our lack of actual knowledge (and particularly statistical information) on the countless and discreet, short-scale and multifarious mobilities of rural societies.\textsuperscript{42} Van der Klei (1985) insists that it is wrong to conceive of pre-colonial Diola society as an essentially autarkic society, with a pure subsistence economy. In fact, trade had a long history in Lower Casamance, and maintained even in the times of war and reduced mobility. The various Diola groups sold rice and slaves to the Manding, in exchange for cattle.

\textsuperscript{41} The best accounts of the principles of circulation and allocation of land can be found in Snyder (1981) and Linares (1992).
\textsuperscript{42} For an example on nineteenth century France, see Rosental (1999).
and iron goods. In fact, it seems probable that for historical reasons - rather than because of the supposed nature of Diola society - mobility was drastically reduced in Lower Casamance during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Baum (1986) argues that before that era, Diola socio-cultural units were encapsulated in larger units, grouped around priest-kings who had a stronger political power than what later accounts describe. In Baum’s view, the slave trade and the numerous Muslim jihad destroyed these large units, reduced the power of priest-kings, bringing insecurity and reducing mobility drastically, to the minimal trade relations reported by Van der Klei. It is logical enough that fear of capture limited mobility - and this fear was often justified, for there are examples throughout the nineteenth century when the French based in the riverine trade-post of Carabane had to intervene to have African traders freed from slave-raiders.

**Pax Gallica – a changing system of constraints and opportunities**

It is generally admitted by students of colonisation that the colonial period allowed for an important development of migration in the colonised societies. The elements that favoured the development of migration in Lower Casamance are fairly much the same as elsewhere in Senegal or, more generally, in Africa: pacification, the building of infrastructures, colonial taxation and the promotion of new crops. The actual pacification of Lower Casamance by the French was complete only relatively late in comparison to the other regions of Senegal. The French had been present ever since the first half of the nineteenth century on the Casamance river, near the mouth of the river, in Carabane, and in the hinterland, around Sédhiou, but it was only in 1886 that they acquired Ziguinchor, the trade-post which Portugal had founded in the seventeenth century. The inclusion of Lower Casamance in the French empire took even longer, for it was really only towards the end of World War I that the colonial administrative framework encompassed the whole of Lower

---

43 It is often said - and particularly so by Casamansais nationalists - that rice was so sacred to the Diola that it could not be sold, or that the Diola were never a part to the slave-trade (because of their supposed love of freedom?), but these views are mistaken. On the slave-trade among the Diola, see Linares (1986) and Baum (1999). On the rice-trade, see also Thiéba (1984; 392).
44 The complex ritual links that exist up till now between the villages of Moff Evvi (the present communauté rurale of Enampore) for instance, or the villages of the “kingdom” of Oussouye, are a testimony of a stronger pre-colonial political organisation. These spaces are still marked nowadays by the existence of a ritual kingship, a strong dialectal unity and an important measure of endogamy.
45 See for instance De Jonge et alia (1978; 115).
Casamance. The 1920s and 1930s were a peaceful period in the region, and it took the requisitions of rice and labour of World War II to stir a revolt south of the river.

Pacification and the end of the slave-trade were undoubtedly important, in societies that had been atomised in the previous centuries, and where mobility had been much reduced. Also the development of infrastructures, roads, bridges and ferries, in the uneasy geography of forests and marshes which characterises Lower Casamance, contributed to easing mobility considerably. The introduction of new crops (rubber, pluvial rice, groundnut) modified the local agricultural systems, though groundnut, the major cash crop of the colony of Senegal, while it quickly penetrated in Middle Casamance, developed only of late in Lower Casamance. In the meantime new employment opportunities were developing: the groundnut fields of Middle Casamance and The Gambia were voracious for labour... Finally, with the imports of Indochinese rice, the marketing of rice, the prime local production, which had been a major trade in the early nineteenth century, almost disappeared. The sudden safety which the French imposed, their tax pressure, the stifling of local trade circuits, the development of new opportunities all contributed to shaping the possibility for Diola migration...

The strengthening of the juniors

In what way did these changes in the broader Senegambian context affect the elder-dominated Diola society of the pre-colonial era? Van der Klei (1985), who has applied the framework of economic anthropology to the study of the development of Diola migration, has a ready answer: he interprets migration as a choice sponsored by the elders in an attempt to reproduce their domination in the new context – “concatenation”, i.e. the chaining of modes of production... Pre-colonial Diola society lacked a significant bride-price (the classical locus of power of the elders for economic anthropologists), and Van der Klei hypothesises that other pre-colonial relations of production (initiation ceremonies and funerals for elders) were its functional equivalent. He then goes on to argue that the elders forced juniors into...

---

47 On this late rebellion of the Diola-Floup, see Roche (1998).
migration to get money and buy the prestige goods necessary for the maintenance of the pre-colonial relations of production 48.

No matter how inspiring, this line of argument has several flaws. Van der Klei’s reference to initiation ceremonies and funerals of elders as the functional equivalent of bride-price is not very convincing, since it was actually elders who were in charge of providing cattle for initiation of their juniors - of course, they did that through the labour of the juniors, but by no means were they totally inactive. In any case, expenses for initiation and funerals were never mentioned by old interviewees as important factors for migration 49. And it is not even clear that initiation was such a tight control system – during fieldwork, we were repeatedly told of instances of young men getting initiated in a neighbouring village to bypass their elders’ will. More importantly, elders were never mentioned as particularly favourable to the migration of the juniors, particularly in the early stages of the process. This plugs into more theoretical issues: the analogical use of Marxism by economic anthropologists takes them too far, for the classification of African societies in elders and juniors is an uncertain one... After some time, many juniors in turn become elders, and antagonism and exploitation, however hidden by lineage and ritual ideology, are not the only kind of relation that can be established between these two groups. Perhaps this focus on the supposed antagonism between elders and juniors is not necessarily the best way to make sense of African societies. Finally, the articulation of the modes of production need not always take place to the benefit of the elders. It is probable that most juniors did not disobey their elders, that they accepted to hand over a significant portion of their new wealth to their elders, but in the long term, they were reinforced, and changed the society to their benefit. Somehow, they had little need to fight in order to win.

In fact, French colonisation reduced in many ways the power of the elders and their capacity to impose immobility and obedience on their dependents. While mobility outside the lineage had always been very risky in pre-colonial times, it became a more conceivable option - from then on, juniors who were in conflict with their elders could easily move to another place. First of all, migrants were no longer

---

48 One of the strongest points of Van der Klei’s article is the attention he pays to pre-colonial economic currents. This further weakens the idea of the self-contained nature of Diola society.

49 Interestingly, it seems that in the Muslim sections of Lower Casamance, a significant brideprice has developed: two grands boubous for the bride’s mother and father, and a sum of money, sometimes around 100,000 CFA. A systematic study of the content and variation of brideprice among the various Diola sub-groups is very much in need.
in a danger of being attacked by other villages or seized by slave-raiders: solidarity with the lineage became less essential for survival. More importantly perhaps, the introduction of cash crops and pluvial rice uprooted the elder-enforced monopoly over the production of staple food. While it took several years to set up new rice-fields, young men could easily prepare peanut fields, and they could use the varieties of pluvial rice, introduced by French agronomists, whose growing demanded little preparatory work. The money gained from these activities would finally allow young men to marry easily, without entering the complex familial system of exchange of women. The ritual power of the elders would also be confronted by the new availability of two world religions, Islam and Catholicism, which had until then been discreetly present in Lower Casamance without ever making real progress.

As a result of these evolutions, the lineage order lost some of its cohesion, and this opened the way for a (renewed ?) general mobility. Contrary to Van der Klei’s argument, migration in Lower Casamance proved thus more of a good opportunity for young men and women than an occasion for the elders to maintain their exploitation. Perhaps, in the African context, there is no single answer to the classical riddle of economic anthropology - did colonisation benefit the juniors or the elders? There is reason to believe that the inability of Diola elders to maintain their social control is related to the weakness or absence of pre-existing hierarchical structures - the noted acephalousness of nineteenth century Diola society. In other African societies, where such pre-colonial hierarchies existed, the elders have often been able, at least for some time, to penetrate the new colonial structures of power and opportunity, allying with the colonial authorities. Thus, among the Bamileke of the Cameroonian Grassfields, the first phase of colonisation actually witnessed a strong reinforcement of the power of the elders and chiefs. Where pre-colonial hierarchy was absent or limited, as in Lower Casamance, the juniors were rapidly able to profit from the new opportunities - the traditional order proved less able to transform itself and incorporate and domesticate these opportunities.

---

50 The extension of polygamy in Lower Casamance is thus largely connected to cash crop (and Islam). Beforehand, in Diola society, polygamy seemed to exist mostly under the form of the levirate: a widow would marry one of her husband’s brothers, even though he might already be married himself. Following Baum, we do not ascribe the acephalousness of Diola society at the onset of the colonial era to a Diola spirit, but to historical factors.


52 Another difference between Lower Casamance and the Cameroonian Grassfields is that, with the development of a major plantation economy in southern Cameroon, the colonial authorities favoured
The renewed mobility and the shifting balance of power inside colonial Diola society are confirmed by the foundation of a number of villages throughout Lower Casamance, starting around the beginning of the twentieth century. These villages (for instance Kaguit, Médina or Mampalago) were usually created in forested areas, where the cultivation of groundnut and pluvial rice was possible. Lambert (1999) ascribes this new mobility to demographic pressure, and this factor surely played a part. But collecting stories of the founding families of these villages, one gets a recurring picture: the founder of the village was usually a young man, either unmarried or recently married, who was having various problems with his ‘fathers’/’uncles’/’brothers’ - i.e. the elders usually in charge of the lineage and its fields. The problems range from attempts to delay the majority, when the elder is supposed to allocate lands to the new adults, or, in the case of married young men, recurrent deaths of young children through sorcery - a symptom usually ascribed to the ill-will and jealousy of close kin. As a result of these problems, while it was hardly possible to successfully rebel against the elders inside the village, it had become easier than before to leave and settle in another place. To borrow from Hirschman’s celebrated typology, in the absence of conceivable ‘voice’, the settling out of the village (permanent rural migration) offered a plausible and safe enough ‘exit’. But permanent rural migration, the most ‘traditional’ form of migration possible among the Diola, soon led the way to other forms of migration. The elders thus rapidly lost a lot of their grip on the young men and women - they would have a difficult time to prevent them from attending school and/or migrating to the cities. But they did not even try very hard: migration became a generalised pattern, and among the Diola, the possibility for sustained urban migration was largely determined by this early colonial rural mobility. This loss of power of the elders is nowhere clearer than in the rapid religious change that went along with migration - and shared the same generational character.

The development and the control of Bamileke labour migration, under the supervision of the chief. In Senegal, the groundnut sector was already well-organised, and there was no need for such a state-sponsored and chief-controlled migration....

54 Of course it could be reasonably argued that these tensions were partly caused by demographic pressure.
**Migration, conversion and the dynamics of age-groups**

The beginning of migration was also that of rapid religious changes, and it is significant that the two were frequently associated: moving out of the village, one was also moving out of the traditional ritual order (in both its oppressive and protective aspects), and this went along with rapid conversions to Catholicism and Islam. Islam and Catholicism, that had long been marginally present in Lower Casamance, made massive progress in a few years - and these were the years of migration. Indeed, migration and conversion to Catholicism or Islam often went together - with a clear generational aspect to it. Mark (1976) thus notes that Diola migrants who went to the Gambia in the 1930s to cultivate groundnut for Muslim Manding employers often brought back both Islam and groundnut cultivation to their village. The same proves true of urban migration and Catholicism, as many interviews make clear. Thus, in Essyl, the first migrants were also the first converts to Catholicism: thanks to contacts with the missions, they had learnt a useful urban trade - tailoring - and they finally decided to move to Dakar to work as tailors.

But what is the exact direction of the connection between migration and religious change? In some cases, as for instance with the Catholic tailors from Essyl, conversion seems to be a pathway to migration. But it seems to work also the other way round, with conversion ensuing from migration. In some cases, religion seems to have had a strong integrative function for migrants arrived at their destination: for the first generation migrants-converts to Dakar, conversion to Catholicism often took place in town... Martin (1962; 29) thus notes: “Animists in their homeland, most [Diola migrants] in Dakar convert to Catholicism.” Indeed, it is remarkable to note how few animist Diola one can find among the burgeoning 1955 Dakarois diola community: the census found only 0.9 per cent of animists among the Lower Casamançais permanent migrant population - a clear under-representation, even when compared with the 1988 percentage of animists in the region of Ziguinchor, which revolved around 7.7 per cent. The same was true for groundnut-cropping migrants in the Muslim and Manding sections of The Gambia where they migrated: they would convert to Islam to create ties with their hosts.

---

56 Interview Louis Ehemba (alias), Ziguinchor, 10 July 1999.
57 See République du Sénégal (1992 ; 26). The census mixes the animists with other minority religions. Obviously, since animism still carries a negative stigma, it is probably under-estimated – in the department of Oussouye, animists will tend to declare themselves Catholic and have a Christian name.
These conversions were often quite superficial, and people have long been fluctuating between various religious practices. But nevertheless, one would convert, even superficially, even temporarily, to relate and create new bonds within one’s new society. That is how one can understand the fear often expressed by Diola migrants during interviews: “if you stay an animist, and if you die in the city, who is going to take care of you?” But it need not be for such existential reasons, for matters of life and death: while early migrants were unlikely to find many fellow-villagers in Dakar, they could enlarge their network by entering the Catholic Church, which provided the social occasions to meet with other Casamançais. Moving away from the ritual power of the elders (in both its protective and oppressive aspects), one would enter a new, larger sphere. Conversion, like migration, proved very efficient in this process - and both conversion and migration were thus tightly related to the dynamics of age-groups. 58. Ironically, Manding Islam, once the religion of the successful new generation of rural migrants, was superseded over the years, as Mark (1976; 167) recounts:

Now that the students of the 1930s have themselves become the heads of families, they frequently complain that today’s youth lack interest in Islam. These complaints may be valid, for almost universal urban migration has taken young Diola out of the religious, if largely unlettered Muslim community of Boulouf, and placed them in the more secular atmosphere of modern Dakar. The younger generation of Muslims may well exhibit less seriousness and enthusiasm about their faith than did their parents and grand parents who were first-generation Muslims. 59

Migration and religious change thus seemed to come to Lower Casamance as a package, possibly confirming Robin Horton’s interpretation of conversion as an adaptation to a suddenly enlarged world, within which new spiritual coping mechanisms were felt necessary 60. The pattern of religious change, and its correlation with both migration and the dynamics of age-groups further prove the connection between migration and generation.

58 Another aspect of religious change that is somehow related to age-group migration is the proliferation of prophetic movements such as that of Aline Sitoé Diatta. These prophetic movements came as attempts to bridge the inefficiency of the routine priestly practices of the spirit shrines. Young men and women - and particularly migrant women - have always played a strong part in these movements, even at times when migration was not such a generalised pattern as today. As mentioned above, Aline Sitoé herself had migrated to Dakar. Such is also the case for one of her modern epigon, Anna Djibâlènè, a woman from Kasa who preached in the 1980s.

59 It seems necessary to draw distinctions between the types of Islam, for it seems urban Murid Islam has some popularity with Casamançais migrants - a contrast to ‘outdated’ Manding Islam.

60 In the Casamançais context, Linares (1986) and Baum (1990, 1999) provide interesting critiques of Horton’s implicit evolutionism. Baum (1999; 38-39) argues that Diola religion is not ‘local’, but includes a fully-fledged cosmogony which has successfully be fit to the ‘modern’ world – hence the liveliness of present Diola religion, even in the urban context.
**Rural migration**

We have mentioned the existence of pre-colonial trade circuits. In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century, these pre-colonial trade circuits were substantially modified by the European presence. The slave-trade progressively came to a halt during the nineteenth century. A ‘legitimate’ trade in tropical goods for the European market developed (wax, rice, hides, honey). Later, around the turn of the twentieth century, imports of cheap Indochinese rice seriously impaired the circulation of local rice. All the while, new opportunities were opened by access to the world-market, new products were in demand and new goods were offered. In the context of *Pax gallica*, this resulted in massive new mobilities. Now that trade with the Manding was cut off, the necessary goods (iron, cattle, textile) had to be gotten from elsewhere. The Diola thus started to produce and exchange with the world-market. There was a short-lived rubber boom, then palm produce (oil, wine and kernels) had a longer run, and later came the groundnut. The resulting agricultural migration took place during the dry season, and did not interfere with rice-cultivation.

Significant exploitation of Casamançais rubber lasted from the 1880s to 1913 and was largely controlled by Manjak from Portuguese Guinea. Some Diola nevertheless took part and started circulating around the region to forested areas to collect rubber. Rubber was either sold to itinerant Manding traders (the so-called *dyoula*), or brought directly to the European trade posts. Mark (1976; 348-349) notes, against the stereotypical view of the Diola as anti-capitalist autarkic agriculturists, that the Diola from Buluf showed a great sense of what their interests were, and would go sell their rubber in English Bathurst, where prices were higher, rather than in the French-controlled harbours of Ziguinchor and Carabane; similarly, until the end of the rubber trade, they rapidly shifted from rubber to palm produce and then to rubber again, following the fluctuations of the world-market. Around the turn of the century, a number of Diola men had also started migrating to the Gambia or Middle Casamance, to harvest palm produce (kernels and oil). They were frequently hosted by Manding families, whom they paid with a portion of their crop. The same system functioned later when Diola took part to the *navétanes*, a pan-Senegambian

---

61 On the Diola involvement in rubber production and trade, see Mark (1976).
movement for the cultivation of groundnut during the rainy season (naweet, in Wolof); Diola migrants would go towards Middle or Upper Casamance, or to the Gambia, where groundnut was already well-established as a cash-crop; migrants would pay with a rent in kind or a few days’ work each month on their host’s groundnut field. Subsequently, they would bring home the new skills acquired; during the 1930s, groundnut production developed quickly in the suitable areas of Lower Casamance.

Though male migrants had the upper hand in agricultural migration, they rapidly associated with women (wives or kin) who helped them in various tasks. Commenting on migration from Thionck-Essyl, Hamer (1981; 188) notes that while men climbed the trees to collect rubber and palm-tree products, women were in charge of the transformation, transportation and sale of the products; they also catered for their relatives during migration. Reporting on migration from another village from the Buluf, Lambert (1999) notes that women were involved in catering and the planting of peanut seeds, and we have evidence of palm-wine collectors around Oussouye who travelled along with kinswomen to carry and sell the wine. How were the profits shared? There seems to be disagreement between Lambert and Hamer on this point: for palm-produce migration, Hamer reports that profits were split: men got the oil, which they had to share with their host, and women got the kernels: “This division in property rights was often to the advantage of women. The potential gains from trade in palm kernels was often much more favourable than the selling of palm oil for local consumption”.

Lambert (1999), who reports on groundnut-cropping, presents a less favourable picture of male/female collaboration; women only got meagre compensation, a few pieces of cloth, or the right to glean the left-over peanuts. But the very fact that women migrated at all and got something out of it is striking enough, particularly in comparison with the huge groundnut-cropping migration of north Senegal, which mobilised thousands of men and only very few women.

Urban migration thus did not happen as a sudden and weird uprooting, a novelty in an immobile society. It developed and was possible because Diola society

---

63 In Hamer (1981; 188).
64 Perhaps the fact that groundnut cultivation had started as a male-only activity in the Gambia and included women migrants only later is the source of this unequal sharing.
had already engaged massively in rural migration, a migration which involved both genders.

The Diola in town: the development of urban migration

Urban migration was becoming one possible outcome, an increasingly plausible one in a society already on the move. The present section describes how Diola communities went urban. In fact, some Diola had been coming to town ever since the beginning of European presence in Casamance; links had persisted between the Diola and the Mestizo community of the former Portuguese trade-post of Ziguinchor. The French presence allowed for new settlements: the French civil service recruited some Diola employees, though most of the trained workforce would come from north Senegal; and some Diola men also found employment as unskilled workers on construction sites or the new industries, or as craftsmen (tailors, masons, carpenters) in Ziguinchor and in the new urban centres of Casamance (Sédhiou, Bignona). As early as 1917, Diola women were hired as dockers on Ziguinchor harbour, loading peanuts on the boats. Diola urban migration grew massively during the 1930s, with the development of the harbour of Ziguinchor and in The Gambia. This new migration did not go unobserved by French officials. In 1930 already, the French administrative officer for Bignona reported worriedly that:

[emigration] particularly attracts (...) young men modernised by their works [sic] in the [sic] European commerce and attracted to Bathurst. For the first time our attention is also called to groups of young women who, leaving the authority of their families, go to try their luck in the Gambia.

Wages were higher in urban areas, and the Diola quickly realised this. Another feature of the new urban migration is that it would set men and women, who had hitherto collaborated in rural migration, in separate pathways: in Ziguinchor, from the 1910s to the 1930s, migrant women worked on the docks, and in Dakar, they found employment as domestics. The first male migrants moved as waged agricultural workers in the peri-urban areas of Ziguinchor and Dakar; a number of them also found employment as unskilled workers or as craftsmen. Progressively, after World War II, urban migration was generalised. The Diola village of Selungu will provide an example of this process.

---

66 In Mark (1976; 152, note 22), quoting ANS 2G30/84.


**Making it to Dakar: stories from Selungu**

The administrative dryness of files of the French administration is well supplemented by interviews. To understand the process of urban migration, we shall dwell on an inter-generational group interview with a number of Dakar migrants from Selungu, a village of the Oussouye **arrondissement**\(^{67}\). Jeanne tells the story of the first urban migrant of the community, Laura:

*Story 1: Laura Arabiatou [told by Jeanne]*

The first to come [to Dakar] was Laura. There, she converted to Islam and took the Muslim name of Arabiatou. Laura was living in The Gambia. She had come to The Gambia with a brother who farmed groundnuts there. There, she married a Wolof, a man from Kadior, who took her to Dakar. He worked for the railway, and he died in a train accident. After his death, his brother Moustapha took Arabiatou as his wife, and she stayed in Dakar. When she had come with her first husband, she had started working at the harbour, she was cooking for the harbour workers, so she just carried on. And that is how she got a plot of land and a house in the Médina, in the area called Fith Mith.

Laura’s coming to Dakar was thus largely an accident – she had come to The Gambia as a rural migrant, a typical temporary rural migrant. But she had married there, and she had followed her husband further north. This implantation in Dakar remained very fragile, and when she was widowed, Laura remained only because her husband’s brother took her as his wife... Fragile as it was, Laura’s position in Dakar provided an anchorage which opened the way to some more migrants from Selungu – Louise was the first one:

*Story 2: Louise [told by Jeanne and Georges]*

And then, Louise came. She had been to Laura’s, in The Gambia. [Before that] she had been married in the village, but she had divorced and had come to The Gambia. In The Gambia, she had a new husband, a Diola from M’Lomp, and two children with him. But she divorced. And then, she came to Laura’s, in Dakar. Laura, she was the crossroads for everyone. In Dakar, Louise worked as a maid, and she married Jacques. He came from Oussouye and he worked as a palm-wine collector in the Niayes. In the end, she divorced again, and she got back to the village, where she married one last time.

Laura was a “crossroads” for all other migrants from Selungu: Louise came to her, because she had known her in The Gambia, and because she knew that she could provide accommodation. Louise gives an example of life-cycle migration: after a spate of broken marriages, she stays in town for some time, but finally ends up going back to the village, and marrying again; migration is only a temporary experience, and Louise did not settle in town.

---

\(^{67}\) Selungu is an alias. We are fully aware of the distorting effects that group interviews can have on the presentation of the self, but these interviews have the advantage of presenting various stages of migration from a same village - and a quite close kin-group - with people correcting on details. These quotes consist of five life stories; stories 1 and 3 are respectively the ones of the first female and male migrants to Dakar, and were collected from two other migrants’ reminiscences.
This account also introduces other aspects of urban Diola migration: Jacques, Louise’s husband in Dakar worked a palm-wine collector in the Niayes, the wet lowlands lying to the north of Dakar. Indeed, urban migration started as a mere extension of rural migration: it was usually seasonal, and many migrants, who then had no formal education or technical training, were employed in agricultural or semi-agricultural tasks. Thus, many among the first male migrants to Ziguinchor or Dakar were palm-wine collectors or rice cultivators in the suburbs of Ziguinchor or in the Niayes; similarly, we have seen that many women worked in the harbours, loading groundnuts or other agricultural products on the boats. But in town, Louise worked as a domestic – a kind of employment which quickly became general among the Diola and among other migrants groups from Lower Casamance, such as the Manjaks. One should thus not over-estimate the extent of novelty and uprooting of this migration - they were usually voluntary and temporary, and were a mere ‘update’ of rural migration. Migrants would try it for a few dry seasons, and if it proved sustainable, a number of them would start to settle in town, bringing in their relatives.

Story 3: Jeanne
I left the village when I was very young, in 1944 or 1945. It was shortly after the incident in Thiaroye. My uncle was a soldier here. I first went to Banjul with Bigaye, a man from the village who was a seasonal worker there. My elder sister, Antoinette, she was married there, and she had asked me to come to take care of her child. But I did less than a year, and then Louise took me, she asked Antoinette for me to come and look for clothes. That was a troubled time, and I could not easily go back, so I stayed at Laura’s place. And I worked as a maid for a toubab [European]. At the time, it was very easy to find a job. I found my first job thanks to Louise; there was this Lebanese woman who had called us in the street, and she wanted someone to care for her child. I earned 300 francs per month. That was a good salary. So with the money, I bought clothes. And then I met my first husband. His name was Jean. He was a gendarme, from Conakry. I had met him at Honorine Diémé’s place. She was a relative from Oussouye, a Diola. With Jean, we spoke French together. I had learnt the language with the toubab I was working for. I had not been to school before. After some time, he asked me to come to Conakry with him. So I got scared and I left him. So he went, and he took my daughter; she is a nurse there. And then I had another husband here, a Manjak, André. I am here until now.

With Jeanne, female migration from Selungu to Dakar was becoming routinised; this migration is now well established, and seems self-evident. But these interviews help recapture a sense of their initial indetermination - how new and scarce they once were and how they progressively became a typical pattern. What started migration between Selungu and Dakar was in fact a random event - the marriage, in The Gambia, of Laura, a woman from the village, with a Wolof who

---

68 A way to correct this illusion is to look for migratory projects that failed - the problem being that these failed projects have left little tracks, people often avoiding to mention them in interviews.
then takes her to Dakar. Laura’s marriage has thus enriched the set of possible destinations for the people of Selungu. From then on, Laura, who earned money from her catering activities and owned a house, would provide accommodation for all new migrants. Without Laura, migration from Selungu to Dakar would have probably taken place only much later. Diola migration was thus a chain-migration. One sees also in Jeanne’s account the formation of a female pattern of migration: it is Antoinette who asks her to The Gambia, and Louise who takes her to Dakar, to get clothes. One cannot omit the strong exogamy which seems characteristic of this community: Laura had two Wolof husbands, and Jeanne had Guinean and Manjak husbands; of Louise’s four husbands, two were from the village, and two were from other Diola communities... This female basis of migrants provided support for Guillaume, the first male migrant from Selungu, who came long after the first female migrants:

Story 4: Guillaume [told by Jeanne and Georges]
He was the first man from the village to have come to Dakar. During the war, he had fled from military service and he had come to The Gambia. He stayed with his sister, Marianne, who lived there. But he did not stay long. He was so attracted to Dakar... So he went to Kaolack. He did two years, and he worked as a carpenter. As soon as he had finished the apprenticeship, he came to Dakar. Maybe around 1948. He was living at Laura’s place. He worked as a carpenter and married with Rita, a woman from another Oussouye village. When he married, he took his own room in Rebeuss. Around 1958, he went to Guinea Conakry, because people said it was good there. We have not heard from him since then.

One does not know much about Guillaume’s attraction to Dakar, but he could rely on the female networks in both The Gambia and Dakar to organise his migration. Formal education was still very rare around Oussouye, and Guillaume took to training as a carpenter to make it to town... Georges tells a rather similar story, except that he made it to the formal sector, working in one of the booming Dakarois factories of the 1950s and 1960s...

Story 5: Georges
I came in 1952, to learn a trade. I did not go to school. I learnt a bit of French here. I was resolute to leave the village, and people did not say anything, because I said I wanted to learn a trade - there was a tailor in the village, and I wanted to be a tailor too. So I took the boat, alone. I had a little money, because I used to collect and sell palm-wine. When I came to the harbour, my sister Véronique was waiting. She lived with Laura, and she worked as a maid. So I lived at Laura’s too. I was a tailor’s apprentice for seven years at Robert Sambou’s, a Diola from Adéane, who had his shop on rue Jules Ferry. After that, I moved to Rufisque, and I worked as a tailor for a year, and then, I entered the Bata workshop, in 1959. It was a good job. I did 29 years there, but then, it closed down. I got married in 1967 with a woman from around Oussouye. I had met her in Dakar.

But male migration from Selungu was progressively transformed during the 1950s and 1960s. Fabrice, Pierre and their male age-mates, with varying success,
had been to school; formal education and the civil service or the armed forces were a major attraction for the male migrants, who started to pour to Dakar:

Story 6: Fabrice and Pierre [told by Fabrice]
I came here [in Dakar] in 1959. In Oussouye, I went to Saint-Joseph de Cluny [a Catholic school], but I was really unruly, I did not get along well with my schoolteacher. So they fired me. I was very interested in Dakar at the time, so I asked to come here. Véronique, Georges’ sister and a sister of mine, they brought me here. I lived at Laura’s, like everybody else. I could not carry on studying, so I looked for a job. In 1960, I went back to Oussouye. In 1961, I came back here, and I stayed until 1962 without working. In 1962, I entered the Senegalese army. There was Pierre, one of Georges’ younger brothers, who had come here in 1961; he had studied accountancy. So we entered the army together. That was very easy: we had this brother of ours who could facilitate the recruitment, he was a sergeant. I had to make a false certificate, because I was born in 1939, I got rejected in the first place, but I insisted, so it worked. So I did the 18 months, but they did not keep me. So I came back here, and lived at Jeanne’s place. I looked for a job, I worked at SIMCO, a mattress-factory, for some time. Pierre, he took the examination to become a customs officer, and he made it. But I did not want that, people were saying bad things about customs officers, so I did not want it. But I was interested in the police. But I did not do it. Someone told me about the gendarmerie, but it was the army, so I did not want that.

These six stories give us a sense of the transformation which Selungu went through in the course of the second half of the twentieth century, and how Dakar progressively became a major place for the community. In this system, The Gambia functioned as a link in chain-migration: The Gambia had been explored by previous migrants from Selungu and a relatively strong community was already established there - accommodation was available, and so were employment opportunities; most importantly, the very idea that The Gambia could be a destination was also present. The earliest migrants to come to Dakar all spent some time in The Gambia beforehand: it was in The Gambia that Laura married the Wolof who took her to Dakar; it was from The Gambia that she subsequently left for Dakar; it was in The Gambia that Jeanne first came to care for her sister’s baby and where she met Louise who took her north; it was in the Gambia that Guillaume found refuge from French recruitment. Only the latest immigrants, Georges and Fabrice, in the 1950s, went directly to Dakar, bypassing The Gambia: the Selungu community in Dakar was by then established firmly enough, and Dakar could be considered as a ‘primary’, ‘safe’ destination. One conclusion of this study is thus that Diola migration was a largely endogenous movement, fueled by local logics and processes, and that it did not develop as a violent break-away from a traditionally immobile rural world; it was a progressive and careful expansion, building from a lively rural mobility.

The example of Selungu also gives us a hint about the relationship between migration and community life – migrants from Selungu moved together, forming a
complex chain which progressively expanded throughout Senegambia... Migrants relied heavily on other members of the community for food, accommodation, training, fees and jobs; in fact, the choice of the point of arrival itself was heavily dependent on community networks.

The formation of multi-local communities

The example of Selungu migrants in Dakar makes clear that urban migration started as a rare and risky attempt by a few adventurous people, later to turn into a mass chain-migration. Throughout Lower Casamance, people had already been set on the move in rural migration. But after World War II, they came to realise that urban migration was a lot more promising than rural migration.

While men and women had hitherto been associated in migration, the pathways for men and women took different turns. Men developed an interest in education and civil service jobs – there migration would lead them from one school to another, and then, through the national ramified networks of the state, anywhere in Senegal - the specificity of the male pathway, the development of a generation of successful pilgrims of the Senegalese state will be discussed at length in the next chapter. As for the women, they would work as domestics for the middle classes of urban Senegal, which were developing after 1945 with the development of the French state and manufactories. Their wages would be the lowest in the urban workforce, but they still proved good opportunities. All these migrants were related in solid networks that provided accommodation, advice, and even jobs and training.

It was not only chain-migration which was typical of the post-war Diola. Tight contacts were maintained with the village. Many migrants would return to the village after a few years of work in town. Most would engage in a seasonal coming-and-going with the village, usually going back to the village during the summer to work in the fields. Discussing the development of Diola female migration, Lambert (1999) argues that female migrants had to agree to this seasonal migratory pattern in order to legitimise their migration: only if the village productive activities remained undisturbed would the girls and women be allowed to migrate. But Lambert’s point could be generalised to male migrants.

The massiveness of Diola migration, the enduring dependence of Diola migrants on their community, the tight contacts maintained with the village, the participation of both genders, all this has led Lambert (1994), commenting on
migration from another Diola area, Buluf, to propose the notion of multi-local communities: Diola communities now span on several locations. How can one interpret this feature of Lower Casamance, the formation of these massive multi-local communities of Lower Casamançais, spanning between the villages, Ziguinchor, The Gambia and Dakar, grouping both men and women?

**Communities of consumption**

‘Society is founded upon cloth’, argues Teufelsdröckh, Carlyle’s imaginary philosopher quoted at the opening of this chapter. Cloth is no weak foundation, and it played a key part in the successful the multi-localisation of Diola communities. Extracts from an interview with an old female migrant from the Bayottes, a region just a few miles to the south-west of Ziguinchor, insists on the role of sartorial matters in migration:

Q: Did you leave the village for work?
A: I did not go to Dakar, but I went to Ziguinchor. That was before the [second world] war. I went there to carry groundnuts to the boats. I went there as a young girl, and with all the girls my age, we went together. The oldest ones already knew Ziguinchor, and they guided us. All the five of us, we lived together, in Grand Dakar, at Fatou Biaye’s; she was a woman from our village who was married there. (...) [we worked at the harbour] it was difficult to have the tickets [the daily work-permits]. You had to wait with all the other girls (...). We usually stayed three or four months. I went there several years. (...) We bought things to wear, textile, percale or cotton, to prepare the little black loincloths. It is from that time than women started wearing the black loincloths 69. And we also brought things for the women who did not go. These loincloths were absolutely necessary, especially for traditional festivals and burials 70. So you had to go [as a young girl] because when you are married, your husband will not let his woman go away 71.

Q: What did the people in the village think of the girls who left?
A: They were happy, they were telling the girls to go and look for the loincloths. Every girl shared with her sisters, and you must keep some for the burial of your male relatives. And when she is married, she has younger sisters who will give her in return.

Brigitte Bassène’s testimony, which dates from the earliest times of urban migration, fits in the general pattern described above: the girls left by age-group; they were hosted in town by a married female relative; the things they bought with the money earned were kept to themselves and their female relatives - those, too young, who had not yet been able to go to the city, and those, too old, who were already married and could not go back there any more. In Bona’s story, one can feel how migration is deeply enmeshed with the female community: a girl does not go

69 This is a reference to what is known in contemporary Senegal as “pagnes indigo” - indigo-dyed loincloths. Indigo-dying is a an old and well-known technique throughout West Africa, pre-dating the colonial era.

70 The translation “absolutely necessary” does not carry properly the full meaning, indeed the urgency of the French word “indispensable”, which my translator used to translate Brigitte Bassène’s words.

71 Interview with Brigitte Bassène (alias), Bafican, April 1999.
only for herself, but for all her female kin, young and old, who have given her loincloths when she was too young and who will give her when she will be too old. Until now, the black loincloths are proudly worn by Diola women during festivals, initiations, burials, and most specifically during female ritual ceremonies. Male relatives got their share too, but - interestingly enough - only when they were dead: in this area of Lower Casamance, for the funerals, corpses are covered in several layers of loincloths; the more the layers, the more honourable the dead. Before World War II, the black-dyed loincloths had already become an ‘absolutely necessary’ element, a defining feature of what it was to be a woman among the Bayottes; they allowed one to be properly dressed during collective ceremonies (and most specifically female ceremonies) and to honour one’s dead. A cycle of gift and counter-gift – i.e. of honour and consumption – thus came to tie the women of all ages together, and this cycle depended on migration.

Consumption is given a key-role in Michael Lambert’s explanation of massive Diola chain-migration. Lambert’s interpretation (1999) is that migration could develop because migrants were able to find “culturally sanctioned reason[s] to migrate”, and it was the legitimate consumption of legitimate goods which provided these reasons. Thus, women imposed female migration against the patriarchy through the idea that women should come to marriage with their own trousseau – the necessary set of clothes and cooking utensils (metal or plastic buckets, tubs and pots). But Lambert’s gendered interpretation of migration is disputable. There is evidence that the first male migrants had it no easier than their female counterparts; they too had to give proof of their good will, bringing back goods and returning during the summer to work in the fields, or sending money to pay for substitutes. It was not only ‘female’ goods such as clothes and cooking utensils that mattered, but also tin-sheets for the roofing, oil lamps and bicycles. But Lambert is undoubtedly correct when he insists that migration and new modes of consumption were mutually reinforcing, and that this was key to the generalisation of migration.

72 Black loincloths have been partly replaced in those functions by the wax textiles, whose bright colours and varied designs are much appreciated, but they still retain a huge popularity. They are now endowed with a distinctly traditional quality - indeed, they are locally dyed and predate wax textiles (wax textiles are industrial products, often imported from Netherlands, the USA or Indonesia). But Bona Bassène does remember the time when indigo loincloths were a novelty, not a tradition, among the Bayottes. It does not take long to make a tradition... As often happens with ‘traditional’ items, indigo loincloths are now heavily marketed for tourists.

73 Diola migrations to Dakar determined a second-rank migration from Portuguese Guinea (later Guinea-Bissau) to provide substitutes for cultivation.
The acquisition of new goods was optional for some time, and people were not expected to go to town. In fact, many of the oldest migrants recount that their elders openly criticised their migration as a sign of laziness. But the benefits of migration were such that it was finally well accepted. Pierre Niassy, a teacher-turned-NGO-activist, notes the new consensus that formed around migration:

When they worked as domestics, many girls paid tins-sheets for their parents. And when there is the women’s groups week [“Semaine des groupements de femme”], if they must all have the same clothes, they must really find [the money], otherwise you don’t belong, and what will the other women say? So if the husband has nothing, it is the girl who pays. So the elders agree [to migration].

A la Thorstein Veblen, Niassy points to the fact that migration allowed for the formation of a whole new classification of social honour. In this context, the new goods and practices which migration afforded quickly became quasi-compulsory, and migration could generalise. A male Diola migrant’s account of female migration points in the same way:

[the migrant girl] must prepare her trousseau, but also the money which allows to hire agricultural associations. And this is a way of exhibiting the prosperity of the family. If people tell that this family has hired two or three agricultural associations, it is better. It means the girl is well-educated and she thinks about her parents.

In this new context, the stigma moves from migrants to non-migrants: while migration had initially been denounced as a proof of laziness, nowadays deserving migrants get much applause for their hard work and dedication - and their regular remittances of money and goods to their family. It is the ones who stay that are described as good-for-nothings. Migration has now become a social fact, in the full Durkheimian sense: it has a diffuse but powerful constraining power. Should anyone refuse to migrate (and work), he or she would be exposed to humiliation and shame; as one interviewee, commenting on female migration puts it:

If you do not work, you will be punished in the village; when the others will go out and dance, you will not have anything to wear, you will have to stay home. And if someone lends you [some clothes], everybody will know anyway.

A strong moral constraint is thus exerted by the community of peers - fellow-dancers - but also by the community at large, and it is no less strong because it is diffuse. Labour migration now is about honour, it is a way to hold one’s rank, and

---

74 Interview with Pierre Niassy (alias), Ziguinchor, 30 January 1999.
75 Interview with Amadou Diémé (alias), Dakar, March 1997.
76 Interview with Mustapha Sané (alias), Dakar, February 1999. Remember also the Bayottes docker on how absolutely necessary migration had become.
77 Badji et alia (1975: 9) mention a rather similar point in Elana; there, only migrants can afford to pay the entry fees for the balls organised in the village during the summer.
demonstrate one’s hard-working character. Migration, allowing for the constitution of new communities of consumption, has become a norm, an essential step in the maintenance of the social order. The goods that migrants brought back to the village are the key to the generalisation of migration throughout Diola society.

**An open secret**

The fact that migration is by now an integral part of the reproduction of Diola society is clearly visible in the existence of procedures of collective justification. Reporting on a 1972 inquiry on migration in Lower Casamance, two Dutch researchers, Van Loo & Star, somewhat incredulously identified an astonishing cognitive dissonance in the villagers’ attitude to female migration:

The people interviewed (...) thought that the majority of the girls would be back in July. (...) in reality, most of them return only in August. The girls come back too late for the transplanting [of rice] to take place on time. The household heads do not seem to fully realise this, or they do not want to bow to the facts.  

Van Loo & Star were spot on: the villagers just did not want to know that the migrant girls were not taking part to agricultural work. Everyone was happy to have the girls work in town and send money and goods and bags of rice to the village, and most people would probably have agreed that girls who worked in town were entitled to dodge labour in the fields. De facto, that is what most migrant girls have been doing, and so have boys. Indeed, anyone who has spent the summer in a Diola village will share Diouf’s assessment that migrants returning from town do not contribute much to agricultural work... Migrants are often excited with the idea of going back to the village, but their excitement has little to do with the perspective of working in the fields. For migrants, the village is the place of fun and friends, when all migrants, spread throughout Senegal during most of the year, finally have a chance to meet up.

The point is that, nevertheless, nobody will say that they do not take part to cultivation, nobody will say that they would not prefer to stay in the village or that Dakar might have many good points. In fact, people do not only refrain from uttering

---

78 In Van Loo & Star (1973; 212).
79 Made Diouf (1984; 60) comments skeptically on the actual participation of migrant returnees to agricultural work: “The final hypothesis is to see to it that the migrants come back on time and leave when agricultural work is over. This hypothesis relies implicitly on the fact that the migrants who return all take part to agricultural work. But this [assumption] has never been checked, and it seems that most migrants come to take part to the village social and cultural life, and not to contribute to agricultural work.”
the open secret - they will even praise the good life in the village, the free fruit and the green bush, and say that they would rather go back to the village than stay in Dakar. But even when they are in dire straits, they very rarely do so. When asked why they do not return, interviewees go mute; some mention the war, the insufficient moyens (i.e. financial means) or the poor rainfalls; and some laugh and say “Ah ! But Dakar, it is good, still”... The fact is that for the Diola, migration has become an expected, and indeed an often wished for experience.

But how come people feel the need to lie about it all, and publicly pay allegiance to the village while they do not want or plan to go back there ? In an article that deals precisely with these kinds of open secrets and white lies, Pierre Bourdieu accounts for the success of these procedures:

If those lies which deceive no one are so easily accepted by groups, it is because they comprise an unquestionable pledge of respect for the rules of these groups, that is to say, for the formal and universal principle which is constitutive of the essence of the groups.

Thus, acknowledging the rule whilst it is transgressed, the migrants and the non-migrants are engaged in the preservation of their communities. Why are the white lies about the love-of-the-land and the good-village-life necessary ? Because the idiom of land and agriculture is the one which maintains the multi-local community together; in their coming-and-going between Dakar and the Casamance, Diola migrants rely extensively on their multi-local community, and the myth which defines the community refers primarily to rurality and hard work – there is little choice except to repeat it... Thus, the myth of good rural life and the strategic use of the multi-local character of post-1945 Diola communities are taken in a circular, mutually reinforcing logic.

In fact, since World War II, the Diola have effected a clear choice in favour of town and migration, to the detriment of agriculture. According to MadeDiouf (1984 ; 54) and Annie Chéneau-Loquay (1994 ; 357-358), the poor rainfalls of the 1970s are not the only factor behind the diminishing returns of agriculture in Lower Casamance : a key factor is that the Diola have been less and less willing to invest labour and time in agriculture ; many men have simply stopped performing the

---

80 According to Professor Cruise O’Brien, this somewhat schizophrenic attitude is also typical of a more famous diaspora, that of the Irish in the United Kingdom.

81 In Bourdieu (1994; 235).

82 If the multi-local properties of Diola community were to weaken, for instance if the networks of accommodation, training and occupational niches which they provide were to fall into disuse, the idiom of rurality would probably dissolve.
labour-intensive maintenance of the complex system of dams which allowed for the cultivation of productive ricefields right next to the salty mangroves, and women have been putting much less effort into manuring. When the village chief of Baila confides to Thieba, “my granary, it is the money which my son in Dakar sends over”, one does not know whether he resented it or rejoiced. But at any rate, this collective choice for town against village has to be kept secret – the village community still provides the framework for migration, and more than that, it provides the very meaning of migration.

Conclusion

The explanation offered here is thus a complex one. In the new colonial context, acephalous Diola societies were ill-equipped to preserve the elders’ control over juniors, all the more as the relatively late development of stable cash-crops in Lower Casamance encouraged mobility of juniors. Rural migration mobilised massively both men and women. Progressively, migrants explored the cities, particularly after World War II, when urban opportunities were developing fast. Since both men and women were on the move, multi-local communities could form: the village was coming to town. This would in turn further reinforce the appeal of migration, making it easy to conceive of and implement and very attractive. Goods acquired in the urban context penetrated deep into Diola villages and allowed for the formation of new communities of consumption. If Diola society has converted to migration, it is related to the fact that new valuable goods, meanings and practices have been associated with migration. Perhaps rank and fun will seem futile – but they, more than respect for tradition or love of land, are the things for which people actually labour. Such is the reason why, against Thomas’ best judgment, the various village festivals and celebrations, and particularly the male initiation ceremonies (the bukut), have endured, and have indeed expanded into regional, national and international events. They are now cherished occasions for multi-local migrants both to have fun and display rank among their peers.

83 Chéneau-Loquay notes that while in 1960, there were between seven and ten tons of manure per hectare per year, in 1974, a research assessed that the amount of manure had fallen to 1.5 ton. See also Manga’s angry comments in Vanden Berghen & Manga (1999 : 282) : “There is a deep neglect for rice-cultivation. Rice-growers work less than before. Women refuse to manure the ricefields. The men do not bother about the main dykes. Go see in Séléki !”
84 In Thieba (1984; 23), quoting the chief of Baila.
85 Thomas (1965) estimated that the bukut would soon disappear.
Migration could thus turn into a social pattern, a social fact à la Durkheim, an essential step in the reproduction of Diola social order: it was no longer a question of choice, the whole community was engaged in migration. By now, it is only the Diola literati who may occasionally fail to understand the open secret of their multi-local communities; only the educated and urbanised ‘leaders’ of these communities take seriously the villagers’ complaints about the departure of the youth and try to develop alternatives to ‘rural exodus’ \(^{86}\). In fact, after a brief ‘primary resistance’, the elders’ opposition to migration seemed to have quickly come to a halt. One can find a few individual cases in the archives, of elders calling one of their female dependents back to the village. But nothing suggests massive or collective attempts by the elders to have the girls come back. Thus in June 1955, a man from Dianki had a letter written to the police officer of the popular Dakarois district of Médina to have his 14-year old niece Diariétou back in the village, claiming she was engaged and her husband wanted her back. Interrogated by the police; Diarétou answered:

\[
\text{I never was engaged and I do not remember telling my uncle that I loved such a man. I nevertheless agree to going by to my uncle, but not before the end of the hivernage. I have just found a job, and I would rather have some money to buy clothes.}^{87}\]

The tone of Diarétou’s answer shows that she was unimpressed by her uncle’s attempt and the police intervention - she seemed confident enough that it is legitimate for a young girl to go to the city and find money, that everyone should be allowed to go look for himself or herself. She calmly sets her own conditions before returning to the village.

In fact, the real enemies of female migration were the young educated men. Using their connection with the authorities, they sometimes engaged in mass forced returns, which targeted in a quasi-exclusive fashion migrant girls. Emile Badiane, a leading politician of the 1950s and 1960s, played a key role in these attempts to repress female migration. All sorts of measures were taken to control female migration – roadblocks in Casamance, identity checks at Dakar harbour, fines on

\(^{86}\) For an autchthonous literati’s appraisal, see Tambá (n.d.). Migrants are described as “social misfits”, and migrations the cause of the “decomposition of traditional society”. Tambá mirrors Thomas’ analyses mentioned above...

\(^{87}\) In ANS 11D1/182, Dossier Dianki. Procès-verbal dressé par Jean Lamborelle, commissaire de police, en résidence à Dakar-Médina and Lettre de Bouramanding Coly, adressée le 15 juin 1955 de Dianki, sous couvert du chef de subdivision de Bignona. In the same file, there is another, less clear, demand for repatriation addressed by a Ibrahima Sané for his daughter Touty, employed by a a Senegalese civil servant in Linguère.
non-returning girls and their families, collective abductions. Alioune Sané thus describe the mobilisation among the migrants of Diégoune in Dakar:

There was a mass mobilisation of all the people from Diégoune in Dakar. Many people were involved. And some old people followed and backed them. There also was the old president of the Diégoune association, who lived in the Médina, Ousmane Badji. So there was the exodus of the girls, who would not come back during the rainy season. So they talked with the parents, and they decided to get in touch with the authorities, to have sisters sent back of the village, and also the young ones (boys) who were just hanging around here. They were asked to go back to the village to help their parents to the field. And there, according to the age-group, the old ones, we leave them there to choose a husband, and the one who is still young, she can come back to Dakar. It was not easy. So we took them unaware. We got in touch with the authorities, in Dakar and to the sous-préfecture. Some girls tried to hide, to flee, here and there. But all these youth, they were caught and taken away. We were with the policemen, they helped us.

But these attempts failed regularly – people needed the girls’ remittances too much. And when the literati tried too hard to discourage migration, the truth would come out, as Pierre Niassy, a teacher-turned-NGO-activist, witnessed:

[During a village meeting], I said, “the youth who have failed at school, those who go to Dakar to do nothing, they had better stay here to work”. The old people, they did not understand, they told me, “you want to deceive our children into staying here to be peasants like us. You want to deceive us, we trusted you. You, you are a civil servant, you have no problem”.

Niassy’s fellow villagers quickly made things clear to him, telling the open secret and accusing him of ill intents: why would anyone want to discourage such a visibly positive thing as migration, except out of perversity? Niassy had other reasons, but they were those of a literati. The development of a large group of literati among the Diola will be examined in the coming chapter - a change of no less importance than mass community migration.

---

88 For other examples, see Thomas (1959; 181), Pélissier (1966; 816, note 1), De Jonge (1978; 112-113), Marzouk (1981; 96), Lambert (1999).
89 Interview with Alioune Sané (alias), Dakar, 29 April 1997.
90 Interview with Pierre Niassy (alias), Ziguinchor, 30 January 1999.
CHAPTER II

EDUCATION IN LOWER CASAMANCE: A SILENT REVOLUTION

Among all Diola groups, the principle of authority appears to be a necessity from which ones tries to protect oneself. Consequently, political structures are shifting, to the point that Diola mentality has long remained “unknown, almost incomprehensible”. Generally an essential character of Diola groups is their refusal to constitute durable institutional structures of authority and the will to limit their prerogatives to the minimum.

Today, Casamance is the region of Senegal where primary education is the most developed. Some villages even build schools at their own costs, which is a rarity in Africa. Even among the Manding Muslims, one does not feel this systematic hostility towards French schools.

Formal education and the paradox of anti-hierarchy

In their description of the political mores of the Diola, most authors use recurring epithets - holistic and individualist, anti-hierarchical and communitarian. Among the Diola, the community is thought to exert so tight a control over its members that it prevents the formation of self-reproducing elites. At the same time, people are supposedly very independent and refuse to engage in lasting relations of domination. In such a society, no durable structure of power can develop. For many scholars of Casamance, Diola society is a clear-cut African case of a “société contre l’Etat”. This, for Darbon (1988), is the key to the failure of the colonial and postcolonial state in Lower Casamance: the state cannot function properly in the region, because it has no middlemen with whom and through whom to penetrate local society; the Muslim notables, the marabouts and aristocrats who were so instrumental in the colonisation process and are still so useful to the Senegalese.

---

1 In Darbon (1988; 33).
3 These descriptions of Diola society have recently been qualified by some English-speaking authors: using evidence from the Esulalu region, North of Oussouye, Baum (1986) recalls that, in some periods, ‘Diola’ society has known some form of centralisation and strong political power, under the rule of priest-kings. Both Baum and Linares (1987) insist on the involvement of the Diola with the slave-trade.
4 This is the title of a famous - and very controversial - book by the French anthropologist Pierre Clastres, in which he studies how the Amazonian Indian societies fight against the formation of differentiated power.
government in Middle and Upper Casamance and in the rest of its territory, do not exist in Lower Casamance. As discussed in the introduction, for a number of political analysts, this anti-hierarchical spirit, this culture of resistance to power, constitutes an essential explanation for the separatist rebellion in Casamance.

Recent figures about the evolution of school attendance in the various regions of Senegal introduce us to a strikingly different story (see Table II.1 below).

Table II.1: Regional evolution of the primary school attendance rate in Senegal from 1990-1991 to 1994-1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dakar</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>88.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>101.3</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziguinchor</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>88.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>107.2</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>98.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diourbel</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Louis</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambacounda</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaolack</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiès</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>63.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louga</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatick</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolda</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Senegal</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From 1990 to 1995, the primary schooling rate was thus consistently higher in the region of Ziguinchor than in any other region of Senegal, the region of Dakar excepted. Despite a violent guerrilla war, the rate in Lower Casamance never fell below 80 per cent. While the region of Dakar - almost totally urbanised - and that of Ziguinchor have comparable rates, the gap between the latter and the other regions
was never smaller than 22 per cent. Recent national statistics on literacy confirm this
tendency (see Table II.2 below): in 1996, the population of the region of Ziguinchor
was 50 per cent literate; this rate, though 11 per cent lower than the Dakarais rate,
was at least 20 per cent above those of all the other regions of Senegal. Because the
literacy rate is calculated for the total population, this tends to show that the
importance of education in Lower Casamance is a long-term tendency, not a recent
trend limited to the younger section of the population. The contrast between the
region of Ziguinchor and the region of Kolda, which groups Middle and Upper
Casamance, is particularly strong: the rate was only 22 per cent in Kolda. This
discrepancy in education between Lower Casamance and the rest of Senegal,
including the rest of Casamance, is too massive and too systematic not to be
revealing of specific social dynamics.

Table II.2: Regional literacy rates in Senegal in 1995-1996
Source: République du Sénégal (1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Together</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dakar</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>60.88</td>
<td>60.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziguinchor</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>37.18</td>
<td>49.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diourbel</td>
<td>28.32</td>
<td>11.68</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Louis</td>
<td>36.99</td>
<td>21.41</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambacounda</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>21.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaolack</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiès</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>35.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louga</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatick</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>26.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolda</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>14.38</td>
<td>22.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>26.69</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One cannot thus but wonder how this society, supposedly so entrenched in its
refusal of hierarchies, power and the state, came to so easily accept modern
education, an institution so closely related to the state, a system so productive of
inequalities, so elitist in its principles? How is it that, for an apparently long time,
the Lower Casamançais have exploited the opportunities this system offers with such
enthusiasm? All this seems to contradict culturalist understandings of Casamance:
the egalitarian and anti-hierarchical mentality of the Diola seems at odds with their
enthusiasm for modern education.

The purpose of this chapter is thus to resolve this paradox and find out how this
silent revolution was possible at all. The first section, through a chronology of
schooling in Casamance, will provide an outline periodisation; in the early colonial
period, schooling met with limited success, and it was only after World War II that
schooling became such a major fact in Lower Casamance. In a second part, the factors contributing to the success of school in Lower Casamance will be discussed. The relative weakness of Islam and Islamic schooling, and the related interest of the Catholic Church for Lower Casamance were essential factors. But the key element was played by the organisation of the colonial system of opportunities: while trade in Lower Casamance was controlled by diasporic entrepreneurs, the civil service offered an attractive niche, particularly after World War II, when both the demand for civil servants and their salaries grew massively. Thus, in Lower Casamance, a substantial group of educated young men, the *évolués*, developed.

**A history of school in Lower Casamance**

Establishing a chronology of schooling in Lower Casamance is a step towards the interpretation of its development; as will be seen, the initially major part played by the Catholic missionaries from the 1880s came brutally to an end in 1905. In the meantime, state schooling developed slowly; Catholic schooling was progressively revived during the 1920s. But the decisive period of expansion came only after 1945.

There must have existed some form of European education in Ziguinchor, a small Portuguese trading post established along the Casamance river in the mid-seventeenth century, but schooling started to develop in Lower Casamance only towards the end of the nineteenth century, as France began to bear strongly on West Africa. The Catholic Church (more specifically, its French representatives) and the French colonial state were the two main providers of education. The Holy Ghost Fathers, the front line French Catholic missionaries in West Africa, set up missions in various locations in Casamance, in Carabane in 1880, and then in Ziguinchor in 1886, when the Portuguese government handed Ziguinchor over to the French. These missionaries were not specialists in education, but they taught catechism; in their pedagogy, they began using Wolof, because they had been trained in the north of Senegal, and also because there were some Wolof traders and peasants in their areas of settlement. Literacy in the Roman script was an essential element in the strategy of the missionaries - in the north, a large religious literature had already been produced in Wolof, transcribed into Roman characters, and the same model was pursued in

---

5 In the French colonial lingo, the term *évolués* designated French-speaking Africans with a level of formal education. The term is still presently in use in Casamance, marking off the educated from the illiterates.
These missionaries started teaching Catholic religion, the Roman script and some French at the same time, assisted by locally-recruited catechists. As the French grip over Casamance strengthened, the Holy Ghost Fathers were progressively replaced by missionary societies more experienced in educational matters; some religious texts were published in Diola, and new literacy classes developed. In 1890, two Senegalese nuns, Marie-Augustine Ngom and Rosalie Faye, set up a regular school at Carabane; in 1901, the Frères de Ploërmel, a Breton brotherhood exclusively dedicated to education, opened another school, in Ziguinchor, effectively taking over the limited teaching activity of the Holy Ghost Fathers in the city - they easily attracted 82 pupils, of which 16 already knew how to read and write - but Ziguinchor and its ‘Creole’ (i.e. Afro-Portuguese Mestizo) population offered a good ground for education. Other missions were opened in more rural settings, in Elinkine, a former British trading-post, and in Diembéring in 1898. State schooling had all the while developed in a piecemeal fashion: as early as 1860, in the city of Sédhiou, in Middle Casamance, a French soldier was in charge of a class; in 1892 only was the position taken over by a regular schoolmaster; state primary schools were opened in Carabane in 1893, and in Ziguinchor in 1901.

Catholic education in Casamance was brought to an end in 1905, when the French parliament voted a law separating the state and the Church: the new policy was particularly adamant about destroying Catholic influence in education; educational missions were made to leave Senegal progressively. At the time of the closure, in the religious institutions, there were between 145 and 165 pupils in Ziguinchor and 81 pupils in Carabane. Around the same time, there were only 40 pupils in Carabane state school, and between 10 to 35 at Sédhiou. This law had a disastrous effect on education in Casamance, where much depended on the educational activism of the Church, as observed by many colonial civil servants, who asked for a delay before implementing the law in the colonies. The Holy Ghost Fathers were left alone in this field again, and reverted to their small-scale mixture of formal and religious education. The colonial authorities slowly moved in to fill the gap left by the departing missions; they opened schools in Bignona in 1909, and in

---

6 See Baum (1990; 379-380).
7 See Bouche (1975; vol. II, 147 & 422). Note that in both metropolitan English and French, ‘Creole’ designates people of European descent born in the colonial world. In Senegalese French, the word applies more often to Mestizos. In this research, we shall stick to the emic use of the word.
8 Dates and figures taken from ANS J19, which includes an overview of the situation of schooling in Casamance at the outset of the implementation of the 1905 law.
Oussouye and Diouloulou in 1913 - all of these three villages being administrative centres at the time. The years of World War I were troubled in Lower Casamance, but after 1918, the French progressively reinforced their grip over the region. Still, education made only slow progress, and in 1926, a state education official noted:

> Education in Casamance has not achieved the progress which, two or three years ago, we had good reason to expect. Except for the regional school in Ziguinchor, whose happy growth is due to its director’s zealous activity, most other schools have remained unchanged, some have clearly lost ground, and no new school has been opened. The school in Diémbering which had 110 pupils three years ago had only 40 last year, reduced this year to the ludicrous figure of 2 this year. The school in Oussouye only has 14 registered pupils, while it had 95 three years ago.

All the while, Catholic schooling did not meet with much more success. It had started to recover slowly after 1918, in the new ambiance of *Union sacrée* that had French Catholics and republicans rejoicing in the victory over Germany; the ban on Catholic schooling in French West Africa was lifted in March 1922. One administrative report from 1933 mentions the opening of three Catholic schools prior to 1922: two in Carabane, and one in Ziguinchor - a girls’ school. The schools in Carabane were closed down because the population of Carabane was moving to Ziguinchor, the newly established administrative centre of Casamance; a Catholic boys’ school was opened in Ziguinchor in January 1930. The same report mentions attempts at opening clandestine Catholic schools in Sinedone and Bignona. In any case, this first period of the history of school in Casamance was not one of inordinate success: schooling remained very sparse, attracting but a few pupils; except for the Portuguese Creoles of Ziguinchor, the Lower Casamans did not prove particularly receptive; schoolteachers were faced with the same difficulties as elsewhere in French Africa in the recruitment of pupils – and keeping them in school; *chefs de canton* and colonial administrators had to tour the villages to recruit children for the school and children were often hidden from the schoolteachers.

During the 1930s, the first burst of enthusiasm for school developed around Bignona, in the canton of Djougouttes: villagers came together to build schools, and petitioned the authorities with some success to supply schoolteachers. The *administrateur supérieur* testified:

> Recruitment is really easy, the schools are overloaded, many students are not admitted because of a lack of seats and schoolteachers. Attendance is extremely high during: 99 per cent in Bignona, Kartiack - 98 per cent in Diouloulou, an average of 95 per cent in

---

9 In ANS O474/31, Rapport à Monsieur le gouverneur du Sénégal sur l’inspection des Ecoles de la Casamance, 17 décembre 1925-6 janvier 1926.

10 In ANS 11D1/180.
other schools. The population in Sindian has built the teacher's house and the school, which has been opened for this new school year. The number of children increases continually, it is urgent to open a third class-room in Bignona and in Bassire [Bessire]. Twelve applications for the opening of new classes have been made by the villages of the Cercle. Our material means do not allow us to satisfy them 11.

But this precocious wave of enthusiasm proved to be short-lived. In March 1933, a colonial official bitterly commented that:

The autochtonous populations that have built almost everywhere the school with their own hands, seem to lose interest totally in the building. In many villages, the school stands dirty and miserable, next to a well-kept chapel 12.

As a result, only a very small number of people from Lower Casamance seems to have made it through school in the 1930s. The majority of those schooled at the time just did not continue with it and went back to the fields, slowly forgetting the little French they had learnt. Only in Ziguinchor did schooling thrive, both in its state and Church form, because a bourgeoisie had developed, mixing the old Creole (i.e. Afro-Portuguese Mestizo) elite of the city and the auxiliaries of the French, Franco-African Mestizo or north Senegalese, who had learnt from their close collaboration with the French what school was about.

In fact, it was only after World War II that schooling triumphed all over Lower Casamance. But how are we to date the boom in schooling precisely? Table II.3 below compares the number of planned classes in state schools for 1955-1956 by region, and gives a clear sense that by then, Lower Casamance had already become very special. Using a ratio between the total number of inhabitants and the number of classes, Lower Casamance stands in sharp contrast with other regions 13.

In 1955 already, the region of Ziguinchor had a ratio comparable to the almost fully urbanised region of Dakar. The third most schooled region of Senegal was Saint-Louis, largely because of the city of Saint-Louis itself. The worst ratio (13,646 inhabitants per class) was that of the region of Diourbel. The neighbouring region of Kolda (7,560 inhabitants per class) stood in a stark contrast with Ziguinchor, even though the data for Kolda incorporate the western section of the department of

11 In ANS 2G36/75, Rapport annuel d’ensemble de l’Administrateur supérieur de la Casamance, 1936.
12 In ANS O474/31, Rapport général de la tournée d’inspection des Ecoles de la Casamance, mars 1933.
13 Unfortunately, no complete demographic data is available for 1950s colonial Senegal, and the computation was done using 1976 census data. The regional distribution of inhabitants between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s has not substantially changed, but for the continuing growth of Dakar. This need not pre-occupy us much, since what interests us mostly is a comparison between Lower Casamance and the rest of rural Senegal. At worst, to correct the date, we should reduce the ratio for Dakar, highlighting further the specificity of the region of Ziguinchor.
Sédhiou, akin in sociological terms to the region of Ziguinchor, and which displays a similarly strong schooling rate.

Table II.3: Number of classes and population/number of classes ratio in 1955-1956

Table: Number of classes and population/number of classes ratio in 1955-1956

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of classes in 1955-1956</th>
<th>Population according to the 1976 census</th>
<th>Ratio population/number of classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Louis</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>514,735</td>
<td>3,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louga</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>419,599</td>
<td>7,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatick</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>597,501</td>
<td>6,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambacounda</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>287,313</td>
<td>5,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziguinchor</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>291,632</td>
<td>2,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolda</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>439,050</td>
<td>7,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diourbel</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>423,038</td>
<td>13,646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiès</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>675,440</td>
<td>5,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakar</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>940,920</td>
<td>2,329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaolack</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>597,501</td>
<td>6,713</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The specificity of Lower Casamance were thus already striking in 1955. That means in the few years between 1945 and 1955 a fantastic revolution had taken place there, silent and almost unobserved: mass rural schooling discreetly triumphed.

Factors of revolution: the impact of world religions

Trying to interpret this silent revolution, regional comparisons can help. If one considers the 1990 figures for primary schooling, the region with the lowest primary schooling rate was that of Diourbel, 24.1 per cent in 1994-1995, while the national average stood at 54.6 per cent. This gives an interesting clue to the riddle of school in Lower Casamance: Diourbel, the region with the lowest schooling rate, is also the heartland of the Muridiyya, the powerful Muslim brotherhood founded by Cheikh Amabou Bamba towards the end of the nineteenth century. The aim of this section is to examine the role of world religions as enabling or disabling factors in the development of French education in Lower Casamance. As will be seen, in Lower Casamance, Islam developed relatively late, and it did not allow for the development of powerful maraboutic structures. The weakness of Islam in turn prompted the Catholic Church to develop a special interest in the region, and put a lot of effort into schooling.

14 1955-1956 data is detailed by cercle and subdivision, which differ from the 1976 regional administrative boundaries. I have summed up figures for cercles and subdivisions so that they correspond to 1976 data.

15 The 1976 census figures are taken from the 1988 census report; they were recalculated in this report to fit to the administrative boundaries established after the 1984 reform.
Islamisation from below: the failure of the marabouts

It is now canonical to oppose and compare Islam and European colonial expansion as the two forces that shaped West African history in the nineteenth century, and certainly Lower Casamance is a very peculiar case in this respect inside Senegal: while Islam had been present north of the Gambia and in both Middle and Upper Casamance for centuries, it remained largely absent from Lower Casamance until the nineteenth century. But the difference is not only of a chronological nature: as will be seen, Islam in Lower Casamance developed from below, and the marabouts were never able to gain as much power and influence in Lower Casamance as elsewhere in Senegal. They were consequently never in a position to offer an alternative to European schooling.

Wolof auxiliaries to French colonisation around Carabane were probably the first Muslims to settle permanently in Lower Casamance, in the first half of the nineteenth century, but they remained an isolated minority; not infrequently, they Diola-ised thoroughly, abandoning Islam for local animist cults. Around the same period, some *dyoula* – i.e. Muslim Manding migrant traders - started to operate in the area. The second and most significant flow of Islam came to Lower Casamance toward the end of the nineteenth century, when a number of Manding and Peulh marabouts coming from the east and north, from the Gambia, Middle Casamance and Fouta Djallon, led their *jihad* among the ‘pagans’ of Lower Casamance. But as Leary (1971) and Mark (1976) demonstrate, the violent character of this second wave encouraged resistance rather than conversion on the part of the animist peoples of Lower Casamance. Islam really took off only later, around the beginning of the twentieth century; Mark (1976) has convincingly demonstrated that Islam came along with cash-crops and growing trade contacts with the Gambia. From then on, Islam developed rapidly; it has nowadays become the religion of the vast majority of the population of Lower Casamance: according to the 1988 census, 73.2 per cent of the population of the region of Ziguinchor were Muslim – in Senegal as a whole, the population was 93.8 per cent Muslim; in that same year, Upper and Middle Casamance were 93.4 per cent Muslim. Still, Islam arrived later in Lower Casamance than elsewhere in Senegal, and it was not able to achieve a comparable domination. Most importantly, though Lower Casamance adopted Islam in the end,

\[16\] See République du Sénégal (1992; 26, table 1.7).
the new religion never gained there the institutional and political strength it acquired in the rest of the country.

In northern Senegal, as is well known, Muslim brotherhoods, after an initial period of mutual distrust with the colonial state, ended up collaborating closely with the French. Actively involved in cash cropping and trade, engaged in a subtle game of voice/loyalty with the colonial state and maintaining tight clientelistic relations with their followers, the marabouts imposed themselves as brokers of political, economic and religious resources between the state and the peasantry. In exchange for their cooperation, the marabouts of the powerful brotherhoods were able to influence French colonial policy. They proved particularly able to repel French education both directly, by influencing the colonial state, and indirectly, by providing Koranic schooling, channeling their disciples into these Koranic schools, and controlling a whole section of the Senegalese economy where they could employ the graduates in Koranic studies. Even nowadays, this privileged relation between the state and the brotherhoods is maintained, and the rural marabouts are still able to contain the extension of French schooling in their zones. Recent statistics confirm the weakness of French schooling in the region of Diourbel, the heartland of the powerful Muridiyya Muslim brotherhood: the region of Diourbel had both the highest population/number of schools ratio in Senegal in 1955 (see Table II.3 above), and the weakest schooling rate of Senegal in the 1990s (see Table II.1 above).

South of the Gambia, the situation has been altogether different. Of course, from the 1880s onwards, the colonial authorities were desperate for auxiliaries and very keen on pursuing their policy of alliance with the marabouts that had met with some success in northern Senegal. French control over the territory was loose, and the colonial administration was eager to have people with whom they could communicate in Arabic or Wolof and who would know local languages, people who could move around and who could write - even if it were in Arabic script; the French

18 In 1994, the Khalife General of the Murids obtained the closure of 37 new schools, recently built and totally furnished, around Touba. Interview with Makhary Seck, Direction des constructions scolaires, Ministère de l’Éducation nationale, Dakar-Plateau, 6 June 1997. Keita (1990) documents similar intervention of Murid marabouts about health care, contrasting them with Lower Casamance, where rural health infrastructures are well-developed. Let us note that the attitude of the marabouts is not exclusively reactionary, neither vis-à-vis schools nor health care facilities: in education for instance, some accommodation has taken place between modern and Islamic schooling, with the development of Franco-Arab schools, mixing in various proportions French and Arabic, Islamic learning and ‘lay’, scientific studies... and English, with the encouragement of some of the big marabouts.
were also interested in recruiting people who had some interest in trade and the cash economy, who could act as economic modernisers in a region that was seen as essentially primitive and autarkic. This practice was partly theorised under Governor Xavier Coppolani, who formed the general principle that Islam was a step toward civilisation, and the Muslims could be useful auxiliaries.\footnote{This policy had a lot to do with the fact that many of the early colonial servants in Senegal had acquired an expertise on Islam and the Arabic language during the colonisation of Algeria, and had thus often informally relied on Muslim auxiliaries in Senegal, as Leary (1971 : 239 & foll.) indicates.}

In Lower Casamance, the marabouts seemed like the right people; most of them came from Upper or Middle Casamance, from a Manding or Peulh background, others from Northern Senegal or Mauritania, such as the Aïdaras, a maraboutic \textit{sherif} family. The colonial state and the marabouts rapidly came to strike an alliance. Thus, one of the Aïdaras, Chérif Mahfouz, became \textit{khalife général des Djougouttes}, using an honorific title bestowed by the French upon deserving marabouts. Many authors insist that the French consistently favoured the settlement of Muslim Northerners or Manding marabouts; Gasser (2000; 198) thus asserts that, “for the French administration, the solution was to set up a system of stable chiefdom with north Senegalese canton chiefs and to favour the settlements of Manding Marabouts in the Islamised areas of the region”. But there was much more to the French attitude towards the presence of Islam in Lower Casamance than an unqualified reliance on Muslim immigrants. From the onset of the colonial era, this Muslim policy had been a debated issue. As the colonial grip got firmer, the pro-Islamic line was increasingly questioned. Fears of a pan-Islamic anti-colonial movement, the practical experience that these allochthonous middlemen were often ill-suited to the task, the growing expertise of the French colonial servants themselves, and, in some cases, support for the Catholic Church, were all factors of a new policy. William Ponty, who became Governor-General of French West Africa in 1908, advocated a redefinition of the colonial policy vis-à-vis Islam, and his \textit{politique des races} was a breakaway from Coppolani’s older pro-Muslim line. Cruise O’Brien (1967; 314 -315) sums up the foundations of Ponty’s approach:

The aim of such policy was to preserve ethnic particularism by ensuring that each ethnic group had chiefs appointed from its own people: the territorial principle of administration was to be replaced by a racial principle. One of the arguments which Ponty put forward for the system was that it would safeguard non-Muslim peoples from being ruled by French-appointed Muslim chiefs from other groups. (...)

Marty [a French colonial official who carried out an extensive inquiry on Islam in French West Africa in the 1910s] refers to ‘one of the chief principles of our Muslim policy in West Africa: to win over and turn to our advantage the forces of Islam,
wherever this religion has triumphed over local animism, but carefully avoid helping its
development in fetishist societies, much less working ourselves to aid its diffusion and
more vigorous implantation’.

Of course, the pragmatics of exerting power in Lower Casamance rendered
impossible an uncompromising adherence to any formal principle. But following the
new policy, a massive effort was progressively made to nominate autochthonous
chiefs as canton chiefs; the colonial administrators increasingly justified their
nominations with a mention of the autochthony and local honorability of their
appointees. Thus, in 1922, when discussing the nomination of new chiefs for the
cantons of Brin-Séléki and Diémbéring, respectively Djivoasil and Diagnel, the
administrateur supérieur of Casamance took care to specify that the two applicants
he proposed to the governor were “Diola of the pure race, belonging from their
ancestors to each of the mentioned groupings, where they enjoy the esteem of the
population” 20. Linares (1986) makes clear that, somewhat paradoxically, in the
process of designating autochthonous village and canton chiefs, colonial
administrators often picked Muslim converts, since they were looking for dynamic
young men who seemed receptive to change. For instance, after the death in 1916 of
Demba Soumaré, the allochthonous Sarakollé chief the French had nominated in the
Djougouttes, a canton north-west of Bignona, the French selected first Ansumana
Diatta, and then Arfan Bessire Sonko, two Diola who were the first Muslims
converts in their respective villages of Tendouck and Bessire - Ansumana Diatta
was a disciple of Cherif Mahfouz Aïdara himself 21. Still, following World War I, the
quasi-totality of canton chiefs in Lower Casamance were autochthonous
Diola 22.

On the whole, the French kept co-operating with the marabouts in Lower
Casamance, but avoided favouring them too much; marabouts were made to
understand that they would not be allowed to engage in active religious proselytism
in regions where Islam had no strong footing. Trincaz (1984; 46) recounts that,
visiting Ziguinchor in March 1914, Governor Ponty gladly received the solicitations
of the Senegalese population of the city for public fountains and other facilities, but

20 In ANS 11D1/147, Lettre de Mr l’Administrateur supérieur à Monsieur le Lieutenant-Gouverneur
du Sénégal, Ziguinchor, le 19 avril 1922.
21 See Mark (1976; 117-118).
22 In both the present departments of Bignona and Oussouye, Northerners became a rarity as canton
chiefs. East of Ziguinchor, two powerful maraboutic families from northern Senegal, the Seck and the
Cissé, maintained a lasting presence and controlled respectively the cantons of Adéane and Bainoucks.
refused pleas for the installation of Arab schools in the city. The colonial servant Paul Marty, in his survey of Lower Casamance Islam, noted the interest Cherif Sidi Karria, a Manding disciple of Saad Bouh, settled in Kériouane, a village near Sédhiou, had taken in Mambigne, a locality situated in the Diola-populated region of Fogny, and the French reaction to this proselytism: “He [Cherif Sidi Karria] has been invited in May 1915 not to trouble the traditions and social and religious customs of the Diola and to fall back on his village of Kériouane, from where missionary activity is open to him over the Manding region.” Marty thus points to a clear case of an implementation of the politique des races, on ethnic lines: the Diola were not supposed to be Muslim, and they should be protected from maraboutic influences; only the Manding area was fair game for those Islamic influences.

But the weakness of the marabouts in Lower Casamance also had to do with less shifty elements than such variations in the Islamic policy of the French. The marabouts in Lower Casamance were newcomers, and competition for followers among them was rife; they held only a limited economic role in a region where the cash economy was still marginal; they controlled almost no land. They were of not much use either to the colonial state or the population - and lacking contacts with one meant they would not have much to bring to the other partner. Generally speaking, to paraphrase Bayart, Islamisation in Lower Casamance was ‘from below’. It depended neither on powerful marabouts nor on political structures, but on individual initiative, the discreet migration and contacts of the autochthonous population in The Gambia, Fouta Djallon, Dakar or Portuguese Guinea. Studying the Islamisation of Lower Casamance, one sees a complex, quasi-Brownian situation of uncoordinated multifarious efforts and actions. Because of lively competition and lack of coordination, no marabout in Lower Casamance was able to establish the kind of quasi-monopoly which the Muridiyya built over the political, material and spiritual goods in some parts of northern Senegal. In Lower Casamance, the marabouts could not enter the virtuous circle of religious leadership, economic power, control over followers and contacts with the colonial state.

Thus, the marabouts in Lower Casamance, though they were partners of the colonial state, were never strong enough to oppose French schooling. Actually, there is some evidence that those among the leaders of Islam in Lower Casamance who

---

23 See Marty (1917; 50-51).
felt strong enough did attempt to oppose French schooling locally. Their power to resist French schooling was often related to their having been able to gain legitimacy as political middlemen: as Lambert (2002) indicates, in Baland, a village situated to the north-west of Ziguinchor, a powerful local marabout backed the elders and they managed to prevent the opening of a school in his village for many years, while all neighbouring villages already had their own schools. The marabout himself was a ‘friend’ of Emile Badiane, the political big man of 1950s and 1960s Lower Casamance, and despite his noted interest in education, Emile Badiane was apparently reluctant to press on such a precious man to have him accept a school in his village.\(^{24}\)

In 1950, the administrateur de cercle for Ziguinchor reported a similar case in the village of Baghanga, east of Ziguinchor:

> [the schoolmasters] complain (...) that the large village of Baghanga, set between Sinedone and Adéane persists in refusing to send the children to school, despite the 1950 decree which imposes school attendance compulsory.
> I have been told that Baghanga, a strongly Islamised area, prefers to send its children to Koranic school, and that in order to keep them from our recruitment, they send the children to marabouts who teach on the other side of the river, in the subdivision of Sédhiou, and even in The Gambia. In Baghanga itself resides a very influential marabout.\(^{25}\)

On the whole, in Lower Casamance, contrary to what happened in the rest of Senegal, Koranic schooling never was able to constitute a serious alternative to French schooling. In the zones of Lower Casamance that had converted to Islam, a kind of compromise rapidly emerged between Koranic and French schooling, a compromise very similar to the one now valid in most urban areas of Senegal, where Koranic schooling functions in the interstices between French schooling - either children take evening classes in the Koran, after leaving French school, or they learn the Koran in their early years, before entering French school. Koranic schools lost a battle they had barely fought. In Baland, boys from the village were fleeing to the neighbouring school-endowed villages to get some education; the elders would

\(^{24}\) Michael Lambert, personal communication. Note that Baland is an alias for Lambert’s main fieldwork village.

\(^{25}\) In ANS 2G50/95, Rapport politique annuel de la subdivision de Ziguinchor pour l’année 1950. “The same schoolteachers also complain that the large village of Baghanga, between Sinedone and Adéane staunchly refuse to send their children to school, despite the 1950 decree which renders school attendance compulsory. I have been told that Baghanga, a very Islamised locality, prefers to send their children to Koranic school; in order to preserve them from our recruitment, they send them to marabouts settled on the other bank of the river, in the Subdivision of Sédhiou, and even in the Gambia. In Baghanga itself resides a respected marabout.”
organise prayer meetings for their failure, but they soon had little choice and agreed to the opening of a French school in the village.\textsuperscript{26}

\textit{The Catholic Church: schooling for the faith}

The sustained interest of the Catholic Church for the region was another major factor in the development of schooling in Lower Casamance. This interest is strongly related to the weakness and late development of Islam in the region. In northern Senegal the progress of the Catholic faith was made difficult by the strength of the Muslim brotherhoods and the quality of their connections to the colonial state. When French colonial effort was channelled toward Casamance at the end of the nineteenth century, a whole new field was opened for the missionaries, raising immense hopes. The actual progress of the Catholic faith was not as great as expected, but in the meantime, the Church contributed decisively to the development of schooling in Lower Casamance through its massive investments.

Entering Casamance, the French missionaries first settled in Sédhiou, in Middle Casamance, where French rule was first established. But the mission in Sédhiou rapidly proved a failure: the Muslim Manding seemed immune to Catholicism; a few Diola were the only converts the mission could gather. As early as 1885, the missionaries in Sédhiou noted the contrast between Manding Middle Casamance and the Diola-populated Lower Casamance: “In Sédhiou, there seems to be little hope for the future; in Lower Casamance, to the contrary, reside numerous Diola tribes, who appear much more open to the Gospel”\textsuperscript{27}. A few years later, this prognosis about Sédhiou was confirmed; for the Holy Ghost Fathers, the city’s only interest lay in the animist Diola who fled there from the violence of the various warriors-marabouts who were roaming around Casamance towards the end of the nineteenth century:

\ldots(\ldots) the Mohammedans are found there [in Sédhiou] in large numbers, and we might sweep the dust from our soles, if Providence had not sent there many Diola, expelled from Fogni, their homeland, by the marabouts, who have destroyed and made havoc of everything.\textsuperscript{28}

Logically enough, the missionaries quickly turned away from Middle Casamance - the mission in Sédhiou was closed in 1890 – and focused their attention

\textsuperscript{26} In Lambert (2002).
\textsuperscript{27} In Bulletin de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit, XIII, 1882-1885, 709.
\textsuperscript{28} In Bulletin de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit, XIV, 1887-1888, 310.
on Lower Casamance, where the animist Diola that had responded so well to the call of the Lord around Sédhiou were most numerous. In Lower Casamance, the situation was entirely different: as discussed above, the Muslim brotherhoods were almost absent or remained weak, and there were instead ‘primitive’ and ‘pagan’ cults, which few colonial servants would care to defend. To the Church, Lower Casamance rapidly stood out as the biggest opportunity for the propagation of the faith in the whole diocese of Senegambia. For some, Lower Casamance was all the more strategic as it was thought it might provide the Catholic Church in Senegal with an entrenchment from which to ‘counter-attack’ and conquer for Christ the rest of Senegal.

If one could bring the Diola people into the arms of the Church, hard-working and prolific as it is, one could conceive the hope that here, in a near future, the numerical balance could be in favour of Christianity, an event (...) which would have a deep impact over the neighbouring regions.

Lower Casamance was such a crucial part of the Catholic Church in Senegal that it was given a special and experimental status: in 1939, the district of Casamance was made a Préfecture Apostolique, under the direction of Bishop Joseph Faye, a Casamançais member of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost. There were surely practical reasons behind this decision - the difficult communications between Dakar and Ziguinchor and between Ziguinchor and the rest of Casamance called for a decentralised organisation -, but the special status granted by the Church to Casamance is undoubtedly indicative of the special position that Lower Casamance occupied in the imagination of the leadership of the Senegambian Church. According to Sambou (1984; 158-164), the choice of an autochthonous bishop, bitterly resisted by some French missionaries, was related to the hopes which Casamance had raised inside the Church and to the fact that these hopes were increasingly proving false: during the 1930s, Islam made major headway in Lower Casamance, particularly around Bignona, where the missionaries had initially been most active.

29 Of course, the Church has maintained to these days its presence throughout the diocese, at heavy costs for limited profit so to speak, with missions, churches and schools in the biggest cities east of Ziguinchor - Kolda, Sédhiou, Vélingara, but this stems more from the need to stake one’s territory than from the real results in terms of conversion.
31 Joseph Faye was born in Sédhiou in 1905, to a family from north Senegal; he grew up in Carabane. He was ordained in 1931 by the Archbishop of Paris at Notre-Dame, during the closing ceremonies of the 1931 colonial exposition, the first African priest ordained in Notre-Dame. See Sambou (1984; 198-200).
32 The relative failure of the Church in Lower Casamance did not go unobserved by the colonial authorities. In his 1944 yearly report, the administrateur supérieur du cercle de Ziguinchor evoked a
Catholicism was progressively overtaken, and the Church authorities came to suspect that the French missionaries had been too intolerant with local cultures and customs and had not been able to attract the local population; the lack of a significant local clergy was interpreted as both a proof and a cause of this failure. The nomination of a native bishop, a precocious step towards the Africanisation of the Church, was thus an attempt to save the day.

But despite these disappointing results, the Catholic Church never lost its enthusiasm for Lower Casamance. A 1976 *Histoire religieuse du Sénégal*, written by Father Jean Delcourt, parish priest of Gorée and archivist of the Archbishopric of Dakar, thus draws an optimistic portrait of the young and rapidly growing Catholic community of Lower Casamance in the 1950s and 1960s:

(...) the young new diocese already had in 1955 almost 22,000 Christians, 25 priests, including 3 Casamançais and 43 nuns, including 19 Africans. In 1960, the diocese counted almost 30,000 Christians and 2,500 catechumens, 36 priests, including 7 Africans, 10 friars, including 3 Africans and 70 nuns, including 24 Africans. Offices for Education and Charity have their own directors. (...) And when in 1965 Bishop Dodds was on the verge of leaving Ziguinchor, on a total population of 563,000 inhabitants, his diocese counts 35,000 Christians distributed in 15 missions, with 47 priests, 21 friars and 95 nuns to evangelize them. 7,000 pupils attend its 45 primary schools, 345 its secondary schools and 146 its 3 vocational training centres. 11 advanced seminarists prepare to priesthood in Sébikotane and there are 125 lower seminarists in Nyassia and Ziguinchor. CV and AV, scouts, IAC and JEC, Légion de Marie, Croisade eucharistique and the social secretary have their chaplains.

The length of the enumeration, its tone, triumphant and fevered, the care for numbers, everything in this text resounds of the enthusiasm that Casamance (and most specifically Lower Casamance) aroused inside the Catholic Church - nowhere else in Delcourt’s brochure can a similar section be found. In most of Senegal, Catholicism remained stagnant and there was little the Church could do to gain ground against a dominant and active Islam, which enjoyed the support of the state. In this bleak context, Lower Casamance seemed a promising vineyard for God’s vintagers, and that was why the Church, throughout this period, was consistently readier to invest in Lower Casamance than anywhere else in Senegal, and was much more reactive than the colonial state.

---

lack of progress of the Church in the subdivision of Oussouye, a “marked regression” in Diembering and Elinkine, and a stagnation in Bignona after a rapid post-1918 growth; he comments that: “On the whole, the Christian missions hoped for better results in Casamance. From now on, they stand opposed to Islam, here as elsewhere, and they do not dominate.” In ANS 2G44/106, Rapport politique pour l’année 1944 - Cercle de Ziguinchor.

33 In Delcourt (1976: 104-105).
In this context, education was a key missionary instrument, and the Catholic Church employed substantial means to develop schools. At the apex of its educational influence, in the 1950s and 1960s, the Church controlled up to 45 primary schools in villages of Lower Casamance, plus four in Ziguinchor itself; in the rest of the region, it ran primary schools in Sédiou, Kolda, Vélingara and in Pakour, south of Vélingara \(^{34}\). Counting on schools to spread its religious influence, the Church enlisted Muslim pupils and maintained schools in areas almost void of Catholics, in the hope of gaining influence. This was not an absurd technique, as Father Paul Sané’s trajectory illustrates. Born in a Muslim family of Balla-Bassène, in the vicinity of Sindian, Sané was converted through school:

The first school in Sindian dates from 1962. My father was the village chief, so he had to give an example. In my village, I was the only child to go. The school was in, it depended on the [Catholic] mission of Balandine. It lasted only one year, and we were brought in Balandine, in a Christian family, and that was the reason why, after primary school, I wanted to go to the Séminaire Saint-Louis. I was baptised only here \(^{35}\).

In Father Sané’s trajectory, the distance between school and faith is small indeed, and this proves the tactics of the Church had some efficacy: was Sané going to the seminary to become a priest or to get further education? But there were not many Paul Sanés, and the heavy costs of running this educational machinery, the progressive spread of primary state school as a substitute for Catholic schools and the limited evangelic results convinced the Catholic Church to close down most of its primary schools: in 2000, only seven of them remained, in those rural areas of Lower Casamance which constitute the core of Casamançais Christianity; schools in Kolda, Sédiou, Ziguinchor and Vélingara were maintained, building on their reputation of excellence \(^{36}\). During the 1970s, the Church in turn ‘converted’ to secondary schooling, where the Senegalese state has proved largely unable - or unwilling - to satisfy the needs of the population.

The interest of the Church for Casamance, or, more precisely, for Lower Casamance, allowed for the constitution of a large group of Catholics, a major component of the Senegalese Catholic community – about a third, according to priests interviewed. But the Catholics in Lower Casamance were never more than a substantial and powerful minority. Nevertheless, the evangelical interest of the Church was a major element in the development of schooling in Lower Casamance.

\(^{34}\) Interviews at the Direction de l’enseignement catholique, Ziguinchor, 30 January 1999.
\(^{35}\) Interview with Father Paul Sané (alias), Ziguinchor-Colobane, 28 January 1999.
\(^{36}\) Interview at the Direction de l’enseignement catholique, Ziguinchor, 30 January 1999.
But it was not only access to education and the resulting job opportunities which the Church determined: as will be seen in Chapter V, granting Lower Casamance a special position in its Senegambian organisation, the Church also played a major, if unintentional, part in the development of traditionalist tendencies in Lower Casamance.

**Civil service as a pathway to prosperity**

Contrasting Lower Casamance and the rest of Senegal, we have established that, south of the Gambia, Islam was never in a position to play the dissuasive role it exerted in the north of Senegal. It is also clear that the Catholic Church played a positive role in the expansion of schooling in Lower Casamance. But the internal logic of this revolution still escapes us: why did the Diola opt for school?

In the French colonial system, schooling was basically about social promotion and most specifically about civil service jobs – school was endorsed by the local population in as much as it offered a pathway to prosperity. In the colony of Senegal, the other such pathway was trade. When the colonisation of Lower Casamance began, trade and state were equally manned by people from the north of Senegal. But while access to the civil service seemed straightforwardly related to school, trade functioned altogether in a different fashion. Thus, as will be seen, the Diola were barred from entering trade, which remained largely controlled by allochthonous trading diasporas. When they were sufficiently integrated in the colonial system, the Diola thus opted massively for school and the civil service. In this respect, chronology matters: Lower Casamance had come under colonial domination rather late compared with the rest of Senegal. Precisely at the time when colonial presence in Lower Casamance was becoming a routine matter, after World War II, the civil service proved a privileged pathway to prosperity in the colony of Senegal; recruitment was high, and the wages grew quickly. In this context, school could thus impose itself as the hegemonic pathway to prosperity.

**Trading diasporas in Lower Casamance**

Asking Lower Casamançais literati why they chose to join the state rather than engage in trade, one usually gets two kind of answers, pragmatic and moralistic. The pragmatic ones mention the better money and safer positions the civil service offered. The moralistic ones insist on the perverted character of most Senegalese
traders, the need to cheat, lie and deceive to succeed in business - and the impossibility for any Lower Casamançais to adhere to this kind of ethos. A number of social scientists and many French administrators have indeed highlighted the deep distaste of the Diola for business and trade, their high morals, their innate peasant honesty, and colonial archives document the many abuses committed by traders - north Senegalese, but also Lebanese and French - to the detriment of the rural populations, described by many observers as honest, and by the cynics as naive. We should not buy at face value these culturalist-moralistic remarks, but they indicate something of the way in which civil service and trade functioned in colonial Lower Casamance. These two worlds did not stand equal in their accessibility for the peoples of Lower Casamance: they were barred from the world of trade, controlled as it was by trading diasporas of north Senegal, while the world of the state proved much more accessible. Undoubtedly, the negative judgments made by Lower Casamançais literati on traders have to do with this experience. But moral judgments here merely confirm the daily experience of an exclusion which had more to do with history than with morality.

Throughout the colonial period, access to trade in Lower Casamance depended very little on schooling, though all Ziguinchor traders (French, Lebanese and Senegalese alike) were keen on schooling their children and on hiring graduates from schools for book- and shop-keeping. Access to trade depended rather upon the networks of the northern Senegalese traders settled in Ziguinchor, who either controlled the local operations of French companies or ran their own businesses; ethnicity, kinship and membership in Muslim brotherhoods played a major part in the constitution of these networks.

This situation was not by any means confined to Lower Casamance, and a lot has been written, with reference to West Africa and to other regions of the world, on the role of trade diasporas and pariah entrepreneurship. The general idea of this literature is that goods, financial resources and business information as well as that most precious factor of all, trust, are more easily channelled and circulated in a tight minoritarian community, sharing a strong identity; trade diasporas thus tend to be strongly endogamic. In this context, access to business activities was difficult to the Diola not only because the initial accumulation of capital was extremely difficult to

---

achieve. Interviews with some traders from northern origin established in Lower Casamance showed that, with the right connections, one needed no start-up money: some patrons would lend the necessary goods – the main question was that of entering the network of trust. The career of Momodou Fall, a successful Ziguinchor-based retailer, is a good example:

Q: How did you make it to Ziguinchor?
A: I was born in the Djoloff, in Linguère [north Senegal]. I came in Ziguinchor in 1955. I had worked in Dakar for five years, but it did not work out. So I left for Ziguinchor, to see whether it would work better. (...) I came here with the boat called Ouoloff. (...) I had no money, only my bag. So I went to Saint-Maur market, I found someone, he provided accommodation. The next morning, I went around town. I started with ten kilos of gum, I sold little stacks of five Francs.
Q: Who gave you the gum?
A: It was Serigne Ndiaye (alias), the one who provided accommodation. I had met him on the market, he was a Tijani, just like me.
Q: Were there many Tijani in Ziguinchor?
A: Yes. They have dahiras [Muslim religious association]. I joined the Moustarchidine.
Q: Was that long after your arrival?
A: It was a month and a half after 38.

Soon after arriving in Ziguinchor, Momodou Fall was able to make use of his Tijani connection to find a patron, and establish as a trader, without any starting capital; to complete his integration, Fall quickly joined a Tijani dahira. For the autochthonous Lower Casamançais, such a strategy was not practical.

The control of trade diasporas over business in Ziguinchor is very well documented; The 1969 membership list of the bureau of the Ziguinchor chamber of commerce confirms this impression: on the board of traders, only two of the nineteen names mentioned are Diola - plus two names whose origin is unclear 39. The situation was slightly different for the board of craftsmen: of the ten names mentioned, three are probably autochthonous patronyms 40. Bruneau’s (1979) maps of the commercial activities in Ziguinchor in the 1970s and Darbon’s census of Marché Saint-Maur (1988; 205) establish that trade diasporas controlled most of Ziguinchor’s business sector in the 1960s and 1970s. Beyond trade, this domination by allochthonous elements actually extended to all capital-intensive activities, like transport and sea-

38 Interview with Momodou Fall (alias), Ziguinchor, March 2000.
39 The two names in question are Mané, who could be Diola, Balant or Manding and Gomis, who could be either Manjak or Portuguese Creole. Of course, the ascription of patronyms to ethnic groups in Africa is a very imperfect measurement of ethnicity, because autochthony, ethnicity and patronyms are not unchanging, but this kind of ascription still has a validity, were it only because it is used in everyday life by most people in Casamance.
40 In Bulletin hebdomadaire de la Chambre de commerce de Ziguinchor, n° 776, 9-16 August 1969.
fishing. After almost a century of French colonial presence in Ziguinchor, the Diola had still not penetrated those tight networks of trust.

As Linares (1988) points out, some Diola did become traders, particularly in the area around Sindian, which was strongly under the influence of the Manding. But those aspiring tradesmen had no choice but to adopt the language, ethnicity, religion and often even the patronyms of their Manding patrons. There was also another kind of Diola that engaged in trade: in the post-war era, a number of Diola literati started to work for the French trade companies – Abba Diatta, who was born in 1930 in Mlomp, near Bignona, thus testifies:

I found it necessary to carry studying elsewhere. I went to Ziguinchor (...). At the time, with the certificat d’études primaires, you barely had to look for a job. As I was looking for money to go to Dakar where my headmaster had told me I could take evening classes, I took a job as a commis-peseur at the COFRACO [a French trade company]. (...) [after a few months] I felt that the money I had saved was enough to go to Dakar and pay for the evening classes.

Abba Diatta later passed successfully the examination of the civilian air service – subsequently, he occupied important politico-administrative functions in various ministries, and became a deputy mayor of Ziguinchor throughout the 1980s and 1990s. For Abba Diatta and many of his age-mates, entering trade was no more than a temporary step in a strategy that was entirely focused on the pursuit of formal education and civil service jobs.

Recruiting for the civil service: a historical window of opportunity

Recruitment for the civil service was an altogether different thing: it did not depend on ethnicity, kinship or religious networks. It was open to all and depended solely on educational attainments, at least in principle. There was a rather straightforward relation between success in school and the passing of state examinations. More significantly perhaps, at a time when Lower Casamance was

---

41 See Cormier-Salem (1989, 1992) and De Jonge (1979) for an illustration of the dominance of northerners in the fishing industry.
42 Interview with Abba Diatta, Ziguinchor, 5 December 1998.
43 See also interview with Mamadou Angrand Badiane, former representative to the Senegalese national Assembly, Ziguinchor, 28 February 2000: “All the biggest trade companies recruited after the certificat. There was also the Grandes Endémies [a state health service], which recruited people with low qualifications. I chose trade. I worked as an assistant accountant. They would train us (...). I did well. But the people in the civil service, they were more respected. So I took the state examination to become a commis de l’administration [clerk], it was a local examination on Ziguinchor. So I was only a local civil servant, so I wanted to take a national examination, to be a full civil servant.”
44 This does not preclude the existence of a number of biases in civil service recruitment; for instance, for sociological or political reasons, the children of schoolteachers and canton chiefs would probably do well in school.
fully integrated in the colonial order, after World War II, the civil service recruited massively and offered rising wages, thus proving much more attractive than diaspora-controlled trade, which remained hard to penetrate; in the other regions of Senegal, which had got in touch with the colonial state earlier, alternative ways of social climbing had already been explored (trade, urban craftsmanship, religion), and their inhabitants were thus less inclined to privilege the civil service as single-mindedly as the men from Lower Casamance did. The period from 1945 to the 1960s was thus a historical window of opportunity for Lower Casamance: finally, schooling made (social) sense.

From 1945 the civil service grew massively, with growing French public investment in French West Africa. According to Fall (1997: 11), there were 12,300 public employees in Senegal in 1948. By 1957, the figure had increased to 20,737. The increase carried on: 22,000 in 1961, 33,591 in 1965, and 54,151 in 1979. But that meant even more jobs for the Senegalese citizens, because of the progressive departure of metropolitan French civil servants after 1960. Also, with the loi Lamine Guèye, voted by the French national Assembly in May 1946, the statutory difference between citizens and subjects was abolished, and the wage levels of Senegalese civil servants were upgraded.

The discrepancy between waged labour (and particularly public employment) and rural incomes thus rapidly widened after the war. Diouf, Vermot-Gauchy and Brun (1965) suggest a comparison between the average yearly income of a waged unskilled worker in the ‘modern’ sector and the yearly value of groundnut marketed in Senegal per capita; the wages of unskilled workers in the ‘modern’ sector can be held to be a good indicator of the general tendency of wages in the formal sector, and particularly in the civil service.\(^{45}\)

\(^{45}\) The authors mention a number of limitations in the comparison they are using. For instance, though groundnut has long been the hegemonic cash-crop in Senegalese economy, rural populations have other sources of income: cultivation is a seasonal activity, and peasants usually have alternative ways to supplement their income; they also still partake in a traditional subsistence economy. The comparison also discounts the notion of family, since the income of the waged worker is often the only income of a whole family, while the value of groundnut is computed per capita on the whole population of Senegal; rural households thus often add up many times this yearly value. Still the gap is so vast between urban and rural revenues that the data remains useful, and in any case perfectly valid to indicate evolutions. Probably the gap between agricultural income and wages was even greater in Lower Casamance, since groundnut-cropping was less common there, and subsistence economy long remained dominant.
Table II.4: Comparison of the evolution of agricultural income and wages in the formal sector
Source: Diouf, Vermot-Gauchy & Brun (1965; 60)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yearly income of a waged unskilled worker</th>
<th>Yearly value of groundnuts marketed in Senegal per capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919-1921 828</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922-1926 1379</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927-1931 1655</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-1936 1956</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-1941 2257</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942-1946 4464</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-1951 37440</td>
<td>4512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-1956 58968</td>
<td>7136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-1961 79248</td>
<td>9390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-1964 91520</td>
<td>10515</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure II.1: Comparison of the evolution of agricultural income and wages in the formal sector

Figure II.1 indicates that all incomes grew considerably after 1946, until the early 1960s; but it also makes clear that agricultural incomes grew at a much slower pace.
pace than wages. No doubt after the war, when Lower Casamançais had grown accustomed to the colonial state and explored pathways to prosperity, waged labour seemed an attractive opportunity to young men eager for promotion. At the time when Lower Casamançais people really got integrated in the colony, i.e. after 1945, the most attractive sphere was the civil service; the glorious years of trade belonged to the earlier era of colonial domination, when groundnut revenues were comparably high and allowed the entrepreneurs who acted as middlemen between the rural areas and the world market to get rich. The years after 1945 were those of the triumphant and well-funded modernising state: all administrative services, and particularly those that were labour-intensive (education, health, agricultural extension), were hungry for men. In Lower Casamance, there were many young men who were ready to become literati.

Finding statistical clues

While the statistical data on schooling in Lower Casamance is easy to obtain, it is actually difficult to find quantitative evidence to document the interest of Lower Casamançais for the civil service. The Senegalese state does not have - or publish - data on the regional or ethnic origin of its civil servants. But there are some quantitative sources confirming the strong presence of Lower Casamançais in civil service. We have already mentioned in Chapter I this analysis sorts out in retrospect the mystery of the shortlived outburst of enthusiasm. A first clue can be gotten from the brief chronology of schooling in Lower Casamance which introduces this chapter. This chronology mentions that, in the area around Bignona, in the 1930s, there had been a shortlived wave of optimism for schooling. The reason why this first wave dispersed is precisely that, during that period, there was no connection between getting education and entering the civil service, and too few jobs for the new literati. Too few of the young educated men of that time were in a position to resist and overcome the defiance of the elders vis-à-vis school.

The Senegalese Armed Forces could be an interesting source of data. Since recruitment for the military service is made by a commission rotating throughout all departments of the country, the interest of the Casamançais for military service is theoretically measurable, but it has been so far impossible to obtain the data from the Armed Forces Headquarters. Interviews revealed that those who failed to recruit in one department sometimes attempted recruitment in the neighbouring departments, which probably limits the quality of the data that could be obtained through that source. Rumour has it that the Armed Forces do have data on the ethnic origin of their recruits, but I was not able to access those data. Apparently, the gathering of those data was related to the conflict in Casamance, and the need to assess the alleged over-representation of men from Lower Casamance in the Armed Forces.

Qualitative data also illustrates the interest of Lower Casamançais for school and civil service. I witnessed myself the influence of the culture of the Armed Forced and the Gendarmerie in Lower Casamance when, in April 1999, I went from Dakar to Lower Casamance to attend a village festival, travelling all the way with Dakarois who came from this village. On board of each vehicle, huge Mercedes buses, two chefs de bord - the same organisation and denomination as in the French Army from which the Senegalese Army derives its inspiration - were in charge of the discipline and
Martin (1962) and his analysis of the 1955 Dakar census, which indicated the over-representation of Casamançais in the police force, and their under-representation among the unskilled workers. Another clue is given by Vengroff and Johnston (1989; 128) in a study of the regional origin of a sample of 110 local development agents (probably category C or D) in 1984; they find that 15 per cent of the sample hailed from the region of Casamance as a whole (i.e. Lower, Middle and Upper Casamance). But these clues remain sparse and somehow doubtful.  

organisation of the travel; they were the ones who negotiated at security and customs checkpoints; in fact, in all the three vehicles that constituted the convoy, the chefs de bord were either soldiers or gendarmes. Several times during the travel, Senegalese Army songs in Diola were sung, most of the youth wholeheartedly joining in with the adults.  

Le Soleil, 29 May 1980, gives another interesting clue, reporting on a survey of the Caisse nationale d’épargne (CNE), a state savings bank. A lengthy quote of this article seems necessary: “L’examen de la répartition socioprofessionnelle des épargnants permet de déceler chez les Sénégalais des dispositions différentes vis-à-vis de l’épargne suivant les paramètres ethniques et les secteurs d’activité (...). Du point de vue ethnique, les Casamançais battent tous les records d’épargne, non seulement en Casamance mais aussi sur l’ensemble du territoire nationale. Même au Cap-Vert, les ressortissants de la région méridionale dament le pion aux ‘autochtones’ wolof et lébou. (...) M. N. D., agent des guichets dans le bureau de poste d’un quartier dakarois, explique le phénomène par la grande capacité d’organisation des Casamançais. Il insinue toutefois que ‘leurs besoins sont moins nombreux étant donné que la Casamance est une zone riche en produits vivriers, ce qui fait que ses ressortissants n’envoient que peu d’argent à leur famille.’ Cette interprétation est vivement contestée par I. Bodian, originaire de la Casamance, pour lequel ‘les Casamançais envoient autant d’argent chez eux que n’importe qui’. Il cite aussi l’exemple de la récente pénurie de riz dans la région pour réfuter l’idée qu’en Casamance ‘on ne dépense rien pour se nourrir.’ Pour I. Bodian, ‘l’épargne dont on parle n’est qu’une mesure de prudence. On épargne pour construire une maison au village ou préparer ses vieux jours’. Cette propension à l’épargne en dehors des théories a priori et des préjugés peut s’expliquer par une forte survivance de l’économie de subsistance dans la région et par la situation socio-économique de la majorité des épargnants casamançais. En Casamance, il était (il est encore) de tradition de garder une partie importante de la récolte de riz pour supporter la période de soudure et pallier les déboires qui pourraient résulter d’une pluviométrie déficiente. Les greniers sont sacrés. Seules les grands moments familiaux sont l’objet de dépenses coûteuses, notamment le mariage, mais surtout les funérailles (en pays animiste) et la circoncision dont les cérémonies pouvaient durer hier encore cinq mois. (...) A cette tentative d’élucidation basée sur la référence traditionnelle s’ajoute une autre qui veut que les Casamançais concernés par le fait de l’exode rural grossissent les villes où ils sont économiquement faibles et ignorent scientifiquement l’existence des banques [a curiously self-defeating explanation]. Cette thèse peut être corroborée par la prolifération d’associations d’entraide formées sur la base des appartenances territoriales et dont le but est d’affirmer le devoir de solidarité à l’endroit de frères attachés par les mirages de la ‘ville cruelle’ et en proie à des difficultés rédhibitoires. Pour I. Diédhiou, la nécessité de l’épargne s’explique parce que les ressortissants de la métropole du sud sont les principaux soutiens de leurs familles confrontées à de nouvelles réalités économiques. (...): La région méridionale est suivie de la région du Cap-Vert avec une mention spéciale pour Dakar–banlieue, Rufisque surtout [a suburb of Dakar where the Diola are particularly numerous]. Les autres regions sont presque à des niveaux d’épargne similaires.” It is probable that the over-representation of Casamançais patrons at the CNE has to do with the fact that the Casamançais are over-represented among the workers of the formal sector, and thus have bank accounts, since formal wages have to be paid in banks. The survey actually does confirm that the typical bank saver is usually a small wage-earner from the formal sector. But what is fascinating is how the interviewees in the article, M. N. D. and I. Diédhiou, try to make sense of the surprising interest of the Casamançais for savings: rather than explaining such a modern practice as bank savings via the ‘modernisation’ of Casamance and the constitution of a large group of small formal wage-earners, both look for ‘cultural’ or ‘traditional’ explanations.
In the absence of satisfactory statistics, we have resorted to the construction of a specific statistical measurement, through a systematic study of results of state examinations published in the *Journal officiel de la République du Sénégal* of 1977. The sample thus constituted includes 4,181 names. Patronyms give a fairly accurate indication of Diola ethnicity, and leaving all doubtful cases out, the Diola were *at least* 383, i.e. 9.2 per cent of the sample. Let us remember here that, according to the 1988 census, the Diola made up only 5.3 per cent of the population - a clear case then of over-representation.

These data also allow us to examine the educational niche occupied by the Diola inside the civil service. On the same sample, if one takes into account only those results which indicated holders of the baccalauréat or a superior degree, one finds 373 persons, of which only 18 are unequivocally Diola, i.e. slightly less than 4.8 per cent of the sample. While they were over-represented in the civil service, the Diola thus had a fairly proportionate share of the most qualified civil servants; it seems reasonable to see here an indication that they were thus more numerous in the least qualified jobs of the civil service. An additional clue can be gotten from the examination of the 1977 list of the holders of the baccalauréat recruited at the University of Dakar: over a group of 2,094 graduates, there were only 99 typical Diola patronyms, i.e. 4.7 per cent of the sample.

*The Casamançais niche in civil service*

Indeed, qualitative and quantitative data concur to indicate that educated Lower Casamançais occupied a specific niche in civil service: most of them would hold lower rank positions, as privates and non-commissioned officers, postmen and clerks.

---

50 1977 was chosen because it comes at the apex of the Senegalese civil service, before its crisis and before the beginning of separatist activities in Lower Casamance.

51 This statistical approach is based on all the 1977 issues of *Journal Officiel de la République du Sénégal*. State examination results usually mention the patronym and the place of birth, and eventually the place of training. Of course, in Senegal, patronyms are not a perfect indication of ethnicity, because changing names is frequent and because some patronyms are shared by various ethnic groups, but one can still form pretty accurate guesses – all dubious cases were counted out. Happily enough, many Diola names are very typical (Badji, Diatta, Diémé, Diédhiou, Djiba, Lambal, Niassy, Sagna, Sambou); only a few Diola patronyms are shared with other ethnic groups, for instance Sonko with the Serer, or Mané with the Balante and the Manding. Name-changes are frequent in the Casamance in contexts of migration and conversion, but they are mostly due to Diola taking over north Senegalese or Manding names. Thus, the importance of the Diola in those statistics might be slightly underestimated.

52 It has thus far not been possible to check the level of each examination. Only those examinations for which the level could be clearly established have been taken into account.

53 The list is published in *Journal officiel de la République du Sénégal*, 14 May 1977.
schoolmasters and health services employees. Casamançais employment took this shape as a result of a consequential constraint: the limited availability of secondary and higher education in Casamance, when compared to a massive primary schooling system. Indeed from an early period, whereas primary education was strong in the region, secondary education always remained limited; the lack of personnel and the focus on the Quatre Communes where large white communities lived that had to be given a normal, metropolitan education, caused this discrepancy. In 1990 only was a lycée opened in Bignona; lycée classes were opened in Oussouye even later; until then, the only institutions which prepared pupils for the baccalauréat were in Ziguinchor: the lycée Djignabo and the Catholic collège Charles Lwanga. This lack of secondary education was ameliorated for a while by a policy of scholarships, which nevertheless remained very exclusive.

Consequently, the kind of employment that Casamançais could get was tightly defined, and this was further reinforced by the functioning of the Senegalese system of civil service recruitment. The recruitment system of the Senegalese civil service, continuing the French model, depends very much on formal education; all jobs are organised in four broad categories, A, B, C and D, which each correspond to a different level of formal education. D is for people recruited with the Certificat d’Etudes Primaires, an exam taken at the end of primary education; C is for people with the Brevet de Fin d’Etudes Moyennes, which takes place after secondary education; B is for people with the Baccalauréat - the end of higher education - or more; and A is for people with a licence – bachelor’s degree - or more; another category has been added, E, for people without formal education, but its recruitment is very limited. This system is very rigid, and it is usually not possible to cross from one category to another - unless one takes additional exams. This system of categories determines the type of employment one has access to and is also related to a salary scale, which calculates earnings according to category and seniority. Of course, from the large educated population of Lower Casamance, a number succeeded brilliantly, but most of them belonged to categories C and D. Nevertheless, in the 1950s and 1960s, category C and D jobs constituted very enviable positions, especially in Casamance, where opportunities to earn money were still limited; those who had such jobs could settle long-term in the cities, help their parents in the village, cater for new migrants; their social status would be very high. Those who were in the armed forces or the gendarmerie would retire after the usual
fifteen years of service, with a pension, and start a second life, return to the village and invest in farming equipment, set up a small workshop or join the civil service. Both civil servants and servicemen enjoyed a privileged position.

**A further confirmation: the weakness of female education**

Further confirmation of the connection between school and civil service jobs can be found in the gap that has persisted between girls’ and boys’ schooling. From the 1940s to the 1970s, the silent revolution of schooling took place to the advantage of young men mostly, and the schooling rate of girls in Lower Casamance, though markedly higher than anywhere else in Senegal, nevertheless remained substantially lower than that of boys.

This had undoubtedly had to do with the fact that the state, colonial and post-colonial, despite its proclaimed goals of civilisation, was pursuing the pragmatic, short-term goal of training auxiliaries, and in the colonial period, there were few civil service jobs that could be held by women. Thus only a minimal level of female education was maintained in public schools - after all, women could be good nurses and schoolteachers, as they had proved to be in France during the Third Republic, but educated Casamançais girls employed in the civil service remained a rare occurrence, as examination of the payroll of the civil servants in the cercle de Ziguinchor up to 1960 quickly makes clear; most of the few women mentioned were the metropolitan wives of French schoolteachers, employed as schoolteachers themselves.

The Catholic Church was in a quite different position, since it schooled not for jobs, but for faith - and for civilisation, which seemed a pre-requisite. Female souls seemed as worthy of salvation as male ones: Christians are somehow like angels, and sex does not really matter. Of course, sex did make a difference, since schooling for girls in Catholic schools included housekeeping, but general education was not entirely neglected either. And the Church offered an attractive model for Casamançais girls: the African nun. As early as 1905, when the Catholic Church was made to close down its schools, 40 to 60 of its 145 to 165 pupils in Ziguinchor were

---

54 It is a possibility that the early exposure of some Diola girls to European techniques of housekeeping in Catholic schools played a part in guiding their migration towards domestic jobs; the similitude with the Serer might be a clue: the Serer too have a strong Catholic minority, and many Serer girls work as maids in Dakar.
girls, and so were 45 of its 81 pupils in Carabane 55. The offer of female schooling was thus not altogether absent from Lower Casamance.

If female schooling long remained low in Lower Casamance, it had to do with the fact that school opened very few opportunities for the girls, and while French education seemed unpromising for girls, they and young women saw in employment as maids in the cities a fairly satisfying path to modernity: surely, seeing the other girls coming back from Dakar with money, goods and clothes, the prospect of spending long years at school with no guaranteed results in difficult exams must have given village girls food for thought... The boys had almost no choice.

Of course, over the years, education became so important in Lower Casamance that it was transformed into an end valuable in itself. The Diola literati increasingly pressed for female education 56. After all, female education would only confirm the évolués’ own attainments... But though job opportunities for women developed in the early post-colonial era, a gap has remained between male and female education in Lower Casamance. Certainly primary schooling became quasi-universal in Lower Casamance, and the primary schooling rate of girls in the region is rather high, as Table II.1 above indicates. But there remains a difference in quality and intensity. Families usually do not invest as much on the education of girls as on the education of boys 57; while families will devote much effort to finding the proper schools and the proper tuteur for their boys and, in the case of resits, are ready to pay for private schools, girls usually stay in the village school for a few years, and then leave at their first failure in the state school system. In a society where formal education is so entrenched, education is a good thing even for girls, but families usually behave as if it were not worth investing too much money on...

In the preceding sections, we have seen how a growing social demand, undiverted by trade or Islam, combined with a large supply of private and public schooling and civil service jobs to result in the emergence of a group of educated men with such jobs. Of course, in the 1950s, neither schooling nor civil service jobs concerned a large number of people in Casamance. Only a minority of young men

55 In ANS J19.
56 See for instance the comment of a future leader of the separatist rebellion: “I wanted to explain to the Diola that we could no longer leave formal education to boys while girls come to work as maids. Our brothers who will be chief executives in ministries, who will be their personal assistants? Little Wolof girls?”. Interview with Mamadou Sané Nkrumah, Paris, 27 September 1999.
57 See Reboussin (1995; chapter 4): “When I was old enough to go to school, I went through the third year [of primary school] and my father said, ‘It’s not worth paying school fees for a girl’.”
actually took part in the process; but this change was significant enough to reshape the whole society, the success of these men, however humble their actual functions might have been, was such that school and civil service employment rapidly became an unquestioned project for most young men in Lower Casamance. School was so successful in Lower Casamance that it gradually infiltrated and influenced the whole society – the progressive extension of primary schooling to girls is merely an example of this process.

**The figure of the évolué: reshaping the public sphere in the village**

The emergence of a group of young literati has permanently modified the cultural and political order of Lower Casamançais villages. Urbanity and school penetrated very deep into the villages, and a whole new array of cultural practices was introduced. They came to form a complete system of social differentiation, which further confirmed that formal education was the new major resource in Lower Casamance. The literati were not only migrants who could bring home tin-sheets and bags of rice or cement - undoubtedly, because of their wages, the literati could bring more of everything than the other migrants, and particularly the maids. But the literati were also évolués. This word, which is still in use in Diola villages, is a key-term of the colonial era; the évolués were the elite Africans who were supposed to lead the modernisation of Africa, as opposed to their fellow-villagers, the supposed ‘primitives’. The knowledge and know-how of the évolués, their mores, their financial resources, their newly acquired skills all combined to give them social eminence. As a result of their new legitimacy, the évolués emerged as communal leaders, thus reshaping the public sphere in their home villages.

**The cultural practices of the évolués as a yardstick of success**

In Lower Casamance as elsewhere in West Africa, school brought about the development of a whole new set of socio-cultural practices; those practices (theatre, football, ballroom dancing and music, new dress codes) became statutory components of what it was to be an évolué. In Lower Casamance, these practices permeated deep into the villages, and are still highly visible at present, setting apart this region from the other rural districts of Senegal. Indeed, the profound penetration of these practices throughout Lower Casamance, which has no equal elsewhere in Senegal, is a witness to the importance of schooling in the region. In our attempt at
interpreting these practices, we should insist on the element of novelty, fun and excitement which those practices had, and which played no small part in their successful dissemination. But they mattered also because they provided an occasion for the successful évolutés to display their new skills and make manifest their success, both individually (one against all) and collectively (the youth against the elders). This is why they became so widespread and conspicuous.

There were many ways in which the évolutés could perform as dominant social figures – their ability to negotiate with the state bureaucracy and the material assistance which their wages allowed them to send to their families played no small part in their increasing legitimacy after World War II. But social occasions like theatre, football or ballroom dancing, because they were public, played a major part in the development of a whole new scale of social prestige around the new dominant figure of the évoluté. New évoluté practices set a new yardstick visible in the villages themselves, which confirmed that everyone (or every man) had to try for himself the new pathway to prosperity which school had opened.

From its arrival in West Africa, modern theatre had been inextricably related to school; it was first developed in French West Africa in the 1930s as a pedagogical device, in Ecole normale William Ponty, the elite school dedicated to the training of high-level autochthonous auxiliaries to French colonisation. Adapting from the practice of theatre in metropolitan French schools, the staff of Ponty had decided that school theatre should be educational, concerned with local history and tradition, and focus on local social issues. School theatre progressively became a defining feature of educated elites throughout West Africa: in every city which hosted a sufficiently large number of educated men, theatrical groups were set up. In Lower Casamance, because of mass schooling, theatre was to have a particularly strong impact. In Ziguinchor, as early as 1944, an association called La Fraternelle, “grouping students and alumni of the various schools gives stages some theatrical shows during the holidays”. During the 1950s and 1960s, most villages of Lower Casamance had their own theatrical companies, which performed during the summer holidays.

---

58 Bielemeier (1990) offers a detailed history of French-speaking theater in Senegal. This section of school theatre owes a lot to numerous discussions with Jean-Hervé Jézéquel.

59 This was related to a broader interest which French educational institutions developed for the traditions and history of West Africa. Around the same time, a Bulletin de l'Enseignement de l'AOF was published, later to be renamed L'Éducation africaine; it combined pedagogical material and 'African' short stories, proverbs, historical and ethnographic notes; some of the plays written for African theatre by staff or pupils of Ponty were published in this Bulletin.
Sport, and particularly football, was equally related to schooling, in both its Catholic and state versions. In 1944, two sports’ unions existed in Ziguinchor. The first one, La Jeanne d’Arc, grouped Catholic youths, under the guidance of Father Février; the second one, L’Union sportive de la Casamance, grouped specifically the educated youth. These two unions were active in football and athletics. Six years later, new associations had cropped up throughout Lower Casamance; the subdivision of Bignona boasted three sports’ unions, L’Athlétic and two Catholic Jeanne d’Arc, one in Bignona, the other one in Soutou; in other Catholic centres of the subdivision notably Elana and Affiniam, smaller societies existed. Progressively, throughout Lower Casamance, in villages, more or less formal groups were set up that usually dealt with theatre and sport.

Ballroom-dancing was the other activity which saw a particularly rapid development in rural Lower Casamance. In all villages, the youth would provide for a cemented floor and a record-player with the latest songs. Ballroom-dancing had the educated young men in suits meet with the young maids in European dresses, demonstrating their new urbanity in a way quite different from traditional dances, which set genders apart. The testimony of Momodou Sané Nkrumah, leader-to-be of the separatist movement, on 1960s dances is illustrative:

Q: What about the migrants’ association in Dakar?
A: I found the association there, in Dakar, in 1959. Before I went there, I was a member of the village association. In 1959, in the village, the oldest youth had decided to create a dance club; the elders could not dance European dances; the bugarab [traditional Diola drum] yes, they could, but not the dances with the record-player. So the youth got together in a club to dance those dances. (…)
Q: And what would you do with the association’s money?
A: (…) In 1962-1963, we paid a brand new record-player, with a microphone and everything. Before that, we had a really bad one. We paid 75,000 Francs, avenue Jean-Jaurès, in Dakar. Our village was the first to have this kind of equipment.
Q: What kind of music was it, at the time?
A: It was Zairian and Cuban music. Momodou Diémé, when he graduated from the school of horticulture in Cambéréne had a one-year scholarship in Houdan [in France], because he was one of the best. So he came back with French music, Enrico Macias, Francoise Hardy, Sylvie Vartan. We imposed French music even if people did not dance, we really wanted it.

Thus, year after year, new haircuts, new clothes, new music would be brought from town to village, playing an important role in the structuration of communities.

Little has been written about the reception of these practices in the villages, and interviews revealed conflicting views. Certainly those practices could fit in easily in

---

60 ANS 2G44/106, Rapport politique 1944, Cercle de Ziguinchor.
61 ANS 2G50/115, Rapport annuel 1950, Subdivision de Bignona.
the old models, in a society where age groups formed a major basis for sociability. Football thus became the functional equivalent of wrestling contests, an occasion for the young men to demonstrate their bravery and attract the girls’ attention. But there are some indications that these new practices could be at odds with the elders’ views. We should beware of exaggerating the degree of control which the elders exerted over the public space among the Diola 63, but there is little doubt that in such a society, public speech and performance were no small matter, and that theatre and sports were powerful means to break up the elders’ control over public speech. For instance, the performance of ‘traditional’ dances, which Ponty-inspired school theatre encouraged, was seen in conflicting lights: these performances were an indication that the youth still had an interest for their father’s practices, but they also bypassed the elders’ role, and broke away from the proper apprenticeship - one can easily guess how controversial these initiatives could be.

Even those practices that did not meddle with the elders’ ‘traditions’ could equally stir up trouble. Amadou Diémé thus recounts how little his father enjoyed his public performance when he first came back to his village as a new civil servant:

I entered the *cours normal* [teacher’s training course] of Mbour in 1963, I got my *brevet* in 1967. So I thought my status had changed. With the *brevet*, one could become a civil servant. So when I came back to Bignona, I wore my tie, my white shirt, my jacket. At the Gambian ferry, I had bought a pack of cigarettes Boyard. My uncle, an engineer, had offered me a football – I was a very good football-player. When I approached home, I was walking elegantly. Behind me, my father was there, walking with his *grand boubou* [Muslim robes], at first, he did not know it was me, he could not recognise me. But when he finally realised who I was, he smacked me in the face twice. I ran off full speed for the house, I reached the house before my luggage. I took the tie away, and I crushed the cigarettes. I had wanted to say ‘I am grown up, I am mature’; away from my parents, I could do that, but once I was home, I was subjected to custom again 64.

Amadou Diémé’s comical depiction of his return hints at a series of tensions which the development of this new status group of *évolués* could provoke. Nevertheless, the legitimacy of the young *évolués* quickly became such that there was little that could to be said against their practices.

These various social occasions came to function as rating systems - fluency in French, the wearing of the proper clothes, dancing skills were the new scales on which individual merits were weighed. For the people that would never go to town,

---

63 Anthropologists of Diola society disagree over the meaning of *kumpo*, a ritual masquerade performed by the youth. See De Jong (1999) for a presentation of the various arguments - a ritual imported and controlled fully by the youth, or a ritual controlled by the elders to regulate the behaviour of the youth. Like most social practices, pre-colonial practices were not lacking in ambiguity and double entendre...

64 Interview with Amadou Diémé (alias), Dakar, March 1997.
these occasions only highlighted their ignorance, and they confirmed to the ones that could go that it was well worth going. From the 1950s onwards, these practices became the very stuff from which status was made in Lower Casamançais communities... In the areas of Casamance that had been Islamised under the previous generation, this new set of practices and values replaced Islam altogether, which the first-generation Islamised elders often did not accept well.

It would thus be wrong to define *évolué*-ness merely by a qualification, an income and a position in the labour market – in the definition of the new social group, leisure activities played an equally significant part, endowing it with a meaning in local societies. As the previous generation had embraced Islam and cash-cropping together, the new *évolués* embraced a whole series of new practices, leisures, of course, but also, beyond that, an *hexis*, a specific training of the body, and values – *évolué*-ness was not only a class, it was a full-fledged ‘status group’ with its own ‘style of life’, to borrow from Max Weber’s terminology.\(^{65}\)

**The *évolués* as communal leaders: the associations de ressortissants**

Building on their growing number, prestige and resources, the *évolués* took to coordinating the large Diola migrant communities among which they were emerging as leading figures. Back in the village, they started to organise the youth around the new cultural practices which they had been learning. In town, they structured solidarity networks and transformed them into full-fledged *associations de ressortissants*, which progressively engaged in developmental activities. Increasingly, while the villages were transforming into multi-local communities coalesced by constant migration, they played the part of communal leaders.

The first sphere in which the *évolués* intervened was recreation. The new practices learnt in school and town – theatre, ballroom dancing and football – were brought back to the villages. They trickled down from town to village during the summer holidays, when the students came back. Starting in the 1940s, in order to co-ordinate these new activities, the young *évolués* introduced new structures in the villages: formal associations formed throughout Lower Casamance, under various names.

\(^{65}\) See Weber (1952 : 193) : “With some over-simplification, one might thus say that ‘classes’ are stratified according to their relations to the production and acquisition of goods; whereas ‘status groups’ are stratified according to the principles of their consumption of goods as represented by special ‘styles of life’.” Other authors have insisted on the importance of consumption and leisure in the constitution of groups – see for instance Veblen (1992) or Elias (1983).
In the Bandial, around Enampore, the Union Culturelle du Royaume Afilédhio (UCRA) was created in 1958; because the villages of Bandial had become interested in school only lately and their contingents of students were too small, this association was created grouping all the villages of the zone where Afilédio, the priest-king of Enampore, formerly ruled:

The main organisers were Marcel Bassène [now a lecturer in Mathematics at Dakar University, and opposition MP, then a 15-year old student] and Georges Bassène, from Essyl, Jean Bassène, from Etama, and Tendeng, from Bandial. It was for intellectuals and executives, in July. It later came to affect the whole village. Their activities were sport, culture - theater, education and summer schools. (...) When I was young, we staged a play which recounted the history of our village, Etama. Our ancestors left Bandial because of problems about ricefields. It taught the children our history. I was playing a warrior who had stayed in Bandial and who came to warn the people of Etama: ‘be careful, the people of Bandial will come and attack you’. 66.

In the beginning, these were only youth associations, created to deal with youth recreational activities. It seems that in their early periods, some of them at least excluded all the uneducated youth of the village; in any case, the leadership of these associations was confided to the best educated youths, coming from écoles normales or lycées. These associations collected membership fees, invested in the buying of a record player and a few records, a ball and a set of sports gear for football; they would also build a foyer (a meeting place) to host the activities of the association. They would also run summer schools, where the older students or wage-earners would teach the younger children in the village. Thus, in 1955, a Abba Sambou, then a student at the Lycée Faidherbe in Saint-Louis, wrote to the colonial authorities about the creation of a Renaissance scolaire de Bignona. This association, based in Bignona, grouped exclusively students or civil servants around three main goals: “1°/ to give summer schools (2 months); 2°/ to organise theatrical events and balls; 3°/ to practice sports and scoutism” 67.

All this seemed rather normal and unremarkable: in Diola society, age groups already had their own associations, and the new youth groups seemed to follow this pattern. But progressively, around the 1950s and 1960s, as the young men turned into

---

66 Interview with Souleymane Bassène (alias), Ziguinchor-Grand Dakar, 10 July 1999.
67 In ANS 11D1/149, Lettre de Abba Sambou, élève au Lycée Faidherbe de Saint-Louis pour la création de la Renaissance scolaire de Bignona, en juillet 1955. See also ANS 11D1/406, Lettre de l’inspecteur adjoint de police Diallo Moctar à Monsieur le commissaire de police de la ville de Ziguinchor, Ziguinchor, le 19 juin 1953: “The association called ‘Les deux amis’ is a group created by young boys last August; its seat is in Boucotte, at Boubacar Couloubaly’s. This group, which included 20 members at its beginning, almost all of them students, had the purpose of raising monthly dues of 75 Francs, and organise recreational activities for some of the members on their departure to the higher schools.”
civil servants, wealthy and prestigious, as they got married and had children, youth associations transformed into formal village associations. Occasionally, under the impulse of the évolués, a village would hold a congrès, a large-scale meeting in which all villagers, migrants and villagers, students and illiterates, maids and old cultivators, were theoretically united to discuss the village’s social problems. Le Soleil, the Senegalese daily, in an article entitled “Les congrès de village: une innovation des Casamançais”, noted the precocious development of this new trend among the Lower Casamançais, and clearly related it to formal education.

As a result of this initiative there has been a slow revolution over the past years and a change among the population. The “ressortissants” of the various “villages exodés” towards urban centres organise. These groups detect all shifts in their native villages, henceforth a crucial challenge for the village congresses. It is a double mission towards our populations. First, rural exodus is progressively brought to a halt. Second, one takes part to the village life, no matter how remote one is from its realities. (...). Among these groupings in Casamance, the most dynamic are found in the department of Bignona, because this department is more animated, with a high schooling rate.

The building or maintenance of the village school, the supply of school stationery and books were among the first problems congrès and village associations considered. But they rapidly shifted to larger issues, such as the raising of money for the building of religious edifices or healthcare centres, the lobbying of politicians, the preparation of village festivals and rituals. In a later phase the associations developed economic investments, investing in village shops, taxis-brousse, or market gardening. Thus the recreational associations of the early évolués progressively transformed into local political arenas, a clear sign that the balance had shifted in Diola society. Mamadou Diémé, from Tendième, thus describes the first congress in his village:

Q : When did the first congress take place ?
A: The first congress in Tendième was in 1972, I was one of the prime movers, one of the leaders of the youth. There was a Peul who had a shop, who despised the villagers. So we of the youth, we wanted to kick him out. And also we thought that the youth were not interested enough in the village, that they did not take part to [agricultural] works. So we had the minister here [Emile Badiane, a Casamançais minister who hailed from Tendième], and all villagers. The ones who came from Dakar were like heroes, they talked of great things. And we talked about the health centre, and Emile said “yes, we are going to see to it”. But he welcomed the initiative well.

Q : And how did villagers accept it ?
A: It was the youth association that had organised it, so it was well received. We had used the representative [Mamadou Angrand Badiane, another leading politician from Tendième] to help us organise the congress, and we let him preside it... He called all villagers, saying that one wanted to speak with them. It was quite authoritarian, I must say, not very participatory.

68 In Le Soleil, 13 June 1980.
69 Interview with Mamadou Diémé (alias), Dakar, 28th June 1999.
From Diémé’s account itself, the whole process was not very participatory – the leading youth would use the political leaders, minister Emile Badiane and representative Momodou Angrand Badiane to impose their way on the villagers. After all, as Diémé puts it, they were the men from Dakar, they were the ‘heroes’ of the new world...

On the whole, older men and women seem to maintain a rather cautious attitude towards those associations, fully cognisant that they are not their business. I was able to witness from a distance a meeting of one such association:

M. mentioned this morning a meeting of the ward’s association at the Youth Club. Impossible to take part. The meeting lasts a whole morning and part of the afternoon. I hang around the Club, a large building with a tin-sheet roof and a cemented floor. Inside, around fifty young men, and a few women. All men wear European clothes. Those I know come from the Gambia or Dakar, and they have come especially for this meeting. People talk Diola, but some French may be heard. All the while, outside, elders pass by, wearing the tattered boubous they wear to work, carrying machetes and kadiendos. This is June, and the ricefields must be prepared 70.

In the same area, around the central plaza of the village, it seemed like two worlds were cohabitating, but would not actually mix. Village elders soon had no other way but to follow these associations, since they were proving able to muster large sums of money and manpower, and they felt that they did not belong in this new social sphere. These new village initiatives were organised and run by the urbanites and the educated youth. Like the recreational practices, they were occasions for these new social groups to demonstrate their newly acquired skills and identity, to make manifest their new social status, to impose their new system of social classification. These occasions marked the final victory of the literati, who were thus able to invade the public sphere back home. A whole new society had emerged, which placed school at its centre and accepted the hierarchies it traced.

**Conclusion**

The answer to the riddle of the high level of primary education that has set Lower Casamance apart from the rest of Casamance and from the rest of Senegal since the 1940s is a complex one. It was a whole set of imbricated factors that combined to produce this peculiarity. A growing social demand, undiverted by trade or Islam, met with a large supply of private and public schooling and civil service jobs – chronology played a part, for the timing of the insertion of Lower Casamance

---

70 Fieldwork notes, April 1999.
in the colonial system was crucial. Initially, the young men recruited in those jobs were not numerous, but their success was such that formal education and civil service employment quickly became an unquestioned project for most young men, and for the multi-local communities around them; the quest for formal education would result in massive collective investments and sacrifices (often in the proper sense). Evolution became the new legitimate cultural repertoire of social promotion.\footnote{The notion of cultural repertoire of social promotion is proposed by Ellis, Hibou & Bayart (1997).}

In January 1959, one such évolué, Doudou Mohamed Sarr, a teacher in a Bignona state school and local secretary-general of the Parti du Renouveau Africain-Sénégal (PRA-S), an opposition party, sent a letter to the administrateur in Bignona, denouncing the maneuvers of the ruling party, the Union Progressiste Sénégalaise (UPS). Among other things, Sarr reproached the leaders of the UPS with denying access to school to villages or individuals that supported the PRA-S:

\textit{Monsieur l'administrateur, everywhere people want schools. This need for the creation [of schools] sometimes erupts in violent ways. Education, we now realise, is increasingly a claim of the rural masses who, contributing as they are to the FERDES [sic – probably FIDES], try to fight against the scourge of ignorance. But in this accelerated policy of schooling, the UPS develops another policy, one of repression, which creates around state schools unhealthy trends.}

This, soon after the last referendum [the 1958 referendum on whether Senegal should remain in the Union française], the village of Diatock, which had freely voted No, was had its school cancelled by the winners of the day, even though the inhabitants of the place had already given 200,000 Francs.

In Balingore, we followed all the pressures which the UPS authorities of the canton exerted on the PRA-leaning headmaster (...). Let us add that the school in Diouloulou was threatened with the interruption of the works. In Diakoye-Banga, our partisans of Niankit would have been subjected to the same iniquities if the canton chief had not seen to it.

And last Sunday, while a decision prevented us from answering the invitation of our militants in Suelle, a UPS group led by Kébadinding Dramé organised a meeting in Mangoulé, at Sadia’s, sniggering at us in front of the masses, leading the local UPS majority to threaten to dismiss from school the children of the PRA militants.\footnote{In ANS 11D1/180, Lettre adressée par Doudou Mohamed Sarr, secrétaire-général du PRA-S à Bignona, le 13 janvier 1959, à Monsieur l’administrateur, chef de subdivision de Bignona.}

Doudou Sarr himself was an évolué – he was a Diola, born in Kagnobon, but had grown up in Ziguinchor, in the house of a Sarr, a man from north Senegal, where he had been educated.\footnote{Doudou Sarr is one example of cross-ethnic name-changing. On Doudou Sarr, interview with Samba Sané (alias), Badiana, 15-16 March 2000.} In the early 1950s, he had started working as a schoolteacher. Sarr’s letter is a further testimony of the importance school had rapidly taken on in Lower Casamance: by the end of the 1950s, it had already become a sufficiently valued institution for its access to be used as a reward or a
punishment in patronage politics. But this letter also introduces us to some interesting features of Casamançais politics: there was a political side to the social eminence which the évolutés attained in Lower Casamance, which requires attention.

74 In the 1940s already, canton chief Arfan Sonko, from Bessire, punished the traditional rival village of Kagnobon by refusing to enlist their children for school. Interview with Mbaye Cissé (alias), a Manding native of Kagnobon, Ziguinchor, 9 March 2000.
CHAPTER III

LEGAL REGIONALISM AND

THE POST-1945 POLITICAL EMERGENCE OF THE EVOLUÉS

My first contact with politics dates from 1951. (...). Originally enough, we had decided we would vote for the candidate who spoke French the better. In Sédhiou, we had such bright boys... We called ourselves the ‘disciples of Vaugelas’, who was the father of French grammar. We were so presumptuous. The parameter, mistakes in French. We had specialists and when you talked, you had to think about it first, for you were being watched. Senghor won. Lamine Guèye did not come. Ousmane Socé Diop replaced him 1.

The purpose of the MFDC is to group and unite all populations of Casamance towards the realisation of a political programme of rational democratisation, ascensional evolution of the masses [“évolution ascensionnelle de la masse”], and amelioration of the standard of living. The activity of the MFDC is based on the resolutions adopted by the political advisers of the movement in their call of the 23 of February 1949, whose main principle [“quintessence”] is to reform our local politics and mobilise as an intellectual community to identify, analyse and solve various the local issues in a general framework, without interfering or creating obstacles to issues of interest to Senegal as a whole or to another region of the Colony in its own sphere. For the time being, the MFDC is autonomous, and is not affiliated to any regional, federal or metropolitan movement 2.

A nationalist mythology 3

Modern Casamançais separatists, as nationalists often will, are keen on tracing the genealogy of their movement; they are experts in post mortem recruitment, and enlist from the centuries a host of fighters, kings and prophetesses who have opposed French or Portuguese colonial invasion. Looking hard enough, the separatists also found recent ancestors, in the turbulent years after the World War II, the years of the advent of mass politics in Senegal and Casamance. In one of their earliest texts, separatists thus made it plain that they considered their own action to be a revival of earlier political activities. They even drew their movement’s name, the Mouvement

1 In Courrier du Sud, 9, December 1998. This is an extract from an interview with Bassirou Cissé, a political figure of the 1960s and 1970s Casamançais politics.
2 Extract from the statutes of the MFDC, Chapter I, Article II. Source : personal archives.
3 Writing this chapter, I have had the chance to benefit from the expertise of Catherine Atlan on post-1945 politics in colonial Senegal and on that of Jean-Hervé Jézéquel on the literati in French West African politics. Needless to say, the mistakes are mine.
des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (MFDC), from a regional political group active during the late 1940s and early 1950s:

Our Casamançais brothers, among others Emile Badiane, Edouard Diatta, Edouard Diallo, Ibou Diallo, created the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (MFDC), at the congress of Sédhiou, on the 4th of March 1947. (...) In order to support [Léopold Sédar] Senghor, the MFDC, without ever renouncing its options, without ever sinking itself, froze its activities so as to facilitate the birth of the BDS [Senghor’s party]. It was the first big mistake of our elders, for gratefulness is not a Senegalese trait. (...) As for the Mouvement Autonome de Casamance [MAC] of Assane Seck and Louis Dacosta, it affiliated to the Union Démocratique Sénégalaise [UDS], Senegalese section of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain [RDA] 5. Its members subsequently joined the Senegalese section of the Parti du Regroupement Africain, le PRA-Sénégal (...). They were, until a very recent past, the warmest supporters of the immediate independence of Casamance by armed confrontation 6.

If this text insists that the first MFDC had taken part to the BDS “without ever sinking itself”, it is because the modern separatists lay claim to its heirloom 7. Later in the separatists’ ideological justifications appeared a complicated story of how Senegalese president-to-be Léopold Sédar Senghor and Emile Badiane, one of the founders of the first MFDC, had signed an agreement about a temporary integration of Casamance in Senegal at some point in the 1940s or 1950s, how this agreement had been kept hidden by the Senegalese government beyond its expiry date and that the contemporary MFDC was merely claiming that temporary inclusion of Casamance in Senegal is overdue; some versions add that Emile Badiane was poisoned by the Senegalese secret service just in time to prevent him from demanding independence 8. Those 1940s and 1950s Casamançais regional(ist)

---

4 As will be seen below, the movement gained official recognition only in 1949. The separatists’ insistence on 1947 might have to do with the fact that they find in this early date a confirmation of the autonomy (and supposed separatist line) of the first MFDC from Senghor’s BDS, which was created in 1948 only.

5 As will be demonstrated below, the MAC never affiliated to the UDS-RDA, but allied with the SFIO, the Jacobine party against which the MFDC had actually been formed. The interpretation of this mistake is interesting – is it related to the fact that some leaders of the MAC were indeed former members of the RDA, or is it just a deliberate suppression of a fact that does not fit the pattern?

6 From a MFDC pamphlet transcribed in Darbon (1985 ; 132-133).

7 Examples of the same insistence that the first MFDC had never formally dissolved abound. See for instance La Voix de la Casamance, 50, March 1995.

8 Interview with Mamadou Nkrumah Sané, Paris, 6 December 2001. See also Lambert (1998), De Jong (2001 ; 213-214) or Gasser (2000 ; chapter 6). Gasser (2000; appendix 6) provides a fascinating transcription of a propaganda session in a Diola village in the late 1980s: “Senghor called Emile Badiane and told him ‘today, we do not have enough cadres. Especially in Casamance, those who have been to school are not that many. So I ask you, since we are brothers, we are going to put Casamance and Senegal to work together for twenty years, we are going to work ten years for Casamance, and then ten years for Senegal’. As for Ibou Diallo [another MFDC leader], he did not want that. Émile Badiane and his other friends followed Senghor’s way. Ibou Diallo told them: ‘If we do what they say, tomorrow, blood will be spilt in our Casamance for separation’. Now, it is this blood which is flowing. What Ibou Diallo said is now happening. So they signed for these [twenty] years.”
parties are thus an essential stake in the myth of origin of the modern MFDC, for they are taken to confirm the perennial existence of Casamançais political consciousness.

What is surprising is to see how easily this lineage is accepted by many, including a number of researchers, who buy the separatists’ claim without bothering to check its credentials; many start their analyses of Casamançais separatism with a section on the first MFDC, arguing that the second MFDC is a mere resurgence – like the nationalists, social scientists are on a quest for origins, and these two quests eventually overlap. There are actually few indications of a direct affiliation between the first MFDC and the second MFDC, and they are mostly rumours. Some say Father Diamacoune himself was a member of the first MFDC, or that he took part to a famous incident in Bignona in 1955, which pitted supporters of the MFDC and Léopold Sédar Senghor’s BDS against supporters of Lamine Guèye’s SFIO, but none of these elements have been proved yet. Apparently, very few members of the first MFDC joined the second MFDC; Bourama Faye Badji, a schoolteacher and politician who joined the second MFDC rather late, is the only example that readily comes to the mind of most separatists - and Badji’s line is known to be quite ambiguous.

Nevertheless, there existed regional political movements in post-1945 Casamance, and this calls for attention. The present chapter thus aims to assess the claims laid by the second MFDC. What was Casamançais post-war politics all about, then? How was Casamance politically integrated in the colony of Senegal? In the observation of Casamançais politics of the 1940s and 1950s, we can unfortunately not rely on the usual political history of Senegal. There are many studies of post-1945 Senegalese political life, but they say little about the questions that interest us here. Their focus bears on the grand epic of Leopold Sédar Senghor, his tightening grasp on Senegalese political life, his building of a Socialist party and his progressive

Authors working from second hand sources are the most likely to indulge in such a mistake. See for instance de la Grange & Balencie (1996), Foreign & Commonwealth Office (1999) or de Benoist (1991), who though they mention that the first MFDC was not separatist, take the lineage for granted; Perret (1994; 276) is less cautious and describes the first MFDC as a separatist movement; Manley (1998) seems to consider the MFDC survived throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Marut (1999; 122) mentions an article by Moussa Paye, in Sud Quotidien, 1 March 1994. An Father Senghor did take part to the 1955 Bignona incident, but it was not Father Diamacoune Senghor, who was ordained only in 1956. This homonymy is the probable source of the rumour. See Badji’s testimony in Barbier-Wiesser (1994).

inclusion of all oppositional groups. Most authors stick to a top-down approach, and build their narrative almost exclusively on one man, Senghor - either depicted as a modernist grand homme or as a traitor to the African cause, depending on the author’s political alignment. In these studies, institutional and ideological aspects of politics are often paid careful attention, to the detriment of social and local elements; no sense is made of what the experience of politics meant for most of the population; nor is any attention given to the regional variations of politics. Most of what is observed happens at party conferences or in meetings of the Assemblée territoriale, not to mention the French National Assembly. Outside the doors of assemblies, maybe Tivaouane and Touba, the holy cities of the Muslim brotherhoods, figure on the usual political maps of Senegal, too visible to be discounted, homes to the subtle allies of the winner of the game, President-to-be Léopold Sédar Senghor. The rest of the country makes a brief appearance on the stage as la brousse, an unremarkable mass of followers whose devotion to Senghor is unquestioned. Local processes and subaltern actors are abandoned. This calls for amendment: there was politics happening in the suburbs of Dakar, in bush villages and secondary towns, and these local political stages allowed for the grand epic of decolonisation, the narrative of Senghor’s coming to power to become historical possibilities, which functioned only in as much as they were able to plug into local narratives, cleavages and tensions, and make sense both of and in these; in each region of Senegal, and possibly in each village, these processes developed in different ways.

In Lower Casamance the story was that of the progressive political emergence of the class of autochthonous literati whose formation was described in the previous chapter. In this chapter, a first section describes pre-1945 politics - a closed game between the urban elites of Ziguinchor - the French traders, the Afro-Portuguese Mestizo community, and the civil servants and traders from the Quatre Communes, the main French settlements of northern Senegal; resentment by both the Creole community and the small independent French traders against the Quatre Communes were sources for the constitution of a limited elite urban regionalism. The second

---

13 La brousse, ‘the bush’ is a keyword in Senegalese politics, designating the rural areas, as opposed to the Quatre Communes, the old coastal/urban centres of French domination. It is still in use.

14 It seems that, while English-language African studies have long paid attention to local aspects of politics, francophone political scientists have usually kept to the capital city... For examples of English-language studies of local African politics, see Hopkins (1972), Dunn & Robertson (1973) or Villalon (1995). Curiously enough, francophone/French historians have led the way in the study of these local aspects of politics. See for instance Bois (1971), Agulhon (1970) or Weber (1982).
section analyses the emergence of the young Diola évoluté: a first step was the marginalisation of the Mestizo and French elites from the centre of the stage, under the guidance of the Quatre Communes African elites\textsuperscript{15}; then, the local évoluté themselves emerged as an autonomous political force and created the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance, a non-ethnic regionalist group. It was Senghor’s capacity to interpret and act through the structural opposition between la brousse and the Quatre Communes that brought him to power. The next two parts will discuss the subsequent emergence of two parties that played a special role in the Casamance – the Mouvement Autonome de Casamance (MAC) and the Parti du Regroupement Africain-Sénégal (PRA-S); it will be seen that under this apparent regionalist resurgence, the logics were those of political competition, ideology and age group. The last part will discuss the role of regionalism as a standard feature of one-party post-colonial politics.

\textsuperscript{15} The same process happened in the Quatre Communes during the 1910s, with the political emergence of Blaise Diagne, who took over from metropolitan French or Creoles. See Johnson (1991).
Pre-1945 political life in Lower Casamance

Before 1945, politics in Lower Casamance, as in the rest of rural Senegal, was limited to a very small number of participants. Of course, in rural Casamance as everywhere else in the colonial world, there was ‘politics’ going on, in as much as everyone, including the Casamançais indigènes themselves, was struggling over resources. In Casamance as elsewhere, some of the indigènes actually did rather well out of the pre-1945 colonial system, particularly those who exerted some degree of influence over the workings of the colonial state, either because they held official functions (clerks, interpreters and canton chiefs) or because, for one reason or another, they occupied the ground between the state and the people (traders, retired servicemen, religious leaders, schoolteachers)\(^\text{16}\). But on the whole, prior to 1945, the colonial state stood out of the reach of most people, and formal procedures of accountability and political negotiation were almost absent; the population actually showed little enthusiasm for contacts with a colonial state that was at the height of its coerciveness.

In this sense, pre-1945 politics was an elite game. In Casamance as a whole, it was only in Ziguinchor that a political arena was found, but it remained very exclusive, almost totally controlled by le Commerce - French and Lebanese entrepreneurs, and their more humble Mestizo and northern Senegalese counterparts. Still, somewhat paradoxically, it was in the arena of this municipal life that the idea of a Casamançais identity was first defended, building on the presence of an old ‘Portuguese’ community and on that of a small community of small independent European traders.

Citizens and subjects: the Senegalese context of Ziguinchorois politics

Senegal had a rather peculiar dualist political organisation inside France’s African empire: during the nineteenth century, a distinction had progressively emerged between two classes of Africans: while the rural masses were considered subjects (sujets), and were subjected to a restrictive Code de l’indigénat which deprived them of all political rights, the originaires of the Quatre Communes, Dakar, Rufisque, Gorée and Saint-Louis, the four historical sites of French presence in

---

\(^{16}\) Outside of the Casamançais context, Amadou Hampâté Ba (1973) has provided a classic example of such a performance, in the person of cunning interpreter Wangrin. In Casamance, some figures, like that of interpreter Tété Diédhiou, or canton chief Benjamin Diatta could qualify as Diola relatives of Ba’s Wangrin. The two men will make an appearance in this chapter.
northern Senegal, enjoyed full citizenship and had rights similar to those of Metropolitan citizens (citoyens); this had led to the election of an African representative, Blaise Diagne, to the French National Assembly in 1914. When establishing themselves away from the Quatre Communes, citizens kept their prerogatives and would normally pass them onto their children.

Ziguinchor thus held a peculiar position in the whole of Casamance, for while the quasi-totality of the inhabitants of Casamance were subjects, a number of French citizens with full political rights were settled in Ziguinchor: there was a small French Metropolitan community, civil servants and traders, and a number of Senegalese who were also French citizens; there was also a Afro-Portuguese Mestizo community (whose emic designations, “Creole” or “Portuguese”, will be used below), which struggled for political rights similar to those of the originaires.

Mestizo logics: the ‘Portuguese’ community of Ziguinchor

Ziguinchor was initially a Portuguese trading-post, established on the Casamance river towards the mid-seventeenth century 17. For two centuries before the colonial era, it had played a role in regional trade, controlling a north-south commercial connection with the larger Portuguese settlement of Cacheu. Deserted by metropolitan Portuguese, Ziguinchor had witnessed the development of a Christian Mestizo community who spoke a Portuguese Creole dialect and prided themselves on their Portuguese origin; but throughout the nineteenth century, Ziguinchor was increasingly absorbed into French commercial networks, and it stood on the east-west trade route which the French were busy establishing along the Casamance river. In 1886, an agreement was signed between France and Portugal, which gave Ziguinchor to France.

Among the Creoles of Ziguinchor, the French take-over was not well received: French rule would bring to an end the substantial autonomy which the Ziguinchor Creoles enjoyed. A sign of this hostility can be found, during World War I, in the Germanophilia of the Creoles of Ziguinchor and Portuguese Guinea 18. Still, it progressively became clear that the French annexation was irreversible, and the Ziguinchor Creoles started to militate to gain French citizenship. After all, they had

18 See Pélissier (1989 : 336-337, note 192). Pélissier thus notes that “The administrateur supérieur of Casamance notes that, despite the Portuguese entry into war [on the side of the Allies], the inhabitants of the trading-posts feel sympathy for the Germans, and not for the Allies. Subscription of Francs 13,500 in favour of the German casualties, and Francs 3,000 only for the French Red Cross.”
some qualifications for citizenship – they exhibited the signs of ‘civilisation’ which the French colonial authorities valued: some Creoles were rather wealthy and literate traders; many of them had long had contacts with their Mestizo counterparts in the *Quatre Communes*. Finally, even if the French Catholic missionaries were appalled at the ‘superstitions’ which crowded their Catholic religious practices, all Creoles were Christians 19.

This demand by the Mestizo community of Ziguinchor was a unique case in Casamance: while the rural population basically kept trying to ‘dodge’ and ‘exit’ the colonial state, and evade military recruitment and tax payment, the Mestizo community engaged with the colonial state. This is well illustrated by the issue of recruitment during World War I. Recruitment went relatively well throughout Casamance at the beginning of the war; but when it became clear that many recruits were dying, it became much more complicated. In Ziguinchor, though, as both Trincaz (1984; 47) and Roche (1985; 333) note, many young men from Ziguinchor volunteered during the tour which Blaise Diagne, the representative of Senegal to the French Assembly, made in 1918; two young Senegalese officers took part in the tour, Galandou Diouf, who later represented Senegal at the National Assembly, and Henri Gomis, a Mestizo tank lieutenant from Karabane 20. Diagne’s argument was that if Africans paid the price of blood, there would be little which the French could refuse them. Apparently, the young Mestizo were following Diagne’s strategy, and demanded to enlist with the same terms as people from the *Quatre Communes* and to be considered citizens. At the same time, the rural Diola had a very different attitude: they were simply fleeing recruitment by hiding in the bush or crossing into Portuguese Guinea or English Gambia. Borrowing from Ranger’s typology, one could say that while the Creoles were already engaging in modern proto-nationalist contestation, the Diola were still practising ‘primary resistance’ 21. For the Creole community of Ziguinchor, acquiring citizenship was a way to assert themselves against the new French traders that were pouring in Ziguinchor, to regain their past status, and to re-establish the lost statutory difference between them and the rural populations of Lower Casamance with whom they did business; for the Creole

19 On the missionaries’ appreciation of local Chrisian practice, see for instance *Bulletin de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit*, XVI, 1889-1891, 276-277 - the missionaries try to intervene to bring to an end the ‘traditional’ African funerals.

20 After the war, Gomis went back to Ziguinchor, where he settled as a trader. He figures on the list of members of the Chamber of Commerce in the 1930s and 1940s.

21 On this typology, see Ranger (1968).

urbanites of 1918 Ziguinchor, the real issue was equality with citizens (metropolitan French and northerners), and difference from subjects. The Creoles felt all the more legitimate, as they considered themselves to be the autochthonous inhabitants of Ziguinchor, the ‘sons of the land’ (filhu di terra), those who had first engaged in the economic development of the region. This touchy attitude based on privilege, civilisation, birth and autochthony, maintained long after 1945. In the 1940s and 1950s still, the colonial authorities noted many such instances: the Creoles apparently denounced the French and Lebanese traders’ dominance, or the Mancagne migrants from Portuguese Guinea who tried to pass off as Ziguinchor Creoles to get the French nationality and enter French school 22. As shall be seen in Chapter VI, this Creole sentiment maintained well into the late twentieth century.

Le Commerce français and the economic personality of Casamance

The French traders of Ziguinchor themselves, who were the object of the Creoles’ jealousy, also played a part in the development of a localist feeling. Those traders held in a specific position in the French business community in Senegal. Tensions between le Commerce and l’Administration were something of a recurrent feature throughout the French empire, and the colonial world at large. But in Casamance this antagonism was reinforced by a tension between the French traders settled in Casamance, and particularly in Ziguinchor, and the Quatre Communes. It seems to have been a tension between big business, the great colonial companies which had the upper hand over most activities north of the Gambia, and the smaller independent white entrepreneurs who were trying to make a living in Casamance, this peripheral, promising and newly conquered zone of Senegal; indeed, at the end of the nineteenth century, the new monetary economy of the region fell into the hands of a group of small white traders, who had limited - or troubled - relations with the major trading companies. At the beginning of the twentieth century, groundnut, the dominant activity of the colony of Senegal at the time, was being produced

---

22 On the first point, see ANS 21G124, Rapport de renseignement politique d’avril 1946, which mentions that certain ‘Portuguese’ natives were claiming political pre-eminence; one of them apparently said to a French authority that “French and Lebanese traders must realise that we have our ricefields, we were there before them, we will live without them and we have had enough of it.” On the second point, see ANS 2G50/95: “Members of some old Portuguese families of Ziguinchor, who have become French over the years but still regret their former privileges are ill-disposed towards this infiltration of Mancagne children in our schools. They describe them as foreigners and circulate the rumour that their parents use false witnesses and cheat the Tribunal to declare them born in French territory.”
around Sédiou, but remained almost absent from Lower Casamance until the 1930s; the Ziguinchor-based traders dealt in other goods, like rubber, wax, palm oil or hides. An independent economic personality was there, which endured beyond the subsequent collapse of the rubber economy and the mass development of groundnut in Casamance 23.

In a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of Ziguinchor, on the 10th of September 1937, a member reported that he had got a copy of a letter from the Institut Colonial de Bordeaux, which suggested:

[a fight] against all contracts dealt by French Producers and Manufacturers with European [emphasis in the original text], Moroccan, indigenous and particularly Syrian small traders settled in Senegal and French Sudan. It was also proposed, among others, that metropolitan companies accept as a guideline to eliminate progressively and in as much as possible from among their suppliers all Producers and Manufacturers who would engage in such contracts [with small traders] 24.

This vague story of a plot between big colonial business and the Ministère des Colonies to ruin and eradicate the small traders need not be true, but it is revealing of the climate of touchy defiance that prevailed in this isolated society of small European traders, stuck between increasingly competitive Lebanese and Senegalese traders and big French companies. Suspicion was high among the French traders of Ziguinchor, and they developed a powerful localist sense of their interests. In 1908 the French traders obtained the creation of a Chamber of Commerce in Ziguinchor, separate from the Chambers of northern Senegal, a step towards a measure of economic autonomy. The acts of the Chamber of Commerce read like a long list of recriminations, complaints and demands to the colonial administration. The general argument was that Casamance did not get as much from the Colony as it contributed, that the specificity of Casamance required special treatment, favorable tariffs or specific institutions, that because of the difficulties of transportation between Casamance and Dakar and within Casamance, mass investment and some financial autonomy were needed. The Chamber of Commerce was under the control of independent traders with local activities; the representatives of trade companies that had shops in Ziguinchor rarely attended the meetings of the Chamber, or were

---

23 On the economic history of colonial Casamance, see Mark (1985, chapter VI) and Roche (1985). The rubber trade collapsed shortly before World War I, because of competition from East Asian rubber plantations.
24 Chambre de Commerce de Ziguinchor. Procès-verbal de la séance du 10 septembre 1937. A collection of records of the Chamber of Commerce from 1924 to 1940 is available in the Bibliothèque nationale de France.
mentioned as mere ‘guests’ (“invités”)—their firms were registered only in one Chamber of Commerce, in the *Quatre Communes* or in the metropole.

**Demands for political representation and autonomy**

As Trincaz recalls (1984; 44), the two groups, the Creoles and the French traders, initially competed with one another. But their relations progressively eased, and it was this alliance between the Creoles, nostalgic for their past powers, and the French traders, eager for business, which formed the primary force behind demands for political representation and political autonomy in Ziguinchor. Because it hosted a sufficiently large community of citizens and *évolué* subjects, Ziguinchor thus became a *Commune mixte*, with a partly autonomous municipal life, very early on, in 1907 25. As mentioned above, a year later, in 1908, a Chamber of Commerce was created in Ziguinchor.

The *Communes mixtes* were administered by a municipal commission, headed by the French *administrateur*, and made up of two groups of six councillors and their three deputies, voted in by two separate electoral colleges, one for the citizens and one for the subjects established in the *Commune*—it is worth mentioning here that not all subjects living in Ziguinchor could vote, for a number of conditions were set: to vote in the electoral college of the subjects, one had to exhibit signs of ‘civilisation’ - education, military service or employment in the civil service.

The first articulation of a Casamançais identity thus made little reference to cultural or ethnic identity; it was basically municipal and economic. It was borne by French and Creole traders looking for ways to promote their socio-economic status in a colonial world dominated by the *Quatre Communes*. This movement did not come out of the rural depths of tradition, but from the city of Ziguinchor, the very centre of economic modernisation.

**A closed political arena**

The conditions of the electoral franchise were so restrictive that very few inhabitants of Ziguinchor had a right to vote. Only around a hundred voters took part in the two elections held in Ziguinchor in 1930 - for the *Conseil Colonial* in May, and for the municipal commission in December. Four years later, in 1934, the

---

25 In Trincaz (1984; 43).
electoral body reached two hundred people; the electorate reached a very small portion indeed of the population of Ziguinchor, which numbered 6,000 people in 1931 and 8,000 in 1936. In this context of restricted franchise, local elections in pre-1945 Ziguinchor consistently demonstrated the domination of the French and the Mestizo over local politics; some northerners, citizens from the Quatre Communes or wealthy subjects, played a part; but there were very few Casamançais of rural extraction.

The exclusiveness of this early political life appears neatly in a sociological study of political personnel in the 1930s. I have summarised in Table III.1 below the data I could obtain on the men elected to the municipal commission in 1930 and 1934, drawing from administrative files or records of the Chamber of Commerce; origin is often guessed from patronyms, when specific files were not available - as was often the case.

### Table III.1: Origin and occupation of the members of the municipal commission of Ziguinchor in 1930 and 1934

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Representatives for citizens</td>
<td>6 traders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deputies for citizens</td>
<td>1 traders + 2 unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Representatives for subjects</td>
<td>2 traders + 4 unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Deputies for subjects</td>
<td>3 traders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Ziguinchor, as in Saint-Louis and Dakar, the small metropolitan French community dominated local politics in this period - they occupied seven of the twelve prestigious positions of representatives for citizens; the table also points to the importance of the Creole community and to the existence of a small group of politically active Senegalese citizens from northern Senegal. Aside from the Creole,

---


28 The category ‘Mestizo’ employed here refers exclusively to Ziguinchor-born ‘Portuguese’ Mestizos. At least one and maybe two of the men counted as ‘French’ in 1930, actually were Mestizos from northern Senegal; such might also be the case of one man counted in the ‘northerner’ category in 1934.
there were only four men with rural Casamançais patronyms (Sambou, Dramé, Mané and Seydi) in 1930, and three in 1934 (Goudiaby, Diémé and Mané). For want of data, their presence remains difficult to analyse. Sambou and Goudiaby clearly are Diola patronyms from Lower Casamance; Seydi indicates Peulh or Manding origins, from Middle or Upper Casamance; Dramé and Mané are unclear, for they could be point to either Manding, Balante, Baïnouck or Diola background, i.e. Lower or Middle Casamance. Their presence is nevertheless a testimony of Ziguinchor’s growing population and its pulling power throughout the region, up to the distant areas of Middle and Upper Casamance: under French rule, Ziguinchor was no longer a small, isolated trading post, and it attracted settlers from the hinterland, who felt established enough to engage into politics. But rural Casamançais - like their fellow Senegalese subjects – did not achieve political eminence.

Another striking feature of the table is the number of traders among the political elites. In pre-1945 colonial Casamance, trade was a good path towards wealth, but also towards notability and political power. We have shown in the previous chapter how the Diola, and more generally the people from Lower Casamance, rarely penetrated the trade networks, which were under the control of trade diasporas (and the Ziguinchor Creole); this fact was not without political consequences. In Middle and Upper Casamance, the situation was different, and out of these portions of the territory emerged a successful entrepreneurial class. Whatever the reasons for this emergence, the contrast between Upper/Middle and Lower Casamance is clear-cut:29 early on, an active class of autochthonous traders formed; Manding and Peulh dyulas - in its non-ethnic meaning of peddler - circulated throughout Casamance, walking or cycling with their loads of goods from village to village. Some of them attained remarkable prosperity and settled in Ziguinchor, opened retail shops or were hired by French firms; some of them even entered the Chamber of Commerce in Ziguinchor - such was probably the case of one Famara Seydi, who was elected a deputy representative for sujets to the municipal commission in 1930. Traders stood at the junction between urban and rural spaces,

29 One can only hypothesise about this emergence, which demands detailed studies. Among the plausible elements for this specificity are first, the long existence of a lively internal autochthonous trade, in relation with the vast Manding political structures of the West African hinterland - a nice case of longue durée; second, the fact that, around the city of Sédhiou, peanut cash-crop had precociously developed, perhaps providing the 'primitive accumulation' necessary to engage in trade; third, the precocious strength of Islam which allowed for a faster integration of Middle and Upper Casamançais populations in French trading networks manned by Muslim northerners.
commuting between the two; no doubt they were better equipped than agriculturists to participate in politics. During the early colonial period in Casamance, up until the World War II, trade, urbanity, contacts with the colonial authorities and political eminence almost equated with one another. This excluded almost totally the rural agriculturists of Lower Casamance, who did not have, like their fellow Casamançais from the Middle or Upper Casamance, the same opportunities: while this exclusion of the rural population from politics was general throughout Senegal, it was thus particularly pronounced in Lower Casamance, in the quasi-absence of local elites. When Lower Casamance started to produce a new model of men, the French-educated civil servants, the politics of the region changed radically.

Post-war politics: the demise of the Creoles

The end of World War II marked the beginning of a new phase of Senegalese politics. The rules of the game were modified from above: voting rights were progressively extended, and African rural masses became the real sources of political legitimacy. In a quick succession, the Creole elites were uprooted by the more modern elites from north Senegal, who were in turn replaced by local literati of rural origin – particularly schoolteachers.

The enfranchisement of African subjects

In Lower Casamance as elsewhere in the French colonies, political life burgeoned after 1945. A game hitherto played only by select members, politics progressively included the masses. The reform of the political structure of French West Africa and the establishment of various institutions whose members were designated through a progressively extended suffrage opened a new era of mass politics; in a few years, the size of the electorate in the colony of Senegal grew, from 20,753 in April 1936 to 192,861 in November 1946 and 665,280 in May 1951, finally reaching approximately 1,100,000 voters in 1958. Another important change was the suppression of the distinction between subjects and citizens. In its first version, political reform had subjects and citizens of Senegal organised into two different electoral colleges, to designate representatives to the French National Assembly and to the Conseil général (later Assemblée territoriale) du Sénégal, an advisory body progressively strengthened in its the functions of a fully-fledged

30 Figures quoted from Zuccarelli (1988; vol II; 30).
parliament on internal matters. But the distinction between sujets and citoyens was finally abolished by a law passed by the French National Assembly on the 7th of May 1946, named after its promoter, the Senegalese lawyer and politician Lamine Guèye. It was the progressive relaxation of the qualification required to vote which allowed for this rapid increase in size of the electorate indicated by the above figures.

In this new political era, the small indigenous elites of the Quatre Communtes, the former citizens, that had already been engaged in politics for years, led the way. Lamine Guèye himself, who had proposed the law, a member of the moderate left-wing Section Française de l’Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO), was born in French Soudan, but his family came from Saint-Louis, and Guèye had been elected mayor of Saint-Louis in 1925. But Guèye soon recruited a young intellectual, an agrégé de grammaire, almost new to politics, Léopold Sédar Senghor. Sédar Senghor was born a subject, and, like many other European-educated men and civil servants, had been granted citizenship because of his degrees. From 1945 to 1948, these two men led a large coalition of parties, called the Bloc Africain, and waged the struggle for emancipation of the African population, easily winning their battles.

1945-1948: uprooting the old urban elites of Ziguinchor

In Ziguinchor, in the early phase of this new political life, the opening of the electoral franchise allowed for a profound modification of the political equilibrium among the African elites. In Casamance a new group made up of traders and civil servants, a large number of whom came from north Senegal, seized the upper hand from the metropolitan French traders and Ziguinchor Creole; the Creole preserved their power only locally, in Ziguinchor.

In 1943, when political life progressively resumed throughout the colony of Senegal, two anti-Vichy associations emerged in Ziguinchor, each one apparently associated with one of the two segments of the pre-war urban elites - the Creoles and the northerners. The first one, the Association patriotique indigène de la France combattante, was headed by Auguste Gomis, a Mestizo trader, former member of the municipal commission and former Socialist conseiller colonial, whose mandate had been revoked in 1942 by the Vichy authorities because of his supposed Gaullist allegiance. The second one, Combat, was led by Alassane N'doye, a northerner.

---

31 For biographical elements on Gomis, see ANS 11D1/406, Le commissaire de police à Monsieur l’administrateur commandant le cercle de Ziguinchor, le 22 juillet 1950, Ziguinchor. See also Roche
When a local branch of the Section Française de l’Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO), a moderate Socialist metropolitan French party, was finally created in Ziguinchor in March 1945, Combat rallied behind Lamine Guèye, its new north Senegalese leader, who had imposed himself against Alfred Goux, the metropolitan French mayor of Dakar.

But internal tensions in the SFIO section of Ziguinchor quickly erupted. When the Dakar authorities of the SFIO authoritatively supported a list headed by Doudou Kane for the December 1946 elections to the Conseil général, David Carvalho, the secretary of the Ziguinchor SFIO section resigned to create a Ziguinchorois section of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA), a radical French West African party affiliated to the French Communist Party. Carvalho recruited Auguste Gomis as a leader for the new RDA section of Ziguinchor. Carvalho’s and Gomis’ affiliation to the RDA clearly had more to do with local politics than with their very improbable radicalism: since the SFIO branch in Ziguinchor was controlled by the northerners who backed Guèye, joining the RDA was a logical move for the major Mestizo figures of Ziguinchor. The SFIO thus included mostly northerners with connections in the Quatre Communes where the SFIO was born, while the RDA grouped many of the Christian Creoles from Ziguinchor. Lists of members gathered by the colonial administration are clear on that point. A post-electoral meeting organised in December 1947 for a reconciliation between the two parties showed the cleavage with striking clarity: all leading SFIO members mentioned were Muslims with names from northern Senegal (Amadou Daffé, Doudou Kane, Ameth Diaw,

(2001 : 110) and interview with Paul Da Souza (alias), Ziguinchor-Santiaba, 9 March 1999. Gomis was born in 1893 in Saint-Louis, but his family had roots in Ziguinchor. He had served six years in the French Army, and had come to Ziguinchor in 1923, following his brother, a tax-collector; he had worked as a shopkeeper in Diooloulou, tried to develop agricultural projects near Ziguinchor, and later established as an agent d’affaires, a kind of lawyer-businessman. He entered politics during the 1930s; he was elected to the Conseil colonial for Casamance in 1937. He kept this mandate until his dismissal in 1942.

32 In ANS 2G44/106, Rapport politique de l’année 1944, cercle de Ziguinchor.
33 See Carvalho’s letter of resignation in Réveil, 21 August 1947.
34 In ANS 11D1/406, Le chef de subdivision de Ziguinchor à Monsieur le commandant de cercle de Ziguinchor, Ziguinchor, le 25 juillet 1950: “ As for Mr. Gomis, I think I can add that his participation to the RDA list during the late 1946 elections for the Conseil général had more to do with his opposition to the list supported by the other local party than with an anti-French attitude [because of its initial Communist affiliation, the RDA was considered anti-French].” See also ANS 11D1/406, Le commissaire de police à Monsieur l’administrateur commandant le cercle de Ziguinchor, le 22 juillet 1950 à Ziguinchor: “A devout Catholic, the [negative] position which the Church has adopted towards the Communists and the RDA has brought him to lose interest in a movement which has consequently fell in a slumber. It is probable that Gomis Auguste saw in this whole case only his interest and that he feared his membership of the RDA might cost him part of his clients.” Roche (2001 : 76-77) ascribes Gomis’ affiliation to his exclusion from the SFIO.
Boly Diaw, Doudou Diagne), while all major RDA figures were Christian Creoles (Auguste Gomis, Henri Gomis, Alain N’Diaye, David Carvalho, Jean Kandé)\(^{35}\).

In the December 1946 elections to the Conseil général du Sénégal, the SFIO defeated the RDA in Casamance as in the rest of Senegal. There were good ‘national’ reasons for this defeat: the SFIO was an old party, with an established presence, a major player in metropolitan French politics, and its moderate progressive tone was appealing to the African colonial elites. But in Casamance the victory of the SFIO had also to do with the local context and the nature of the political cleavage. The Creoles were relatively isolated, and their networks did not go much beyond Ziguinchor, while the northerners could rely on a large network of traders and civil servants covering the rural areas. Ibou Cissé was one of them, a rich trader from the Saloum, who put his influence and money in the service of the SFIO. Ibou Cissé himself did not live in Ziguinchor, but in Mampalago, a village in the far north-east of Lower Casamance. His connections with northern Senegal and the SFIO politicians based there, his wealth, his in-depth knowledge of the rural world, his proficiency in the Diola language, his networks of clients, his prestigious Islamic mystic powers, all combined to establish him as a notability. For the colonial authorities, he was a man to court, for he could prove a resourceful middleman, and a troublesome opponent. Cissé repeatedly intervened as a defender of the rural masses, and engaged in a sustained fight against his arch-enemy, the Diola canton chief Arfan Bessire Sonko\(^{36}\). It was men like Cissé who, unlike the Ziguinchor Creoles, were able to develop electoral networks and canvass the growing electorate. Men like Cissé also took part in the recruitment of young politicians:

In 1946, [Ibou Cissé] welcomed the first political leaders of Senegal, Lamine Guèye and Léopold Sédar Senghor. These were the first elections which the population really felt, after the Lamine Guèye law had been passed in May 1946 [the law abolished the distinction between subjects and citizens]; Senghor and Guèye were elected on the same SFIO list and [Ibou Cissé] backed them. Before the 1946 elections, my father had been up to Podor to invite Emile, one of the first cadres of the department to represent the department [in the elections to the Conseil Général]. He needed intellectuals, sons of Casamance who had been through French school and who could hold up ["pouvoir tenir tête"]; Emile had refused, saying he was not interested in politics. So [Ibou Cissé] went to look for Edouard Diatta in Saint-Louis; he was writing in a paper, Les Echos d’Afrique; he was the son of [canton] chief Benjamin Diatta. He had been emancipated

---

\(^{35}\) See ANS 21G219/178, Annexe A Renseignements n° 357 du 22 décembre 1947. Of course, the two parties did not function exclusively on this cleavage. When the RDA organised its structure, it included several north Senegalese Muslims, usually in subaltern capacities. See Réveil, 28 August 1947. The SFIO list for 1946 included one Mestizo, Emmanuel Gomis.

\(^{36}\) On the Sonko-Cissé conflict, see ANS 11D1/147 and ANS 11D1/149.
early, he criticised French imperialism; people found Edouard too anti-French, but Edouard gave his agreement 37.

It is not too difficult to guess who the “people” were: they were the small urban/northern elite of king-makers which formed the SFIO structure in Casamance, marabouts, traders and civil servants. Benjamin Diatta, the father of Cissé’s recruit, was no small figure in the region: a Diola from the southwestern zone of Kasa, converted to Catholicism, he had served as a colonial interpreter, and became in 1922 province chief for Ouissouye; he held many medals for the services he had rendered to the French 38; before the war, like Auguste Gomis, Diatta had been a member of the Conseil colonial 39. Edouard (or Pierre-Edouard), who was born in 1913, had been educated by the Holy Ghost Fathers in Dakar with Léopold Sédar Senghor, and at the lycée Faidherbe, in Saint-Louis; he had taken part to proto-nationalist activism, and had contributed to Le Jeune Sénégal, a progressive newspaper, towards the end of the 1930s.

The SFIO list on which Diatta ran was headed by Momodou Alpha (alias Doudou) Kane, a schoolteacher, born in 1913 in Ziguinchor; he was the son of Seydou Kane, a prominent Toucouleur trader and notability who was a member of the Ziguinchor Municipal Commission in 1934 and the ward chief of Santhiaba, a district of Ziguinchor, in 1942 40. The three other members were Amadou Lamine Daffé, leader of the SFIO branch in the town of Sédhiou (Middle Casamance), a rich Manding trader with activities in Dakar, Emmanuel Gomis, also a trader, and a member of the Portuguese Creoles community of Ziguinchor, and Magor (or Mogor) Gaye, a Wolof trader from north Senegal. The RDA list grouped three Creoles (Auguste Gomis, Joseph-Félix Corréa and David Carvalho), one Kolda trader (Amadou Lèye Diop) and one Diola colonial interpreter (Tété Diédhiou) 41. The times were changing, for there was not a single white man on the lists. With their list,

37 Interview with Morgaye Cissé, one of Ibou Cissé’s sons, Mampalago, 13 December 1998. Indeed, Les Echos d’Afrique attacked relentlessly the colonial administration, but it was in fact a right-wing populist paper of the white community...
38 The rank of province chief was granted to deserving canton chiefs who were then in charge with the supervision of several cantons.
39 For biographical details on Benjamin Diatta, see Roche (1977) and (1998). See also ANS 11D1/317.
40 On Seydou Kane, see Trincaz (1984 : 103-104). Seydou Kane himself was born in Sédhiou in 1882, and he had been educated in a French school in Saint-Louis.
41 Tété Diadhiou (or Diédhiou), the only Diola on the list, got the lowest RDA score, with only 652 votes; this might well be a sign that supporters of Auguste Gomis and RDA were reluctant to vote for a Diola from la brousse - though Tété Diadhiou was no small man, for he was an interpreter for the French administration.
SFIO candidates obtained a clear victory, with about 3,180 votes, while RDA candidates got an average of 700 votes. Emile Badiane, the Diola schoolteacher from Tendième, who had rejected Ibou Cissé’s endorsement, was not so uninterested in politics as that, for he had run on his own, getting only 143 votes.42

Thus, from 1945 to 1947, in Casamance as in the rest of Senegal, the Bloc africain which Guèye and Senghor had constituted around the SFIO met with political success. In Casamance this victory corresponded to the limited opening of the political franchise: the old urban elites of Ziguinchor, the Creoles, who had been major players in the municipal context of pre-war politics, were unable to mobilise support among the non-Mestizo voters, in Ziguinchor and in rural Casamance; the growth of the electorate (from about 200 voters in 1934 to around 4,000 in 1946) proved too much for their limited political capacity. It was the northerners, their powerful and growing alliance of traders and civil servants, who won the day. Doudou Kane, the Toucouleur schoolteacher who headed the winning SFIO list, is a good example of the rise of this new social group: Seydou Kane, his father, was a local notability, but he was merely one of the representatives for subjects in the 1934 Municipal Commission; his son went much further than that.

However the victory of the SFIO was short-lived, for things were moving fast. The electoral franchise was going to broaden again, new men were emerging, and Emile Badiane, the man whom Ibou Cissé had tried to recruit, the man who had run in the 1946 elections alone and had won a handful of votes, was going to have his revenge.

**The next step: the emergence of the local literati**

The second phase of post-1945 Casamançais politics witnessed the emergence of the autochthonous rural literati and their movement, the MFDC. But this evolution was not specific to Lower Casamance or to Casamance as a whole, with regional political groups forming throughout Senegal. The specificity of Lower Casamançais regionalism seems to have lain in the violence of the cleavage that pitted the literati against the old elites.

42 The electoral procedure was *panachage*: the five-name lists were endorsed by one party, but voters could select each of their five representatives from any list, which explains how candidates from the same list got different electoral results.
The MFDC, a regionalist group 43

From 1947 onwards, following his return from a training period in Saint-Louis, Emile Badiane settled in Sédhiou, where he taught at the schoolteachers’ training school (cours normal). Emile Badiane was a Diola born in 1915 in Tendième, a village adjacent to Bignona; his father, who had converted to Christianity, sent him to school in Bignona; in the 1930s he entered the Ecole normale William Ponty, the French West African elite school, from which he came out first in his year; he directed a school in Podor, in the north of Senegal, and later came back to teach in Casamance. At the cours normal in Sédhiou, Badiane met with another teacher, Ibou Diallo. Ibou Diallo was born in 1915 near Sédhiou, in a Mandingised Peuhl Muslim family; his father was a relative and follower of Samba Aïssata Diallo, a canton chief, who sent Ibou to school; just like Emile Badiane, Ibou Diallo made it to Ponty in the 1930s, and was employed as a schoolteacher in Lower Casamance after graduation. Badiane and Diallo progressively formed a Casamançais lobby hostile to the Quatre Communes – all other main figures of the MFDC belonged to the same category – rural autochthonous literati 44. On the 14th of April 1949, Badiane and Diallo sent the statutes of the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (MFDC), from which the current rebellion draws its name, to the Governor of Senegal 45.

The political line of the MFDC included both a (moderate) critique of colonialism and a regionalist stance. An ex-MFDC activist, Sancoung Sané describes it thus:

Our ideas disturbed especially the colonisers who worked in a close cooperation with the traditional chiefdom [i.e. canton and village chiefs – though not traditional among the Diola, ‘chefferie’ was often called that way]. Saying that one could not accept, in a single country, to have citizens and subjects, asking the population to refuse certain kind of taxes and all such progressive ideas could only annoy the colonisers and their acolytes of the traditional chiefdom 46.

43 There is no satisfactory academic analysis of the first MFDC. On the history of the first MFDC, see the testimony of Sancoung Sané, a founding member, in Le Soleil, 31 August 1998. See also the testimony of Bourama Faye Badji in Barbier-Wiesser (1994).
44 Major figures include Yoro Kandé, a Upper Casamance Peuhl teacher-turned-civil servant, Sancoung Sané, an agricultural extension officer from Sédhiou, Ansou Mandiang, a schoolteacher from Marsassoum, Dembo Coly, a schoolteacher from Sédhiou, and Paul-Ignace Coly, a schoolteacher from Bignona.
45 Author’s personal archives. Diallo Ibrahima et Badiane Emile, Instituteurs en service à Sédhiou, Casamance, Sénégal, à Monsieur le Gouverneur du Sénégal, Sédhiou, le 14 avril 1949.
46 Interview with Sancoung Sané, Le Soleil, 31 August 1998.
As for the regionalist stance, Paul-Ignace Coly, a schoolteacher from Bignona and leading MFDC figure, describes aptly the tension which the nomination of political leaders aroused:

They [the SFIO leaders, including Doudou Kane] wanted to impose another Kane [Kane is a typical Toucouleur name, from northern Senegal], a trader. (...) We did not like [that] and we reproached them with coming and paying no regard to the views and will of the autochthons. We did not know politics and the word had quite bad connotations. And [it] came from far away. Saint-Louis, Dakar. We told them that we had here people of value, able to understand. So we had to be associated. That we had our intellectuals. So we had an argument. I told them the truth, without giving any names. It was clear, in my head, that politics in Bignona had to be done with natives of Bignona. There was no way they could come and impose whoever they wanted. They nevertheless imposed Ismaila Kane, a trader who had never even spoken to a neighbourhood meeting. But they were from the SFIO. They would be going to represent Bignona to a big meeting in Dakar, and they would go on their own. We, from the BDS, we were the vast majority, and we were going to be represented in Dakar by these people without any representativity.²⁷

Of course, since the lineage of the second MFDC is a contested issue now, it is difficult to know precisely how deep the first MFDC went in its regionalist stance. Sancoung Sané, in an interview with the Senegalese state daily, rejects abruptly the idea that the first MFDC had views about the independence of Casamance:

Q: When you created the MFDC, what were your targets? Was it about the independence of Casamance?

A: When we created this movement, neither Ihou Diallo nor Emile Badiane, who were coming from Saint-Louis, nor Yéro [Yoro] Kandé (...) nor myself, charged with propaganda, nor any other member talked about the independence of Casamance. We were in favour of a united and prosperous Senegal without gross regional inequalities. When we talked about independence, it was about that of the Senegalese nation. The original MFDC – I see a difference with the present -, conceived its missions were to warn any political party in charge of the country against the pursuit of the policy which France had in Casamance, and to insist so that the interests of the region be taken into account. I say this forcefully: any independence of Casamance figured nowhere on our agenda.²⁸

Sané’s view is persuasive, and the extract from the statutes of the MFDC, quoted at the opening of this chapter, makes clear that the movement developed its action inside the framework of the then Colony of Senegal. The debates of the day were not about ethnoregional identity, they were about the defence of the rural masses, whom the educated elites claimed to represent, against the old colonial elites, corrupt canton chiefs and greedy traitants. The rural basis of the MFDC was such that, until 1953, it had no section in Ziguinchor.²⁹ Many texts of this period give a

---

²⁷ In ACAD (n.d.; 19-20).
²⁸ Interview with Sancoung Sané, Le Soleil, 31 August 1998.
²⁹ The MFDC was so absent from Ziguinchor that Senghor’s BDS created a section in Ziguinchor in 1950, headed by Etienne Carvalho, a Mestizo accountant at the Société de Prévoyance, a state-sponsored agricultural cooperative. This section was the only BDS section in Casamance that did not depend from the MFDC. Carvalho subsequently became mayor of Ziguinchor.
sense of this kind of ruralist populism. Indeed, like the Russian populists, the new Senegalese évolutés and cadres revered the people, the rural masses, and claimed they were the only source of political legitimacy – an implicit critique of the colonial order. The small print read that the autochthonous évolutés and cadres were the only legitimate trustees of the rural masses.

**Regionalism, a Senegalese national feature**

Reading the press of the time, it is remarkable how little the MFDC was accused of ethnic or separatist tendencies. Actually, the emergence of regionalism was not specifically Casamançais. It was eminently related to the emergence of literati elites in all the regions of Senegal, who were pitted against the old SFIO politicians from the Quatre Communes. In this new context, the évolutés metamorphosed into cadres, social and political leaders, men who held their mandate from the durable and specific link they maintained with their region of origin. Regionalism thus became a standard feature of Senegalese politics of the time.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, throughout Senegal, many regional political groups formed, and denounced the domination of the SFIO and the Quatre Communes elites over politics; Schachter-Morgenthau (1964; 143) mentions such groups throughout the colony of Senegal, such as the Union Générale des Originaires de la Vallée du Fleuve, the Fédération des Originaires et Natifs du Oualo, the Association des Toucouleurs du Fouta Toro pour la Défense de la Condition humaine, or the Parti travailliste Saloum-Saloum; Roche (2001; 117) mentions also a Union Démocratique des Ressortissants du Sénégal Oriental. To him, all these movements “were impatient with the centralism of the Dakarois and Saint-Louisiens”. Because Senegalese political life had long been monopolised by the Quatre Communes, and because this dominance abruptly came to an end with the enfranchisement of the masses and the formation of modern rural elites, the cleavage was clear-cut. Above all things, it was the depth and pervasiveness of this structural cleavage, and the correct perception which he had of it that allowed Senghor to win

---

30 There seems to be a misunderstanding in some of the literature, for instance Pouilly-Tréca (1996; 377): in the 1950s, ‘séparatisme’ and ‘autonomisme’ referred primarily to those who favoured the separation of Senegal and other African colonies from France... For an illustration, see Condition Humaine, 15 March 1952: Charles Cros, a SFIO senator, accuses the BDS of being separatist from France.
his repeated electoral victories through an alliance with the regional literati elites – for indeed, Senghor won the day.

Senghor against Lamine Guèye: the fall of the SFIO

Ibou Cissé had been right in his attempt to recruit Emile Badiane to the SFIO. His failure to do so had not prevented the SFIO electoral victories in 1946. But because of Badiane, the SFIO had little time to enjoy its triumphs. The growth of the electorate, which had proved fatal to the Creoles’ political pre-eminence, was a swelling tide, and it would result in the defeat of the SFIO. With political prescience, Léopold Sédar Senghor, who was still on Lamine Guèye’s ticket in the SFIO, sensed the growing rift between the Senegalese electorate and the SFIO. From the end of 1947 onward, tensions between Guèye and Senghor built up. Senghor’s grievances were many - he reproached Guèye for his subservience to the French metropolitan SFIO, which remained very conservative on the colonial question; Senghor also denounced the corruption of Guèye’s followers and the domination of the Quatre Communes over Senegalese politics. Senghor finally decided to split from the SFIO in 1948, and created his own party, the Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais (BDS) in October 1948. Senghor skilfully built on the regional parties to develop his electoral base, and the MFDC became a key element in Senghor’s victories.

The Senegalese political epic often reads as if Senghor, the rural masses and their political representatives (schoolteachers and marabouts) all fell for each other. Actually, there was some discussion inside the MFDC, as to whether or not allying with Senghor was appropriate. But many elements were pleading for Senghor. First, unlike Guèye, Senghor was from la brousse himself; he had been to Casamance in 1946, and he had met with some of the men who later founded the MFDC; Senghor’s visits to the rural areas had earned him the derisive nickname of “député en kaki” because of the French-style bush clothes which he would wear for his visits in the hinterland. Second, Senghor denounced the domination of the Quatre Communes over Senegalese politics - Senghor had been elected in 1946 as the representative of French subjects, and it seemed that he would serve la brousse better than Lamine Guèye - at least, he knew what it looked like. Finally, Pierre-Edouard Diatta, then

51 See Vaillant (1990; 221).
52 Edouard Diatta, the son of Diola colonial chief Benjamin Diatta, who had been elected on the SFIO list in the territorial elections of 1946, had been at school with Leopold Sédar Senghor. He was a
a conseiller général for Casamance, had followed Senghor when he left the SFIO to form the BDS; he provided Senghor with a crucial link to the Casamançais literati. The sympathy between the MFDC and the BDS was undoubtedly strong, for shortly before Badiane and Diallo formalised their association, in April 1949, it was Condition Humaine, the journal of the BDS, that published their manifesto\textsuperscript{53}.

In 1950, the MFDC thus decided on an electoral alliance with the BDS, but clearly rejected incorporation into the BDS, on the grounds that local issues could not be satisfactorily defended in a national party. The same process happened throughout Senegal, with the regional political movements and marabouts of the hinterland progressively rallying around the BDS. This provided Senghor with an easy and overwhelming victory in the parliamentary elections of June 1951, when the BDS took the two MP seats for Senegal. The geography of these elections is revealing of the split between the small world of the Quatre Communes and la brousse: the SFIO won a majority only in Dakar and Saint-Louis (‘Lower Senegal’) and in Matam and Kédougou; Ziguinchor was already the staunchest BDS area.

Table III.2: Results of the 1951 elections for the French National Assembly\textsuperscript{54}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Registered voters</th>
<th>Valid votes (number of votes)</th>
<th>BDS (percentage)</th>
<th>SFIO (number of votes)</th>
<th>SFIO (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Senegal</td>
<td>13,668</td>
<td>5,725</td>
<td>2,339</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podor</td>
<td>35,541</td>
<td>12,330</td>
<td>7,557</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>4,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matam</td>
<td>42,745</td>
<td>16,212</td>
<td>4,276</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11,867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louga</td>
<td>27,427</td>
<td>15,925</td>
<td>10,770</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguère</td>
<td>11,032</td>
<td>4,047</td>
<td>2,699</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diourbel</td>
<td>62,283</td>
<td>30,751</td>
<td>24,103</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>6,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiès</td>
<td>102,441</td>
<td>53,471</td>
<td>35,786</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaolack</td>
<td>130,382</td>
<td>60,095</td>
<td>50,169</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>9,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambacounda</td>
<td>16,093</td>
<td>8,324</td>
<td>7,103</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kédougou</td>
<td>6,931</td>
<td>3,885</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziguinchor</td>
<td>95,225</td>
<td>51,115</td>
<td>48,001</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>2,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s.-d. Rufisque</td>
<td>4,012</td>
<td>2,975</td>
<td>2,187</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakar</td>
<td>64,328</td>
<td>29,084</td>
<td>8,692</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rufisque</td>
<td>18,317</td>
<td>8,967</td>
<td>6,296</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Louis</td>
<td>12,852</td>
<td>10,370</td>
<td>2,154</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>644,277</td>
<td>313,276</td>
<td>212,317</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>95,947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

founding member of the BDS, but, interestingly, not of the MFDC. There is little doubt that he played a key part in bringing the MFDC and the BDS together.\textsuperscript{51}

In Condition humaine, 29 March 1949.

\textsuperscript{53} Since the third contending party, the Gaullist Rassemblement du Peuple Français, won very few votes, its results are not mentioned in the table.

\textsuperscript{54} Data and reference provided by Catherine Atlan.
In the 1952 elections for the Assemblée Territoriale, the general picture was similar: the alliance between the BDS and the regionalist parties was maintained, which logically resulted in massive success for the BDS and its regional allies in la brousse; the SFIO preserved seats in two constituencies only, those of Lower Senegal (Saint-Louis) and Dakar. The 1952 ballot is all the more interesting, as the lists of candidates for this ballot were set up locally - fruitful insights can thus be gained into the cleavage between the Quatre Communes elites and the rising rural elites in Lower Casamance.

Table III.3: Results of the 1952 elections for the Assemblée Territoriale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Registered voters</th>
<th>Valid votes</th>
<th>BDS (number of votes)</th>
<th>BDS (percentage)</th>
<th>SFIO (number of votes)</th>
<th>SFIO (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dakar</td>
<td>97,208</td>
<td>42,842</td>
<td>18,956</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>23,886</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Senegal</td>
<td>31,588</td>
<td>18,557</td>
<td>7,180</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>11,377</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matam</td>
<td>40,709</td>
<td>14,898</td>
<td>8,255</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>4,392</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podor</td>
<td>32,056</td>
<td>15,394</td>
<td>12,298</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>3,096</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguère</td>
<td>11,584</td>
<td>4,191</td>
<td>1,771</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>1,433</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louga</td>
<td>35,379</td>
<td>15,063</td>
<td>9,335</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>4,912</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiès</td>
<td>104,869</td>
<td>55,335</td>
<td>40,964</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>14,370</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dioürbel</td>
<td>61,822</td>
<td>35,443</td>
<td>24,642</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>10,801</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaolack</td>
<td>128,212</td>
<td>68,328</td>
<td>51,391</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>15,877</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambacounda</td>
<td>15,257</td>
<td>5,360</td>
<td>4,611</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kédougou</td>
<td>6,181</td>
<td>2,871</td>
<td>2,165</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziguinchor</td>
<td>95,790</td>
<td>46,251</td>
<td>42,554</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>3,697</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>660,655</td>
<td>324,532</td>
<td>224,122</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>95,296</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A post-mortem of the SFIO: analysing the local cleavage

In 1952 as in 1951 the constituency of Ziguinchor stood out as the staunchest supporter of Senghor among all the regions of Senegal, with 92 per cent of the votes in favour of the BDS. The next most pro-Senghor region of Senegal was Tambacounda, with 86 per cent; then come four regions, Podor, Thiès, Kaolack, Kédougou, with a pro-BDS vote that gravitates around 75 per cent. The constituency of Ziguinchor clearly made a choice for Senghor. But how are we to understand this quasi-unanimity? And who were the 3,697 electors who opposed the MFDC-BDS alliance?

56 The few independent candidates in Matam, Linguère, Louga and Kaolack, who totalled less than 5,000 votes, are not mentioned.
Through a detailed examination of the biographies of the candidates for the 1952 Assembly, one can identify the nature of the cleavage at play: winning a stunning 92 per cent of the votes in the region, all BDS candidates were elected. The eight BDS candidates were Ibou Diallo and Emile Badiane, the two main leaders of the MFDC; Robert Delmas, a metropolitan industrialist settled in Dakar, parachuted into Casamance by the BDS top-brass; Edouard Diatta, the son of Benjamin Diatta and one of the five outgoing SFIO representatives; Djibril Sarr, a Sédhiou-born Wolof schoolteacher; Edouard Diallo (a.k.a. Babacar or Ibrahima N’Diaye), a Diola civil servant and former SFIO member; Yoro Kandé, a Peulh civil servant from Upper Casamance; and Amadou Lèye Diop (a.k.a. Michel Diop), a Peulh trader from Upper Casamance who had run on the RDA list in 1946. The SFIO list included three of the outgoing SFIO representatives for Casamance, Amadou Lamine Daffé, a Sédhiou Manding, Emmanuel Gomis, a Ziguinchor Creole, and Magor Gaye, from Sédhiou, the three of them coming from a trade background, and five new candidates: four traders, Mamadou Kékoto Diamé, a Manding, Abdoulaye Diallo, from Kolda, Laurent Carvalho, a Ziguinchor Creole, and Khalil Dia, a Casamance-born Toucouleur, plus a schoolteacher from north Senegal, Assane Diack.

Comparing the two lists provides a convenient approach to the nature of political cleavages in early 1950s Casamance. While the BDS list included two Diola (Diatta and Diallo) and no Creole, the SFIO enlisted two Creole (Carvalho and Gomis) and no Diola. The other big difference is the way in which the outgoing SFIO representatives for Casamance chose sides – four of the five men elected in 1946, when Senghor and Guèye were still co-operating inside the SFIO, were also candidates in 1952. In 1952, the SFIO had three of the outgoing members on its list, and a fourth outgoing member, Doudou Kane, a Ziguinchor-born schoolteacher from a northerner family, remained throughout the period an influential member of the SFIO in Casamance; the BDS had recruited only one of the outgoing representatives, Edouard Diatta - interestingly, of the five outgoing representative, Diatta was the

57 Diallo is a Peulh name, but Edouard Diallo’s father, a Diola with the patronym Sambou, had apparently converted to Islam and had taken the name of his marabout.
58 I have counted as ‘traders’ two SFIO candidates, Emmanuel Gomis and Magor Gaye, who were at the time of their first election to the Conseil Général in 1946 mentioned as traders, but had by 1952 become civil servants - Gomis as agricultural extension officer and Gaye as an employee of the state agricultural marketing services (Service du Conditionnement). These transfers of SFIO politicians from business to civil service (particularly in the Service du Conditionnement) were repeatedly denounced throughout the period by the BDS and the MFDC. Amadou Lamine Daffé was and remained a trader from 1946 to 1952.
only Diola and the only civil servant. The BDS list in Casamance thus gives the impression of being made largely of *hominès novi*, while the SFIO was sticking to the same old portion of the elites. But it is the occupational criterion that seems most relevant, for, leaving aside Delmas’ rather peculiar case, the BDS picked six civil servants - four of them schoolteachers, and only one trader, while the SFIO selected only one civil servant and seven traders. The cleavage is thus rather complex, mixing generational, occupational and ethnic elements. One does not know much about the sociability of these two groups, but one can hypothesise that they had their own social activities – Chamber of Commerce meetings and Sufi Islam for the SFIO; ballroom-dancing, football and school theatre for the MFDC-BDS.

The 1952 election is thus a privileged moment to witness the local emergence, both in political positions and electoral weight, of a new group: that of the literati of local origin; among them, schoolteachers played a prominent part. In fact, schoolteachers played such a key role in political mobilisation in post-1945 Senegal that Senegal has often been called, with reference to the French Third Republic, a *République des instituteurs*. But what was it that granted these men such apparent charisma?

*The local literati in politics: “Des hommes pouvant tenir tête”*

When Ibou Cissé, the wealthy SFIO king-maker from north Senegal, had tried to recruit Emile Badiane, he apparently had a clear view that the new politics required graduates, French-educated people “pouvant tenir tête”, who could stand up to the colonial authorities. He was so right in fact that his failure to recruit Badiane to the SFIO ultimately proved fatal to his party. After 1947 the keyword was *cadre*, a notion that has since remained a fundamental element of the Senegalese political lexicon. A *cadre* was an *évolué* with a good French education and a civil service job, and a taste for politics, who could act as a community leader. It was the quest for a *cadre* which had set Ibou Cissé on the roads, to the distant towns of Podor and Saint-Louis.

---

59 The trader that figures on the BDS list, Michel Diop, comes from a part of Casamance, the area of Kolda, where school was almost absent, and where very few autochthones had a chance to enter the civil service.

60 In writing this section, I benefited immensely from hours of discussion about Senegalese schoolteachers in politics with Jean-Hervé Jézéquel, whose thesis on the autochthonous schoolteachers of French West Africa is forthcoming.
Ibou Cissé himself was no cadre. He had learnt the Koran in the Saloum and he wrote Arabic, which served him well for his accountancy, but he had not been to French school, and the French he spoke he had acquired through years of business in the French African empire; he never considered running for elections himself. Later, another of his sons, Bassirou Cissé, engaged in politics and became a member of the Assembly for Bignona. But Bassirou had served as an officer in the French Army and as a teacher in a French school: he was one of the literati, he was a cadre. The same was true, as we have seen, of Benjamin Diatta’s son Edouard, who had been educated in Saint-Louis and was an employee of the Clerk’s Office. French education was thus becoming a crucial element in politics: the biological and political heirs of Ibou Cissés and Benjamin Diattas, ambitious entrepreneurs of the early colonial era, were graduates from French schools employed in the civil service... Indeed, in 1946, the head of the SFIO list had been a schoolteacher, Doudou Kane. This evolution was general throughout Senegal, and the political emergence of Senghor was a symbol of it – the prestige of Senghor, at least among the évolués, lay in part in the fact that Senghor was an agrégé de grammaire, that he had mastered that most central part of French civilisation, grammaire.

To be sure intellectual prestige mattered much, but the successful political mobilisation of the schoolteachers in the post-1945 era had to do with the general position which they occupied in the colonial apparatus. This position was essentially an awkward one – the African schoolteachers were considered an elite body, one of the first for which a specialised structure and training was set up, the Ecole normale William Ponty, a French West African hallway of excellence; the mission which this body was charged with was one endowed with extraordinary importance by the colonial rulers themselves – organising the évolution of the whole society. At the same time their means were limited, and they were often considered much less important by the French than the territorial administration (canton chiefs, clerks and interpreters) 61. In fact they were an embodiment of the paradoxes of French colonisation, oscillating as it was between the pragmatics of domination and the theory of emancipation 62.

61 According to Jean-Hervé Jézéquel, the schoolteachers were repeatedly aggrieved during the 1930s and 1940s, with the diminution of the standards of recruitment and the non-implementation of measures allowing for eventual promotion in the ‘normal’ Metropolitan hierarchy of schoolteachers.

62 For another illustration, in the context of French colonial Algeria, of the built-in contradictions of autochthonous schoolteachers, see Colonna (1975).
A second aspect of the schoolteachers’ position played a part in getting them interested in politics, and in engaging in politics successfully: contrary to many other African civil servants, they were durably established in local communities, and they formed a wide grid which covered the territory, penetrating even in the rural areas – but contrary to the canton chiefs, they could (and would) change location. Also, contrary to the territorial administration, they were not engaged in the direct exercise of colonial authority – their exertion of power, once people had come to accept to send their children to school, was rather limited. Their relations with the population were thus rather good. In fact, they were often mobilised by the local populations as intermediaries to communicate with the colonial state, and, not infrequently, as counterweights to the territorial administration. So when the franchise was extended, when the age of mass politics came, throughout Senegal, schoolteachers provided a quasi-natural link to the rural population, as well as a network for mobilisation.

**A Lower Casamançais specificity?**

The political emergence of the literati was a fact throughout Senegal – but was there anything different in Casamance or Lower Casamance? Indeed the MFDC stood out as the most lively of all regional movements, and until 1958, the pro-Senghor line was quasi-unanimous. The very presence of the SFIO in the rural areas was seen as a violation and would result in extreme violence: in January 1955, when Lamine Guèye finally decided on touring la brousse, his convoy was ambushed around Bignona; four of his supporters were killed in this attack. So how are we to interpret the virulence of Casamançais anti-SFIO behaviour?

There were two counts on which MFDC regionalism was different in Casamance, and this had to do with Lower Casamance: first, the local literati were particularly numerous; second, they were often without ties with the old colonial

---

63 This is an instance of Andersonian pilgrimage. In fact, Anderson does mention Ecole normale William Ponty; he points out that while students were recruited from all over French West Africa, they would usually be designated to their country of origin – Ponty pilgrimages thus failed to bring about a West African nationalist consciousness. See Anderson (1991; 123-124).

64 One of the notable exceptions being the village of Kagnobon, where the SFIO long maintained a strong presence. This had to with the traditional opposition between Kagnobon and the neighbouring village of Bessire, the village of canton chief Arfan Sonko. As mentioned above, Ibou Cissé, a leading SFIO figure around Bignona, was Arfan Sonko’s nemesis, thus becoming very popular in Kagnobon.

65 Guèye’s convoy, which included Ibou Cissé himself, was actually on the way to Kagnobon. The inhabitants of the Manguiline district of Bignona themselves had had a long history of antagonism with Kagnobon, and the violence of their reaction surely had to do with past grievances; they felt intolerably provoked. On this affair, see ANS 11D1/188 and ANSOM Fonds ministériel Affaires politiques, Carton 2255, Dossier 3, Incidents de Bignona.
elites. It was these elements, as well as the influence of French and Creole regionalisms, that gave Casamançais literati regionalism its distinct nature.

First, in Lower Casamance, where education was so massive, the literati – and the schoolteachers - were numerous. They maintained strong ties with their villages of origin, where they progressively emerged as communal leaders, and they facilitated the diffusion of politics locally. Migrants – and there quickly were many Diola migrants in Dakar - also played a key part; parties quickly set up sections among the migrants, and used them as relay to the villages 66.

Also, because education became so widespread in Lower Casamance, and accessible to most, the new literati elites that emerged were not necessarily tied to the old elites, those of the early colonial days, the Diola canton chiefs, or the marabouts and traders from northern Senegal. Of course, there was Pierre-Edouard Diatta, the son of chief Benjamin Diatta. But his case is largely anomalous – none of the other major Diola political figures of post-war politics (for instance Emile Badiane, Dembo Coly, Paul-Ignace Coly, Dominique Goudiaby) came from such prominent families; nor were alliances with prominent migrant families from northern Senegal common. In the rest of la brousse, to varying degrees, the new elites were often related to the old elites, and were less violently opposed to the Quatre Communes, with which they had old links 67. In Lower Casamance, the concatenation between the Quatre Communes and colonial elites and the young literati was thus rather limited, and this gave local politics a particularly antagonistic tone - Lower Casamançais regionalism was thus particularly touchy.

66 The role of migrants in local politics is confirmed by De Jonge et alia (1978; 128-129).
67 To take a Casamançais example, the Cissé and Seck families, powerful groups of traders and marabouts, who had administered the two eastern cantons of the subdivision of Ziguinchor during the colonial era, successfully carried their political influence into post-war and post-colonial politics. Two of their sons, Assane Seck and Doudou Cissé, who both received a good French education, were long major figures in Senegalese and Casamançais political life.
Hence the clear-cut shift in post-war Lower Casamance, summarised on Figure III.1 below. The big black arrow charts the circulation of political legitimacy from the 1930s to the 1950s. First, until the beginning of the war, it was the era of Auguste Gomis and the Creole urban elites of Ziguinchor.

Then, soon after the war, the SFIO and the urban northerners- traders like El Hajj Kékoto Diamé and Ibou Cissé, but also schoolteacher Doudou Kane, and Pierre-Edouard Diatta, son of a canton chief and civil servant. Unlike the Creoles, these men were not locked in the nostalgic, local politics of Ziguinchor; they had contacts out of Ziguinchor, and could mobilise throughout the networks of the citizens and enfranchised subjects in secondary towns of Casamance. But when all limitations on the franchise were finally lifted, the men who could lead the mobilisation were the “enfants du village”, the growing number of educated Diola whom the French schools were turning out \(^{68}\); hence the 1950s emergence of the Diola évolutés and of

---

\(^{68}\) The idiom “enfant du village” is taken from *La Voix de la Casamance*, 27, 23 July 1954. On this local paper of the 1950s, see below.
Emile Badiane, their leader; the Creoles and northerners could maintain a presence in Ziguinchor mostly.

Perceptible already after 1945, the emergence of this new elite was confirmed in the late 1950s, when the younger and more radical generation of Lower Casamançais, the ones just out of the post-1945 educational silent revolution, reached political maturity.

**Contesting the MFDC-BDS: politics in Casamance after Senghor’s victory**

To the local *évolués* of the 1940s, Senghor had represented a liberation from the SFIO elites, and each election proved a plebiscite for the MFDC-BDS, confirming that the local *évolués* had taken the lead in politics. But Senghor’s power was not unchallenged, and on two occasions, Casamance played a specific part in new oppositional trends: from Casamance, the Mouvement Autonome Casamançais and the Parti du Regroupement Africain-Sénégal challenged Senghor’s dominance, with unequal success. These movements have usually been interpreted as signs of the particularly strong regionalist sense prevalent in Casamance; this is partly true, but as shall be seen, they testified perhaps more to a pan-Senegalese trend, the political radicalisation of those literati elites. The specificity of Lower Casamance would thus have more to do with the activity of these numerous literati elites than with any Casamançais ‘essence’.

**The Mouvement Autonome Casamançais: “a new brood”?**

In 1950 the MFDC’s alliance with Senghor had seemed logical enough to Badiane and Diallo, but when, a few years later, Senghor took to absorbing regional groups into his party, new tensions arose inside the MFDC: the old leaders of the party, Emile Badiane and Ibou Diallo, were pitted against the younger rank-and-file of the movement, although this internal conflict was a many-sided one. As will be seen, for the most part, it was not a dispute over whether it was worth maintaining a separate regional movement for Casamance, whether distinct Casamançais interests required a specific political forum: generational, ideological and crudely partisan aspects were much more important.

Badiane and Diallo already belonged to the older generation of politicians, born during the 1910s and trained during the 1930s, and they were at a distance from the leftist, anti-colonial currents that became popular among the Senegalese literati of the
1950s. For many of the younger évolutés, Badiane and Diallo and their new leader, Léopold Sédar Senghor, had accepted co-operation with the French colonial oppressor too easily. Senghor had then replaced Lamine Guèye in power and he had taken a primary role in the administration of Senegal; Senghor was essentially a moderate, who maintained a positive view of the relationship between France and Senegal; also, confronted with the pragmatics of power, he had softened his tone. Thus he was increasingly seen by the radical youngbloods of the Senegalese left as a collaborator with the French, almost a traitor to the African cause. Now it was no longer the dubious methods of the SFIO that had to be opposed, it was the corrupt and centralist tendencies of the new BDS elite.

Undoubtedly there were more material aspects to this conflict: the nomination of members of the BDS in constituencies attributed to members of the MFDC was a big issue. So doing, the BDS looked like it was using the same old parachuting techniques as the SFIO. An extract of an interview with Bourama Faye Badji, then one of these dissenting youths, indicates this tension:

The youths opposed it [the union with the BDS], because they had claims that were specific to Casamance, which could not defended in the framework of an integration to the BDS; they also disagreed with the parachuting in Casamance of BDS executives, like Macodou Ndiaye, who was elected at the second Assemblée territoriale as a MFDC member, and there was another one, this toubab whose name I do not remember [Robert Delmas, a French industrialist]. There was also a third one. As if we did not have enough cadres ourselves... Paul-Ignace [Coly, a Diola from Bignona], he was a schoolteacher, they could have taken him.

Bourama Faye Badji does not seem very dissimilar to Emile Badiane or Ibou Diallo: a Diola born in Sindian, a village in northeastern Lower Casamance, son of a ward chief in Sédhiou, he went to the Ecole Blanchot in Saint-Louis and became a schoolteacher. But he was born in 1929, making him fourteen years younger than Emile Badiane and Ibou Diallo, and he had been a student at Blanchot in 1945; when a young teacher in Sédhiou, he had eagerly read forbidden communist newspapers, obtained through the pilot of a French agricultural company settled in Sédhiou. A strong generational rift was there, as Faye Badji himself insists, with a more radical agenda and a less cooperative attitude vis-à-vis the French. Badji insists on the ideological aspects of the cleavage:

69 For the 1957 elections to the Assemblée territoriale, which the MFDC-BDS (then BPS) won, the 11-member MFDC-BDS regional list included two northerners, Macodou Ndiaye and Abdoulaye Fofana, and a Frenchman, Jules-Maurice Lemaire. See ANS 11D1/387, Déclaration de candidature du Bloc Populaire Sénégalais.

70 Interview with Faye Badji, Ziguinchor-Boucotte, 28 January 1999.
Q: What was the difference between the MFDC-BDS and you?
What mattered was the penetration of Socialist ideas with the RDA. The ideas of the
RDA were popular, even if the RDA never broke through in Senegal; they had a
Senegalese section, the UDS, but they were recruited only among the intellectuals, they
acted essentially among the youths. But the UDS paper was very popular here. (…)
So we wanted to resist Senghor’s monopoly over the mass of former French subjects,
because we felt Senghor was a man of the right. We were from the left Many of us had
done Marxism. Djibril Sarr [a Séduhiou-born MFDC-BDS schoolteacher who had been
elected to the 1952 Assemblée territoriale, and who led the MAC breakaway] was a
Marxist.71

A further indication of the ideological nature of the struggle that was going on
inside the MFDC can be found in the role played by the paper Réalités africaines,
published in Dakar by a group of prestigious Senegalese left-wing intellectuals –
Abdoulaye Ly, Amadou Mahtar Mbow and Assane Seck, a Casamançais intellectual
whom we will soon see come on stage. Throughout 1954 and 1955, the paper
repeatedly published articles denouncing the leadership of the MFDC, first by Khaly
Dia, a Toucouleur from Casamance, who was an employee of a trade company, a
trade-unionist, a member of the RDA and the secretary-general of a Rassemblement
des Casamançais de Dakar, then by Djibril Sarr.72

This change in generation and ideology went along with a change in the
political geography: while the first branches of the MFDC had been formed, against
the dominance of the old colonial elites of Ziguinchor, in the smaller cities of
Casamance, like Bignona and Séduhiou, the new radical generation gathered in
Ziguinchor and in Dakar, where many civil servants and students were to be
found.73 In 1953, a MFDC branch had been created in Ziguinchor, the heartland of
the Creoles and northerners, where there had hitherto been none, grouping mostly
young men. In the MFDC paper, La Casamance, Emile Badiane noted this
emergence as “a new brood”.74 He was right, and to him, it would prove a
troublesome one.

But this developing tendency was not only about generation and ideology – it
was also about SFIO revenge against the BDS; in fact, the Ziguinchor branch of the
MFDC included some ex-SFIO members. In 1954, a local newspaper, La Voix de la
Casamance, was created in Ziguinchor by Abdoulaye Ndao. Ndao was born in 1918

71 Ibidem.
72 See Dia’s obituary in Réalités africaines, 23 December 1954.
73 For a later illustration of the geographical distribution of the MAC, see Réalités africaines, 26
March 1955: a “rassemblement des Casamançais de Dakar (tendance MFDC Indépendant)”, led by
Djibril Sarr, issued a condemnation of the attack by BDS supporters against Lamine Guèye’s
partisans in January 1955. On this attack, see below.
74 In La Casamance, 3, February 1955.
in the Diola village of Balandine in a family from north Senegal; he worked in Ziguinchor as an accountant at Petersen, a trade company; after 1945, he played an active part in trade-unionism in Ziguinchor, and he was a member of the SFIO 75. La Voix de la Casamance had no official political affiliation, but many articles attacked Edouard Diatta, Ibole Diallo and Emile Badiane, the leaders of the MFDC, and their national ally, Léopold Senghor – Ndao’s sympathy for the SFIO clearly maintained through the 1950s 76. The younger generation of the MFDC read with delight La Voix de la Casamance and its aggressive articles against the powers-that-be. A quote from the paper illustrates the new tone of politics:

Do you think that the City should be blamed with all the fault? Precisely not. (...) Most of the work falls on the brousse itself. [The brousse] must pitilessly clean up its lists and mores. It must realise that the reality of politics does not lie in drumming sessions, that it is not only about, for a whole mandate, organising meetings, congresses, sections and sub-sections, committees for the sale of membership cards, grandiose festivals, displacement of adversarial characters, etc. 77 The reality of politics, it is the hospital, the crumbling school, the road, the phone, the market, the village healthcare centre, the weak bridge on the marigot, finally breaking down under the passenger-full bus, it is the city without public lights, the harbour without docks, the docks without harbour, the groundnut seeds, the stinking and feverish ponds of Corinthas [a district of Ziguinchor] along which mosquitoes and other vermin feast for free on the back of the mosquito-net-less, it is the reduction of unemployment through the creation and development of modern industries and the starting of new construction sites.

The “grands territoriaux” [i.e. representatives to the Assemblée territoriale] must understand that, for the survival of their parties, they should not try to kill the regional movements – which they are, from now on, incapable of doing - but that they should let them develop and organise. If this were to happen, how do you see Senegalese politics in a dozen year from now? There will be strongly organised regional parties which may eventually ally and organise a unity of action, wearing on their flags BLODRICA, EB or UPR (the Bloc Démocratique des Revendications des Intérêts Campagnards or the Eveil de la Brousse or the Union Paysanne de Revendications), etc. If the City wants to use these future

---

75 See Ndao’s obituary in Paris-Dakar, 7 January 1960.
76 Signs of Ndao’s sympathy for the SFIO abound in his paper. For instance, Ndao published in May 1954 an article by Boubacar Obaye Diop, a leading SFIO figure, and in December 1954, an article by El Hadji Doudou Lo, deputy secretary of the SFIO section of Casamance. The MFDC-BDS answered to this last article in its own journal, La Casamance. Also, the paper of the SFIO, L’AOF, 11 March 1955, reprinted an article written by an Insa Ndiaye in La Voix de la Casamance, 56, 18 February 1955, which denounced the MFDC-BDS ambush of Lamine Guèye in 1955. Many separatists consider that La Voix de la Casamance voiced the claims of the MFDC (to the point that one of their papers is homonymous), while in fact it was opposed to the leaders of the first MFDC.... Some researchers seem to make the same confusion – see for instance Marut (1999 ; 215) or Barbier-Wiesser (1994; 279). Sancoung Sané, in Le Soleil, 31 August 1998, explains the confusion: the MFDC had decided to create a journal with this name, but Abdoulaye Ndao stole the title...
77 The “tams-tams” are a reference to the drums-and-dances often organised by political parties to attract popular attention. The “déplacements” refer to the arbitrary nomination to remote places of political opponents who belonged to the civil service; it was a classical weapon of the rulers in the colonial era – the colonial state, the SFIO and the BDS, each in their own turn, had used it remorselessly. La Voix de la Casamance, 18, 21 May 1954 denounced the exile imposed on El Hadji Doudou Lo, employee of the state agricultural marketing services and SFIO leader.
forces, it has to revise its methods and reserve the highest number of seats in all assemblies for the worthy children of the village [“les bons enfants du village”] \(^{78}\).

The article questioned the idea that the lack of development should be ascribed to ‘la Cité’ ie. the *Quatre Communes* - an exculpation which confirms Ndao’s SFIO allegiance - and denounced the “grands territoriaux”; the MFDC-BDS members of the Assemblée territoriale stood accused of plotting to ruin the regional movements... What *La Voix de la Casamance* proposed was a strengthening of the various regional movements ; SFIO supporter Ndao was thus asserting the strength and legitimacy of the very same regional movements which had led to the defeat of the SFIO ; he was basically trying to turn the favourite weapon of the BDS – regional movements – against its wielder.

The internal tensions in the MFDC over the relationship with the BDS were exposed publicly in October 1953, on the occasion of elections to the Assemblée de l’Union Française, an assembly which grouped representatives from all parts of the French empire. In these elections, the BDS won all three seats for Senegal, but despite promises made by Senghor, no member of the MFDC was nominated by the BDS; under heavy pressure from the new MFDC generation, Badiane and Diallo were forced to resign from the political bureau of the BDS. Internal tensions were high, and the new Ziguinchor branch of the MFDC, led by the radicals, dominated the 1953 MFDC congress in Marsassoum, during which the autonomy of the movement from the BDS was forcefully maintained. In June 1954, the fourth congress of the MFDC took place in Bignona, in the presence of Joseph Mbaye and Alioune Badara Mbengue, two major BDS figures, and tensions were renewed:

On the night of the second day of congress, Ibou [Diallo] and Emile [Badiane] sent Bouly Dramé to negotiate with the youths. Finally, there was a third day, and Ibou and Emile said ‘affiliation’ instead of ‘integration’. But what people understood was integration. So the youths were unhappy and left the MFDC; then, we created the MAC \(^{79}\).

Thus, after the Bignona congress, *les jeunes*, the younger and more radical wing of the MFDC, grouped in the Ziguinchor branch, felt betrayed. Under the guidance of Djibril Sarr, a member of the Assemblée territoriale and a leftist figure of the MFDC, they broke away from the MFDC and created the Mouvement

\(^{78}\) In *La Voix de la Casamance*, 27, 23 July 1954

\(^{79}\) Interview with Bourama Faye Badji, Ziguinchor-Boucotte, 28 January 1999. On the Bignona congress, see also the account by Khaly Dia in *Réalités africaines*, 19 August 1954.
Autonome de Casamance (MAC) at a congress in Marsassoum in June 1955. Soon after that, Djibril Sarr left the BDS group at the Assemblée territoriale. As La Casamance, the MFDC paper, euphemistically put it, he was “attracted by principles extraneous to our ideals”.

After some time Assane Seck himself, a leading contributor to Réalités africaines, was recruited by the MAC. He was a Casamançais, a member of the powerful Seck family, a family of northerners which settled at the end of the nineteenth century in Casamance, and which controlled the canton chiefship of Adéane; born in Inor, near Sédhiou, in 1919, educated at Ecole Blanchot and Ecole normale William Ponty, Seck had served in World War II as an officer, and had been to university in Paris, where he obtained degrees in geography; he had passed the first exam of the prestigious agrégation de géographie, a diploma whose symbolic importance had been established by Senghor’s precedent of obtaining the agrégation de grammaire. On his return to Senegal in 1952 Seck became a teacher at Ecole normale William Ponty in Sébikotane, near Dakar, and he took part to the activities of radical left-wing group Réalités Africaines and its eponymous paper. He was a cadre of greater prestige than the average schoolteacher - much more prestigious, at any rate, than Djibril Sarr’s schoolteacher background; a prestigious intellectual with strong local roots around Adéane, Seck became the leader of the MAC. Other radical Casamançais intellectuals joined, for instance a number of members of the RDA, which had remained a minority party for intellectuals throughout the period; the most notable recruit was Louis Da Costa.

Rapidly, through Djibril Sarr, the new movement got in touch with Babacar Obèye Diop, one of Lamine Guèye’s men. The SFIO had learnt from its repeated electoral defeats: it was by then determined to break its isolation from la brousse, and was eager for alliances with those regional movements which had ensured Senghor’s victory. An alliance with a young and active organisation settled in one of the most loyal and most numerically important stronghold of the BDS seemed a very

---

80 In Réalités africaines, 17 August 1955. In the contemporary context of separatism, the acronym of the MAC is often misinterpreted as Mouvement Autonomiste de la Casamance, as if the MAC fought for the political autonomy of Casamance; some authors make the mistake, for instance Zuccarelli (1988; vol. 2; 53) and Darbon (1988 ; 183). The present section makes clear the MAC did not have such an idea – what the MAC fought for was the autonomy of the Casamançais regional party from Senghor’s BDS.

81 In La Casamance, 3, February 1955.

82 Da Costa was born in 1930 in Oussouye, the son of a migrant from Portuguese Guinea and a Diola woman from Oussouye; he was a schoolteacher.
clever move to the SFIO. Assane Seck thus formed a ticket with Lamine Guèye for the parliamentary elections of January 1956, against the BDS ticket which included Léopold Sédar Senghor and Mamadou Dia, another bright left-wing intellectual - a very fashionable electoral implement at the time, so it seems. But the SFIO-MAC ticket failed miserably. At the national level, the BDS got 346,266 votes (76 per cent), the SFIO-MAC alliance only 101,372 votes (22 per cent) \(^{83}\). The results for Casamance, presented in Table III.4 below, demonstrate the failure of the MAC to gain political ground in Casamance: while the BDS national average was 76 per cent, it got 87 per cent of the votes in Casamance, and the SFIO-MAC alliance scored significantly only in urban Ziguinchor, where the traditional SFIO constituency was found \(^{84}\). In Assane Seck’s area of origin, near Sédhiou, results were only marginally better.

Table III.4: Results of the January 1956 elections for the French National Assembly in Casamance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Valid votes (number)</th>
<th>BDS (number of votes)</th>
<th>BDS (percentage)</th>
<th>SFIO (number of votes)</th>
<th>SFIO (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ziguinchor commune</td>
<td>3,189</td>
<td>1,924</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1,131</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziguinchor subdivision</td>
<td>6,266</td>
<td>5,760</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oussouye</td>
<td>6,194</td>
<td>6,101</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bignona</td>
<td>2,682</td>
<td>19,707</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1,881</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sédhiou</td>
<td>16,362</td>
<td>14,108</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1,875</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolda</td>
<td>5,133</td>
<td>3,964</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vélingara</td>
<td>5,082</td>
<td>4,348</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63,908</td>
<td>55,912</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>6,333</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The MAC had failed to appeal beyond its constituency of young left-wing radicals, and in May 1956, pragmatically enough, Assane Seck defected to the BDS and became a member of its political bureau. The MAC had thus been a failure: the real leaders of Casamance remained the older generation of évolutés, Emile Badiane and Ibou Diallo, those who had created the MFDC and fused it with Senghor’s BDS, taking part to the Bloc Populaire Sénégalais (BPS) in 1956.

---

\(^{83}\) See Roche (2001: 165). The UDS, the Senegalese section of the RDA, got only 6,888 votes.

\(^{84}\) For a confirmation that the SFIO was unable to go beyond its core constituency of urbanised northerners, see ANS 21G219/178, a document titled “Responsables à la propagande”, Ziguinchor, le 14 septembre 1956, signed by El Hadj Mamadou Kékoto Diamé, then political director of the SFIO. The list gives forty-six names of major SFIO militants; there are only about six Diola names on the list.

\(^{85}\) The rural areas of Ziguinchor (the cantons of Adéane, Mandjaks, Bainoucks, Bayottes and Brin-Sélélé) which formed the subdivision, voted separately from the commune of Ziguinchor.
This section establishes clearly that, no more than that of the MFDC, can the emergence of the MAC be put down to an outbidding in regionalism, a proto-nationalist tension: the MAC also had to do with the left-wing political radicalism of the young literati, the personal interests of some of its leaders, and the desire for revenge by the SFIO. What this historical sequence does show, though, is that regionalist politics remained an appealing line in Senegal. But this regionalism was in no way separatist – it was integrative. In fact, integrative regionalism became a key feature of Senghor’s postcolonial Senegal, as will be seen in the next section.

The PRA-S and Casamance: an epilogue?

Assane Seck’s rallying to Senghor did not last long. Senghor had barely convinced, in April 1958, Lamine Guèye’s Parti Sénégalais d’Action Socialiste (the ex-SFIO) to join in the BPS to form the Union Progressiste Sénégalaise (UPS) than the UPS was split open when Paris proposed, in September 1958, to its African colonies a choice between immediate independence or an extended autonomy in association with France. After an initial hesitation, Senghor rejected immediate independence. Seck and his radical friends from Réalités Africaines, Abdoulaye Ly and Amadou Mahtar Mbow, then took the lead of the more radical wing of the UPS, particularly strong among the youth, and created the Parti du Regroupement Africain-Sénégal (PRA-S), which demanded immediate independence and supported the ‘No’ vote for the referendum that took place on the 20th September of 1958. This time Assane Seck did not engage in politics on a regional basis, but contrary to what had happened with the MAC, his new party met with notable success in Casamance.

As is shown on Table III.5 below, while the ‘No’ won only 2.2 per cent of the votes in the whole of Senegal, it obtained 7.4 per cent in Casamance. The threat which the PRA-S posed to the UPS in Casamance was such that it repeatedly led to violence between partisans of the two parties: houses were arsoned, militants beaten up or publicly humiliated.

---

86 On the general history of the PRA-S and the context of its creation, see Traoré et alia (1966) and Roche (2001; chapter XV).

87 The current MFDC, eager to find signs of an enduring Casamançais political identity, wrongly claims that a majority of Casamançais voted ‘No’. The separatists’ argument is that since their forefathers had rejected the autonomy proposed by France in 1958 while north Senegal had accepted, Casamance should have been separated from Senegal.
Table III.5: Results of the 1958 Referendum in Senegal and Casamance

Source ANSOM, Affaires politiques, 3548, Procès-verbal de la Commission des votes pour le référendum sur la Communauté

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Percentage of Yes (i.e. UPS)</th>
<th>Percentage of No (i.e. PRA-S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commune Ziguinchor</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivision Oussouye</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivision Ziguinchor</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commune Bignona</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivision Bignona</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivision Sédhiou</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commune Kolda</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivision Kolda</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivision Vélingara</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Casamance</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sénégal</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Success in the Casamance was such that when the 1960 municipal elections approached, the PRA-S decided that it would only compete in Casamance. *Indépendance africaine*, the paper of the PRA-S, printed an appeal by the political bureau:

Even though the whole country is presently objectively in process of mass mobilisation against this party [l’UPS], it is today certainly only in Casamance that the masses inside the PRA-Senegal can, at any time, fight and defeat the UPS dictatorship. It is for this reason that, vanguard of the Senegalese people (...), the PRA-SENEGAL DECIDES TO ENGAGE THE PRA-SENEGAL COMMITTEES FROM CASAMANCE ON THE FRONTLINE OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE SENEGALESE PEOPLE DURING THESE ELECTIONS (...).

The electoral battle will thus be in Casamance a national test. It will be a highly political battle. (...)

Where they are sufficiently organised against the apparatus of domination and repression of the UPS; where they have achieved mobilisation inside the ranks of the PRA-Senegal against the UPS; where they can already face and bear witness for all those who cannot under the UPS oppression UPS; there, the ‘de-Senghorised’ Senegalese popular masses who were the first to be democratically organised thanks to objective local conditions, the popular masses of Casamance, under the guidance of the PRA-Senegal will go to the polls on the 31st of July 1960, on the account of all the Senegalese who are fond of justice and freedom and who all will watch this region that day. (...)

PRA-SENEGAL militants from CASAMANCE, turn these elections, in Casamance, into a test valid for the whole of Senegal, into an example useful to the whole or our people! You will be faced with the full weight of the UPS apparatus, but vote PRA-Senegal, at all costs, and get other people to vote! You must ensure the triumph of the will of the people in Casamance! The other regions will follow 88.

The political bureau of the PRA-S was imprecise as to the nature of the “objective local conditions” which accounted for the greater impact of their party in Casamance. Analysts usually interpret the strong implantation of the PRA-S in Casamance as a result of the personal influence of Assane Seck in the region. Traoré

---

et alia (1966; 92-93) thus mention “the influence of one of its leaders, M. Assane Seck, who hails from this region, and who benefits from being its first university-educated man”. But how come Assane Seck did what other leaders of the PRA-S, who were no less prestigious than he was, could not do in their own regions of origin? How come that Assane Seck’s previous attempt with the MAC in 1955 had been largely an electoral failure in Casamance, while three years later his party made high scores?

Of course, three years earlier, when he was allied to Lamine Guèye, Assane Seck was just a young returnee from Europe, and since then, he had had time to develop his implantation in Casamance; his losing ticket with Lamine Guèye had given him a public stature, and he benefited from his prior participation to Senghor’s BPS; the fact that he came from a powerful family was a help. In fact, Table III. 5 indicates that the region of origin of Assane Seck, the subdivision of Sédhiou, gave some of the lowest regional results to the PRA-S. The undeniable charisma of Assane Seck probably played a part in the success of the PRA-S, but there must be other reasons for it.

My contention is that Seck was well received in Casamance because the younger generation of évolutés, those who had followed the MAC, the numerous and heavily politicised young men who were sensitive to Seck’s prestige as an intellectual, had been developing their power in Casamance. Now, it was their turn to act as middlemen between the rural masses and the state: the generation of Emile Badiane and Ibou Diallo had become government officials and elected representatives, they had left the village schools, they spent a lot of time in Dakar. The young PRA-S militants, like Bourama Faye Badji, who had first mobilised inside the MAC, had grown older; a number of them now ran the numerous village schools of Lower Casamance, and they were able to mobilise the local population.\textsuperscript{89} The UPS leaders were well aware of the sociology of their challengers for “the MFDC-BDS [UPS] elected representatives would tell the peasants to beware of the schoolteachers and nurses.”\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{89} Indépendance africaine, 5, 5 September 1959, tellingly insisted on the ‘explaining’ which the PRA-S militants did in rural areas: “we did not need to lose time in personal attacks in the Senghor way; it took only a little clarification on the suppression of forced labour, a collective deed which answered to the aspirations of the African masses; it took only some simple analyses of the political situation, a few oral accounts, short but clear, on the meaning and content of our line; we just had to show the peasants the exploitation to which they were subjected (...)”

\textsuperscript{90} Interview with Lamine Diouf, Ziguinchor, 18 November 1999.
This is confirmed by the local geography of the PRA-S vote: Table III.5 indicates that the PRA-S gained its best results in the communes (i.e. urban centres) of Ziguinchor, Bignona and Kolda, and in the subdivision (i.e. rural district) of Bignona. The fact that the PRA-S was able to penetrate the rural parts of Bignona so strongly is in a direct relation with the early development of primary education there – as seen in Chapter II, the subdivision of Bignona had taken the lead in the development of education in Lower Casamance, and that of Oussouye lagged behind 91.

The success of the PRA-in Casamance had little to do with regionalism, but it depended on radicalism, and radicalism in late 1950s and early 1960s Senegal was largely coterminous with education and urbanity. As Traoré *et alia* note (1966 : 93) “the PRA is not localised in Casamance only, it has a measure of influence in the urban areas. But its extension in rural areas was quasi-null”. Thus the PRA-S success in Casamance had primarily to do with the fact that Lower Casamance, even in its rural areas, had been more exposed to formal education, and was more ‘urban’. More than Assane Seck, it was the solid grid of rural schools and the active young *évolués* who staffed them that explain the local penetration of the PRA-S. If anything, the PRA-S experience shows more the exceptional degree of political mobilisation and modernisation of the region than anything.

The PRA-S in fact denounced the regionalism of the local BDS leaders (i.e. the MFDC-BDS) 92. In November 1959, commenting on incidents in Oussouye, Louis Da Costa, an ex-member of the MAC who had followed Assane Seck to the PRA-S, stated that a rebellion in the Casamance should not be excluded after independence: “when the Senegalese will be left between themselves, it will be easier to settle accounts”; his sentence was thus clear about the inclusion of Casamance among “the Senegalese”. Da Costa mentioned that Casamance could actually separate from Senegal, but only to join Sekou Touré’s Guinea, then the lighthouse for radical French-speaking West Africa since the Guineans had voted No in September 1958 and had gone for immediate independence - Da Costa’s separatist statement, and the

91 Another factor is that in the 1950s, education in Oussouye was still largely under the control of Catholic Church, which was a staunch opponent of the PRA-S – in the subdivision of Bignona, state schools had proliferated.

whole PRA-S episode, had thus more to do with left-wing radicalism than with a sense of identity 93.

**Early post-colonial politics: the logics of political representation in a one-party regime**

Following independence, Senegal saw a progressive closure of the political game. Senghor’s mixed policy of coercion and cooptation finally resulted in the absorption of all opposition parties into his party. Senegal finally became a one-party state in 1966, when the PRA-S finally reunited to the UPS. But one-party systems rarely abandon their claims to provide some form of political representation, and Africa prior to the “third wave” of democratisation was no exception. For instance, the idea of representation does lurk behind the “reciprocal assimilation of elites” which Bayart (1985) described as typical of Cameroonian politics – if Cameroon is to know peace, every group, every region must have a portion of its elite incorporated in the state elite. Throughout its post-colonial history, Senegal displayed broadly similar traits: a limited representation through co-opted elites with a regional basis. This system functioned under the guidance of the same évoluté elites that had put Senghor in power.

**The persistence of political representation?**

Some scholars of Senegalese politics, enthused by the 2000 political alternance, have a tendency to exaggerate the continuity of ‘political pluralism’ in Senegal 94. Retrospective interpretations of the Senegalese political ‘success story’ often underestimate the degree of coercion and control that prevailed in postcolonial Senegal, and the negative effects of its degraded modes of representation. Nevertheless, throughout Senegalese political history, there has been a sense that some form of communication should exist between the people and the state, and that it was the politicians’ business to provide channels for such communication. The foundations are still very much disputed: the long history of party politics in Senegal; the anti-hegemonic role of the ambiguous alliance between the state and

---


94 See for instance Gellar (2002).
the marabouts; the depth of the political cleavages during the late colonial period; and the existence of a rather broad intellectual elite have all been mentioned 95.

Whatever the reasons, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, President Senghor did tolerate competition inside the UPS – and it was often bitter. Louis Da Costa, a leading figure of the PRA-S who joined the UPS with his comrades in 1966, describes the internal feuds that took place inside the UPS after the fusion between the two parties:

So when we did the union between the PRA and the UPS, we were given a percentage of positions in the cabinet, in the political bureau, in the party. In the bureau, we had nine people only, I think (...). During the party elections, we had to buy membership cards. So we had to convince our partisans while the [UPS] cards were worth a hundred francs, and ours [those of the PRA-S] 50 francs only. We explained them that it was the only way to have representatives. In Ziguinchor, we bought 2800 UPS cards, while the UPS leader already had 6000 cares. But we beat them, because it was physical presence that mattered – maybe they did not have the militants So we took the section of Ziguinchor-town and the two districts of Nyassia and Niaguiss. And I became the general secretary of the coordination [for the department of Ziguinchor] in 1966 or 1967 96.

Of course, Senghor and his entourage took special care not to let competition go too far, and there is little doubt that this competition conveyed the demands of the ‘people’ only in very soft tones. Da Costa describes the regulations which Senghor imposed on the whole system:

In Oussouye, we were strong, [but] we did not run. Siganar, Effoc, Youtou, Mlomp, we did not run, we told the comrades to support Joseph Mathiam [a pro-Senghor UPS local leader]. In Bignona, we beat Emile [Badiane]. Senghor called Assane [Seck] to ask him to leave Emile ahead. In Sédhiou, we beat them. In Kolda, we did not run, because the people in Kolda, Demba Koita, was a former PRA-S man and we backed him. Throughout the region, we were strong. We controlled three departments 97.

Emile Badiane was too important a man, and he was to be spared the indignity of defeat at the end of the faction of ex-PRA-S who had entered the UPS... Each of the factions controlled three of the six departments of the region of Casamance – Senghor took great care to maintain a fine balance between the factions. Still, inside the ruling UPS, whose name was changed to Parti Socialiste (PS) in 1976, competition did exist. At every level, from the national bureau to the local sections, tendances, flexible coalitions of politicians, would compete for political power; sometimes a local leader could impose his hegemony, but it would only be temporary and ultimately fragile, and an opposite tendance would soon emerge. Tendances

95 On those various points, see for instance Gellar (2002) and Cruise O’Brien, Diop and Diouf (2002).
97 Ibidem.
were not fighting over the support of the people, but to win that of the higher echelons, by distributing the greater number of membership cards and organising the biggest pro-government rallies. The official election per se had little meaning in Senghor’s Senegal; it was the race to gain the endorsement of the PS, the much yearned for investiture, which provided the venue for real political competition. This kind of system allowed for a substantial measure of filtering and distortion: the party top brass controlled the number of membership cards distributed in the various branches; they determined the allocation of patronage resources; they controlled internal procedures; they could use the state authorities to modify the balance between tendances, and so on. Still, the system as a whole provided for a form of power limitation. Even more, it provided Senghor with a method for domesticating the young radicals of the PRA-S – progressively, absorbed by the day-to-day competition of tendances, they merged with the old guard of the MFDC-BDS. In the end, when Senghor left in 1980 and was replaced by Abdou Diouf, the youngbloods were nicknamed the ‘barons’ of Senghor - a paradigmatic case of reciprocal assimilation of elites...

The strength of legal regionalism

Legal regionalism was the other main feature of this kind of degraded representation; it could actually be argued that legal regionalism (as opposed to illegal separatism and to ethnicity) is a built-in feature of post-colonial governance. Since national-level party politics does not function properly and since the centralised state is the only pool of resources, representation is essentially territorial – post-colonial regimes, inasmuch as they care to grant a measure of representation, usually balance the various regions of the country in terms of ministerial offices.

Such is the meaning of many of those meetings, typical of one-party systems, which are wrongly thought unitary: they provide one occasion for factions to gauge their respective weights. These rallies basically function as stock exchanges, allowing for quotation of the various political shares. These quotations in turn determine the distribution of support (and nomination) by the men of the higher echelons to those who have demonstrated successfully their ‘control’ over some portion of the people. Observations during the 2000 presidential elections made it clear that, during meetings, the leaders of the various factions of the PS took great pains to make sure ‘their’ men were identified as such; banners and slogans often associated the name of President Diouf with that of the faction leader, and all sorts of mouvements de soutien and comités proliferated, whose only function was not to unite, but to discriminate between supporters of Abdou Diouf...
seats on the ruling party’s committee and so on. In this kind of system, a politician’s value is assessed essentially according to his capacity to bring the pork-barrel ‘home’. The nation is organised as a pyramid of territorial entities which compete with their peer-units over scarce resources – this is almost all post-colonial politics is about. Politicians always make higher claims, constantly denounce unequal treatment and try to get a bigger slice of the national cake for their constituency. Signs of this legal regionalism were abundant during the 1960s, and even in the late colonial era: as described above, Senghor’s victory against Lamine Guèye depended largely on his capacity to rally the regionalist hinterland elites against the dominant Quatre Communes, and this translated into terms of positions for the new elites as well as in terms of public investments.

Instances of such legal regionalism in Casamançais politics (and in Senegalese politics at large) are manifold. The abolition of boarding schools in Saint-Louis in the early 1970s, for instance, caused outrage in Lower Casamance and led the Casamançais elites to react. Bassirou Cissé, the son of Ibou Cissé, was then a PS bigwig and a representative for Bignona, and he denounced the scheme at the National Assembly. All the leading Casamançais politicians and Monsignor Sagna, the Diola bishop of Saint-Louis, gathered to raise funds and create a Foyer de la Casamance in Saint-Louis. In 1974, the same Bassirou Cissé insisted vehemently on the decentralisation of industrial development, and denounced the jealousy of his colleagues from Sédiou, which had resulted in the failure of the development of a new plant in Ziguinchor. Interestingly enough, as seen above, Cissé’s father was a successful Saloum-Saloum (i.e. a nordiste) trader established in the department of Bignona, and a major figure of the post-1945 SFIO. Despite his Saloum origins, Bassirou Cissé saw no harm in defending the interests of Lower Casamance, his adoptive region. Legal regionalism was thus an accepted feature of Senegalese

99 There are some non-territorial modes of representation, such as youth wings or women’s leagues or trades-unions, but they usually control much fewer resources and carry much less weight; very often, their branches have little autonomy and are fully integrated into territorial politics.

100 Bringing back the pork-barrel to one’s constituency is of course a prominent feature of all democracies, but in other regimes, like Western liberal democracies, it is not ‘all there is’ to politics.


102 In the aftermath of the 1982 separatist demonstration, Bassirou Cissé fell victim to the ethnic line of the government’s counter-insurgency policy, which promoted ‘autochthonous’ Casamançais (and technocrats) in lieu of the old ‘barons’. Cissé was thus progressively supplanted by one of his ‘men’, Landing Sané, a Diola civil servant from Balingore, who became a minister in 1983, right after the first separatist demonstration in Ziguinchor, together with a batch of three other young Casamançais technocrats. Following his marginalisation, Bassirou Cissé joined forces with the major opposition
politics. It was not regarded as illegal ethnicism, which was banned by the Senegalese constitution. In another instance of legal regionalism, in July 1980, Prime Minister Diouf received the main Casamançais political leaders and cadres to discuss the future of the region; every single one of them came with a shopping list of public goods for his own constituency, criticising the privileges granted to others’ constituencies.  

Conclusion

In Senegal as a whole, post-1945 politics was structured by the tension between la brousse and the Quatre Communes – regionalism was a national feature, and affected all regions of Senegal. The progressive opening of the political franchise coincided with the constitution of a large évoluté elite, politically active, who represented these regionalist tendencies. In Lower Casamance, because of the importance formal education was acquiring, this emergence was particularly strong, thus leading to a strong political mobilisation and a lively regionalism. Other factors like the old localism of the Ziguinchor Creoles, the economic particularism of the French traders, and the lack of concatenation between the new évoluté elites and the old colonial elites, played a part in this process. The political clause of the Lower Casamançais version of the Senegalese social contract was the political preeminence of the évolutés as middlemen, Emile Badiane being their figurehead.

Building on the national cleavage between the Quatre Communes and the hinterland, Léopold Sédar Senghor was able to drive out of power the dominant party of the time, the SFIO, whose base was in the Quatre Communes. It is ironic that the existence of regional parties in the 1940s and 1950s, nowadays claimed by modern Casamançais separatists as indicative of the specificity of their region, was actually a feature shared with many other regions of Senegal - and was determinant in the ascent to power of Léopold Sédar Senghor, Senegal’s great man. Another irony was...
that, as the PRA-S experience made clear, the specificity of Casamance (and particularly Lower Casamance) had more to do with its degree of integration and participation to the Senegalese political scene, than with exclusion – electorally, the Lower Casamançais behaved like the urban population of north Senegal. But modern Casamançais separatists are not wholly unaware of the paradoxes of post-war Casamançais politics, as is revealed by the ambiguity of their evaluations of Emile Badiane – at times a traitor, at times a fool cheated by Senghor, at times a hero...

104 See for instance Darbon (1985 : 133), Marut (1999 : 173-174) and Gasser (2002 : 427, note 16). See a letter by Father Diamacoune in La Voix de la Casamance, 47, December 1994: “I do not absolve totally the Casamançais who were Senghor’s earliest companions. They put too much trust in Léopold and the Senegalese. They simply forgot that these Senegalese did not go through the same sacred groves as we, the Casamançais.”
CHAPTER IV
THE BREAK-UP OF THE COMPACT

Ajammé Mbaye, maa ngiy ñibbi
Mënnaa foot, mënnaa pase, mënnaa lépp
Li ma bègg, Yalla mayna ma doom bu raft.

Alors les jeunes sont partis à Dakar où semblaient se trouver les clés de ce monde moderne : l’argent, le travail, l’instruction. Ainsi s’égrènent les années d’exil. Les filles ont suivi les jeunes qui ne voulaient plus les épouser sur place. Elles les ont trouvés courant toujours derrière l’argent nécessaire. Elles les ont aimés. Elles ont porté des enfants sans gagner de mari, travailler pour élever leur enfant, assurer la subsistance de ceux qui ne travaillent pas. Les jeunes pères trop accaparés par leur propre lutte ont prolongé indéfiniment leur vie de jeunes hommes. (...) Derrière les paroles des femmes courageuses pointait parfois la rancœur contre ces garçons irresponsables, retranchés toujours derrière les ‘moyens’ qui leur manquaien t pour rentrer dans leur vie d’homme. Quel inaccomplissement, quelles humiliations ceux-ci cachaient-ils derrière leurs éclats de rire.

The quest for the golden age

As is often found in nationalist movements, Casamançais separatists insist that Casamançais society is peculiarly harmonious, that its fabric is without rents or flaws. They often make use of the ethnological classification of the Diola as an acephalous and egalitarian society, to insist on the Edenic nature of Casamançais societies. Reference is frequent to various examples of village solidarity, the most popular of these stories being perhaps the one about inter-familial food gifts in cases of food scarcity: when a family in the village suffers from a food shortage, not only do the neighbours offer baskets of rice; they are told to do so secretly, at night, to avoid unnecessary humiliation to the needy family. The absence of castes or slavery in Lower Casamance – a stark contrast with northern Senegal – or the peaceful

---

1. *Kanaleen* song in Wolof, from a tape of Diola female songs: author’s private collection. The words translate as follow:
   
   Ajammé Mbaye, I am going home,
   I know how to wash clothes, I know how to iron, I know everything,
   What I want is that God give me a beautiful child.

   This song is a *kanaleen* song. *Kanaleen* designates women who undergo a ritual to protect their children – usually only women who have lost many children ‘unnaturally’ do it. During the time of the ritual, which can last several years, these women settle out of their village, behave as buffoons; they take nicknames – “Mbaye” is a Wolof word and surname (meaning “father”). On the *kanaleen* ritual, see Journet (1981a) and Fassin (1987).

cohabitation of many cults and religions are also often mentioned. Of course, to
darken the traits of this Rousseauist paradise, one has only to read the
anthropological literature on ‘acephalous’ or ‘egalitarian’ societies, to find out that
they are loaded with huge tensions between competing lineages, villages, and
gender- or age-groups. And indeed, nationalists do perceive some internal tensions
most of their discussions take a nostalgic tone; the sense is clear, among those who
developed these lines of discourse, that the good old days are over, that the golden
age of village solidarity is little else than a cherished memory. And reinstating the
old and somehow vanished harmony is precisely what the nationalists claim to be
doing.

This is, as said above, a classical feature of nationalist discourses. Indeed
nationalism is not only about dealing with those defined as outsiders (in the case of
Casamance, the ‘northerners’). Nationalism is also a reordering of society. In the
European context, the importance of these internal aspects of nationalism is well-
known, and they are well studied. There are countless sociological or psychological
interpretations of European fascisms and nationalisms that give a priority to these
internal aspects, with unequal success. But in African studies, research on identity
politics has often taken little account of the dynamics and struggles internal to the
groups involved. The reasons for this are threefold. First, scholars of African
identity politics (usually political scientists) lack knowledge and interest for the
workings and tensions of local societies. Secondly, since social scientists have long
supposed that the ethnic community was ‘natural’, pre-existent and homogeneous, it

---

3 On various aspects of the many tensions in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Diola society, see
the works of Baum, Linares, Hamer, Journet, Lambert, Mark and Snyder. On the specific issue of the
participation of the Diola in the slave trade, Baum (1986) and Linares (1987) establish that, though
they rarely kept slaves themselves, the ancestors of the modern Diola did seize captives in enemy
villages. If they were not given a ransom, they would sell the captives to the Portuguese or the
Manding.

4 Authors pointing to the importance of the internal, rather than external, factors in the constitution of
nationalism are numerous and have presented very diverse views. For views of nationalism as a step
to the constitution of industrial society, see Deutsch (1969) and Gellner (1983). Fascism and
national-socialism have been interpreted against the background of the internal consequences of world
crises (World War I and the 1930s economic crisis). But there are other lines, such as Reich’s
psychoanalytical interpretation of fascism (1972) or Kornhauser’s depiction of the politics of mass
society (1959).

5 For a recent exception, see Bravman (1998; 7) who notes that “intragroup tensions rarely draw
notice in analyses of the origins and ideological reproduction of ethnic groups”. In his discussion of
Taita ethnic identity in Kenya, he insists (ibid.; 4) “that the social pressures that spurred contestations
and change were shaped primarily within local social groups – sometimes through locally-rooted
innovations by a segment of society, other times through the ways people like Taita’s Anglicans tried
to incorporate influences from without.”
was never considered problematic – its internal tensions and its mode of constitution were not taken as relevant objects of study. But even when later developments in anthropology and history insisted that ethnicities were social constructions, and not eternal and amorphous ‘data’, ethnicities were often interpreted as internally non-problematic and self-evident. The general tendency has been to analyse ethnicities essentially as procedures geared to the constitution of borders, the separation from outsiders - and competition with them over other external resources (land, market shares, access to the state)\(^6\). This is the third point: most non-primordialist analyses of ethnicities have given so far little consideration to internal matters – even when these non-primordialist approaches described ethnicity as cultural politics, the embeddedness of identity in intra-group politics was neglected.

Drawing on the example afforded by research on European nationalisms, it is this embeddedness which we propose to track in the present chapter. We aim at an exploration of the rents in the fabric of Lower Casamançais society - the nature of the cracks has something to tell us about the constitution of Casamançais nationalism. It will be seen that, towards the end of the 1970s, a divergence became increasingly evident between Lower Casamançais men and women: the men, dependent as they were on formal education and public employment, were faced with growing difficulties, while the women, who relied on informal employment, were able to maintain, and even expand, their successful migration; this severe crisis of the male pathway to modernity was related to long-term demographic changes (the state could no longer cater for the growing number of educated Casamançais) and contingent problems (the financial difficulties of the Senegalese state, the crisis of the school system); cleavages deepened between the few successful migrants – and most specifically the higher strata among them, the *cadres* - and the majority of men. As a result of this process, a group of young Casamançais literati was formed, among whom many discovered their Casamançais-ness in the course of their harsh pilgrimage to Dakar.

**The collapse of the compact**

We have seen in a previous chapter how, in the follow-up to World War II, an implicit social compact was established between the Senegalese state and Lower Casamance, around education and civil service employment. This compact was

---

\(^6\) See Cohen (1969) or the various essays in Vail (1989).
formed in an era of rapid growth of the civil service: a sizable civil service was central to the interventionist African agenda of the French Fourth Republic, and post-colonial Senegal inherited the strong developmentalist state ideology of the post-war colonial government; in addition, throughout the 1960s, a number of French civil servants had to be replaced by Senegalese nationals. The Lower Casamançais literati thus played a major part in this build-up of the Senegalese civil service, but because of the basic education their rural schooling had endowed them with, they were massively concentrated among the lowest ranks of the civil service or the army. At the end of the 1970s the conditions which had allowed for the integration of the first Lower Casamançais literati no longer prevailed: both the population and the proportion of literati inside the population were increasing in Senegal as a whole, and in Lower Casamance particularly; and the Senegalese state progressively entered a severe financial crisis which brought the expansion of the civil service to a halt. Thus both long-term demographic changes and short-term financial changes combined to bring about the break-up of the Casamançais social compact.

Demographic expansion, schooling and civil service in the 1970s and 1980s

After World War II, Senegal at large went through an extremely rapid demographic expansion. But in Lower Casamance, a region which had only been recently colonised, the demographic transition started relatively late and was extremely rapid. The fall of child mortality was steep – one additional effect of the quick development of modern education in the region. This change is clearly

7 Indeed, this gap in child mortality mirrors the one on education between Lower Casamance and the rest of Senegal. Pison et alia (1989; 20-29) note that, in Mlomp, “at birth, a child born alive has a 90 per thousand chance of dying before five. This figure is remarkably low when compared to the rural average in Senegal, 250 per thousand for the 1981-1985 period (...). The figure for Mlomp falls also far under the national average (191) and even under the average for urban areas (135) for the 1976-1985 period.” Pison et alia, noting that the education of mothers had made little headway at the time of the survey, hypothesise that “the key of success seem to lie (...) in a satisfying organisation of healthcare and in the efficient supervision of the population”; they mention that deliveries in rural maternity hospitals in Lower Casamance started in the 1950s, and were quasi-general already in the 1970s. But Pison et alia do not mention male education as a factor and it seems that they underestimate the role of men in health issues, maybe out of an anthropology-induced exaggeration of the importance of the sexual division of labour in Diola society; the quick evolution of child mortality is very probably related to the men’s education and interest in health matters, and their willingness to back the women’s in their fight against child mortality. Barbier-Wiesser & Preira (1994), reviewing schoolwork by Casamançais pupils, indicate that health issues form an important part of formal education in Casamançais primary schools.

On a related issue, that of kindergarten, Emile Badiane played a major role in their diffusion in rural Lower Casamance, turning the region into an exception: according to Sagna et alia (1994; 148, table 4), in 1980, the current region of Ziguinchor accounted for a sixth of children in kindergarten in the whole of Senegal – it was the second region after Dakar.
established from data gathered by the INED in Mlomp, a Diola village. Pison et alia (1989; 14-15), reconstituting the reproductive biography of the women from Mlomp, have calculated that the mortality of children from 0 to 5 years, which had remained rather stable around 360 per thousand until 1960, declined rapidly after that: for the children born between 1975 and 1979, mortality was halved (159 deaths per thousand); for the 1984-1989 generation, mortality was further reduced, revolving around 90 per thousand – the lowest death rate of all regions of Senegal 8. As Pison (1994) puts it, it was a “revolution in health”. This revolution allowed for an extremely rapid population growth. In Lower Casamance this demographic expansion went along a sustained increase in primary schooling. We have seen in Chapter II how the success of the early literati had turned education and civil service employment into an attractive and plausible pathway for the young Diola, and had stirred massive local investments in village schools. In the course of the 1970s, in many districts of Lower Casamance, primary schooling rapidly reached a hundred per cent rate, at least for the boys. As a result the number of people aspiring to educated civil service jobs increased rapidly in Lower Casamance.

But recruitment could not keep on with the rapid growth of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. In the early 1980s the gap between the number of candidates for civil service jobs and the number of available jobs became ever more dramatic. Maintaining the previous levels of recruitment was all the more difficult as the Senegalese state went through increasing financial difficulties at the end of the 1970s, which resulted in the signing of successive agreements between Senegal and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

At the end of 1979 already, Senegal was forced to adopt a short term plan to stabilise the state budget; in 1980 an agreement was signed with the IMF and the World Bank for a plan de redressement économique et financier – the first adjustment plan in West Africa 9. But the actual reduction of the civil service actually came only later, in 1986. Between 1980 and 1983, with the 1983 elections approaching, the Senegalese government was unwilling to implement the adjustment programme fully; in 1984 a board, the cellule de contrôle des effectifs et de la masse

---

8 In Mlomp, the number of children surviving to the age of 5 increased from 84 between 1930 and 1934 to 599 from 1960 and 1964, reaching a peak at 716 between 1965 and 1969.

salariale, was set up to control the workforce and wage bill and to enforce the IMF conditions. In fact, from 1979 to 1983, the civil service further increased from 56,589 to 67,718, and it was only between 1986 and 1990 that the civil service actually diminished. In the specific case of the early block to the literati’s pathway, the structural adjustment process, now a popular and convenient scapegoat in African politics, thus played no part - it was more of a symptom than a cause of the crisis, though it undoubtedly contributed to making matters worse during the mid-1980s.

The key point was that, at the 1970s and in the early 1980s, the continued increase of the civil service was not sufficient to satisfy the growing numbers of young Senegalese (and most specifically Lower Casamançais) who were aspiring to state employment. In the absence of data specific to Lower Casamance, the data for Senegal as a whole, presented on Table IV.1 and Figure IV.1 below, illustrate this evolution. The evolution of the population at school is interesting because it can be taken as an indicator of the demand for civil service jobs. Of course not all the pupils finish school, and even among those who do, a number will have little interest in the civil service. And, of course, most of the population at school in a given year expect jobs only in a later year; but the stories about the success and failure of the older generations circulate quickly. As a consequence, in the context of a French-inspired state recruitment system placing a high emphasis on school-training, at a time when this system had not yet experienced significant problems, the population at school can be taken as a measurement of the general interest of the population in civil service jobs.

As the figure and table indicate, the civil service kept increasing well throughout the early 1980s, but both the general population and the portion of it that was attending school grew even faster; the schooling rate increased from 28.7 per cent in 1969 to 41.7 per cent in 1984; this growth was more pronounced in Lower Casamance, where schooling was already quasi-general for boys by the end of the 1970s. The ratio between civil service and the population at school increased slowly from 1969 to 1976, to reach its high point, with 15.3 civil servants for every hundred

---

10 It had been agreed that the ratio between the civil service wage bill and the state internal income should be reduced from 70 to 40 per cent.
11 République du Sénégal (1998; 62, table 18). From June 1986 to June 1987, the number of civil servants officially fell from 68,893 to 68,131; it reached its lowest (64,446) in June 1990, before increasing again slightly.

173
pupils, and it decreased rapidly after 1979, quickly falling under the 1969 ratio; in 1984, it stood only at 12.7.

Table IV.1: Population of school-age, population at school and civil service in Senegal, 1969-1984


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population of school-age</th>
<th>Population at school</th>
<th>Schooling rate (percentage)</th>
<th>Civil service</th>
<th>Ratio Civil Service/ Population at school (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>882,497</td>
<td>253,037</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>35,950</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>906,502</td>
<td>257,708</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>37,028</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>931,158</td>
<td>262,928</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>38,289</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>956,142</td>
<td>269,997</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>39,287</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>982,502</td>
<td>283,276</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>41,340</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1,009,226</td>
<td>297,560</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>42,097</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1,036,677</td>
<td>311,000</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>44,909</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1,064,875</td>
<td>313,455</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>47,809</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1,101,169</td>
<td>326,505</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>50,114</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1,123,592</td>
<td>346,585</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>52,879</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1,149,279</td>
<td>370,412</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>56,589</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1,174,966</td>
<td>392,541</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>59,258</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1,200,653</td>
<td>419,748</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>63,011</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1,226,340</td>
<td>452,679</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>66,223</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>1,252,027</td>
<td>496,066</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>67,718</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1,277,714</td>
<td>533,394</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>67,811</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure IV.1: Population of school-age, population at school and civil service in Senegal, 1969-1984

---

12 This corresponds to the ratio between the population at school and the population of school-age.
This evolution actually went beyond the civil service, but affected the whole of the formal ‘modern’ sector, where formal education had hitherto been a key-resource: the ratio between waged workers (i.e. formal sector) and the working population, which was 7.62 per cent in 1957, had dropped to 4.26 per cent in 1979 already; with the successive measures of structural adjustment adopted by Senegal, the situation worsened: in 1989, the ratio was 3.31 per cent \(^{13}\). Thus, from the end of the 1970s onwards, the Senegalese economy proved increasingly unable to integrate the educated young men flocking in the ‘modern’ sector. In 1981, for the first time, even those educated to Master’s level, the famous maîtrisards, could no longer be guaranteed a job. Because of the symbolic importance of the maîtrisards, and because of their suspected political capacity, the government felt an urge to intervene, and a parastatal, the Société nationale de garantie (SONAGA), created a fund to help them set up small businesses. But for the lower ranks, the certifiés, brevetés and bacheliers, the situation was even more critical, and little was done to help them through.

In this context the young men hailing from Lower Casamance had an additional problem. We have already mentioned the fact that because of the ubiquity of rural primary schools and the relative lack of secondary educational institutions in Lower Casamance, the Casamançais literati had often only a limited education level; most of them were only certifiés or brevetés; these diplomas would allow them only a limited access to state employment - the lowest level jobs (categories C, D and E) would be their lot. In the course of the 1960s and 1970s, with the success of education, the Lower Casamançais had shown an increasing interest in secondary schooling, and local politicians had exerted pressures for the construction of secondary schools in rural Lower Casamance; but in the 1970s this effort had not been sufficient to improve significantly the level of education of the mass of the literati. And it was precisely those jobs with the lowest qualification which were most severely affected by the crisis; the few jobs newly created or those left free after death, retirement or resignation were reserved to the better-trained people. Recruitment in the armed forces collapsed in a like fashion: many young men would volunteer for the necessary two years of military service, but they were less and less likely to be enlisted after the service.

\(^{13}\) Figures are quoted from Fall (1992; 75).
Another issue was the weakening of the educational system in which Lower Casamançais populations had put so much trust and hope. In his study of the crisis of the Senegalese educational system, Bianchini (1988; 79) notes that the share of the Ministère de l’Education nationale in the state budget, which had grown from 13.1 per cent in 1962-1963 to a peak of 21.8 per cent in 1974-1975, had fallen to 17.3 per cent in 1981-1982. Progressively a host of measures were implemented which seriously damaged the educational system. Scholarships and boarding schools were suppressed, and so was the school stationery which the state used to provide free of charge to the pupils; fees were introduced, to pay for the class furniture and the maintenance of the classrooms. In order to accommodate the expansion of the number of school-age children whilst avoiding the recruitment of additional schoolteachers and the building of new classrooms, the Senegalese state also installed a system of double flux; this somewhat mysterious technocratic jargon designates the pure and simple cutting in two of the timetable: while schoolteachers hitherto had had the same class from morning to the end of the afternoon, the double flux schoolteachers would have to teach two classes - one in the morning, one in the afternoon. As Diouf (1992) mentions, double flux affected the rural schools more than any others – the many rural schools of Lower Casamance were thus first-choice targets for this reform. Throughout Senegal, these changes were not well received by the population, and unrest was general among the pupils and students. The case of the 1979-1980 strike in the lycée of Ziguinchor, which led to the killing of a pupil and an outbreak of urban violence, will be discussed in the next chapter, but this incident was by no means an exception. For instance, in October 1981, and again in January 1982, high school students organised strikes throughout Senegal against the suppression of boarding schools and the irregular payment of state scholarships 14. In this context, for Senegalese families, and particularly for those rural Casamançais families with reduced cash availability and a limited knowledge of the actual workings of school, it became increasingly difficult to ensure proper education.

**Prisoners of the ratchet**

The choice in favour of schooling had been so massive that, when the crisis came, there seemed to be no alternatives open to the aspiring young men from Lower

---

14 In Zuccarelli (1988; vol 2, 162).
Casamance. In other areas of Senegal, where the choice in favour of schooling had been less resolute, there were many other pathways – migration to Europe or better-off African countries, trade, craftsmanship, maraboutic networks; rapidly, graduates from these regions were able to take these alternatives routes. But none of these were easily available to the Lower Casamançais.

This lack of alternatives and diversification in Lower Casamance comes as a surprise to anyone familiar with the literature on rural societies. Coming from various traditions, many authors working on rural societies insist that behaviour is strongly oriented by risk-avoidance, and make clear that non-specialisation is a typical strategy – specialisation being precisely one of the main symptoms of modernisation processes. Levi (1989), for instance, in his discussion of the seventeenth century Piedmontese peasantry, insists on the diversification of strategies as typical of societies where risks (demographic, political, economic, agricultural) are high: in a nutshell, when even survival is uncertain, it seems safer not to put all eggs in the same basket. By way of consequence, in Piedmont, every lineage tried to play several games at the same time – subsistence agriculture, cash-cropping, migrant labour, retail-trade and credit activities, contacts with the authorities or the Church.

In the case of Lower Casamance one may hypothesise that schooling imposed itself with such strength that risk-avoidance strategies of diversification seemed useless: during the 1950s and 1960s, the potential pay-offs were so great that every single young man would try it, and that most elders came to agree. This was a clear case of what economists called ratchet effect: because the investments, both symbolic and real, and the value given to schooling were so high, it seemed useless (and indeed derogatory) to explore other ways – as a result, the choices made in the 1950s and 1960s by the early literati were not easily reversible by their juniors of the 1970s and 1980s. Borrowing the ratchet metaphor from the vocabulary of economics, it should be clear that we do not intend to interpret the behaviour of the Lower Casamançais literati as essentially economic. Not to mention political choices, even professional orientations do not result from purely economic calculations by all-knowing minds. Professional orientations are determined with the limited

---

15 Developments about the risk-aversion and diversification in rural societies can also be found in the now classical (and somewhat paradoxically) antagonistic approaches to South-East Asian peasantries developed by Popkin (1979) and Scott (1976).
information available – the kind of information available being itself determined by sociological factors; also, professional orientations have a symbolic value, which is itself a social construct, and which contributes to no small amount in the decision process. The eminence which the literati had acquired in their multi-local communities contributed to making reorientation more difficult. Long-term investment such as education thus endured, though the situation of the literati was already proving difficult.

By way of consequence, partly because they had barely explored alternative ways and hence had little experience and contacts, partly because these ways were too much at variance with what had come to be the expected, normal way, i.e. schooling and a waged job, it was not immediately possible for many Lower Casamançais to re-orient their educational and professional orientations. It is only now, after years of civil disorder, the disruption of the regular networks of trade and craft, and the implicit affirmative action implemented by the new generation of Diola politicians, that this hysteresis was dispelled: now, one sees Diola engaging in rural entrepreneurship, retail-trade and industrial fishing on a non-marginal basis.

The end of the 1970s thus witnessed an unexpected turn in both the school system and the careers it was supposed to lead to: for many young Senegalese, the privileged pathway which formal education and the state had long offered proved a dead-end. The effect of this change was particularly severe in Lower Casamance, where this pathway had been almost the single access to ‘modernity’. This failure was all the more painful as the Lower Casamançais populations had been investing a lot, both symbolically and materially, in school education. The impact of this educational and employment crisis on the populations of Lower Casamance is difficult to assess at a macroscopic level in the absence of significant and specific state statistics, but the detailed study of the census of a small Diola community in Dakar nevertheless offers essential insights into the consequences of the crisis.

A community under stress

We have seen how village associations constituted powerful networks, bringing the natives of specific communities together around a whole range of activities, both in Dakar and in the village. To organise these activities, and most specifically to levy subscriptions, the leaders of the associations - literati themselves - draw up roll-calls. Collecting one such list and completing it with additional biographical information,
one can get a good picture of the situation of a small Dakar-based Diola community from the Buluf area, west of Bignona, in 1998. This portrait is presented in Tables IV.2 and IV.3 below.

**Portraying a migrant community**

Table IV.2: Census of the natives of a Buluf ward residing in Dakar in 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Subscription (in CFA francs; 1,000 CFA francs = £1)</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Marriage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waged workers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1 schoolteacher, 6 soldiers, 2 parastatals employees, 2 private sector employees</td>
<td>all of them married, one with two wives some measure of exogamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioners, watchmen and regular unskilled worker</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>1 pensioner, 2 unskilled workers, 5 watchmen</td>
<td>pensioner married with two wives, 3 of the watchmen unmarried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed or occasional unskilled worker</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>3 only married, 2 in close endogamy; 2 of the wives are absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women and girls</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>all unmarried girls work as maids 2 of the married also do, in the absence of their husband</td>
<td>20 married women, 18 unmarried girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils and apprentices</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>3 girls only, 2 of whom learn sewing, 1 pupil; 13 boys - 7 apprentices, 6 pupils or students</td>
<td>none married</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The categories of the roll-call, which correspond to the various amounts of yearly subscription expected from the members of the association, are autochthonous, and they reveal something of the social order of the community - or at least of how the literati who constitute the board of the association perceive it: these categories are defined through a curious overlap of gender, age and

---

16The gathering of nominative lists and biographical information has proved a difficult task, because, since the beginning of the conflict, the Senegalese security forces have been exerting a tight surveillance over the associations de ressortissants, suspecting them of organising subscriptions to finance the MFDC; not infrequently, the police have used the census lists as bases for raids. We were nevertheless able to access two such lists, and we have collected additional information through a series of interviews with a number of members of the community; unfortunately, only one list has given precise enough information to be fully usable. We have to mention one substantial limitation of the census thus constructed is that it bears on a community in 1998, almost twenty years after the first separatist demonstration in Ziguinchor. Unfortunately, we have been unable so far to collect older roll-calls - probably because of the anxiety of the associations’ leaders over keeping archives, and the frailty of the associations themselves. We are thus fully aware that the census we have at our disposal is very imperfect, but in the absence of other sources, it will help us interpret the social situation that Casamançais communities have been going through since the early 1980s. Qualitative data indicates largely that the social situation of the young literati has not changed substantially from that time on.
professional criteria; the first three categories are exclusively masculine and the
fourth one is exclusively feminine, grouping both housewives and domestic servants.
Only the fifth category is mixed - it is the category of the junior members of the
community, the youth, apprentices and students. In any case, whatever their
professional status, men (except for the male youth, who are not differentiated from
their female counterparts) are always expected to contribute more money than
women, whatever their actual professional situation.

The very possibility of such a simple classification of the community is
revealing of the amazing regularity (not to speak of monotony) of the social
trajectories of Diola migrants in Dakar: all unmarried women work as domestic
servants, but one, who is a student; after marriage, women usually stop working;
among the men, unemployment is high, since it affects almost half of the adult men;
those who have a job usually work in the civil service, in the army or in para-public
companies; there is not a single trader, nor a single independent craftsman - an
absence which anyone familiar with the Dakar labour market and its complex
hierarchy of odd jobs cannot fail to find intriguing.

Data on education was gathered through interviews, and are presented on Table
IV.3 below. This table bears on the adults of the community only, i.e. only those who
were not pursuing some form or another of formal education at the time of research –
thirty-eight men and thirty-eight women overall.

Table IV.3: Education among the adult natives of a Buluf ward residing in Dakar in
1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest level of education attained</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary schooling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CM2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixième and Cinquième</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quatrième (with or without brevet)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deuxième cycle secondaire</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalauréat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic or Koranic education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without formal education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.3 indicates unmistakably that, in the 1990s still, among the Diola,
formal education remained largely something for the men. While twenty-four of the

---

17 CM2, Cours Moyen deuxième année is the last year of primary schooling; Sixième corresponds to
First Form, Cinquième to Second Form, and so on...
thirty-eight women had not been educated, there was only one man who was in the same position. And those women who had some education usually had not studied for long: none of them had actually been to high school, while fifteen men had undergone secondary education. As for the rest of the community, the sixteen students that are not counted in Table IV.3, the situation was by and large the same: there was only one female student and two female apprentices, while the younger men were more numerous, and divided almost equally among apprentices (seven) and students (six)\textsuperscript{18}.

The divide of the men of the community in terms of jobs is mirrored in a profound difference in matrimonies: while all the waged worker are married, only three out of the nineteen unemployed men have a spouse. These regularities confirm the patterns identified in the previous chapters on schooling and migration. But they also reveal how the community has evolved over the years, and how a number of men have found it increasingly difficult to make a social career in Dakar, and, most specifically, how difficult it has become for them to marry\textsuperscript{19}.

\textit{Marriage in a time of crisis}

Pursuing this study of the pattern of marriage, and collecting information on the twenty-six marriages (including the broken unions) contracted by members of this community, one gets a sense of an extremely strong endogamy. In twenty of the twenty-six marriages, the partners hail from the same village\textsuperscript{20}; the six endogamous marriages are not that endogamous after all, since in five cases they were contracted by men of the village married to women of immediately neighbouring villages\textsuperscript{21}. In a community that has been established in Dakar for more than fifty years, this level

\textsuperscript{18} This division may be revealing of an undergoing change in training strategies: the continued failure of formal education leads many migrants to learn a craft and try to enter the informal sector.

\textsuperscript{19} Data on accommodation was not collected during this research, but there is little doubt that it would confirm the increasingly precarious nature of the situation of Diola men. Vernière (1977 : 141, table 19) in his study of living conditions in Pikine, a major suburb of Dakar notes that on average, 67.5 per cent of Pikinois household heads owned their own accommodation, 19.5 per cent rented it, and 13 per cent were accommodated by relatives; among the Diola household heads of Pikine, only 37 per cent owned their accommodation and 14 per cent rented it, while 49 per cent were accommodated by relatives. These figures unmistakably indicate both the solidarity of Diola chain-migration, and the uncomfortable situation of many Diola household heads...

\textsuperscript{20} The women born in the ward, but out-married, do not figure on the list, because they usually belong and pay their dues to their husbands’ association. This high endogamy is confirmed by Lambert (1999; 87, note 2), who, in his study of another Buluf village, establishes that 70 per cent of the women and 80 percent of the men marry people who trace descent to the village. Lambert however does not discuss the historical evolution of endogamy among the migrants.

\textsuperscript{21} Interestingly, the only case of ethnic exogamy is one of a serviceman from the village who married the daughter of a fellow-soldier, hailing from Saint-Louis.
of endogamy is quite surprising. It may be taken as a testimony to the importance and weight of the village urban community, which tightly organises the social, educational, professional and matrimonial trajectories of the migrants - we have already mentioned the role played by tuteurs; and the football matches and balls organised by the association are major social events, crucial in the formation of matrimony. But this endogamy also points to something else - it is a way to cope in a time of crisis, and it is quite probable that it tightened in the course of the past crisis. The census gives us three clues. First, only the most prosperous men of the community are exogamous. Second, one finds two cases of ultra-endogamic behaviour, i.e. marriages contracted between two natives from the same ward (rather than between natives of the same village but of different wards, like the twenty-two other marriages); this kind of marriage is traditionally depreciated, for one should not marry too close to home - interestingly, the two men who have entered such marriages are middle-aged literati who married late and have a long history of unemployment. Finally, of the three marriages contracted by the unemployed men of the community (including these two ultra-endogamic unions), the wife is absent from Dakar in two cases; one is working in the Gambia, and the other is in the village. As her husband comments, “when the situation here [in Dakar] is difficult, one can bring one’s wife to the village, and save money more easily.” This is a convenient solution indeed, but one which reflects very poorly on a man’s capacity to cater for his family.

22 The hypothesis of a recent increase in endogamy is confirmed by some statistical sources of the end of the 1950s, which point the Diola as much more exogamic than now. See for instance Thomas (1959; 194): “on a sample of a 100 interviewees [Diola living in Dakar] (43 Christians, 57 Muslims), 66 had a Casamançais spouse (Diola or not)”. The 1955 census gives a remarkably similar figure, the Lower Casamançais community in Dakar being one of the least endogamous, with a 65.6 per cent of endogamous unions, while endogamy reached 89.9 per cent among the Wolof, 75.9 per cent among the Sérères, 83.2 per cent among the Toucouleurs and 73.8 per cent among the Peulhs. In Martin (1962; 44, table C.29). Our 1998 sample gives a 100 per cent Diola marriage. But it remains uneasy to interpret this increasing endogamy. For instance, one has to take into consideration the fact that, in the 1950s, there were still few Diola in Dakar, and that they were less likely to find a partner of their own group. With the generalisation of migration among the Diola during the 1960s and 1970s, each community’s contingent in Dakar has grown stronger, thus allowing for a stronger endogamy. Several interviews with older migrants have brought to light that exogamy was not infrequently related to the unavailability of same-village partners.

23 Over the sample studied, two of the exogamic unions are also polygamic and were contracted by a non-commissioned officer of the Senegalese army, who married each of his two wives on his return from United Nations missions abroad, which had earned him a lot of money. This example illustrates clearly the links between prosperity and marriage (this is one of the two cases of polygamic unions) and between prosperity and exogamy.

24 Interview with Saliou Sané (alias), Dakar-Thiaroye, April 1999.
This census thus aptly illustrates the difficult situation of a number of male literati: they have difficulties getting the job their educational achievements lead them to expect, and, by way of consequence, find it extremely difficult to marry – the crucial step into full adulthood, in Diola society as elsewhere. When they marry, they tend to marry with relatives, who are more easily married; in any case, their unions remain fragile.

The small-scale census above points to a new track for research: what happens to gender relations – and particularly marriage - in a context of severe economic crisis? As suggested by the example above, men found themselves in an increasingly precarious position, and a number of them could no longer marry. Data on other Diola communities confirm this tendency. Drawing on the INED research in Mlomp, Lagarde et alia (1996; 284) indicate a further element: while the Diola tend to marry much later than they used to, late marriage affects men much more heavily than women; in Mlomp, from 1955-1964 to 1985-1992, the age at first marriage increased from 25 to 32 years for men, while increased only from 21 to 24 years for women. This evolution was also confirmed by qualitative data from fieldwork.

The literati had been the prime winners of the growing wave of urban migration of the 1950s and 1960s – formal schooling, successful careers, advantageous economic positions - but female migration was also under way, less flamboyant perhaps, but loaded with an equal potential for social change. The context of the end of the 1970s substantially modified the relations between Lower Casamançais men and women; this time, the evolution of the balance of Diola society was to prove more favourable to women. The evolution of gender relations is thus a central aspect of the crisis of Diola society.

---

25 Using data from the ORSTOM and IFAN survey Insertion urbaine à Dakar en 1989, bearing on 1557 biographies of Dakar residents, Antoine, Djiré & Delaplante (1995; 107) note that “for an equal level of activity, the pace of marriage is faster among the Diola (less integrated on the labour market) than among other ethnic groups (...).” It is precisely the endogamic possibilities offered by the cohesive Diola communities which accounts for this higher and earlier nuptiality.

26 See also Lambert (1999, 2002).

27 Fieldwork brought up many cases of young couples having had children before marrying – perhaps a way for the men, despite their economic weakness, to make official a relationship. A number of these relationships were later formalised into marriage, as soon as the men had attained a measure of economic stability.

28 Disputes are rife around the consequences of the continued crisis of the African states and economies on the gender relations. Discussing this issue with data on various African countries and a detailed bibliography, Locoh (1996) comes to the conclusion that the crisis has increased both the responsibilities and powers of women.
The sociolinguistics of crisis

The growing divergence between Lower Casamançais male and female socio-economic pathways finds one of its best illustrations in their linguistic behaviour. A brief extract from our field-notes, focusing on the linguistic practices and attitudes of a Buluf family in Dakar, makes the problem clear:

Malamine Sané is a Diola from Buluf; he lives in Dakar since the end of the 1970s; he went to the lycée until the classe de première, but he had to stop studying, “faute de moyens”; he took several state examinations, unsuccessfully; he speaks fluent French. He has contracted a ultra-endogamic marriage, and he rents a room in Fass, an impoverished district not far from central Dakar; his wife, who left her job as a maid to marry, occasionally retails in fruits and vegetables; Malamine Sané finds occasional employment in factories. With his fellow literati friends, he mixes Diola and French. He claims to be unhappy that his three children, born in Dakar, grow up speaking Wolof and not Diola. He says he does try to speak to them in Diola, with little success; he does so in front of me, and laments his children’s inability to speak “leur langue maternelle”. Malamine Sané’s wife and her sister, who came to Dakar to work as a maid and lives with them, seem much less hostile to Wolof, and apparently use it remorselessly to speak with their children. Husband and wife speak Diola with each other. Malamine is a long-time supporter of the MFDC.

For Malamine Sané, French is both the statutory language of the literati, and a counterweight to Wolof, the language of the Senegalese capital, which has proved so unwelcoming to him; his wife, who used Wolof when she worked as a maid and still runs her house and her retail-trade in Wolof, has an altogether different – and more positive - relationship towards both Dakar and the Wolof language. This case of gendered linguistic practices and attitudes reflects the general situation of the Diola community in Dakar and its acute gender division.

Men and women, French and Wolof, attitudes and practices

Malamine Sané’s attitude towards Wolof is by no means an exception among the Diola men. As one male interviewee, a former soldier and a MFDC supporter, put it, “my sons are Diola, and they have to speak their father’s tongue, otherwise, they are not Diola anymore. Wolof, it is no good”. On the other hand, it is not infrequent, in Lower Casamançais villages populated exclusively with native Diolas, to hear young girls who have not yet left the village speak Wolof with one another; they learn it from their elder sisters who have returned from the city. Girls are bound

29 Fieldwork notes, 12 July 1996.
30 Interview with Malang Djiba (alias), Bignona, June 1996. Juillard (1991; 435) gives similar examples of disdain for Wolof - interestingly, Juillard met with expressions of this disdain only among men.
to use Wolof soon, when they will go to town to ‘look for’ clothes and other goods. Village boys will attend the village school for a long time, and they are less likely to go to town so soon – they usually show much less interest in Wolof; not infrequently, the boys will try their French with the occasional toubab (European) guest, with a mixed sense of pride and anxiousness – those girls who have done a few years at school are much less likely to do that.

These linguistic issues, multilingualism and language choices, have been well researched in Lower Casamance. Juillard, in her book on multilingualism in Ziguinchor (1995), repeatedly refers to the gendering of linguistic practices and attitudes. She mentions the case of a Diola household in Ziguinchor in which only the younger girls speak Wolof with one another. Juillard asserts that “Wolof spreads from the centre of town to the suburban areas through children, young girls and women principally”; she also mentions the judgment of a Diola civil servant from Diembéring on the women of his household: “women like to speak Wolof too much; they have a complex, they are ashamed of speaking Diola.” Unfortunately Juillard gives little sociological explanation to the greater shyness of girls vis-à-vis French and their preference for Wolof. From the previous chapters the reader will readily infer the one we propose: Diola girls are less likely to go to school than boys; when they go to school, girls are less likely to stay there long and earn degrees; finally, they are less likely than men to enter formal sector jobs that will require a mastery of French – French is not on their ‘pathway’, but Wolof is.

Linguistic practices and attitudes are thus profoundly marked by the gendered division of training and employment typical of contemporary Diola society: while young women easily adopt Wolof, the language of urban survival and the employment niche which they almost systematically occupy in Dakar, men proclaim their attachment to French – the language of school, formal employment and the state; to an extent, they also ‘declare’ in favour of Diola. One could interpret the women’s attitude to Wolof as a token of their socio-economic oppression – and the related false-consciousness. But for them, Wolof is a window opened on a world

---

31 “Aller chercher” is the expression used in Senegalese French to describe economic migration to the urban areas.  
33 In Juillard (1995: 244).  
away from the village, a world which may have better things to offer, and still largely delivers the goods. Drivaud (1992; 558) mentions one man’s bitter comment: “Women go out, they work for the petty bourgeois, they learn Wolof. When she [the generic Diola women] comes back, she passes it onto her children, out of pride” 36. Indeed, for many Diola women, there is pride in speaking Wolof, because it is the language of their still successful endeavours in the city. As for the young men, they cherish both their statutory language – French –, even though it is by now largely unable to open access to social climbing, and the language of home – Diola; to a large extent, this appreciation of Diola is a reaction to their failure to integrate properly in Wolof-speaking urban ‘modern’ Senegal.

The paradox of Wolofisation

Our own fieldwork experience, the above example of Malamine Sané, as well as Juillard’s research, unveil a surprising tension at play in the literati’s linguistic behaviour: for all their proclaimed allegiance to French and Diola, and their official disdain for Wolof, the Diola literati make an extensive use of Wolof, even in domestic contexts. Juillard’s answer to the riddle is that “the evolution of the Diola would seem to be quicker, and follow more closely the general course of history [than that of other ethnic groups less likely to use Wolof]” - a probable, if somewhat cryptic, reference to the importance of both schooling and migration among the Diola 37. This correlation of Wolof and French as the two languages of urbanity and ‘modernity’ (market, school, state) is an intriguing characteristic of modern Senegal, often denoted under the expression “Wolofisation”: if French is the language of the classroom, Wolof is the language of the schoolyard, and that of the market and the state as well; as Cruise O’Brien puts it (1979; 26-27), Wolof is the “‘parallel’ language of the school and the state”, and the two languages develop in a quasi-symbiotic fashion 38. Indeed, Juillard documents such a positive correlation between Wolof and French; she establishes that, in Ziguinchor, the Diola are more prone to using Wolof than members of other ethnic groups, such as the Balante or the

---

36 Drivaud quotes an interview with a worker from the SONACOS, Ziguinchor’s groundnut oil-processing factory, who hails from Geba, in Guinea-Bissau – Geba is a Diola-populated portion of Guinea-Bissau, and the small Bissau-Guinean Diola community has been largely taken along the trends of Senegalese Diolas.
37 In Juillard (1995; 207).
38 On Wolofisation, see the founding article by Wioland & Calvet (1967); see also Cruise O’Brien (1979) and (1998) and Swigart (1990) and (1994).
Manding, among which schooling is less generalised. The Diola actually stand out as the most Wolofised of the ethnic groups in Ziguinchor, precisely because they are also the most French-speaking. But how come, though they actually know Wolof and use it, the Diola literati assert a strong dislike for it?

**The évolué and the moodu-moodu**

To the literati, Wolof is the vulgar and easy language of anyone, and peculiarly the ‘uneducated’ (i.e. non-French speaking) moodu-moodu, goorgoorlu and xoslumen, the emerging actors of débrouillardise, business, trade, informality and migration, who are progressively replacing the French-speaking civil servants as the dominant figure of social success in contemporary Senegal, as described, among others, by Malick Ndiaye (1996, 1998). The Diola literati have a whole series of stereotypical reproaches against the Wolof language: Wolof is a language of liars and thieves, of insults, it is a poor language, acquired effortlessly and it lacks rigor. To a large extent, these reproaches are actually targeted at these moodu-moodu, whose success is troubling the ‘normal’ course of things whereby hard-working schoolchildren who learn proper French must make it to good jobs in the formal sector. Lies and insults belong to Wolof-speaking Sandaga market, the lively business centre of Dakar, and not to the well-groomed, French-speaking and self-respecting world of Senghor’s Building administratif, a huge Dakarois block where the main central administrative offices are concentrated; lies and insults designate *le Commerce*, as opposed to *l’Administration*, to use the old colonial categories. Wolof is the language of the crisis, the language of the painful adjustment of the Senegalese state, and as such it comes as a negation of the Diola literati’s pathway.

As opposed to Wolof, French is perceived by the literati as a serious and decent language, as Juillard indicates when she stresses the importance of the ‘proper’ practice of French: “The girls have a complex: in Wolof, you can make all the mistakes you want, it does it; with French, it does not do. French is language of effort, Wolof is the language of enjoyment”.

One may add that it is precisely because the learning of French in Senegal is achieved essentially at school, with a

---

39 See Juillard (1995; chapter VI). See also (ibid.; 193): “the Wolofisation of friendship relations between the Diola pupils of Santiaba is all the more remarkable as it contrasts with the declared linguistic conservatism of the Diola for their family relations.”

40 Of peculiar importance is the existence, in urban Wolof, of “insultes de mère”, which many Diola find a terrible thing.

41 In Juillard (1995; 99).
huge emphasis on the ‘correct’ practice, that ‘correctness’ matters. And it is also the reason why French, and the grammatically correct use of it, are so important: they have been acquired at a cost, and they symbolise and anticipate on the status they are supposed to open access to. In Senegal, and particularly in Lower Casamance, where schooling is so prevalent, French is thus a clear case of go/no go: if one does not possess a sufficient command of both the formal grammar and the vocabulary, it does not do to take the risk of speaking French – as witnessed during fieldwork, the ones who try to speak French without having a sufficient knowledge only attract the irony of those who speak proper French, as well as that of those who do not. As a result of this, a number of people who have been to school for a few years (particularly girls) ‘forget’ French rapidly, or are extremely reluctant to use it. Such is never the case for Wolof, because the learning of Wolof is an altogether different process: it does not depend on school, books and rigorous teachers, it permeates in series of discreet social interactions, which allow everyone to muddle through and build up a speaking knowledge of Wolof. Thus, though the two languages live in a surprising symbiosis, Wolof in itself is a refutation of French – hence the somewhat schizophrenic attitude of the Diola literati towards Wolof: they use it a lot, but despise it.

Among the stereotypes attached to the Wolof language, the idea that it is a language for deceptive seduction is very strong: adroit Wolof-speakers from northern Senegal are reputed to seduce innocent Diola women. One male Diola interviewee, a former civil servant, makes clear that this poses problems for the young Diola men:

Very often, boys run into problems: the girls back from Dakar, they speak Wolof; it is all material: Wolof means a better husband. We could not resist that, it is the girls who have weakened us. And Wolof is a light tongue, a tongue to chat girls up, it is easier. In Diola, it is not that easy. Many boys could not marry, they stayed in the village And boys have always been following girls, so they could not stay here when the girls were going.

See for instance Juillard (1995: 231), the end of the quote from the Diola civil servant from Diembéring mentioned above : “(...) When speaking Wolof, one may make mistakes, it does not matter much, it is an easier language, and it does not ring as bad as when one does mistakes in Diola”. Of course, as Swigart (1994) makes clear, there is a clear distinction between the *lingua franca* Wolof language, which is heavily influenced by French and has a simplified grammatical structure, and the pure Wolof (*Wolof bu xoot*) spoken by ethnic Wolof from the Wolof heartland. The common-sensical idea often expressed by non-Wolof Wolof-speakers that Wolof is a ‘poor’ language does not reflect the inner ‘essence’ of Wolof (linguists still have to decide on the proper scale to assess the ‘richness’ of a language), but merely illustrates the sort of Wolof they learn - and the process by which they learn it: *ad hoc*, in the streets, without formal grammar, and often from other non-ethnic Wolof migrants who speak its urban, adulterated *lingua franca* version.

43 Interview with Simon Sagna (alias), Ziguinchor, 30 January 1999.
The implicit assumption is that Diola women are not educated and have remained simple enough to be cheated by cunning Wolof-speaking northerners – the literati know better and they would never fall in such traps. Here, the Wolof language stands for relaxed modernity and urbanity, the popular Mbalax music, easy urban life with dirty money whose acquisition has a lot more to do with shady business deals than with the monthly wages of a deserving and educated civil servant. Of course it is difficult to know how much truth there is behind the stereotype. As mentioned above, there are clear indications that Diola men find it increasingly difficult to marry, but there is no proof that this is due to the successful take-over of Diola women by cunning Wolof-speaking northerners. In any case, whatever the truth behind the myth, this stereotype is revealing of the anxiety of the Diola men: when their main social, economic and symbolic resources – schooling, the French language, civil service - are abruptly cut down, when uneducated, sharp-tongued and semi-legal Wolof-speaking débrouillards have the upper hand, what is left for them to do?

The sociability of women, the isolation of men

We have mentioned in Chapter II the countless ‘modern’ associations set up and headed by the (usually male) literati, busy with organising football tournaments, balls or development programmes in the village or in Dakar. Among the communities from Lower Casamance these associations are exceptionally active and visible, and many of them have achieved a lot in the development of the village infrastructures. But the rosiness of the picture asks for qualification. These associations are extremely unstable; the mishandling of funds is a frequent occurrence, and they are regularly dissolved, to be reestablished later by a younger generation of literati. Generally speaking it takes either a group of dynamic male age-mates, or a rich patron with some money, to get these associations to function. In any case the activities of male-headed formal associations come with innumerable fits and starts. Here again, the contrast between genders is intriguing: while men

---

44 See Juillard (1991 ; 436) : “it takes Wolof to chat girls up”; and ibidem (1991; 443).
45 Interestingly enough, this distinction between ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ associations is an emic categorisation: it is known to, and used by, the Diola themselves; it bears witness to the sense of specificity which the literati derive from their training – a specificity which is acknowledged to them by the larger society.
46 The organisation of male circumcision ceremonies – the major village festivals, which demand the pooling of vast resources – is a notable exception, for they usually are very well organised; but these
seem to belong to few groupings beyond the fragile formal associations, most women are also part of a myriad of smaller and more discreet groups, more or less formal, which seem endowed with an extraordinary plasticity and resilience. Of course many of these female groupings are connected in some way or another to the formal village or ward associations, and very often form a constitutive element of these broader associations; nevertheless, these female groupings still frequently lack an official framework. The sociability and capacity for collective action of men and women thus seem very different, and this tells us something of their respective conditions.

*The roots of female sociability*

The description of a dance organised by a Diola women borough association in northern Dakar provides a good starting point for our inquiry:

It is afternoon in Dalifort, a district of northern Dakar. In the street, near a football ground, the sound of *bougarabou*, the Diola drums, is heard. A wide tent sheet and a plastic groundsheets draw a space in the very middle of a sandy plaza. Spread along the four corners of the mat, a group of thirty-or-so women, and a few girls too. All the adult women wear good-looking *boubous* and many have golden necklaces and ear-rings; about half of them have *boubous* of the same cloth – among the rest, there are three smaller groups with *boubous* from the same cloth; the girls do not have *boubous*, but the usual set of loincloths and old T-shirts. All of them are barefoot – the sandals are grouped together near the central pole of the tent. In a corner, the *bougarabou* orchestra - four drummers, including a woman, and an electric guitar player, as a substitute to the usual two-note cow’s horn. The women sing and beat along, clapping their hands or using two short ron-tree rods. Women, one by one, enter the circle, under the cheers and laughters of the others, and erupt in dance solos, stomping the ground with amazing speed. No man takes part; about forty of them stand aside, Diola and non-Diola, a few meters from the tent, a mixture of excitement, curiosity and skepticism – only a young man, who seems drunk, enters the circle for a solo; he gets no cheers and rapidly withdraws. Later, I will be told that it is a group of Diola women from Dalifort, from various villages, who have put some money together to organise this party: they have paid for the band to come; they have spent the morning cooking together at the place of one of the leaders of the association, the wife of a civil servant, and they have had a splendid lunch.

This quite unexceptional party - two dozen women, a good meal and a small band – stands in stark contrast to the often spectacular events organised by the formal male-headed associations - football competitions in the national stadiums, fund-

---

47 There is at present a strong tendency towards formalisation, a tendency often inspired by the (male) literati and their attempts to use their knowledge of the formal sector to tap the increasing resources available to female associations in the context of the growing interest of the state and development agencies for gender issues.

48 Fieldwork notes, 23 May 1999.
raising balls in Dakar clubs, inaugurations of new public equipment in the village “sous la présidence effective du ministre”. It is nevertheless illustrative of the strength and warmth of female sociability – a discreet daily routine. In the urban context, female associations, just like their counterparts in the village, fulfill a broad range of functions: they engage in various combinations of ritual practices (for the performance of fertility or child-preservation rituals, such as ehunia or kanaleen, or the organisation of female circumcision), economic activities (tontines, team-work, retail-trade or small craftsmanship) and social and festive occasions (banquets and female dances)\(^{49}\). These female associations are remarkably active and have, in their peculiar and discreet way, a much greater capacity for action than male-headed associations\(^ {50}\).

There may be several explanations for this divergence between male and female sociability and capacity for collective action. Journet is inclined to think that this situation reflects the structurally higher propensity of Diola women to associativism: Diola women, who circulate among the lineages, tossed about by marriages, are used to establishing new sociabilities outside their community of origin; men, who remain essentially attached to their mother’s and father’s lineages and have little contacts with their spouses’ lineages, do not share the same associativist capacity\(^ {51}\). Also, whilst male-headed formal associations intervene in exceptional moments, female associations build on the lively daily sociability of women. There are a number of activities that are seen as essentially female – going to the market-place, taking care of the children, cooking – and even in the urban context, these activities offer frequent occasion for collective action by women.

Pursuing this line of thought on the gender division of labour, the differences in sociability and capacity for collective action between men and women may lie less in the permanent structure of Diola society than in its contemporary evolution: the modern migratory pathway for women is much more co-operative and collective than that of men, which depends on the eminently individualising process of success at

\(^{49}\text{On urban kanaleen associations, see Fassin (1987).}\)

\(^{50}\text{To take one village example, the women from Affiniam have taken over from the men the running of the canoe for Ziguinchor, because the men were eating the money up. To take another Affiniam example, when the men of the Muslim yard of Affiniam stopped taking part to the building of the maternity which the Catholic Church was trying to set up in the village, the women, just like in Aristophanes, simply went on strike – they would not speak to their husbands, nor cook for them, nor sleep with them. After a week, the men were back on the construction site. I am indebted to discussions with Jean-Claude Marut for these examples.}\)

\(^{51}\text{Odile Journet, personal communication.}\)
school and exams. Most women work as domestics – a low-qualification employment – and have a barely individualised professional life. As seen in Chapter I, there are vast networks of female employment: the women who manage to establish themselves cater for their younger female relatives, train them and find them a job; when they stop working (for instance when they marry, or when they go back to the village), they entrust their job to a hand-picked relative. Of course networking is not absent from the men’s professional life, but village-based networks of kinship and friendship play a much greater role for the women. The men’s professional destiny is much more individualised, dependent as it is on an external and individualistic training system (school and state exams) whose central principle is the ranking and differentiation of skills and proficiencies. Indeed, despite the crisis of the male pathway to modernity, there still is a proportion of the literati that achieves successful social mobility – some of them become elite members of the Senegalese state, top-level civil servants and political office-holders. The men’s positions are thus much more contrasted – from the irregular waged worker to the civil servant with a car, a life-job and social security. Contrary to the men, most women have (or have had) fairly similar jobs, with comparable resources.\footnote{Of course, socio-economic differentiation between women is partly a function of their matrimonial status and the position of their husband, and we have seen that, even with the group boubous, it still permeates. It is nevertheless much less profound than that between men.}

Anthropologists have insisted on the importance of associations in rural Lower Casamance, for both genders – beyond the limits of the lineage, the Diola are used to forming a number of groups, with a variety of functions (economic, festive, religious) and membership principles (from friendship and free association to old marriage alliances).\footnote{See Linares (1992) and Reveyrand (1982).} It seems that in the context of urbanisation and generalised migration, women were more apt to preserve this dense net of associations. This is not to say that the urban associational practices of Diola women have been left unchanged by migration, that Diola women have been better preservers of tradition for tradition’s sake - there is no ontological necessity that women should be a conservatory of tradition. Actually, Diola women have largely readapted these traditions of associations to the urban context, endowing them with new functions and practices, and their capacity to preserve the tradition of associativism (and recast...}
it successfully in a new context) was very much related to the specificity of their socio-economic and cultural pathway 54.

A brief observation on the clothing practices of men and women in urban context may serve to symbolise these observations on male and female sociability. As seen in the Dalifort case above, on festive occasions, groups of Diola women will wear *boubous* sewn from the same cloth, and one important function of their associations is precisely the pooling of resources to buy a great quantity of *boubou* cloth with identifiable patterns and share it among the members. Of course, the use of a single cloth does not rub out all differences, *boubous* are never uniform, and there are many small ways for the most successful women to assert their prosperity: every woman usually has her own tailor to sew the *boubou*, and the *boubous* can be sewn in very diverse ways, and include additional expensive garments and laces; some will afford to pay for the latest cut, and everyone will know. And there are also all the accessories, shoes, jewels, hair-cut and make-up 55. Nevertheless, the symbolism of unity, which sharing a single *boubou* pattern provides, is extremely strong. The main point is that men do not have such a practice: when in Ziguinchor or in Dakar, the men never have uniform gear; in Dakar, they tend to wear Western clothes, either the highly-valued imported *prêt-à-porter*, or, for the ones who cannot afford it, their cheaper tailored local replicas – a typical *évolué* habit, an eminent reflection of individuality and of one’s capacity to buy rather expensive clothes 56.

Clothes may appear as a rather accidental indication, but the men’s lack of interest and capacity to express unity through sharing a clothing pattern provides a very apt metaphor for the broader evolutions of Diola society. Social, economic and cultural differentiations between Diola men are much more acute than those between

54 For instance, the female dance in Dalifort described above is marked by the model of the Wolof *sabax* party. Also, the Diola women from Dalifort have modified the basis for association, building on urban co-residence rather than on village origin or lineage to constitute their association – this does not preclude them from belonging to village or lineage associations in Dakar. Finally, the practice of the uniform *boubou* cloth is probably derived from late colonial political militancy - on this later aspect, I benefited from a discussion with Catherine Atlan.

55 To take another example, it is worth recalling that the female dance described above gives a substantial room to the individual, since it is based on solo performance.

56 There is one exception though, which actually constitutes a confirmation: during initiation ceremonies, men do exactly what women do – buy a quantity of a single cloth, usually relying on women’s expertise on the cloth market, and share it and prepare uniform gear. But these ceremonies are exceptional (once every twenty to thirty year), and the men wear these clothes like a disguise – only exceptionally can the men express a sense of unity through clothing. Indeed, the clothes are extravagant (baggy trousers, large-sleeved tunics), and they are not likely to be worn again. The contrast is strong with the women’s *boubous*, which are not ‘extravagant’ but ‘elegant’ and are worn very frequently, during all sorts of ceremonies, parties and group meetings.
women, and this complicates co-operation – and even basic sociability - between men considerably.

*Isolated elites: “les cadres and les populations”*

The relationships between men of differing social status is very much at the heart of the Casamançais conflict, as is shown by Father Diamacoune’s angry attacks against the successful Casamançais *cadres* he tagged as *casamanqués* 57. Tensions have become acute between *les cadres* and *les populations*, and particularly between the *cadres* and these literati who have not met with the same success during their own pilgrimages to north Senegal. Even beyond separatist pamphlets, signs of these tensions are highly visible. For instance, in Lower Casamançais villages, one very rarely observes the individual investments which the migrants returning from Europe achieve in the Senegal river valley or in Baol – cars, shops, two-storey houses. In rural Lower Casamance, the visible investments usually are collective ones, public goods (schools, wells, community clinics) provided by the migrants’ associations and the development agencies (often with a significant contribution from the *cadres*). Individual investments are rather inconspicuous; the houses, for instance, have very few modifications – some have a tin roof and, exceptionally, a cemented floor; agricultural investments are limited to cemented wells and small mango orchards. It is true that, since the crisis of the state at the end of the 1970s, the emigrants have been in a much better position than the civil servants. But the quasi-absence of private investments in the villages – and the fact that this absence is noted by Casamançais - is revealing of the gap between the *cadres* and the population. There are symptoms of this gap – even beyond the small group of *cadres*, Casamançais waged workers established in the cities tend to stay on after retirement, rather than go back to their village of birth. All this, it could be argued, may be related to the traditional egalitarianism of Lower Casamançais societies, but it seems it has a lot more to do with the huge hopes which education and formal employment had stirred in Lower Casamance, and the surprising – and somewhat incomprehensible – disparities that have resulted. After all, out of the generations of men that went to school during the 1950s and 1960s, many did well, with only a small educational background – the *certificat d’études primaires* was the key to all sorts of jobs, and particularly the civil service. For the generations trained during the 1970s, even the

57 “Casamanqués” is a pun on “Casamançais manqués”, i.e. ‘fake’ Casamançais.
baccalauréat or university degrees were no guarantee – only a few among those who got these hitherto envied titles would actually succeed in getting the kind of job they had been training for. This situation has resulted in a general uneasiness between men, and between the cadres and the populations.

In many interviews, people contrasted the style of the older politicians with that of the younger, post-independence generation of cadres accused of lacking in conviviality and knowledge of customs. Emile Badiane, the 1950s and 1960s Casamançais big man and founder of the first MFDC, is probably the most popular hero in these stories – narratives abound about him, that celebrate his sense of contact, his simplicity, his taste for village life, hunting and palm wine. These stories are mirrored in other stories, bearing on the modern politicians (Robert Sagna, Landing Sané) rumoured to speak a clumsy Diola and to spend their time in hotels for Europeans in Ziguinchor and Cap Skirring...

While there are many good sociological causes to account for these differing styles (and to accept the idea that there is some truth to this contrast), there is little doubt that one of the main bases for this vividness of contrast is precisely the depth of the tensions between the cadres and their not-so-successful fellow literati. Interestingly, it is these literati, who should feel less estranged from the cadres than the rest of the population, who are particularly prone to putting such a bleak portrait of contemporary politicians and cadres.

The men’s sociability and capacity for collective action have been substantially affected by their exploration of the pathway to school and civil service – this exploration, which lately proved a risky one, has resulted in profound and apparently unfair inequalities. The weakness of male sociability is the result of both the men’s unwillingness and their incapacity to express unity. Women stand in a clear contrast – building from traditional associations, they were able to maintain rather tight-knit

---

58 Politicians have been very keen on changing their image, for instance Robert Sagna, who underwent Diola initiation in 1994 in Thionck-Essyl. Robert Sagna hails from Brin, one of the heartland of Casamançais Catholicity, which explains why he had not been initiated beforehand. On Sagna’s initiation, see De Jong (2001, chapter 6); De Jong makes clear that Sagna entered the sacred grove on his own terms, and lost no occasion to make his notability manifest – he arrived with his own car, at his own time, and stayed only very briefly in the grove, playing a complex game of populism and notability.

59 For instance, while the first cadres had not fully severed all links with rurality (they had grown up in villages, went through rather short periods of training and were often employed in rural areas as schoolteachers), the next generation have grown up in Ziguinchor or in Dakar, in families of proto-literati or within the networks of the Catholic Church; they have gone through longer periods of training and often work and live in Dakar. They have thus been through a more complete acculturation to the dominant urban literati culture than their predecessors.
communities, associations and networks of solidarity and sociability. Their life in Dakar or in Casamance may be as difficult as that of most men (and at times even more so), but they still are likely to walk successfully the expected professional and matrimonial pathways, and they can build on the warm sociability of the female groups.

**Conclusion**

At the end of the 1970s, many young men from Lower Casamance thus found themselves cheated and trapped: the privileged access to ‘modernity’, which schooling and the hope for civil service jobs had hitherto offered to their uncles and elder brothers, was a dead-end to them. The equation, established after World War II, between successful schooling and a well-paid job in the civil service proved wrong. The ratchet had closed on these young men: alternative ways had never been explored or had been abandoned; the young men themselves, their peers and their relatives, all were expecting success would come from the state’s pathway, which drew the brunt of efforts and investments. But for the enthusiastic pilgrims to the Senegalese state, it became increasingly uneasy to get a proper education, and transforming education into a job got even more difficult. This change was all the more shocking as the general level of formal education in Casamance was further rising. The pilgrimage turned into a painful series of disillusionments and failures.

In this new context, women from Lower Casamance fared better than men. Female migration was much less dependent on education, or depended on a lower level of education. The trajectory of Casamançais women was thus much less affected by the crisis of the educational system. Women were also spared the effect of crisis of recruitment in the civil service. The divergence in the migratory trajectories of Casamançais men and women had greatly benefited the men in the 1960s, because they could get well-paid formal sector jobs. But at the end of the 1970s, the beam of the scales moved back: women relied on informal employment and on institutions built on kinship or village solidarity, apparently ‘traditional’, but redrawn and modernised, adapted to the urban life; men depended on formal

---

60 On the persistent weakness of female formal education in Lower Casamance, see Chapter II above. Nevertheless, Diola women nowadays tend to be more educated than other Senegalese women, and thus manage to get much better paid jobs with Lebanese and Europeans. A sign of this can be gotten from *L’Avis*, an ads magazine destined to the European community of Dakar which publishes ads by maids: while Casamançais women are far from forming a majority of the maids in Dakar, it is Diola and Manjak women who put almost all the ads.
education, and salaried labour in formal institutions. These changes affected gender relations, as men were faced with serious difficulties when it came to matrimony - they had to marry at an increasingly late age; they were less and less able to provide what was expected from them. Since the men were defaulting, women had to take on new responsibilities, and have acquired new powers. The words of a song of Diola women, the song of Ajammé Mbaye, a song in Wolof, quoted at the opening of this chapter, rings with the sense of pride and achievement which many Diola women still get through migration:

Ajammé Mbaye, I am going home,
I know how to wash clothes, I know how to iron, I know everything
What I want is that God give me a beautiful child.

Ajammé Mbaye has learnt new skills – perhaps not the skills of the literati, but she knows her stuff; she has been to town, she has done everything a woman should do, and now she can come back to the village; what she now has to do – a child – only God can give. The men have long had no such songs to sing – and present gender relations in Diola society are marked by a degree of acrimony and distrust: the men often describe the women as selfish and corrupt; the women think the men are lazy and irresponsible.

But the consequences of the changes of the end of the 1970s were felt beyond gender relations. Despite their leading role in ‘modern’ village associations, the men’s capacity for collective action, and even their sociability, were seriously undermined by social differentiation. They were increasingly estranged from one another. Most specifically, the first generation of cadres, these successful literati who had played a strong role in the evolution of Diola society during the 1950s and 1960s, were replaced by a new generation that found it more and more difficult to relate to the country people. This was a further source of social restlessness.

As a result of all these changes, a large class of impoverished and marginalised educated young men was constituted. These men could not quite make it to Dakar, nor could they really go back to the village – there was nothing there for them to do. Their pilgrimage had proved to be a doomed quest. These cheated pilgrims of the Senegalese state, migrating back and forth between Dakar, Ziguinchor and the village, formed the social basis for the MFDC. It was among them, not among the Diola agriculturists (a diminishing and ageing rarity in Lower Casamance), that

61 On the song, see note 1 above.
Casamançais nationalism found its fertile ground. And the organic intellectuals of Casamançais nationalism were not those cadres who had achieved successful pilgrimages to Dakar; they were precisely those middlemen who had tried to take the young men on the fateful pilgrimage to school, civil service and development - the schoolteachers, the Catholic priests, the local development agents.

The kind of understanding obtained thus far seems fairly straightforward: the expectations of the literati were high, and so were those of their relatives – and these expectations were less and less likely to be fulfilled. This situation stands out as a classical case of relative deprivation, a clear case for Gurr (1970). In a way, this phenomenon — a marginalised literati elite forming the basis for fundamentalist or nationalist movements — comes as a small surprise. Specialists of the Arab world have long demonstrated the role of the drop-outs of the higher education system in the 1970s and 1980s Islamist movements 63. More recently, the civil war in Sierra Leone has been interpreted along a rather similar line 64.

But these analyses often stick to a crude economism and/or produce a somewhat deterministic and mechanical sociology: the sociological position, defined in objective traits (in the present case, ethnic origin, education, employment), is thought sufficient to determine political expression (or non-expression). The keyword is here: ‘expression’. Identity politics is thought to be essentially expressive, expressive of something else than itself. In this line of approach, an identity is merely a form, a language, a guise for something else, something which is in a way thought more ‘serious’, more ‘real’. Whether this thing, real and serious, has to do with society, the economy or culture does not make a big difference – it is the actual target of social science, the treasure scholars must dig up – and once this is done the explanation is complete.

The major problem with these lines of explanation is that they do not connect the specific sociological position the cheated pilgrims of the state occupy with the kind of political imagination they develop. They tell us little about the kind of political language which is chosen - there is more to language than a neutral form, a mere expression – language is constitutive of ‘reality’. The nature of the political language chosen to express resentment is in itself a sociological phenomenon, and it is the purpose of the next chapter to investigate the progressive constitution of the

political idiom of the MFDC – this investigation too will reveal the crucial role played by schooling in this process, both in sociological and ideological terms.
CHAPTER V
FORMING IMAGES OF (LOWER) CASAMANCE

In 1975, in the course of an interview, I noticed the astonishing memory of one of my informers about events that had occurred more than 70 years ago. He answered: ‘A few days ago, I listened to the radio-broadcasted lecture by Christian Roche [then head of the Ziguinchor lycée and researcher on Casamançais history] on these same events’.¹

A war of ideas

The general purpose of this research is to examine how Casamance, as a discourse, became a historical subject, a force of its own, an idea endowed with enough legitimacy to be the reference for a guerrilla movement. The Senegalese government has included these discursive aspects in their counter-insurgency, waging a war of ideas along with a war of soldiers: among the various manoeuvres in this war of words, the Diola affiliation of the MFDC has been highlighted; Aline Sitoé has been given a better seat in the Senegalese national pantheon²; Casamance has been suppressed as an administrative unit; loyalist cadres have tried to build on the mythical kinship between the north Senegalese Serer and the Diola³. No matter how much the Senegalese state contests this legitimacy, attempts to erase the name of Casamance from its records or tries to reshape the imagined communities, there seem to be few men, even among the loyalist statesmen, to believe in the efficacy of such imaginary counterinsurgency measures - everyone nowadays considers Casamance a fully-fledged and legitimate historical subject.

But this has not always been so, and the emergence of Casamance as a historical subject, in both usages of the term - first as an object of discourse, then as a (mythical) unit of action - is a very recent phenomenon. Casamance became such a subject only after a process (or, more exactly, processes) of construction: its meaning was fixed progressively, by the interventions of various institutions and groups which were making Casamance the object of their action; in order to wage their

¹ In Mark (1994; 575, note 14).
³ A few Diola and Serer cadres thus created the Association Culturelle Aguène-Diambogne (ACAD), from the names of the two mythical sister ancestors of the Diola and the Serer. On the ACAD and their line, see for instance ACAD (n.d.), Guèye (1996) or Sambou (1996).
policies, these institutions and groups developed specific understandings of the region. The goal of this chapter is thus to identify the various processes through which these understandings were reached, how they were structured and what they said Casamance was like: what were the discursive steps through which ‘Casamance’ ended up being a credible (at least to some people) political rally point?

In fact, we have already seen, in Chapter III, instances of a Casamançais identity, with the autonomist tendencies among the European and Mestizo community of Ziguinchor, and the regionalist tendencies of post-World War II politics. But these tendencies differed substantially from the present Casamançais nationalist discourse: the European concept of Casamance was entirely geographical and economic; the Mestizo idea of Casamance depended precisely on the lack of African culture – the Mestizo claim was based on their degree of (European) civilisation; even the regionalist claims of the évolution of the 1950s were not based on culture, but essentially on the political arrangement of the French colony, the separation between subjects and citizens... These three formulations of Casamançais identity did not depend on the idea of a specific Casamançais culture or tradition – this reference to a Casamançais culture or tradition is specific of Casamançais nationalism. Casamançais nationalism has absorbed to a greater or lesser degree all previous conceptions of Casamançais identity, but reference to Casamançais culture and tradition are its typical and distinctive features, and it is these features, and their progressive constitution, which form the object of the present discussion.

The first sections of this chapter will thus provide an account of how various institutions, operating in various configurations, (the Catholic Church, the tourist industry, the Senegalese developmental state) progressively helped constitute the idea of Casamance as a discursive object. The point of these sections is not an extensive deconstructionist analysis, but rather less ambitiously to describe a series of configurations, both discursive and social, in which the idea of a specific Casamançais or Diola tradition has played a central role: the external institutions engaged in the production of these discourses have built their understanding, and, by way of consequence, their actions in the region, on the idea that Casamance, and most specifically, Lower Casamance and/or the Diola district, was home to an

---

4 This list is not limitative – other institutions probably contributed, for instance non-governmental organisations, which have increasingly tried to strengthen technical expertise with anthropological approaches and have not unfrequently contributed to the production and proliferation of culturalist discourses on Casamance.
unusually strong and distinct tradition, and that, sometimes an asset, sometimes an impediment, this tradition was a fundamental element, which had to be given a primordial role in the design of policies in the region. In the course of the 1970s, these discourses on tradition, which we will term ‘traditionalisms’, reached an unprecedented intensity and penetration, largely because they were supported and diffused by schooling and the évolués. Indeed, now that analyses of discursive processes have lost the excitement of novelty, and that we can use them in a pragmatic fashion, as a useful, though oftentimes strangely-shaped tool in a whole toolkit, it seems to be particularly relevant to mix sociological with discourse analyses. Thus another tool, a most classical ‘sociological’ one, will be necessary, in a final section, to give a full sense of the process. This tool will help fill the gap that one often suspects after reading from discursive deconstructions of ethnic, regional or national identities: authors convincingly demonstrate that traditions are invented, that identities are not what they seem, that they bear the imprint of the hegemony of the powers that they were supposed to resist, but one often ends up not understanding how such apparently artificial identifications finally prevailed, how people finally played by these rules; a top-down imposition of military power is easily understood, but one is left wondering how conquest can actually have effects on the imagination of the vanquished. This chapter will thus also try to track down how these discursive processes were enmeshed from their inception with sociological processes, and how it is precisely this nexus of processes which gave birth to an identity to be adopted by the new-born Casamançais.

From fetishism to inculturation: Catholic images of (Lower) Casamance

We have mentioned in Chapter II how the Catholic Church in Senegal had taken an early interest in Casamance (and most specifically Lower Casamance), and how this interest went some way into explaining the remarkably high schooling rates of the region. But the interest of the Church for Casamance did not result only in generalised schooling. Dependent as it was on the image which the Church formed of

\[5\] Brittany, as studied by Bertho (1990), provides a remarkably close example of an image shaped by external forces with varied (and not infrequently conflicting) interests: the counter-revolutionary Catholic church, the Republican historians, the touristic entrepreneurs... See also the account of the birth of Greek nationalism by Gourgouris (1996) – this obvious influence in this approach is Edward Said.

\[6\] For this section on the role of the Catholic Church, I have benefited from the comments and advices of Didier Péclard.
Casamance, it retroactively influenced the constitution of the political imaginations of the Casamançais populations. In this matter Casamance is by no means an exceptional case in Africa: the role played by Christian missionaries in the crystallisation of ethnic identities elsewhere in Africa is now well-known. In Lower Casamance as elsewhere in Africa, the missionaries, for (their own) very practical reasons - converting the local populations - were among the first to produce discourses on ethnic/regional identities, to collate dictionaries and establish grammars, to observe and report local customs. The purpose of this section is thus to examine the discourse of the Catholic Church on Casamance - the hegemonic Christian Church in this region: what has the Church been saying about Lower Casamance?

---

7 See for instance the various issues of the Lausanne-based publication *Le Fait missionnaire*. The role of the Church has been documented extensively in the case of Rwanda and Burundi. See Vidal (1991), Gahama & Mvuyekure in Chrétien & Prunier (1989), or Linden & Linden (1999).

8 Other studies of the influence of the Christian missions in Africa very often mention the grammatisation and standardisation of local languages. In Casamance the missionaries surely played a pre-eminent part in the standardisation of the Diola language (and the other languages of Christian Casamance, like Manjak and Portuguese Creole). In their efforts to teach catechism, print religious texts, and train themselves in local languages, they initiated what sociolinguists call the ‘grammatisation’ of local languages; for the first time, languages were both written and described in grammars and syllabi. On grammatisation, see Baggio (1997). Of course it is difficult to tell the respective role played by spontaneous standardisation (by autochthonous speakers) from the consciously willed normalisation (by allochthonous grammarians). But there is little doubt that the intellectual efforts of Catholic grammarians-missionaries were not devoid of social and political consequences, both practical and imagined. These works on Casamançais local languages are fairly old, since Father Wintz, a missionary of the Holy Ghost Fathers, published his *Dictionnaire français-dyola et dyola-français* in 1909. This dictionary was largely based on the dialect spoken around Elinkine, a logical enough choice, since the neighbouring village of Carabane was still the centre of French Casamance - and of the influence of Catholicism. Progressively, the centre of gravity of Catholicism glided northwards, around Bignona, a more populated region where the new faith seemed to be doing well in the 1930s. In 1940, Father Weiss, from the Bignona mission published a *Grammaire et Lexique diola du Fogny*, and justified his choice of the Fogny language: “The Diola language is spoken in Casamance, on the right bank from the Ocean and the Gambia to the Sangrougrou [sic]; on the left bank from the Ocean and Rio Cacheao [sic] to Ziguinchor. There are several dialects, but the Diola from Fogny, which is the richest and the most precise, is understood by all the Diola, even in Lower Casamance [which then meant the Kasa] and even by tribes related to the Diola: the Floup, the Bayotte, the Banyounko, etc.” In Weiss (1940; 1). It is difficult to know actually how far this was true at the time, but it is probable that the missionaries’ effort at grammatisation helped the Fogny dialect to become the *lingua franca* of a Diola territory more and more clearly defined. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the Catholic Church in Casamance never went as far as Anglican and Reformed churches in British Africa: in Casamance, autochthonous languages were never widely used for mass-schooling and catechism. With this scarce data and in the absence of detailed studies by sociolinguists on the evolution of Diola dialects, one should refrain from over-estimating the impact of this grammatisation. This discussion owes much to personal communications from Pierre-Marie Sambou, a professor of Diola linguistics at the University of Dakar.
The Holy Ghost Fathers and the fetishists

The reasons behind the Church’s interest for Casamance are clear enough: in the late 1880s, while the strength of Sufi Islam rendered most of the colony of Senegal immune to Catholicism, Lower Casamance seemed like a haven for a Senegambian Church that was having difficulties finding its constituency. Animism was still largely predominant in Lower Casamance in the early stages of French colonialism, and animists seemed an easier flock to convert. As mentioned in Chapter II, the missionaries in the predominantly Manding area of Sédhiou thus acknowledged as early as 1888 that the Diola would be favourable ground for a mission. The Diola seemed to have natural proto-Catholic characters:

These Diola are fetishist and enemies of the Mohammedans. They like to work, and cultivation is their main activity. They gladly welcome the missionary at home and listen to his word with interest. They also like to attend Mass.

The enthusiasm and hopes which Lower Casamance aroused inside the Church, appear clearly in a later text, an account by a Father Cissé, from northern Senegal, of his visit in the region in 1950:

We have kept an excellent impression of Casamance, or, more exactly, of Lower Casamance, because we did not see the rest (...).
The Diola is truly sympathetic; he comes to you unhesitatingly, with a very open physiognomy and shakes hands easily, whether a man or a woman. (...) The generosity of the Diola and the friendly welcome which he offers to all strangers are beyond all praises.

Father Cissé then turns into an anthropologist, and finds this evident moral superiority reflected in social life and even in the natural environment:

The Diola house, vast, cut in several rooms, with a vast roof covering the walls against the rain and forming a circular verandah, is much better than either the Wolof or Serer hut. Thanks to doors and windows, one sees clearly, and it is good to live in.
This people has the luck to live on a fecund land, whose vigour expands in wondrous forests and rich fields. River, marigots, wells, there is no lack of water to live and farm. Timber, and particularly that of the ron-tree, is used to furnish the house. Game is abundant and one can always find fish in the marigots.

This quasi-Edenic situation ‘naturally’ allows successes in the evangelical mission of the Church:

On this land, Christ has begun to expand his dominion. In as much as we were able to see, the area is undergoing a deep Christianisation. There is no lack of calls to priesthood, since Casamance has given a deacon in Koumi (Haute-Volta), two young

---

10 In Bulletin de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit, XIV, 1887-1888, 310.
‘philosophes’ in Popenguine, four ‘petits séminaristes’ in France, five more in Oussouye, and a number of ‘latinistes’ and ‘pré-séminaristes’ in Carabane 12.

In the early text by the Sédhiou-based Holy Ghost Fathers as well as in the later text by Father Cissé, the visiting Senegalese priest, enthusiasm for Casamance was related to an implicit ethnology, a traditionalist tendency; for both authors, Lower Casamance appeared as a preserved, primitive, fetishist rural area, not spoilt by modernity, trade or Islam; it was these very qualities which made it a haven for Catholic missionaries. A notable feature of this ethnology is a synecdoctic tendency, which has durably marked approaches to Casamance: for the Church, “Casamance utile”, i.e. potentially Catholic Casamance, was actually Lower Casamance; in the Catholic eye, Casamance thus often means Lower Casamance 13.

The Catholic imagination of Casamance had a lot to do with the general epistémé of the embattled Catholic Church of the nineteenth and twentieth century: just like their fellows in Europe, the missionaries in Africa distrusted things ‘modern’ - urbanisation, trade, money, migration - which perverted innocent peasants, otherwise endowed with a natural morality 14. Rurality was thus consistently perceived as a good sign for the Faith - and a thing to preserve; migration was seen as a worrying evolution, destructive of the traditional village life which formed a natural step before conversion 15. In a way, the general epistémé of Catholic churchmen at the end of the nineteenth century has shaped and biased early interpretations of Casamançais or Diola realities, putting the emphasis on certain features (tradition and pre-colonial religion), while erasing others (modernising trends).

12 ‘Philosophes’, ‘petits séminaristes’, ‘latinistes’ and ‘pré-séminaristes’ designate various levels of the Catholic training system.
13 The fact that Father Cissé, during his visit to the region, had not called on Middle or Upper Casamance is illustrative enough of the priority granted to Lower Casamance.
14 This epistémé was shared also by protestant churches, as Jenkins (1988) has demonstrated about the Basel missions in southern Africa, but in the context of the French Catholic church, it had a lot to do with the French Revolution. Counter-revolutionary Catholics found in Vendée’s rebellion against the Revolution an example of a primitive rural community, faithful to its Church and King, revolting against the atheist, urban and ‘modern’ Revolution. Interestingly, this diagnostic, as Bois (1971) and Tilly (1967) have shown, is largely wrong: the portions that rebelled in 1793 were not infrequently the most ‘modern’ ones - and the ones that had been taken the greatest interest in the original Revolution of 1789. The ruralist bias of the Catholic Church is not absent from ‘modernising’ Catholic theologies, as is illustrated by the examples of the Economie et humanisme school of thought or the progressive Latin-American Catholic churches and their notion of communautés de base illustrate.
It is worth noting here that it is not in itself that Casamance seemed peculiar, but as an component of a larger structure, the Senegambian diocese. The diocese of Senegambia itself was defined to a very large extent externally and arbitrarily, according to the constraints of a global Catholic Church operating through its French branches. Lower Casamance derived its peculiarity in the eyes of the Church from its inclusion inside a larger unit in which Islam was hegemonic. The north was helplessly modern and offered little hope; Casamance, in contrast, with its preserved village-life, would be the locus of Catholic expansion. Had Lower Casamance been included in a different administrative unit of the Church, a unit in which Islam had not been so prevalent (say, for instance, southern Ivory Coast, also an animist area at the time), it is probable that it would have been seen, described, administered and imagined by the Catholic clergy of the diocese in an altogether different fashion; Casamançais fetishism and ‘primitiveness’ would not have been distinctive and would thus not have played such a central defining role. This representation of Lower Casamance as a primitive fetishist and quasi-Edenic haven has had a profound impact on the history of the region.

It has already been argued in a previous chapter that, because Lower Casamance was so important to the Church, and because Islam was making progress, Casamance was subjected to an early Africanisation. As early as 1939, Casamance became a préfecture apostolique, a semi-autonomous bishopric inside the Senegambian diocese. Monsignore Faye, born to a northern Senegalese family established in Carabane since the nineteenth century, became the first préfet.

---

16 Interestingly, much to the dislike of Diola Muslims, current texts on Lower Casamance regularly over-estimate the importance of animism and/or catholicism and underplay the weight of Islam, which has been for the past 50 years the religion of the majority of the Diola; Marzouk (1993: 483) recalls that more than 60 per cent of the Diola are Muslim. This ‘mistake’ is evidently related to the fact that, in a country were Islam is the almost exclusive religion, the existence of a small concentration of animists and/or Catholics stands out as an interesting and hence probably significant fact, setting Lower Casamance apart from the rest of the country. For examples of this mistake, see for instance De la Grange & Balencie (1996: 265-266): “(...) the most popular cult is a syncretism between animism and Catholicism. (...) With a Catholic and animist tradition, Casamance has always been receptive to regionalist themes (...)”; and Zuccarelli (1988: 172): “this illegal movement represents the Diola ethnies, majoritarily Catholic and animist in a largely Muslim country”. It should be noted that the writers or institutions who make this kind of mistake do not have experience of field-research in Lower Casamance. Some other authors, without committing this kind of purely factual mistake, nevertheless give, without justification, a privilege to animism and/or Catholicism in their interpretation of the Casamance rebellion. Having pointed at specific instances of the Church’s influence (educational matters and traditionalism), we believe that we grant the Catholic Church a substantial, though limited and largely involuntary, part in the production of a Casamançais political identity.
apostolique - he was one of the first African bishops in French West Africa 17. Shortly after World War II, Lower Casamance became a full-fledged diocese, endowed with a substantial measure of administrative autonomy. Its clergy Africanised rapidly, and the diocese acquired a substantial measure of autonomy in the training of priests. Most specifically, the priests were recruited and would make their whole career in the diocese itself 18. As a consequence, they probably were the first autochthonous ‘pilgrims’ of the idea of Casamance. Throughout their career, they would circulate around the whole diocese of Casamance; more importantly, they would find fellow-travellers in the other diocesan priests - it is Anderson’s argument that it is from such organised pilgrimages that a sense of commonality, a meaningful identity can develop, shaped by the institutional limits placed on their pilgrimage and the specific imagination of (Lower) Casamance as a primitive haven which the Senegambian Catholic Church was producing. It need not have been a nationalist identity at the time, but a specific sensitivity to the idea of Casamance seems only logical. Little surprise that the 1950s regionalist MFDC received substantial support from the Casamançais priests 19. No surprise either that Father Diamacoune came up with a map of the diocese, the map of the priests’ Andersonian pilgrimages, as a map for a political Casamance 20. Actually, since the beginning of the conflict in 1982, the authorities of the Church have shown an awareness of this issue, and towards the end of the 1990s, they finally decided on a reorganisation of the training of the Senegalese priests, between the village of Brin in Lower Casamance and Sébikotane, a few miles from Dakar. Nowadays, all Senegalese priests know both the north and the south 21.

17 Several Senegalese Mestizo had been bishops beforehand.
18 A Diola, Mgr Augustin Sagna became bishop of Saint-Louis because he was no diocesan priest, but a member of the Holy Ghost Fathers.
19 An example of this support can be found in administrative reports regarding the famous 1955 Bignona incidents, during which a SFIO convoy was ambushed by MFDC-BDS supporters around-Bignona (see Chapter III above); according to the administrative reports, the Catholic priests in Bignona were apparently reluctant to intervene to calm down their flock. This Catholic support for the first MFDC stemmed also partly from the alliance between the MFDC and Léopold Sédar Senghor, a Catholic, against the SFIO, an anti-clerical socialist party with a Muslim leader, Lamine Guèye. The anti-clerical SFIO did make attempts at using religious cleavages to discredit Senghor with the Muslim majority.
20 See Marut (2000).
21 It has been suggested by Marut (2000) that the presence of Catalan and Quebecois missionaries in Lower Casamance could have played a role in the diffusion of a separatist/regionalist spirit. As Marut notes, this is a mere hypothesis, in the absence of real data on the issue: how dominant are Catalan and Quebecois priests among the missionaries? How exactly could they have influenced Casamançais regionalist sentiment? An interesting parallel can be drawn with Rwanda, already mentioned in the introduction: there, the presence of Flemish missionaries imbued with Flemish nationalism had played
The theology of inculturation: a contemporary Catholic traditionalism

The Catholic Church, just like any missionary religion, has always been wondering about the nature of the relationships it should establish with the local mores of the people it was trying to convert, the very disputed attitude of the Jesuits in China being a classical example, and it would be wrong to think that post-world war II debates of ‘African theologies’ were unprecedented historical moments. Even the Holy Ghost Fathers of colonial times were faced with the same issues, and dealt with them in a less uncompromising way than is sometimes told. Nevertheless the era after World War II was singular because of the intensity of the debate; a substantial portion of the clergy was now autochthonous; hopes of evangelisation were high, but so were fears of Islam, atheism and communism; Third World nationalisms demanded that things European be indigenised. In this context, and most specifically around the Council Vatican II (1962-1965), the Catholic Church engaged in a serious reflection over the relationship between traditional religions and Christianity in Africa. Baum (1990; 192) mentions that, in the 1960s already, Spanish missionaries started to encourage Diola Catholics to take part to traditional rituals. Horizons africains, the periodical published by the Catholic Church, echoed these debates, and articles multiplied on the relationship between the Church and African culture. In 1976, the cover of Horizons africains read “Inventing a Senegalese Church”; in 1977, a long article on Black civilisation and Catholic Church” was published; a 1979 special issue on Casamance mentioned the progressive Africanisation of the liturgy.

Beyond these broad themes, there is no doubt that these reflections, which bore essentially on Africa, were stirred by the rapid progress of Islam in Africa, to the detriment of the Catholic faith. This expansion of Islam was thought to be explained by Islam’s adaptive capacity and its tolerance for local practices, a tolerance that had enticed scholars like Vincent Monteil to postulate the existence of a specifically Black African version of Islam, the famous ‘Black Islam’.

---

22 The discussion of inculturation is based on Gadillé (1983) and Blaser (1995) and on interviews with Casamançais priests, Fathers Alain Diédhiou and Célestín Sagna.
24 See Monteil (1964).
became more tolerant of the autochthonous practices, maybe if some form of inculturation could take place, the Church would get back its lost edge in Black Africa. After all, a Black Catholicism was better than none... In Casamance, these worries were deeper than in other places because of previous high expectations: the 1930s booming Catholic community around Bignona was by the 1970s a besieged stronghold in the middle of vast waves of Islam on the north bank of the Casamance river, and even in the small district of Oussouye, where Catholicism had long been the only alternative to fetishism, Islam was gaining ground. In Lower Casamance, inculturation seemed a good enough answer to this difficult situation. For the mixed urban Christian communities in Dakar, inculturation was hardly useful: there was no single set of cultural traditions to give room to, but several (Serer, Cape-Verdian, Bissau-Guinean, Diola, Quatre Communes Mestizo), but in Lower Casamance, in the presence of a supposedly limited and fairly homogeneous tradition, it seemed more promising.

Nazaire Diatta, a Diola Catholic priest, played a central part in this effort at inculturation. From 1968 onwards he composed a large compendium of Diola proverbs, with commentaries. It was released in 1998 by a French publishing company, but we learn from the acknowledgments that it had been circulating for some time before among the “young clergy of Casamance”, “so that (they) speak to the Christian people from (their) common culture”. The whole book is dedicated to Monsignore Augustin Sagna, bishop of Ziguinchor, and an extract of his pastoral instruction of the 29th June of 1983 is quoted:

During these visits, several Christian communities have come back on the crucial matter of inculturation. Yes, with the first missions, our Christians have felt like they have a foot in one culture, and another foot in another culture. They are not at ease, and one understands them.

The whole effort of our present mission is precisely to find an answer to this terrible tension... “One has to convert – not in a decorative way, like a superficial paint, but in a vital way, deep and down to the roots – the culture and the cultures of men”... Their herdsmen are not asleep, they are engaged in the digging.

The purpose of the book is thus clearly established: it is not an anthropologist’s account of Diola society, nor a folklorist’s collection of proverbs; it is a book by a Catholic priest, a book intended to solve concrete problems in the service of the

---

25 It is indeed correct to say that the religious practices and beliefs of the various Lower Casamançais ethnies (Diola, Manjak, Mancagne, Balante) present a number of important similarities.

Catholic faith. It is underpinned by the belief that a knowledge of a ‘culture’ is a strategic element in the effort to convert Casamance; it is also believed that proverbs are particularly relevant elements in the understanding of this culture. There were other such studies written by priests and, later, by Catholic laymen. These texts all share common traits. They usually explore Diola religion or cosmogony, assert their dignity, and eventually trace their parallels and divergences with Catholicism.

The earliest of these texts is probably Pierre Diédhiou’s doctorate in theology, presented in Rome in 1967. In words reminiscent of the Sédhiou missionaries quoted above and of colonial ethnography, Pierre Diédhiou describes the ‘true’ Diola:

As a type of man, the Diola is traditionally a man of the land; he is the brave peasant-agriculturist endowed with the ad hoc qualities it takes to fulfill his primarily rural role; generally strong, robust and brave, attached to the independence and pride inherited from his ancestors, which he likes to sing in the potency of his muscles, in the thrust of his bravery and in the wealth of his granary. Intelligent and gifted with a really good and strongly hospitable soul, he is [the Diola], among his ethnic neighbours, the archetype of Casamansais pride.

Then, through the systematisation and rationalisation of certain Diola myths and practices, he goes on describing a Diola theology, in an implicit comparison with Catholic theology - a careful follower of Father Placide Tempels and his Bantu philosophy. He thus identifies the points of convergence and divergence between traditional religion and Catholicism. All this is carried out so as to allow for a selection, as the epigraph of the chapter on Diola religion illustrates: “Do not blow off the Ghost, do not deprecate the gift of prophecy; but check for everything: what is good, keep it, and beware of all possible evil.” (Holy Bible, I Th 5, 19-22). Just like Nazaire Diatta’s compendium of proverbs, the purpose of Diédhiou’s study of Diola religion was thus to constitute a strategic knowledge, a knowledge infused with

---

28 In Diédhiou (1967; 123-124).
29 Tempels, a Dutch Catholic missionary, identified the principles of a Panafrikan Bantu philosophy. See Tempels (1949). Nazaire Diatta proceeds in a way quite similar to Diédhiou, for his proverbs are classified in themes... This whole procedure seems epistemologically unsatisfying. There is no doubt that societies without writing have cosmogonies, but I very much doubt reflection on spiritual matters can be as rational and coherent as Pierre Diédhiou seems to imply. The content of religious symbols is already difficult to control in societies endowed with both writing and a single bureaucratised church; in societies without writing and churches, religious meaning must proliferate and vary almost infinitely, to the point that the compilation of a Diola theology is both difficult and of limited relevance.
power, whose goal was to negotiate and control the relationship between traditional and Catholic religions 30.

The practical results of these researches have so far been actually quite limited, and the nature of the new relationship to establish was of course much disputed? In Casamance, as elsewhere in Africa, these debates were often received with a substantial measure of hostility and defiance on the part of a number of African priests, the theologians and lays, who detected in them mere cosmetic changes, remote from the actual problems of the African Church; some of them called for a theology which would take the sufferings and oppression of the African populations seriously 31. But what matters is that the debate took place at all, as it set local cultures at the very centre of the stage: the question of the status of ‘tradition’ was raised, and ‘tradition’ was inquired into, studied, made an object of knowledge and a element of strategy 32. This familiarised a substantial portion of the Casamançais populations with the idea of a specific Casamançais tradition, and, above all, with the idea of the relevance of this tradition in the modern world.

The Catholic impact

From the early ages of the first encounters between the Sédhiou missionaries to the most recent debates about the inculturation of the Catholic faith, the Church has produced a rather consistent discourse about Casamance. First, this discourse has actually dealt only with Lower Casamance - this metonymy is explained by the fact that Lower Casamance is the only ‘interesting’ portion of the region for the Church. Secondly, Casamance makes sense inside Senegal, or, perhaps more exactly, the sort of sense made is related to its inclusion inside Senegal - an arbitrary inclusion, which has more to do with the organisation of the Catholic Church in West Africa, than with specifically Casamançais elements 33. For the Church, the way Casamançais

30 The differences between the two works are nevertheless interesting, and may illustrate their respective time of writing – Diédhiou’s doctorate, a clear example of the theology of “pierres d’attente”, seems much less ‘progressive’ than Diatta’s compendium, a clear produce of inculturation. On these various debates around Catholicism in Africa, see Blaser (1995).
31 Such is the case of Fabien Eboussi-Boulaga, or of the celebrated Cameroonian theologian Jean-Marc Ela, who advocates a “théologie sous l’arbre”, politically more active.
32 During the 1970s, several churchmen (Laurent Sagna, Nazaire Diatta, Jean-Pierre Diatta, Raoul Sagna) started producing lectionnaires in the Diola language; in the early 1980s, Father Raoul Sagna organised a Casamance-wide anthropological research into significant rites (birth, adulthood, marriage, funerals), which involved both laymen and churchmen.
33 This insistence on the role of the somewhat arbitrary inclusion of Casamance in broader spaces is no return to the old anthem of arbitrary borders; it illustrates the fact that identity is a relational process, in which there is more to learn on the ‘borders’, in the contact zones, than in the inside ‘core’.
identity was defined, and even the very fact that it was defined at all, may thus have more to do with ‘external’ elements than the specific characteristics of the region. Third, this discourse, in contrast to discussions of Casamance by colonial entrepreneurs, has constantly given a strong role to local traditions and cultures: it was not fields and rainfall, natural resources and the transport network that mattered, but men, or, more exactly, souls. In a first period, traditions, and particularly religious traditions, were taken to be indicators of potential Christianity; they later were somewhat more problematic but nevertheless essential elements in the regeneration of the evangelisation of the region. Perhaps this insistence on the importance of traditions and rurality has as much to do with a built-in hostility of the nineteenth and twentieth century French Catholic church to ‘modernity’ than with the specificity of Casamançais traditions.

It should be clear that we are not arguing that the Catholic Church has ‘plotted’ Casamançais separatism, as some players of the Casamançais conflict have argued - with political afterthoughts. Of course, a certain number of priests - and most evidently, Father Diamacoune himself - are supporters, or even members of the MFDC. But the clergy is far from unanimous in its attitude towards separatism; Nazaire Diatta, for instance, perhaps the most vocal author on these issues of inculturation, has been extremely clear in his rejection of separatism. The phenomenon we are pointing at is an altogether different one, with which sociologists will be familiar - it is a case of unexpected consequences of social action: the Catholic Church, while pursuing its own goals (the conversion of Lower Casamance) and producing the strategic knowledge and institutions they thought necessary, has involuntarily taken part to the production of a Casamançais identity. Nazaire Diatta - both a staunch enemy of separatism and an active element in the

---

34 See for instance Walfadjiri, 2 & 3 October 1995, a series of articles written by Abdou Latif Aidara, under the title “Halt au cléricalisme”. Aidara, a teacher and a member of the ruling Parti Socialiste, got in touch with the Front Nord, a wing of the MFDC after the signing of the first ceasefire in 1991, and played a part in the Front Nord’s progressive abandonment of armed struggle. In his articles, Aidara denounced the rebellion as a conspiracy between the Catholic Church, Father Diamacoune and ex-minister and Socialist mayor of Ziguinchor Robert Sagna; these accusations were an obvious attempt at manipulating the Catholic/Muslim cleavage for internal PS disputes: Aidara was then an associate of Landing Sané, the main opponent to Robert Sagna inside the PS throughout the 1990s, and the journal he published his article in was close to Landing Sané’s boss of the time, the PS leader Ousmane Tanor Dieng, also an opponent to Robert Sagna inside the PS.

35 In a short piece entitled “Le problème casamançais”, Nazaire Diatta (1998a) explains the conflict in a fairly classical way (the de facto domination of the northerners over the natural assets of the region, because of their dynamism), but comes up with the conclusion that the Diola should react through dynamism, rather than violence.
production of the idea of a Casamançais or Diola culture - is a striking example of this paradox.

**The developmental state and the myth of mise en valeur**

Arguments about the development of Casamance by the Senegalese state lie at the heart of the demands of the separatists. The MFDC holds that the Senegalese state has consistently neglected Casamance. Senegalese authorities and their spokesmen have consistently answered that, during the 1960s and 1970s, Casamance had actually been the object of more investment than other regions in Senegal 36. Indeed one such spokesman, Makhtar Diouf, is largely justified in writing that “Casamance has actually benefited much more than other regions from the structures and experiments for rural development which were set up in the 1960s and 1970s” 37. Against the Senegalese defence, the MFDC has another variant - they denounce the ‘wrong’ development, or the monopolisation of development resources by northerners, to the detriment of true sons of the soil; this is an altogether quite different argument from the one about neglect, but the two lines have often been mixed. This debate brings more confusion than clarity to our understanding of the Casamançais case. Perhaps attempts at developing the region are less significant in their ability or inability to develop the region and/or open opportunities to northerners or native Casamançais, than in their influence over perceptions of Casamance - and particularly Casamançais self-perceptions. During the 1960s and 1970s the region, and particularly Lower Casamance, were made into major loci for agricultural development. The function ascribed to Casamance in the general political economy of Senegal has thus had a substantial impact on the content of the idea of Casamance, turning it into a cornucopia.

**Casamance, a granary for Senegal?**

From the 1950s onwards it became clearer and clearer to the state that the growing dependency of Senegal on rice imports was a serious long-term problem. This dependency had its roots in the nineteenth century colonial choice made in favour of groundnut production; this orientation was not easily challenged for

36 For an official Senegalese answer on these issues, see République du Sénégal. Présidence de la République (1991). See also Makhtar Diouf (1994) or Konaté (1993), which are quasi-governmental answers on this issue. Konaté is a former sous-préfet in Lower Casamance.

37 In Makhtar Diouf (1994; 137).
ecological reasons, but maybe even more because of the close alliance established between the state (both colonial and post-colonial) and the groundnut-producing marabouts, and because of the dependency of the state on the income derived from the groundnut marketing process. The collapse of the French imperial exchange system (imports of Indochinese rice, exports of groundnut products to metropolitan France) increased the depth of the crisis. Around the time of independence, ideological pressures for a self-supporting, autonomous Senegal, free from the constraints of colonial trade, were mounting. Progressively, as a result of these factors, policies for the development of local rice production were designed. The two regions selected for the implementation of these projects were Casamance and the Senegal river valley - two areas where the limited development of groundnut cultivation and the rather good hydrological conditions allowed room for alternative models of agricultural development. In these two regions there was room for innovative policies, policies that would not go against the interests of the state and the marabouts, precisely because the groundnut, the main sector of state interest throughout the colonial era, was not too developed. And because these regions were not engaged in massive groundnut production, it was somehow felt that nothing had been done there, not even by the autochthonous inhabitants. And because it was only in these areas that something could be done, the potentialities had to be important.

As Carvalho (1983) rightly notes, this view that Casamance was an empty space with an incredible potential, fully open to exploitation and a plausible “rice granary” for Senegal, was largely mistaken, and perhaps more for Lower Casamance than for other portions of the region. Diola rice-cultivation is now well-known for its painstaking waterworks, its careful and complex balance between salted water and rain, its precise parcellisation. Indeed, experts were often not as blind to the complexities of development processes as current critiques of development ideology have it: they were frequently cognisant of the difficulties of developing agricultural production in Casamance; they often had collected sound data about social realities, noting for instance the importance of migration or schooling in Lower Casamance, or

38 It is difficult to find an alternative crop to the groundnut, which can be farmed on the very fragile and poor soils of northern Senegal.
39 Carvalho (1983: 150, 161 & foll.) makes the hypothesis that the selection of these two regions was not free from political considerations - these two regions were at the time having uneasy relationships with the state; Saint-Louis had just been replaced by Dakar as the capital city, and Casamance was the main basis for the PRA.
the complexity of Lower Casamançais rice-cultivation. They acknowledged that there was little spare land in Lower Casamance. They were making regular calls for caution, they signaled the lack of a proper understanding of the complexity of local ecological and agricultural systems, and mentioned the need for further research or small-scale experimentation.

But the point is precisely that despite this technical cautiousness, the projects went ahead. The gap between the technical literature, often detailed and careful, and the public image that progressively formed out of these policies, was huge. See for instance a publication by the Ministry of Information, entitled Les richesses de la Casamance, which systematically plays up the contrast between Casamance and northern Senegal: “Looking at the huge baobabs of our northern prairies, European travellers quickly come to the conclusion that the Senegalese nation is the daughter of a harsh and severe land, for it takes this tree to resist, without dying, to the harshnesses of nature, and only robust fibers allow to get the water needed to bloom and grow. South of the country, in Casamance, the landscape takes quite different features, for the Diola land is one of the few regions of Senegal where one can rejoice and contemplate cow-herds in rich pastures, along rivulets. The green shades of Bignona, the soft undulation of emerald palms in Ziguinchor find their equal only in the shade of trees on the hills of Sédhiou-Kolda, a place no less blessed to discover the beauties of nature, and the Velingara is famous for its huge fields, where cotton scintillates under a silver sky.”

As a result, the whole of Casamance - but, again, Lower Casamance more than the other two portions - became the field of action for an impressive host of development projects. It is worth mentioning here the main projects and institutions that intervened in the region from the 1960s to the 1970s – an astounding enumeration. The Mission Agricole Chinoise (MAC), run by Taiwan from 1964 to 1973, and then by Beijing, intervened in Lower and Middle Casamance, mostly in rice production. The USAID, starting in 1968, had projects in every sub-region (Diarone near Bignona, Marsassoum in Middle Casamance and Kolda in Upper Casamance); the European Development Fund financed a project for rice-production

---

41 Thus, Federation du Mali (1959; 6-7) rightly notes that “schooling [in the Diola area] reaches the highest level in Senegal (35 per cent)”, the same document (1959; 8-9) insists on the importance of migrations, and particularly female migrations, from Lower Casamance. For an elaborate approach to rice-cultivation, see Pélissier (1966), frequently referred to by various experts.

42 In République du Sénégal (1971; 5).
in Lower Casamance, to be implemented by Dutch agency ILACO; it also financed the Opération Productivité Riz from 1969 to 1974, to be implemented by the Société d’assistance technique et de coopération (SATEC) in Upper Casamance. From 1968 to 1973, the USAID funded the Projet Rizicole de Sédhiou (PRS); the SODAICA (Société de Développement Agricole et Industriel de la Casamance) was created in 1963 in Middle Casamance, for the production of rice, maize and groundnut; it was dissolved in 1972, to be replaced by the Sédhiou project (1972-1980), financed by the BIRD. The Sédhiou-based Opération Productivité Rizicole (OPR) and ILACO merged in 1974, to form the PIDAC, with joint funding from the European Development Fund (EDF) and the Senegalese government; its activities, which originally concerned both Upper and Lower Casamance, were rapidly cut down to Lower Casamance only, in 1975. The SODEFITEX, a cotton company operating in Upper Casamance, also developed rainfed rice projects, starting in 1975, with Senegalese and EDF funding. Finally, in 1976, the SOMIVAC (Société pour la mise en valeur de la Casamance) was created, to coordinate all rice-production interventions; the USAID-funded PIDAC was in charge for Lower Casamance, except for the arrondissement of Niaguiss, which remained under the control of the MAC. Most of the projects met with very limited results - and not infrequently utter failure - but the point is not there: these projects had aroused immense hopes, and they had made clear to everyone (including the Casamançais themselves) that Casamance was a region with incredible unexploited potentialities. This theme of the richness of Casamance, once a central tenet of Senegalese development policy, is now also a major element of the credo of the MFDC - as we have seen, the separatists now accuse the Senegalese government of having neglected the region and/or pillaged it.

But there is another important point here: behind this idea of unexploited potentialities looms an idea of primitiveness which has played a major part in shaping the representations on Casamance - including Casamançais self-perceptions. Such phenomena have been acutely observed in the case of Lesotho by James Ferguson, who has made clear that the ideology of development is structurally dependent on a conception that the people to be developed are essentially rural and

---

44 For assessment of the result of these policies, see Gaye (1982), Marzouk (1993), Carvalho (1983) and Bosc (1998).
primitive, to the point of misrepresenting the actual extent of development. Though Ferguson does not lean on this aspect of development discourse, there is little doubt that development discourse is a traditionalism of sorts: whether state or private, it is dependent on the idea of a traditional area to be developed. The status of tradition in development discourse has varied over time; once a cumbersome legacy of irrational behaviours, a set of noxious habits to be eradicated, tradition has recently been re-evaluated in a more positive way – ‘indigenous’ knowledge and institutions have been given a role in the development process. But what matters is that the very foundation of much (all?) development discourse is the idea of tradition, a tradition to be destroyed, used or reshaped. Though Ferguson refrains from generalising his conclusions on Lesotho to the development discourse and industries elsewhere, Casamance - and most specifically Lower Casamance - is a good example of a rather similar process. Because it was seized more than any other region of Senegal by the development discourse, Casamance, and most specifically Lower Casamance, were the objects of a strongly traditionalist interpretation: if Casamance specifically was to be developed in the 1960s and 1970s, it had - out of a discursive necessity which need not have had much truth - to be a specifically traditional and primitive region.

The Catholic connection: Economie et humanisme

State developmental traditionalism was actually very much in contact with Catholic traditionalism. During the 1950s and 1960s men and influences did circulate between these two polarities. Special mention must be made here of the influence of Economie et humanisme, a Catholic movement, over post-war Senegalese politics. Economie et humanisme was a social-Christian movement, founded in 1941 by a French Dominican priest, Father Louis-Joseph Lebret. A former French navy

45 See Ferguson (1990). To illustrate his point, Ferguson contrasts a 1975 World Bank Report describing 1960s Lesotho as “a traditional subsistence peasant society”, “virtually untouched by modern economic development”, with older scholarship; for years before 1975, all scholars of Lesotho had been acknowledging that Lesotho was strongly involved in a cash economy; as early as 1910, the Encyclopedia Britannica mentioned that Lesotho was an important exporter of cattle, wheat and wool to the neighbouring South African states, that a number of Sotho migrants were employed on the South African mines, that infrastructures (railroad, postal, telegraphic and even telephone services) were already well developed, that literacy and education were widespread. Ferguson argues that the World Bank view on Lesotho is not a mistake, not an aberration, but that it is essential to the very idea of development: for development to be necessary, there has to be an under-developed area, untouched by previous development policies. Hence this grossly distorted view of 1960s Lesotho: it is a logical requisite for development discourse.

46 On Lebret, see Garreau (1997) and Houée (1997).
officer, Lebret had carried out extensive field research in the 1920s, in the tradition of conservative French sociologist Frédéric Le Play, on Catholicism and the seamen’s communities in France; he had observed a clear (and frightening) correlation between ‘modernity’ (urbanisation, industrial fishing) and dechristianisation. As a reaction against materialist Marxism, Lebret had developed a specific corporatist-communautarist ideology, and was quite close to the early Vichy regime 47. After the war, Lebret had become growingly interested in Third World affairs. In 1959, Father Lebret became an advisor to président du Conseil (i.e. prime minister) Mamadou Dia, and he was a major contributor to the Senegalese First Plan, which granted Casamance its central position as a ‘rice granary’ for Senegal; the CINAM (Centre d’études industrielles et d’aménagement du territoire) and the SERESA (Société d’études et de réalisations économiques et sociales dans l’agriculture), the two research consultancies hired by the Senegalese government in 1959 to prepare the First Plan, were very close to Lebret, and many other followers of Lebret played a part in policy-making 48. Later, Lebret came to exert a great influence over the council Vatican II, and particularly over the preparation of the encyclical Gaudium et Spes, which was one of the launching pads of inculturation theology. The ideological kinship between Lebret and Senghor was profound – they shared the same desire to form a third way beyond Marxism and Capitalism, through a form of socialist communitarian corporatism rooted in local cultures.

The Zeitgeist of this generation, which had come right out of the colonial order, was in fact a rather moderate critique of colonialism as an unfair, ill-informed and clumsy attempt at transforming African societies. An efficient transformation could only be founded on a real (i.e. cultural) understanding and on empathy for the population. Anthropology was thus involved with both government policies and Catholicism. Louis-Vincent Thomas, the great specialist of the Diola, repeatedly crossed the way of the Catholic networks. In 1975, he thus authored a book on African religions, La terre africaine et ses religions, with a Dominican Father, René Luneau, an important figure of the inculturation movement and a trained anthropologist. Thomas supervised Father Nazaire Diatta’s doctorate, and he wrote

47 See Garreau (1997; 26).
48 See Carvalho (1983; 167). Victor Martin, who edited the commented results of the 1955 Dakar census, was a Catholic priest too, and a member of Economie et humanisme. See Martin (1962). Martin also wrote about the Catholic communities of Senegal. See Martin (1968).
the foreword to Diatta’s compendium of proverbs. But Thomas was also party to Senegalese policy-making; in 1959 he wrote, for the Haut Comité de la Population et de la Famille of the Senegalese Prime minister, a report regarding population movements in West Africa, a report infused with reference to his experience of the Diola. In this report as in the rest of his work, Thomas deploys the same Edenic appreciation of traditional village life and negatively evaluates the impact of migration - a classical theme which he shared with modern Catholicism, as we have seen in the previous section of this chapter. Also, according to Carvalho (1983; 167), Thomas’ works on the Diola were central to the preparation of the First Plan.

Indeed, Thomas himself acknowledges his sympathy for Senghorian African socialism (as opposed both to Marxism and liberalism) in Prospective du Développement en Afrique noire. Un Scénario: le Sénégal, a collection of essays he edited in 1978. In one of the essays, Thomas makes his political allegiance clear. He rejects economic determination, and quotes Henri Lefèvre:

> Development understood in its integrality implies an enrichment, a non-reduced complexification of social relations. It is (and it can only pretend to be) qualitative. it supposes the creation of forms of social life, values, ideas, ways of life, styles. In a word, of differences.


50 See for instance, in Thomas (1959; 192-193) the rather intriguing section on the “psychosocial effects” of migration:

- a) the influence of migration on ethnic psychology is an unexplored domain
- a notable diminution of the subjects endowed with a lively intelligence, a growth of average intelligence, an increase in bickering, anxious, vindicative subjects, a regression of meticulous and depressive subjects.
- a general growth of egocentric affectivity unadaptable but trying to adapt, a strengthening of the paranoid structure and a tendency to schizoidia, a diminution of emotivity and the lability of affects.
- a perturbation of the balance dilatation-contraction to the benefit of coartation.

But such consequences depend directly on the psychology (the very specific basic personality which is that of the Diola; one can thus not, in the present state of our knowledge bring more details).

b) the psychological problem can also emerge at the psycho-pedagogical level

We have already talked about the schooling of children, who are, very early on, plunged into socio-cultural milieus of a new kind, which has important consequences on their mentality. This is all the truer if the parents migrate with the children (family of fishermen, nomads; rural ‘colonists’). Furthermore, processes of acculturation and enculturation (...) do not fail to disturb the balance of relations between adults and children. Finally, let us not forget that teenagers of both sexes leave the native village, attracted to urban life: they are quickly caught up by organised gangs or extremist political parties. Many are scarred forever by the affective traumas of which they are victims.” In the psychological jargon of the day, Thomas drew a very bleak picture indeed, with explicit political afterthoughts...

51 According to Roland Colin, a French civil servant employed as Mamadou Dia’s aide during the First Plan, Thomas was not as important as Paul Péliissier and his works on agricultural systems. Interview with Roland Colin, Paris, 28 June 2001. Péliissier apparently had been engaged in the production of operational research for some time; in 1954, he published in a periodical run by the Service fédéral de l’éducation de base de l’AOF a leaflet proposing a research plan for the teams of the Service. See Péliissier (1954).
Such is, for Thomas, Senghor’s attitude. The political projects that result from such a belief is that:

It is much less about exalting the values of the past, “grandad’s civilisation”, as LS Senghor puts it, than about promoting the permanent values of this civilisation, which may serve a project of socio-economic and socio-cultural promotion.

One can even find in Thomas a discreet critique of the intolerance of most African Marxists toward Christianity, and the choice some of them make to take Islam as a genuinely African religion.

The exact linkages are difficult to identify, the ambiguities are numerous, but there is a nexus here, between classical anthropology, Catholic thought and the Senghorian development ideology - the same themes and the same people circulate, the same angst about modernity, urbanity and migration, the same preference for rural communities. The First Plan was thus a paradoxical attempt to preserve and encourage Casamançais rurality, to fight against this ugly migration which disfigured traditional village life.

Tourism and négritude: Lower Casamance from politico-cultural item to touristic asset

Unlike State and Catholic traditionalisms, produced around a centralised institution, the next external traditionalism whose impact we wish to study is an outcome of the often uncoordinated actions of a series of individuals, groups or institutions - Senegalese civil servants, international cooperation and development agents, artists and entrepreneurs were all part of a sustained process of folklorisation and commodification of Casamançais culture. Interestingly, for tourism as for Catholic inculturation, this process affected Lower Casamance more than the rest of Casamance - and more than any other region in Senegal.

Little has been written about the impact of tourism in Casamance, and the few texts available take a one-sided view of the issue. Some authors mention the negative impact of tourism on a supposedly hitherto untouched Casamance; the ills brought about by tourism (prostitution, new patterns of consumption, emigration) are thought

---

52 In Thomas (1978b; 17-18).
53 In Thomas (1978b; 32-34).
54 There is for instance some paradox in the fact that Catholics and an anthropologist so fearful of change actually collaborated to governement planning at all...
disruptive of the traditional order of things. Others insist that the dominance of immigrants from northern Senegal over the tourist industry, and their sidelining of autochthonous Casamançais from this developing economic sector, have caused a strong resentment among the local populations; in a similar line, land disputes around tourist development projects, in Ziguinchor and around Cap Skirring, have often been mentioned as sources for armed separatism. But nothing has been written about the impact of tourism over perceptions of Casamançais-ness. This is what this present section aims to do.

**Casamance as an asset for tourism**

In 1976, a French tourism monthly published a long article entitled “Senegal: a garden in the sun”. Two large pictures made most of the first two pages. The left page portrayed elephants bathing in a mud-hole, while on the right page kids were swimming and playing in a marigot, surrounded by tall palm-trees and green, dense vegetation; the caption read “Elephants of the Niokolo-Koba or kids of Casamance, everywhere the same innocence, the same natural behaviours, the same taste of freedom”. The article went on:

Ziguinchor, Tambacounda, Simenti, the names sing and adventure eyes [the traveller]. Riding the tracks towards the bush, or the sea towards the South [i.e. Casamance] (...) which, though it does not compare to Normandy when it comes to pastures, brings back life and measure after three thousand kilometers of desert, which, seen from the plane, look like a vast, monotonous and sandy Waterloo.

In a previous issue, the Gault et Millau had published another article, about Dakar and the surrounding Cap-Vert region. The conclusions were that Dakar was the modern, vibrant capital city of an emerging West African country, with a vivid modern cultural life - markets, theaters and museums. After this review of Dakar, the Gault et Millau had thus logically gone on to the next most important tourist assets of Senegal, the Niokolo-Koba and the Casamance; the pictures were extremely clear about the resources these two places have: Niokolo-Koba deals in wild-life, elephants and lions; and what Casamance can provide is human beings, with their ‘innocence’ and their ‘love of freedom’. A further amenity about these human beings well-worth visiting is their culture, which some more pictures in the same article

---

56 On these two points, see Cormier-Salem (1993) and Hesseling (1992).
57 Though Marut (1999) has some suggestive pages on this issue.
58 In Nouveau guide Gault et Millau Connaissance des voyages, December 1976
outline. One further picture portrays a group of women, dressed-up in colourful clothes, some wearing Senghor-like glasses, covered in necklaces, carrying extravagant umbrellas; the caption reads “The Diola: the great black joyfulness at the step of the tropical forest”. Though it is not mentioned, all indications are that this is a group of *kanaleen*, Diola women who have been through a ritual of buffoonery in order to protect their babies from child mortality - a not so funny topic, actually. The last two pictures show an impluvium house, and a group of women head-carrying baskets of rice. The message is by now clear enough: if you want to see modern Africa, burgeoning urban life, go to Dakar; if you care more for wild-life, then head for the Niokolo-Koba; but if your real interest is for African tradition, Lower Casamance is the place. The rest of Senegal is but an “a vast, monotonous and sandy Waterloo”.

There is more to this typology than the fantasies of some tourism journalists. In its July 1969 copy, *Marchés tropicaux et méditerranéens*, a famous French overseas business paper, gave an account of a press conference given by a Souleymane Sidibé, then recently designated Commissioner for tourism by President Senghor:

> [Tourism] is promised to a bright future for his country, and he finds a proof of it in the creation of the position which he has just been designated for, which responds to the wish of the chief of state to see tourism take a decisive impulse, thus justifying the priority character which it has been granted by the third economic and social development plan. (…)
> Among other things, M. Sidibé then insisted on the privileged geographical position of Senegal, which, of all African countries, “is the closest to Europe and the Americas”. (…) Finally, if Dakar is not Africa, the Senegalese hinterland is a summary of Africa, with deserts, savannahs and forests.

M. Sidibé, listing the main sites of the country, describes the amenities and possibilities of each of them:

1. The region of Cap-Vert [i.e. Dakar]: it already constitutes, thanks to its rather important accommodation facilities, its exceptional climate, its convenient access by air and sea and the island of Gorée, a major pole for tourism (…)
2. Saint-Louis and its region: the historical character of this region, the royal city which is there and the cradle of the Senegalese civilisation which they represent deserve that some accommodation structures be organised there.
3. The islands of Saloum, Niodior, Dionewar, N'Danagne and Toubacouta essentially will be integrated in the next development programme, which is justified by their Polynesian [sic] nature, their closeness to Dakar and the traditional hospitality of their inhabitants.
4. The Casamance, whose key assets are the island of Carabane, the diversity of its peoples each of who has its own specific traditions, and the richness of the fauna and flora.
5. Eastern Senegal, where the priority is to turn the famous national reserve of Niokolo-Koba into a serious contender of the East-African parks.

---

59 Impluvium houses are circular houses, with an inner courtyard and a curved roof designed to gather rainwater to the courtyard. They are typical of Diola architecture, though not many are left nowadays – the model is that of the Creole house, a long rectangular house with a verandah.
This typology differs slightly from that in Gault et Millau’s, for other regions of Senegal seem endowed with substantial resources. Still, here again, Casamance remains the only touristic area about which “specific traditions” are mentioned as amenities - though Saloum is endowed with some “traditional hospitality”. Nor did this peculiar perception of Casamance remain a bureaucrat’s planning project. It oriented actual investment policy. In the course of the 1970s, Casamance - and, again the usual metonymy, most specifically Lower Casamance - came to play a growing role in the development of tourism in Senegal. Table V.1, quoting 1976 data from the Direction générale du tourisme, indicates the regional distribution of hotels and hotel rooms in Senegal.

Table V.1: Regional distribution of hotels and hotel rooms in Senegal (1976)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Cap Vert</th>
<th>Casam.</th>
<th>Diourbel</th>
<th>Sénégal Oriental</th>
<th>Fleuve</th>
<th>Sine Saloum</th>
<th>Thiès</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooms</td>
<td>1624</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After Dakar, whose equipment in hotels is also related to its important business and diplomatic functions, Casamance clearly stands out as the most important region for tourism in the country. The administrative region of Casamance at the time included the two current administrative regions of Kolda and Ziguinchor, but Lower Casamance - the administrative region of Ziguinchor - had the leading role. The Club Méditerranée at Cap Skirring alone accounted for 150 of the 284 rooms of Casamance.

This regional division of tourism was taken a step further in the 1970s. With French funding from the Agence pour la Coopération Culturelle et Technique (ACCT), Lower Casamance became the test-zone for a new kind of tourism, “tourisme rural intégré”; the goal of this project was to:

bring out the specifically African values which is to be found, at the regional level, in this extraordinary variety of civilisations, mores and relationships to nature, while attempting to give back to the country the initiative of his supply.

Interestingly, while Lower Casamance is the land of tradition, Saint-Louis, “berceau de la civilisation sénégalaise” is endowed with an important “caractère historique”. History and tradition are two different resources for cultural tourism, history is about monuments, tradition is embodied in people.

Of course, the situation has changed a lot since the 1970s, with massive touristic development on the Petite Côte during the 1980s and 1990s.

In Scibilia (1986; 25), quoting Christian Saglio. See also Saglio (1979) and Masurier (1988).

---

60 Interestingly, while Lower Casamance is the land of tradition, Saint-Louis, “berceau de la civilisation sénégalaise” is endowed with an important “caractère historique”. History and tradition are two different resources for cultural tourism, history is about monuments, tradition is embodied in people.

61 Of course, the situation has changed a lot since the 1970s, with massive touristic development on the Petite Côte during the 1980s and 1990s.

62 In Scibilia (1986; 25), quoting Christian Saglio. See also Saglio (1979) and Masurier (1988).
“Civilisations” (in the plural) and “African values” were thus becoming the central object of a new kind of tourism. A French anthropologist, Christian Saglio, was the head of the new project. Guest-houses were built in eight villages, most of them quite remote from the seaside - a way to make it clear that the experience was nothing like Senegalese beaches. The houses were built in mud-bricks and looked very ‘traditional’ - with a degree of Western comfort nevertheless; the tourists would come for a few days, and discover village life, sometimes even take a direct part in village activities (agriculture, festivals). The programme met with a very real success until the 1990s, when the outbreak of violence progressively brought rural tourism to an end. But even the more ‘regular’ hotels around Cap Skirring have made the most of the resources of tradition - traditional dances, Catholic masses with Diola anthems and drumming, pirogue-fishing in the mangroves... The civil authorities were activated in order to bring all the traditional Diola kings and queens to the opening ceremony of the Club Méditerranée hotel at Cap Skirring in the 1970s, and paid out as much as Franc CFA 2.5 million in sacrifices at the various spirit-shrines of these kings and queens...

President Senghor, négritude and the Casamance

Discussions of Casamançais development above have established a kinship between Church inculturation, Rousseauist anthropology and Senghorian politics of négritude. In fact, perception of Lower Casamance as a traditional haven has also oriented political and diplomatic activity: President Senghor very often sent his diplomatic guests to Lower Casamance to attend rituals of initiation or kingship. Senghor, the very poet of négritude, found Lower Casamance African and traditional enough for his visitors curious about African authenticity; at time, he would visit himself the Diola priestess-queen Sibeth in Oussouye, and he sent André Malraux there, who made Sibeth world-famous after celebrating her in one of his books. And President Senghor is reported to have been particularly supportive of tourism intégré.

63 The eight villages were Elinkine, Enampore, Thionck-Essyl, Baïla, Affiniam, Koubalan, Abéné and Oussouye.
64 Interview with Cheikh Kane, former préfet of Oussouye, Dakar, 26 February 1999. Konaté (1993; 52) mentions that, on one occasion, he was charged with recruiting local performers for a presidential party.
65 In Scibilia (1986; 36).
Senghor’s ideology of négritude may well have had something to do with the peculiar cultural identity that developed in Casamance: in the country of négritude, there were massive objectification and commodification of ‘traditional African culture’, intense efforts in the arts and culture area, and Lower Casamance cultures - along with the smallish Bassari culture in the far East of Senegal - were the closest to Bantu Africa possible, more African and nègre, compared to the other, more thoroughly Islamised or westernised, regions of Senegal. Lower Casamance, after all, had tropical forests, fetishes, masks, and a rich musical and choreographic tradition. A symptom of this state-sponsored interest in tradition can be found in the activities of the Direction des archives culturelles (DAC), a section of the Ministère de la Culture. The DAC was in charge of recording sound-tracks and pictures of ‘tradition’, ceremonies and dances, to be used by researchers and folklorists; it worked extensively in Lower Casamance. Counting recordings in catalogues 1, 3 and 4, dating from July 1967 to December 1972, one finds that 28 per cent of the archives concerned Lower Casamance cultures - Lower Casamance made up less than 6 per cent of the population according to the 1976 census. The ambitious cultural policies of the Senghorian state consistently gave support and interest to Diola traditions.

The impact of traditionalisms

We have so far described the emergence of various discourses on Casamance, borne by different institutions. All these discourses were quite different from the colonial discourses on Casamançais specificity, based on geography or economics – the focus of the new imaginations of Casamance was on culture and tradition. In one way or another, these discourses have all placed the idea of a Casamançais tradition at the very centre of their functioning. We have also seen that a strange metonymy operated, that these discourses often meant Lower Casamance when they claimed to deal with Casamance as a whole while in fact they were focusing on Diola culture.

---

66 The Direction du patrimoine historique et ethnographique (DPHE) now holds the archives of the DAC, after its suppression some ten years ago. The count was effected on Catalogues 1, 3 and 4; Catalogue 2 was not available at the DPHE. Let us note that this striking over-representation of Lower Casamance cultures in ethnographic research occurred despite the difficult working conditions prevailing at the time in Lower Casamance, noted by DAC researchers. Interview with Séya Ndiaye, archivist at the DPHE, 31 July 1999, Dakar

67 Paris-Dakar, 25 February 1960, mentions a session of “folklore casamançais”, presented by the Jeanne d’Arc, a Catholic youth group from Ziguinchor, at the Palais-conservatoire du Mali [it was the time of the Mali federation].
But in what ways did these ‘external’ discourses affect autochthonous discourses and practices?

**Tradition and traditionalism**

It might be objected that if these external traditionalisms did develop at all, it is because an actual tradition was there, which could stimulate the thoughts and actions of these external institutions. After all, civil servants and planners, missionaries, tourist guides, ethnographers and artists, Casamancans and non-Casamancans, many of them with a very real knowledge and experience of Casamance, could not quite have gotten it totally wrong; they could be simply and innocuously mirroring a strong tradition; ‘traditionalism’ as such would not actually matter, it would be a mere repetition of things already known to the local populations.

Casamance and Lower Casamance undoubtedly have a rich and rather specific tradition, which marks them off in a way or another from the rest of Senegal, and among the many ‘traditionalists’ of Casamance, there was no lack of acute observers. But this is not the point. What matters is that tradition, once processed through these institutions and their discourses, is profoundly modified. But what is the nature of this transformation?

Perhaps the grammatisation of languages is a good example to start from, in order to identify the nature of the changes which traditionalisms effect on tradition\(^\text{68}\). Indeed, the comparison is all the more illustrative as grammatisation, particularly in the classical era, was very much a traditionalism - its object was to recover and reconstitute an uncorrupted *Ursprache* in its ‘natural’ or ‘ancient’ form, to purify it from foreign imports and misuses. One will readily grant that when an idiom is subjected to a process of grammatisation, when a grammar and a lexicon are established in an objective and written form, and especially when this grammatisation is followed by mass schooling and the publication and diffusion of books and papers in the newly grammatised idiom, the actual linguistic practice of the people is profoundly modified\(^\text{69}\). Of course dialectical idiosyncrasies will

---

\(^{68}\) On the grammatisation of European languages, see Baggioni (1997). The choice of comparing with language is a conscious one, for the the problem is the same: we need to break free from the structuralist representation of language as a logical system of rules to see language as a historical phenomenon, related to the societies where it operates.

\(^{69}\) As noted above, such is probably not the case for the Diola language, for the absence of schooling in Diola has seriously impaired its grammatisation. But any European national languages can be taken as a case of successful grammatisation (and schooling).
maintain; various areas or groups will preserve certain accents, or the use of peculiar words. But on the whole there will be a tendency toward the homogenisation of linguistic practices around the ‘correct’ form established by grammarians and linguists. This process will also modify the size of the imagined community of locutors: grammatisation will reveal new kinships with distant linguistic cousins, and establish hitherto unsuspected barriers with neighbours. Also the official establishment of ‘pure’ and ‘proper’ forms of languages, and the very idea of ‘purity’ will render previous discreet mixings of languages uneasy.

What proves true for languages is true also for other human practices. Tradition, once seized by traditionalism, paradoxically ceases to be itself; of course the change is not dramatic and sudden, it is progressive, tradition and traditionalism overlap for some time, and hybrid meanings consolidate. It is not self-awareness which is at issue, and Rabinow is right when he argues that

the conception that holds the ‘primitive’ as a being living according to strict rules in a complete harmony with his environment and largely spared by the curse of self-consciousness, free from even the smallest spark of this consciousness, this conception is in itself a complex series of cultural projections. There are no ‘primitives’. There are other men living other lives.\(^{70}\)

We are not defending here a ‘fixist’ conception of ‘traditional’ cultures as self-contained immobile units, totally deprived of self-awareness and suddenly exposed to change. Circulations and adaptations of institutions and practices, and debates about the nature and content of tradition and its origins, are important features of ‘traditional’ societies, and forms of self-awareness have been documented among the Diola.\(^{71}\) Traditionalism is only a form of cultural change among many others, but it is a form of cultural change specific in that it functions through the identification of certain cultural features as specifically ancient and fundamental to the life of certain collectivities. But though there existed pre-colonial traditionalisms, there is something specific about modern traditionalisms in their fixity, intensity, scope and diffusion.\(^{72}\) Fixity is in fact not on the part of tradition, but on that of

---

\(^{70}\) In Rabinow (1998; 136). Accessing the English original edition was not possible, and the quote is translated from the French version.

\(^{71}\) For examples of this among the Diola, take Baum’s reconstitution of the circulation of spirit-shrines in pre-colonial Lower Casamance, or the debates between anthropologists on the origin of such major Diola rituals as \textit{kumpo} or \textit{bukut} testify to the existence of the idea of tradition in ‘traditional’ societies. See Baum (1986, 1999). For the debate on \textit{kumpo}, see the conflicting views of Girard (1965), Mark (1985) and De Jong (1999).

\(^{72}\) The difference between tradition and traditionalism more or less corresponds to that between Low and High Tradition in the works of Ernest Gellner. See Gellner (1983; chapters 1 & 2). The works of
traditionalism... Thus, traditionalism invariably completes the end of the tradition it is defending; something necessarily new emerges out of the action of traditionalisms - a thing which is not ‘tradition’, despite its reference to it.  

‘Traditionalised’ traditions progressively reify, they solidify, and lose their discreet mutability; the formulation of a discourse erases the complexities of actual practices; traditionalism mixes temporalities, disguises history into memory; forgotten genealogies are (re)drawn; cultural areas are assembled and divided anew, borders and criteria are firmly established and replace the vague and shifty zones of cultural contact; of course changes and imports are still possible, but they become explicit, they turn into signs. Under the influence of the traditionalisms we have mentioned, ‘Casamançais’ or ‘Diola’ tradition, hitherto engaged in slow but discreet and continuous change, without ever thinking itself in a crisis, was suddenly taken into wider spheres, into larger spaces. It was taken into Senegal, Africa, the whole world, in relation and in a permanent comparison with these new spheres.

A good illustration of the changes brought about by these traditionalisms can be found in an article by Peter Mark on Diola dance. Mark (1994) compares the choreographic performances of neo-traditional (or traditionalist) dance companies, which are called “ballets”, and the dances performed at initiations. Several traits distinguish the two performances. At neo-traditional ballets the audience and the dancers are separate; dancing dress is strictly uniform; the different dance companies

---

Jack Goody on the influence of writing and literacy on forms of consciousness could be another reference – see for instance Goody (1987).

73 The impact of even the smallest of these traditionalisms is beyond doubt. Drawing on his field-experience in Morocco, Rabinow notes that the very coming of one anthropologist (perhaps the most radical sort of traditionalist to be found) and his asking questions provoke changes in his guest-society; he thus recounts how his questions about the Muslim patron-saint of the Moroccan village of Sidi Lahcen Lyussi stimulated a whole research by the villagers to put together a ‘decent’ story about the saint; a number of students from the village also started to look for the saint’s esoteric writings. Before the anthropologist came to Sidi Lahcen Lyussi, nobody had felt the need to gather the various episodes known about the saint; no one had looked for the complex esoterical treatises he had written. Asking questions, the anthropologist had induced among the inhabitants of Sidi Lahcen Lyussi a new way to look at one’s society. In Rabinow (1988; 120-121).

74 By discreet mutability, we mean the procedures by which actual changes are silently incorporated into tradition. Baum (1999) provides a good example of this mutability: the many religious changes in Diola pre-colonial religious practices are erased in the Diola common-sense, which instead presents the idea of a stable, a-historical community. Knowledge of religious history (i.e. change) is a secret well-kept by a few elders.

75 Traditionalisms are necessarily ‘ideal typical’, with social sciences, history and anthropology being among the most notable forms of traditionalisms; unfortunately, not all traditionalists are fully cognisant of the ideal typical character of the knowledge that they are in the business of constituting.

76 For an example, see the quote from Peter Mark at the onset of the chapter.

77 The strong kinship between what I define as traditionalisms and the actual workings of social science are evident - indeed, social science is largely a traditionalism. But social science derives its credibility from the fact that it fully recognises its own posture.
follow one after another in a rigorous succession; companies would perform dances borrowed from other villages - sometimes former enemies. Even though the steps are taken from the traditional culture, ballets are new practices. Of course, as Peter Mark mentions, this folklorisation of traditional dances does not mean that the previous meanings and practices have fully disappeared. Actually, in the course of the ballet, the ‘audience’ do not quite stick to the role they are assigned; for instance, as in traditional dances, where the separation between the audience and the performers does not exist, the audience do intervene in the performing of the dance, entering into short dancing solos. Nevertheless, one finds in the ballets many signs of a real change in attitudes toward ‘tradition’. One of the main aspects is the widening of the potential audience. Dances were heretofore very localised (each village or group of villages has its steps and drumming beat); they were performed only during specific ritual contexts, and had only one possible audience: the village. Dances have now become shows and they are now travelling around, throughout Casamance, to festivals of the Organisation de coordination des activités de vacances (OCAV), but also to tourist hotels of the Petite Côte, and even in European concert halls. Since the 1970s, ‘traditional’ songs and dances are being performed during football matches, and they have also appealed for political patronage. In all these various contexts, these dances have progressively become the symbol of enlarged communities and new ties, these visibly traditional practices have allowed for an expansion of the imagined community beyond the mere limits of the village.

*The évolutés as a traditionalising elite*

The key to the diffusion and importance of these external traditionalisms, and their capacity to capture the imagination of so many people, in Casamance and in the rest of Senegal, lies in the part played by the growing community of Lower Casamançais évolutés in their production and diffusion - it is this part that we are now going to examine. Even if traditionalisms were produced by external institutions, these institutions could not operate without local middlemen to mediate between these institutions and Casamance. The évolutés were necessary assistants in the

---

78 The Organisation de coordination des activités de vacances (OCAV) is a state-sponsored nationwide youth organisation grouping the various Associations sportives et culturelles (ASC). Some ASCs, like the Ballets de Thionck-Essyyl, have transformed into professional companies, engaged in worldwide tours.

79 A Diola drum band, the Groupe Fogny has thus produced a tape praising Elizabeth Diouf, the wife of president Diouf, and Robert Sagna, mayor of Ziguinchor, a PS big man and ex-minister.
production of these discourses, and they also contributed to their diffusion and translation towards the illiterate masses. But the main factor is probably that these traditionalisms have become in a way statutory to their position as évolutés.

School theater provides an interesting example of a practice which contributed both to the social status of the évolutés and to the production of traditionalisms. In our previous discussion of the progressive ‘conversion’ of Lower Casamance to schooling, we have dealt with the role played by school theater, among other activités de vacances; it will be remembered that school theater was imported into villages and performed by returning évolutés as good fun - and also as a mark of their status and a way to contest the domination of the elders over the public sphere by promoting a specifically évolué practice. It is worth detailing here the origin and content of these theatrical performances. In fact, it was French teachers who had first developed theatre, in the curriculum of the Ecole normale William Ponty, the training school for African civil servants (and primarily schoolteachers) for the whole of French West Africa. It was in Ponty that Assane Seck, later to become a major political figure in Casamance, and some other students first written and played Bigolo, the story of anti-colonial Diola warrior Djignabo – Paul-Ignace Coly, the future mayor of Bignona and another Ponty graduate, played Bigolo in later productions.

From then on the practice of theater spread throughout the schools of the French African colonies. School theater was not about staging Racine or Molière, but usually about local history and culture - with the necessary bit of moral education. The plays were to include ‘traditional’ songs and dances. There is little doubt that the importance of schooling in Lower Casamance familiarised whole generations with these artistic practices, turning Lower Casamance into a pool of

---

80 I am grateful to Jean-Hervé Jézéquel, who is completing a PhD on schoolteachers in French West Africa, for drawing my attention to the importance of the school theater in French West Africa.

81 For a general history of theater in Senegal, see Bielemeyer (1990).

82 It is worth noting that this theatrical tradition is still very much alive. It is a part of the competition organised by the OCAV. Schoolteachers play a central role in this organisation in the various echelons of the OCAV and in the ASCs. The plays are still organised in a very similar fashion: the play is staged in local languages, it includes ‘traditional’ songs and ballets, and there is a compulsory topic for competition - very often related to health or development issues.

83 These colonial theatrical practices bore the imprint of the fundamental ambiguity of the colonial rules vis-à-vis local cultures and vis-à-vis the autochthonous évolutés – how far could they be assimilated into French culture? Was there no danger in cutting them away from their cultural roots? In any case, these performances rhetorically highlighted French control of local cultures...
active cultural entrepreneurs \textsuperscript{84}. A level down the scale, the ‘traditional African dances’ shown to tourists in the Petite Côte hotels are often performed by Casamançais cultural groups who hail from this tradition of school theater; the Diola provide many, not infrequently a third, of the professional ‘African’ dancers in Dakarois dance companies \textsuperscript{85}.

In many other ways these traditionalist discourses were statutory to the position of \textit{évolués}. Their role as aspiring community leaders lay not only with their acquisition of the modern bureaucratic ethos, but with their capacity to provide some link between their community of origin and the state they were serving; after all schoolteachers, agricultural extension employees or medical workers were all in the business of ‘translating’ between tradition and modernity. At school the \textit{évolués} learn history and geography and acquire a sense of what a national ‘memory’ is; they learn to read a map and forge geographical representations of territories; in a word, they learn the basics of the kind of traditionalism proper to historical sciences. They take part in school theater, they stage and play and reify their culture, following the western definition of what is ‘tradition’. They are the ones in charge of village associations, and they are in charge of contacts with the state authorities and the non-governmental organisations (NGO) about development issues; as laymen or as priests, they take part in the reflection of the Catholic church on the nature of traditional religion; they are the civil servants and NGO-workers in charge of administering and developing the ‘traditional’ populations; they are the tourist guides and performers who translate and produce local cultures for the \textit{toubab}. The interest of the \textit{évolués} for ‘traditional’ culture is very strong, and one is often impressed, while discussing with Casamançais literati, by their knowledge and interest for the old French anthropology and history on the Diola - many of them have read and are able to discuss the canonical works of Thomas (1959), Roche (1976) or Girard (1969), and I was repeatedly asked to provide copies of these old volumes...

It is quite significant that, at the end of the process, it is the \textit{évolués} themselves who proceed to a kind of autofolklorisation. These traditionalisms have substantially

\textsuperscript{84} See for instance \textit{Le Soleil}, 23 et 26-27 April 1980. Luis Fonseca’s obituary mentions the theatrical company of the French Armed forces during World War II - this company was headed by Assane Seck, and included Luis Fonseca and Douta Seck - the three of them being Casamançais - and Nicéphore Soglo, president-to-be of Benin. Luis Fonseca, a Ziguinchor Mestizo, was a graduate of Ecole Blanchot, another leading colonial educational institution, and a member of the boy-scout movement. After the war he entered the Ballets africains, a famous Dakar-based African dance company. Douta Seck became a major Senegalese playwright and comedian.

\textsuperscript{85} Personal communication, Hélène Neveu-Klingenbach.
modified the way in which the Casamançais perceive and imagine themselves, in very unconscious and discreet manners. The best sign of the influence of such traditionalisms is the fact that the populations themselves, under the guidance of the évolutés, have finally engaged in their own traditionalisms. Against the will of the elders, the évolutés had imposed, in the course of the 1950s, their “modern” practices - football, European dances, school theater; wrestling and masquerading had rapidly lost their edge. From the 1970s onwards the évolutés started organising cultural festivals (journées culturelles) during the summer holidays. These festivals did not exclude football or European dancing, but they made room for certain activities identified as specifically traditional, activities that had often been abandoned by a whole generation - the elders were asked to demonstrate forgotten games or dances. Under the influence of touristic and foklorist traditionalism, traditional practices have ceased being shameful stigma of primitiveness, gladly abandoned for more ‘civilised’ practices; these ancient practices were now valued positively. But they often lack the evidence of lived culture. For them to live anew, it takes a specific effort, a special day – an episode of fun in the dumbness of village life. Under the guidance of the évolutés, the Diola now are their own folklorists. SO WHAT?

Conclusion

In the course of our enquiry into the emergence of the idea of Casamance, we have repeatedly stumbled upon ethnographers or other social scientists: Christian Saglio, the anthropologist running the tourisme rural intégré project; the countless schoolteachers/ethnographers/playwrights of the colonial period; Nazaire Diatta and Pierre Diédhiou, the Catholic priests and explorers of Diola theology; Louis-Vincent Thomas, the Rousseauist anthropologist; the Economie et humanisme consultants; and finally Leopold Sedar Senghor himself, poet, president and interpreter of the ‘negro soul’... The measure of solidarity, the kinship between tourism, development, evangelisation and anthropology lies precisely in a common attitude to tradition, a belief that tradition (or culture or past historical experience) matters, an attitude we have called traditionalism.

These external traditionalisms have not only been promoting and diffusing a form of self-awareness by posing questions to the local societies, often providing the answers as well (or, as often happens, the answers were largely part of the
questions) \(^{86}\). Of course, to various degrees, these traditionalisms bear a resemblance to the ‘real’ world, but their pre-conceptions are often important, to the point of distorting the general picture \(^{87}\). Precisely at a time when Lower Casamance was being radically modernised, representations of the region increasingly insisted on its traditional character. Very often, by a curious metonymy, these traditionalisms were actually focused on Lower Casamance rather than on Casamance as a whole. In the course of the 1960s and 1970s these traditionalisms reached unprecedented influence. In Lower Casamance their diffusion was all the more complete as they met the growing numbers of \(\text{évolués}\), and as a portion of these \(\text{évolués}\) were very often key players in the production or diffusion of these traditionalisms.

\(^{86}\) Thiesse (1999 ; chapter 3) deals specifically with similar examples of the contribution of external and non-political traditionalisms to specific European nationalisms; for instance, Swedish Romantic intellectuals played a key part in developing traditionalist approaches to Finnish culture, which paved the way for anti-Swedish Finnish nationalism.

\(^{87}\) Indeed mistake is never very far, as Rabinow’s case, mentioned in note 73 above, exemplifies. Rabinow came to Sidi Laheen Liussy with a pre-conception that no saintly Moroccan village could fail to have a detailed and widely known story of its founding saint - this was why he had asked about it. Let us imagine he had left the village for a month, for any reason (a illness for instance), right after putting the question, without getting any sense of the hesitations and limited knowledge of the villagers. On his return, he could have gotten a full story, collated in the meanwhile by the villagers, a story that would have confirmed his pre-conception. He would thus have made a mistake and missed a perhaps important point: unless anthropologists come up to ask questions, villagers do not feel the need for detailed hagiographies of the saintly founders of their locality.
CHAPTER VI
TURNING CASAMANCE INTO A POLITICAL IDEA

In Ziguinchor, people started to ask that the town be run by autochtons. (...). At the time, people said ‘autochtone’, one did not say ‘Diola’ yet. At some point, a Diola trend emerged among these people (...) 1.

The politicisation of Casamance

It may seem that our explanation of Casamançais nationalism is by now complete: Chapter IV has identified the social basis of the MFDC, the large group of cheated pilgrims of the Senegalese state; Chapter V has described the constitution of a series of traditionalisms around Casamance, traditionalisms in the production and diffusion of which the pilgrims of the Senegalese state, the cheated pilgrims and their more successful fellow-travellers together, played a major role. However we have not yet shown how these traditionalisms came to acquire a political relevance – and on this, structural approaches in terms of cultural or social factors do not have much to tell us.

Casamançais identity now seems a very well-established fact, an endurable datum, to the point that, at present, it seems rather easy to track its genealogy back in the past, to the essence of culture, the history of resistance to colonialism, or the regionalist politics of the post-World War II period... For such a ‘hard’ fact, only deep, structural, longue durée explanations seem to fit the bill... But the present ‘hardness’ of the fact of Casamançais identity is itself the result of political interaction, and though it may now seem almost impossible to believe, it was by no means a necessary outcome 2.

The point of this chapter is thus to regain a sense of the indetermination and uncertainty in Lower Casamançais politics of the 1970s and early 1980s, when the idea of a Casamançais identity with a political relevance emerged in the public

1 Interview with Ben Mady Cissé, Dakar, 25 July 2002.
2 In this, many commentators fall victim to the community-wide equivalent of what Bourdieu (1986) calls “biographical illusion” - the retrospective construction of one’s life as a coherent and self-willed process.
sphere, and to describe how this initial indetermination was progressively replaced by a widely-shared sense that the problem was the one of Casamançais identity.

As will be seen, the idea of the political relevance of Casamançais identity came a long way. It circulated far and wide. Progressively, in a random series of uncoordinated conflicts, this idea made more and more sense. In the end, it allowed for the mobilisation of several hundred protesters in Ziguinchor, a morning of December 1982.

The first part of this chapter will explore the production, by Esukolal, a Paris-based group of Diola évolués, of a new strand of Casamançais/Diola traditionalism. As compared to its predecessors, this movement, with a measure of ambiguity, benefited from its remoteness from Senegal and promoted a kind of theoretical proto-nationalism. A second section will be devoted to the influence of Esukolal in Dakar, and its huge success among the migrant évolués there. The kind of interpretation of Casamançais identity which Esukolal promoted made increasing sense for many cheated pilgrims, as did the epic of a Casamançais football team, the Casa Sport. In a third and fourth part, the context of late 1970s Ziguinchorois politics, influenced by both national trends and local issues, will be studied; towards the end of the 1970s, urban politics in Senegal at large became increasingly competitive, and in a city of migrants like Ziguinchor, this proved favourable to the emergence of autochthony politics. A final part will describe two movements ‘from below’ – that of the lycéens and that of the female spirit-shrines – which were major counter-hegemonic forces on the Ziguinchorois political stage.

Esukolal: long-distance scholastic nationalism

The journal Kelumak, published by the Paris-based association Esukolal, was one of the earliest steps towards the formulation of a politicised Casamançais identity. The fact that the Casamançais diaspora in France, though numerically unimportant, played a major role in the development of a Casamançais national consciousness will not be a surprise to scholars of nationalism. The role of diasporas is now well-established by research on nationalisms, both old (Greece, Ireland, 3 The classical ambiguity between a Diola and a Casamançais identity is present in Kelumak. The second issue’s full title is Kelumak Journal culturel Ajamat-Diola Casamance, later simplified to Kelumak Casamance. The Ajamat (or Ajamaat) are a supposedly ‘core’ Diola group.
Armenia) and recent (Eritrea, Kurdistan, Khalistan) \(^4\). It has become common to interpret long-distance nationalism as a coping mechanism with globalisation \(^5\). The other line of argument insists on the financial role of diasporas, which are tapped by rebel groups, Kurdistan and Eritrea being two archetypal cases \(^6\). These approaches do have a measure of validity in the interpretation of Casamançais nationalism, but we should like to insist here on another aspect: long-distance migrants, because of their position, act as somewhat scholastic counter-elites. For a series of reasons, which we will presently explore, the Casamançais diaspora in France was in a position to promote an alternative interpretation of the history of Casamance, and to be sensitive to the idea of a Casamançais or Diola cultural identity and how it should relate to Senegal.

*From the ARSF to Esukolal*

Esukolal was born from the Amicale des Ressortissants Sénégalais de France (ARSF), a rather classical *association de ressortissants*, created by the Paris-based Diola community. As described in Chapter II above, in the 1950s and 1960s, only a few migrants from Lower Casamance were coming to France – most would stay in Dakar. Still, from the 1960s onward, there was a small Diola community in Paris, and it was among this community that the ARSF was created in 1969. Initially this association recruited mostly unskilled or semi-skilled workers \(^7\); it began with primarily social functions - as Mamadou Sané Nkrumah explains, the idea was simply “to create an association to welcome our [fellow migrant] brothers” \(^8\). And just like the *associations de ressortissants* in Dakar, during the 1970s, it progressively turned from social functions benefiting the migrants themselves, to an interest in their communities of origin. This change had the same cause in Dakar and

---

\(^4\) For instance, Henderson (1970) demonstrates that the Greek diaspora played a key part in the proto-nationalist cultural Greek cultural ‘revival’ of the early nineteenth century.


\(^7\) In 1971, the following professions were mentioned by the members of the board of ARSF in the statutes they sent to the Préfecture de Police de Paris: three electricians, three mechanics, two shop assistants, one panel beater, one warehouseman, one watchman, one chain-worker, one joiner and a “contrôleur” (?). All were born between 1934 and 1948. Author’s private archives: Amicale des Ressortissants Sénégalais en France, untitled document, 16 August 1971

\(^8\) Interview with Mamadou Sané Nkrumah, Paris, 18 March 2002.
Paris: the évolutés were taking over as community leaders. The developmental shift of the ARSF, and the later creation of Esukolal, were related to generational and educational factors: while the founders and initial leaders of the ARSF tended to be non-educated workers, many of whom had learnt French only in France, the inspirers of the developmental turn and the later founders of Esukolal were often younger and better-educated migrants – many of them were students and office workers.

Frustrated with the slow change of the ARSF, a number of them created a new association, Esukolal, in 1979, which abandoned local social functions in favour of a broader cultural project – the defence of Diola and Casamançais cultures.

Momodou Sané Nkrumah, a future deputy secretary-general of the MFDC, though atypical in many ways, provides a good illustration of this rising generation of évolutés, and their thirst for education. Born in 1939 to a family of agriculturists in the village of Diégoune, in the department of Bignona, Sané describes his odysseic quest for education:

The first school in Diégoune was built in 1956-1957. Each adult over 25 contributed 2,000 CFA Francs. There was only one classroom, 65 pupils. But I did not go (...) In 1953, my father had trusted me to a Gambian marabout, until 1958. In 1958, I left on my own, to learn in an Arab school in Sokone [north Senegal], where a brother of mine was living. Then I went to Kaolack, I was told about a Franco-Arab school in Dakar, so I went there. In 1961, I took the exam for a scholarship to study in Morocco. But Senegalese students in Morocco demonstrated that year, and everything was blocked. We waited 1962-1963. But nothing happened. So I went to Saint-Louis, and then to Nouakchott and Nouadhibou on my own. There, when my money was over, I worked for several months, and I paid a ticket to Las Palmas; I made it to Casablanca, I take a train – I wanted to go to Egypt, but I stayed in Tanger, I was stuck. I came back to Fez, I found a Casamançais relative there and I registered there at the Arab high school where I should have been going, but without scholarship. And I went to the Alliance française. With my [good] results, the head of the Alliance advised me to go to France, and gave me a contact here, at the Alliance. I met a Diola in Paris, a Diatta, from Tendouck. (...) Then I went to the Sorbonne, in a course on French Language and Civilisation, until 1973. In 1973, I got a minor degree in law at the University of Assas.

The évolutés had not been absent from the creation of the ARSF, of course. Sané Nkrumah claims he was a prime mover behind the creation of the ARSF, but that he had let his elders ‘go first’. Interview with Mamadou Sané Nkrumah, Paris, 18 March 2002.

In the 1984 board of the ARSF, there were still many manual workers, but also four students and two office workers. The 1984 board belongs to a new generation, born around 1950. It is typical that, while the 1971 declaration had been hand-written, the 1984 declaration was typed. Author’s private archives: Amicale des Ressortissants Sénégalais en France, Déclaration d’un changement de bureau survenu dans l’ARSF, 20 mai 1984. The renewal of the 1984 bureau was largely a consequence of the 1982 and 1983 separatist demonstrations (and resulted in the exclusion of supporters of separatism); still, the composition of the 1984 bureau is illustrative of the changes that had been going on throughout the 1970s inside the association. See below for elements on the composition of Esukolal.

Interview with Mamadou Sané Nkrumah, Paris, 27 September 1999.
This educational epic, from Diégoune to the Sorbonne, through Gambia, Sokone, Kaolack, Dakar, Mauritania and Morocco, is an extreme case, but it gives a proper sense of what these young men were after: just like their age-mates who had stayed in Senegal, they were aspiring literati. The biographies of the other members of Esukolal show rather similar patterns. Apart from Nkrumah Sané, who later found employment as an office worker at the Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées, a prestigious state engineering school, other significant contributors to Esukolal and their journal, Kelumak, included Mamadou Sadio, Emmanuel Dijkunn Sambou, Ibou Sané and Sankou Sané. Mamadou Sadio was born in Kabiline in 1944, and he had got his baccalauréat in 1966 in the brand new Ziguinchor lycée; he worked at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris. Emmanuel Dijkunn Sambou was a student in Philosophy, and he completed his doctorate in 1984 at the Sorbonne. La Casamance et les forces du mal, a violent denunciation of French colonialism in Casamance. Ibou Sané too was a student of philosophy. Sankou Sané worked at the Centre National des Arts et Métiers, a famous engineering school. As these elements of biography make clear, this segment of the diaspora was very specific, immersed in educational pursuits. A small picture of the leadership of Esukolal, on the cover of one issue of Kelumak, the association’s journal, tells it all: young men in 1970s suits, many of whom wear glasses, one of them smoking a pipe; all look proud and ambitious.

A journal of the évolués, a traditionalist line

The preoccupations of this group were reflected in the very style of Kelumak, the journal published by Esukolal. Kelumak, an eight-page A4 black-and-white journal, had only a brief existence: only five issues were produced, from January 1981. Many pages read just like a school-paper – some poetry in French and in Diola, riddles and school exercises – something of a distant and modernised echo of the évolués’ village summer schools. And there were also some practical sections, a number of texts on development issues such as reforestation, and some technical notes on gardening and agriculture. A few pages dealt with community issues, most

13 In Kelumak, 3, December 1981. See Appendix VI.
14 Thanks to Mamadou Sané Nkrumah, we have had the opportunity to access issues 2, 3, 4 and 5 of Kelumak.
specifically land disputes between villages. The general tone was that of the évolutés who know better than the village folks, and should be listened to.

Still this new generation yearned not only for things ‘modern’, but also for things ‘cultural’ and ‘traditional’. The shift in names between ARSF and Esukolal, from a formal, administrative-sounding, French name and its acronym, to a Diola word (Esukolal means “our village/country”), is in itself an indication of the new traditionalist orientation taken by those intellectual sections of the Diola community in Paris. And many articles in Kelumak (again, a Diola word, meaning “the palaver tree”) bear witness to the influence and penetration of the various external traditionalisms discussed in Chapter V, which appealed to the small literati community which produced and read the journal.

Most conspicuous is a front column attempting a defensive revaluation of Diola religion; to quote but the few first lines:

Contrary to what is often thought, the Joola – A jamat – had his religion, which fit very well with his culture and civilisation. (...) Nowadays, this religious practice is a remnant. The Joola is stigmatised as an animist, a pagan, or worse as one without religion. We say that A Jamat had his religion, a supreme God who teaches [sic] respect for one’s neighbour, honesty and overall work 15.

All this was very much in the line of all the debates that were taking place inside the Catholic Church at the time around inculturation: traditional Diola culture is not a valueless, cumbersome and somewhat shameful heirloom, it is a fully-fledged culture, whose dignity has to be asserted, whose values may have some relevance in the present situation 16.

Among other themes, Kelumak included a periodical column on literacy in the Diola language, as well as its alphabetical transcription, the major interest of Mamadou Maurya Sadio, a future figure of the MFDC. Kelumak also featured many articles on the colonial history of Casamance, or the ethnography of Diola society. Other issues include the etymology of the ethnonym “Diola”, or the biography of some of the ‘traditional heroes’ of Casamance. The general line was that of the existence and significance of a Diola tradition, and more importantly its relevance in modern times.

Like the external traditionalisms it was building upon, this assessment was not altogether uncritical. Momodou Sané Nkrumah, for instance, lamented the lack of a Diola art:

---

15 In Kelumak, 3, December 1981.
16 On the inculturation debate, see Chapter V.
Like all other peoples of Africa, the Diola Ku-Jamate have a rich culture, and perhaps even the richest of all (...). But it lacks an art. And a culture without art does not have and will not have solid foundations. Yes, the Diola Ka-Jumate [sic] did not have or do not have an art, and, to my sincere regret, it is very difficult, not to say impossible to see a sculpture like other peoples of Africa have, portraying a king or a grand-father, a testimony in a way or another of his life as a warrior or a lover. Among ourselves, everything vanishes after death (...). How shall we do to discover the reason for our attitude, and is that a disease? Such is the question which I have always asked myself, which I am now asking myself, and which I now put to you, the Jamates (Diolas) 17.

This critique bears the imprint of the European representation of what a ‘decent’ African culture should be like: art, and particularly the existence of a significant sculptural tradition, are necessary features. For Sané Nkrumah, the fact that the Diola have no such tradition is really problematic, almost a “disease”.

Kelumak was thus witness to a shift in the attitude of the évolutés towards their tradition: reflexive and critical, doubtless, but also quite theoretical and deeply informed by the Western gaze on Africa. The members of Esukolal were thus reappropriating the various external traditionalisms – Diola and African altogether - to which they were exposed. For these men, tradition mattered.

**From political radicalism to identity politics**

As was discussed in Chapter V, a critical interest in tradition was by no means exceptional among Senegalese intellectuals: it had long been an important feature of what it was to be an évoluté in Senegal. But in France, despite the attempts by the Senegalese authorities to control the migrant communities, this traditionalist persuasion could develop more freely and more radically.

The intellectual climate among the intellectual African diasporas in France played a crucial part; it was one for left-wing political radicalism and African cultural affirmation. Hopes for development were high, neo-colonialism and the comprador and bureaucratic bourgeoisie were the enemies; against the Western hegemony, Africanity was asserted with strength; the cultural heroes of the day were Malcolm X, Patrice Lumumba and Cheikh Anta Diop. The Paris-based Diola intellectuals were an integral part of this broad trend of ideas, which contributed strongly to the formulation of Casamançais nationalism.

Some interviewees argued that Nkrumah Sané was no Casamançais nationalist until a rather late point in the 1970s 18. Sané himself claims he has always been a

---

17 In *Kelumak*, 4, avril 1982.
18 Interview with Marcel Bassène, ex-PDS member of parliament, Dakar, 1 May 1997, and with an ex-member of Esukolal, Paris, 4 November 1999.
Casamançais separatist, as a nationalist would say. It is difficult to tell, but it seems very likely that, though always very conscious of his African cultural identity, he came to Casamançais separatism rather late in his political career. What is certain though, is that Nkrumah Sané and a number of the founders of Esukolal, like most African intellectuals in Paris in the 1970s, were strongly influenced by left-wing radicalism; Sané’s nickname of ‘Nkrumah’, from the Ghanaian Independence hero, is in itself already revealing of this ideological climate. Sané himself claims he took part to the May 1968 events. Both Sané and Mamadou Sadio were members of the French Communist Party during the 1970s; and the bibliography of Emmanuel Sambou’s doctorate read like a compendium of 1970s left-wing politics. Clearly, many of the founders of Kelumak resented the conservative orientation of the Senegalese state, its failure to develop Senegal, its clientelistic politics and discreet political repression, its subservience to France. A sign of this orientation can be found in Sané’s own rendering of his attitude during the 1981 Senegalese intervention in the Gambia:

Q : What happened to the Union Casamançaise [a shortlived Paris-based pan-Casamançais association]?
A : Its first crisis, it was after the Senegalese intervention in The Gambia, in July 1981. As a secretary-general to cultural affairs, I asked, along with Diao of Kolda, a meeting to denounce this intervention. Everybody was scared. So I resigned. I said that the interest of Casamance started in The Gambia. They did not follow. But the Senegalese students convened a meeting to denounce [the intervention]. We were invited, as the Union Casamançaise to their meeting at the Maison de l’Afrique [a Paris University Residence Hall].

Q : Why did the Senegalese students oppose the Senegalese intervention?
A : All progressive mind had to know it had to be opposed. Our state [i.e. : Senegal], with the support of France, was doing the work of France. At the students’ meeting, I spoke up to denounce.

In his 2002 account of this episode, Sané described his attitude in 1981 in terms of Casamançais nationalism, claiming he had argued that protest was necessary because the Gambia and Casamance had the same interests. But the argument is somewhat more complicated: Sané’s attitude had a lot to do with the fact that Senegal was seen as a proxy of France and the West, against global revolution, to the point that progressive Senegalese students could feel a community of thought with

19 Interview with Mamadou Sané Nkrumah, MFDC activist, Paris, 27 September 1999.
20 Among the references used, Marx, Foucault, Habermas, Lénine, Marcuse, Poulantzas...
21 In July 1981, a coup attempt led by a young radical, Kukoï Samba Sanyang, briefly overthrew the Gambian Prime Minister, Sir Dawda Jawara. Senegalese troops came to the rescue of Jawara, reinstating him in power and obtaining the creation of a confederation between Senegal and the Gambia. Sanyang was a Gambian Diola, but his Diola ethnicity played apparently no part in his political actions at the time.

Left-wing radicalism was the basis on which Sané’s separatism developed. This is by no means a surprise, for many communitarianisms of the 1970s and 1980s show similar patterns. Students of Islamist movements have noted many cases of change from left-wing radicalism to Islamism. In 1970s Europe the various regionalist movements in Brittany, Scotland, the Basque country or Corsica, were often related to transformations of left-wing radicalism. Here the history of Casamançais nationalism is to be interpreted in the broader framework of the change of political radicalism. This change affected the Diola diaspora in Paris more thoroughly because this community was more exposed than other Senegalese diasporas, which consisted largely of uneducated workers.

* A scholastic counter-elite [SCHWACHSTELLE]

The importance of the men of Esukolal lay not only in their exposure to the deep and global trends of political radicalism. Something else was at play too: while the Casamançais cadres, these few literati who still made it to top jobs in the Senegalese civil service and rose to important political functions in Senegal, could not quite break away from Senegal, to which they were so deeply linked, the Paris-based évolutés had much weaker ties to the Senegalese state, and stood in a better position to formulate the elements of a separatist discourse. In this sense, they could play the part of a counter-elite; unlike the legal Senegalese opposition in Senegal, they were able to develop a line that did not take the Senegalese state for granted.

Like the failed évolutés who were getting so numerous in Dakar and Ziguinchor at the time, the Paris-based évolutés were in an implicit competition with the cadres of the Senegalese state. But when compared to the marginalised literati of Dakar, they enjoyed more comfort and money, and a greater prestige. Their educational

---

24 Hence the careful watch kept by the Senegalese state, and presumably by most African states, over their expatriate communities and their associations. In 1972, a month before his death, the Casamançais minister Emile Badiane came personally to meet the ARSF and try to rally them to the ruling party. Many other instances of visits to diasporic communities by political leaders were reported during fieldwork.
attainments were not infrequently lower than those of the *cadres* (otherwise they would have entered the Senegalese state themselves), and they often had only menial jobs in France. They knew the difference very well, and resented it; the *cadres* were the willing associates of the Senegalese state, and even those among the *cadres* who opposed the Socialist rule and supported the various legal opposition parties, never questioned the framework of the Senegalese state. The *cadres* and the diasporic *évolués* often did not get along easily, and it should thus come as no surprise that, when Marcel Bassène, a *cadre* of the Senegalese state (he was then a lecturer in Mathematics at Dakar university), came to France to recruit for the new-born oppositional Parti Démocratique Sénégalais among the men from Esukolal, he met with little success.

The crucial point is this: the migrants in France were no part of the Senegalese state, they did not depend on it, but nevertheless enjoyed a measure of wealth, eminence and leisure. As Bourdieu puts it, borrowing Austin’s terminology, their position was “scholastic”. In Bourdieu’s view (and this is the core of his critic to Austin), “scholasticism” does not stand only here for an “abstract” or “theoretical” turn of mind - the social conditions of possibility of scholasticism have to be taken into account: for scholasticism to develop, it takes a few men who are spared from the pressing necessities of the day. Such was the position of the Paris-based Casamançais – they were relatively well-off and, vis-à-vis the Senegalese state, they could afford some distance... Precisely because of that, some of them (but by no means all of them) were likely to nurture a trend of autochthonous Diola traditionalism, a trend which appropriated and recast the external traditionalisms.

Comparing *Kelumak* with the 1950s papers of the young schoolteachers of Casamance, quoted in Chapter III, one gets a sense of the nature of the shift: vindications are more abstract, the produce of people who are somewhat remote from Casamance. But at the same time the striking element is the growing sensitivity to the idea of a Casamançais or Diola cultural identity. In the 1950s, the *évolués*’ papers made rather vague mention of the peasantry and how it is treated unjustly by the

---


26 See Bourdieu (1997). The etymology of scholasticism – from the Greek *skholè*, leisure, which also gave *school*, comes as an opportune confirmation of our general argument that formal education is a pre-requisite for nationalism to coalesce...
Quatre Communes and the colonial state; in the early 1980s Kelumak, and the other Diola intellectuals, engaged in detailed discussions of cultural features of the traditional Diola villagers, and sometimes of other ethnic groups as well. The almost theoretical Senghorian peasant was replaced by a culturally-defined Diola peasant.

But the men in Paris remained very far from Casamance, and they had only limited access to and knowledge of Senegalese and Casamançais politics; their scholasticism also meant that they remained theoretical, remote from the actual experiences of most Casamançais; they lacked precise grudges and grievances with which to form an ideology. Also, they were not unambiguous Casamançais nationalists – the left-wing radicalism persisted, and seemed, to some, exclusive of Casamançais nationalism; many of the literati behind Kelumak seemed content enough with Senegal. It is significant enough of the fundamental ambiguity of Esukolal’s cultural project that neither the association nor its paper survived the first occurrences of violence in Casamance and the arrest of some of its most notable members. Kelumak was by no means the steely voice of a united Casamançais separatist movement – with all sorts of debates and tensions among the Casamançais évolués, in Paris and in Dakar – and it is precisely for this reason that it is of interest: all these tensions and debates have been suppressed by the hardness of the facts of violence, of rebellion and repression. Nevertheless, Esukolal offered room for the first phase of Casamançais nationalism – that of a paroxystic autochthonous cultural adoration. And because of their scholasticism and relative independence from the cadres, they could find a constituency among the vast sociological basis of Diola évolués in Dakar – there, they were received with enthusiasm, and the politicisation of Casamançais traditionalism took a further turn.

27 Sambou’s thesis, which was defended in 1984, is remarkably ambiguous – it is a clear defence of Diola identity, but it pays due respect to Senghor and Senegal: “Casamance was not chosen as the framework for this thesis because it is the richest and most beautiful region of Senegal. The fundamental reason [for this choice] is that its people has succeeded, consenting to enormous sacrifices, to preserve the authenticity of its civilisation, of its vision of the world, and all this despite the ferocity of the forces of evil [sic]. This result attained after a resistance which lasted more than 315 centuries [sic], presently allows Senegal and even Africa as a whole, to stand at the rendezvous which Mr. Leopold SEDAR SENGHOR describes as that of ‘the give and take’.” In Sambou (1984; 1).

28 Voices from Ziguinchor and the villages are remarkably absent from Kelumak – a not so surprising fact, considering what we have been writing above about the évolués’ position in Diola society.
Paris-Dakar: in search of a constituency

*Kelumak*, based in Paris, quickly reached the migrant communities in Dakar, which is where it found its constituency. Signs of the successful penetration of *Kelumak* in Dakar cannot be mistaken: a growing number of articles were contributed by Dakar-based Diolas, and the sales in Dakar were reportedly excellent. Success was such that, in June 1982, some Dakar readers and contributors of the journal formally organised their own section of *Esukolal*. From July 1982, a Dakar-dweller, Mamadou Diémé, became the new manager of *Kelumak*, in place of Paris-based Ibrahima Sané. Mamadou Diémé was a cousin of Mamadou Sané, with whom he had maintained close connections despite the latter’s expatriation to France. Mamadou Diémé, along with a fellow-member of the Dakar section of *Esukolal*, Mustapha Camara, would soon play a major role in the MFDC. For the time being, in the early 1980s, both were employees of the Institut Fondamental d’Afrique Noire (IFAN), a Dakar-based academic institution. As interviews made clear, the journal circulated a bit in Ziguinchor, but did not reach into rural Casamance; confirmation can be found in the fact that no Ziguinchor-based contributors are mentioned in *Kelumak*; nor was a *Esukolal* committee established in Ziguinchor, though the journal had a few readers there, notably a number of schoolteachers who were cultural and political activists. In Dakar though, the few young Paris-based *évolués* and their cultural project obtained significant results that, in retrospect, seem logical enough: *Kelumak* was the production of Diola *évolués*, it echoed their interests and cultural styles, and Dakar was the place where the Diola *évolués* were found in the largest numbers, and where they could be reached most easily, through the migrants’ dense social networks. The kind of constituency

---

29 When asked where the sales were the best, Sané Nkrumah answered “In Senegal, of course. The second issue, they made 65,000 CFA Francs at the stadium in one day.” [i.e. 260 copies, for a total output of 1,500 copies]. Interview with Mamadou Sané Nkrumah, Paris, 18 March 2002.

30 An informal organisation had apparently been in existence beforehand. According to *Kelumak*, 5, July 1982, the committee included Youssouph Badji, Ngoie Diba, Mustapha Camara, Mamadou Diémé and Bassirou Badji. Mamadou Diémé was the dominant figure of this Dakar Comité, and it seems probable that he had recruited most members: both Bassirou Badji and Youssouph Badji had shared rooms with him, and Camara was a fellow-worker of his. Diba had been ‘recruited’ into *Esukolal* through a cousin of Nkrumah; a student in Tunisia in the early 1980s, he had written a letter published in *Kelumak*; later, he had stayed with Nkrumah in Paris during holidays, and on his return to Dakar, he had been in touch with Mamadou Diémé. For a picture of the group, see Appendix VI.

31 More signs of exposure to scholasticism... The leaders of the Dakar section of *Esukolal* resembled the Paris group in their closeness to educational or research institutions.

Kelumak could find in Dakar played a strong part in its transformation into an unequivocally nationalist movement.

**A constituency for Esukolal: the évolués in Dakar and Ziguinchor**

In urban areas, as has been described in Chapter IV, the évolués at large were faced with an increasingly difficult situation, and this crisis was felt even more strongly among the Diola communities, where there were so many of these young literati; accessing proper education and getting jobs became harder, and so did marrying; in this context, the literati could no longer cater for the newly arrived in town and were thus unable to pay back the informal debts they had contracted with the tuteurs who had reared them; worse, they had almost no access to alternative pathways, having given little attention so far to emigration, trade or craftsmanship – they were prisoners of the ratchet.

The tightly-knit nature of Diola migrant communities in Dakar, the networks of tuteurs, the associations de ressortissants, the frequent social occasions all combined to make personal failures both more painful and more visible: men were publicly humiliated by their failures to keep decent modern clothing, their incapacity to pay dues for associations or to pay the upkeep for the wives and children. These networks, built as they were on the idea of a village community and tradition, managed by literati, were valuable ground for the diffusion of Kelumak and other traditionalist trends.

Indeed there were many other such strands of culturalism in Dakar and Ziguinchor: as mentioned in Chapter V, the external traditionalisms of state, school, church and tourism had given rise to many local temples for autochthonous cultural self-adoration, ministered by dedicated évolués. The 1970s were a time when Diola associations in Dakar got increasingly interested in tradition; at a time when the promotion of African languages was becoming a new issue in Senegal, a number of Diola teachers and university lecturers engaged in the promotion of Diola language and the formalisation of its grammar. In the early 1980s, Ibrahima Amah Diémé, a high school teacher and a figure of the legal opposition, thus ran a broadcast on Diola culture on the state regional radio:

I belonged to a misunderstood culture, and my duty was to get people to understand this culture. Early on, I did theatre, and conferences. When I was given a job at the lycée in, I asked to run a cultural broadcast on Lower Casamance, essentially on the Diola. It was called Coup d’œil sur la Casamance. (...) The national radio, it came from Dakar, with
journalists from Dakar. As for myself, when there were initiations or festivals, I would go there, ask what was happening \(^{33}\).

But these strands were usually controlled by *cadres*, most of whom were loyal servants of the Senegalese state, if not of the Socialist Party \(^{34}\). *Esukolal* had no such ties – it offered a measure of independence from the Senegalese state, as well as a certain scholasticism, a rather artificial soil which could nurture the idea of an independent Casamance. But beyond these small local and elite-led cults of autochthony, the politicisation of Casamançais identity could proceed through one mass-cult that developed towards the end of the 1970s, a cult practised by tens of thousands of Casamançais migrants in Dakar and Ziguinchor and throughout Senegal: football.

**The Casa Sport: a mass-cult of autochthony** \(^{35}\)

The Casa Sport, a regional football team, is frequently mentioned as a crucial episode in the constitution of Casamançais separatism in the early 1980s. What is usually recounted is that the many Casamançais supporters were unhappy with the somewhat irregular defeat of their team in 1980 against a team from northern Senegal, and that this was a cause for additional frustration. But this was a minor episode, and though there is little doubt that the Casa Sport’s defeat was resented bitterly by many Casamançais, the episode of the Casa Sport is more of a symptom of the state of the Casamançais community in Dakar: what is significant is that there could have been such a mass supporters’ movement at all.

According to Mamadou Sané Nkrumah, matches of the Casa Sport had provided one of the best venues for the distribution of *Kelumak* in Dakar. It was during such matches that Mamadou Diémé had started to sell *Kelumak* in Dakar in 1981 – a sound pragmatic sociology guided Diémé’s choice: on football days, in Dakar, large crowds of Casamançais were assembling, among which the Diola were predominant, as they were the most numerous migrant community from Casamance in the capital city. They actually were the first mass sports supporters’ movement in

---

\(^{33}\) Interview with Ibrahima Amah Diémé, Dakar, October 2002.

\(^{34}\) The promotion of autochthonous African languages in Senghor’s Senegal was clearly not devoid of political afterthoughts: in the line of Cheikh Anta Diop, it was usually oppositional left-wing intellectuals who backed it up. See Cruise O’Brien (1998).

\(^{35}\) This section owes much to the help of a number of Casamançais football aficionados, with varied approaches to Casamançais nationalism. Among those, I should like to thank Nouha Cissé, currently the head of *lycée* Djignabo and president of the Casa Sport. Many other supporters or players of the Casa Sport agreed to give their testimony; I am grateful for their co-operation.
Senegal. This movement symbolised the situation of many Casamançais (and particularly Diola) migrants in Dakar and provided them with an expression. It played a major – and largely involuntary – part in the politicisation of Casamançais identity, giving flesh to the scholastic proto-nationalism diffused by Esukolal, providing an unexpected impetus for the nationalism-in-being.

A Ziguinchor-based football team, the Casa Sport emerged as a national-level contender towards the end of the 1970s. It had hitherto been unremarkable, and had consequently gathered little support from the Casamançais communities - as one early supporter notes, with a zest of bitterness, “prior to 1979, there was no one”.

In 1979, with its star-player Jules-François Bocandé, the Casa Sport performed well and made it to the quarter finals of the National Cup. Very quickly on, much to the surprise of the leaders of the Casa Sport, its small and loose network of football aficionados transformed into a huge, bureaucratised, nation-wide supporters’ movement, centred on Dakar – the team’s victory in the final in July 1979 against a famous team from the north, the Jaraf, gave additional impetus to the movement. As Aliou Badji, the national president of the Comité Allez Casa, recounts:

The committee of the Casa supporters was born in December 1979, after the Casa Sport reached the quarter-finals of the National Football Cup. The team had supporters before, but they were not well-organised. A Casamançais, the now defunct Dialy Mady Sissoko, took the initiative to call on the radio a meeting of all the Casamançais who supported the Casa. All answered spontaneously to the call. After this meeting, an institution was born, called the ‘Comité des supporters du Casa’, with a temporary bureau. It is based in Dakar.

Most observers of Senegalese football agree that the supporters’ movement of the Casa Sport was the first one of the kind in Senegal – and it has become ritual in the football milieus in Senegal to lament the lack of supporters’ movement in Senegal since the demise of the Casa Sport. An ex-player of the late 1970s Casa Sport thus testifies in enthusiastic terms:

Then, there was an amazing spirit. So if you were told “Tomorrow, you will play versus the Casa”, you were in serious troubles. Because they were so well prepared. And there were all the fans, who followed everywhere. There was a mass movement, a phenomenon which people did not understand; even in Dakar, when the team came, , you knew they were there you would say “Here come the Casamançais”. (...) Now, there are supporters’ clubs in all teams of Senegal, but with the Casa, that was when it began. You play at 5 o’clock, all supporters are there at 12. You do not have that easily in Senegal, people have lunch, they drink ataaya [lengthily-cooked Senegalese black tea].

---

36 The Casa Sport was created in 1970, from the fusion between the Union sportive de Casamance, the Galia Club and the Foyer de la Casamance, three old évolutés' associations
37 Interview with an early supporter of the Casa Sport and leader of the Comité Allez Casa, Ziguinchor, 23 March 2000.
38 In Kelumak, 3, December 1981.
Casamance, it is not like that: at 12 o’clock, they are in the stadium. They had a committee and when the Senegalese team played, [i.e. the national football team] they would be called in.

This emergence came as a surprise, but there were good reasons why the supporters’ movement should have been so powerful among the Casamançais, and, more specifically, among the Diola migrants. Historically, the penetration of the practice of football in Senegal depended on the schools, Catholic and governmental, and as our research has made clear, Lower Casamance had had more than her share of schooling. As a result of that, the population of Lower Casamance had been massively socialised into football – from the 1960s onwards, in most rural areas of Lower Casamance, football competitions were taking place and rapidly uprooted traditional wrestling contests. Interested in football, the migrants from Lower Casamance were also numerous in Dakar, and were taken in rather strong networks of sociability. As soon as the team gained some publicity, with its 1979 victory, the migrants started to mobilise.

For all migrants, football matches offered a wonderful social occasion. For those migrants who had not been that successful in Dakar, football was also an appreciated way of expressing frustration. Sports have a noted capacity to symbolise social antagonisms, and for the marginalised Diola literati in Dakar, socialised to football as they were, the matches of the Casa Sport were the place for symbolic confrontation with the city and the state which were denying them so brutally their chances of social climbing; at times, these confrontations got not so symbolic, and there were repeated incidents between the Casamançais supporters and the security forces. The defeat of the Casa Sport in the final of the 1980 National Cup against the Jeanne d’Arc, Dakar’s most famous and oldest team, with the predictable charges of dubious refereeing, was the epitome of these violent demonstrations; Bocandé, the team’s star-player, hit the referee, and supporters clashed with the police forces; Bocandé was banned for life by the Senegalese Football Association. There were repeated incidents involving Casamançais supporters throughout 1980 and 1981, and Senegalese civilian referees decided in June 1981 that they should no longer umpire at Casamançais football matches – the state had to send in military referees.

---

39 Interview with an ex-player of the Casa Sport from 1978 to 1980, Dakar, 25 March 1997. At one point, the Comité Allez Casa even went to create a Club des dix mille, with a view to recruiting 10,000 supporters subscribing 10,000 francs.
Casa Sport never quite recovered from those incidents, but its epic played a major part in the constitution of MFDC separatism.

Indeed, the Casa Sport matches were for a while a venue for the expression of ‘traditional’ identities. An ex-player of the team describes this traditionalism:

The specificity of that team, it was that it was not the team of a group of people, but that of a whole region. Even adult women ["les mamans"] would come to the stadium. This team really was traditional. It was not a new kind of club, we lived in the purest Casamançais tradition. At times, when we entered the stadium, we would wear palm-leaves, to mean that we were from the Casamance. There was all the folklore, some were dressed as kings, all in red, women were clad in loincloths from head to foot.

Pictures of the stands confirm this evidence: men would come dressed up as palm-wine tappers, a gear identified clearly with Lower Casamance; others would wear palm-leaves; the women would have the indigo loincloths as well as pearl and cauri-necklaces usually worn for ritual ceremonies. The choirs and ballets (all female), the drumming bands of the associations de ressortissants would perform during the matches. The women would sing kanaleen songs, not written especially for football. Diola marabouts and animist spirit-shrines too would be mobilised for football matches.

Of course, in the course of this mobilisation, Casamançais traditions were modified and reinvented, both from below and from above. But tradition was making itself manifest – the songs, the tongues, the gear of Casamance were no longer a

---

40 Interview with an ex-player of the Casa Sport from 1975 to 1984, Ziguinchor, 26 January 1999. The Diola priest-kings wear a red cloak and a red Moroccan hat. The origin of this gear is not known. Some interviewees said that the cloak and hat had been given to the chiefs by the French, possibly in attempts to promote chiefdoms among the Diola. Observing that young initiates in Thionck-Essyl wore the same hats, De Jong (1999; 136, note 30), mentions Islam, the Lebanese traders and the tirailleurs sénégalais as possible influences.

41 Pictures of Casa Sport supporters: author’s private collection.

42 Since most Senegalese are Muslim, and (theoretically) abstain from drinking alcohol, the tapping of palm-wine is practised by Catholics and animists, and Lower Casamance has abundant forests of palm-trees – palm-wine tappers are identified by everyone as Casamançais. This identification may have to do with the fact that, as mentioned in Chapter II, the palm-trees in the Dakar peninsula have long attracted Diola palm-wine tappers, the last competent specialists in Senegal. Also, Lower Casamance is a known place for animist practices, which make an abundant use of palm-wine as an offering for libations – though some spirits have acquired a taste for pastis or imported red wine...

43 Tape of the Casa Sport’s supporters’ songs: author’s private collection. Jules-François Bocandé, the team’s star-player, got his own praise song, sung in the Diola-Karone dialect, “Bocandé Esamay”, a song which likened him to a panther.

44 “An event struck me, during the final for the cup. Three hours from the match, we were preparing. 86 villages from Casamance sent a contribution There were lots of bottles with medicene On each bottle, the name of the village So from 9 to 11, we were washing [with the content of the bottles], So I understood that we were not alone.” Interview with an ex-player of the Casa Sport from 1975 to 1984, Ziguinchor, 26 January 1999. The bottles contain decoctions prepared with magic herbs and/or the ink washed from Koranic tablets, which are in common use in Lower Casamance; the users are usually supposed to wash with those decoctions; both marabouts (i.e. Muslim priests) and spirit-shrine priests use this method.
symptom of the Casamançais underdevelopment: they now stood for victory, or even more, revenge against Dakar, the city that was proving so hard on so many of them; the despised female domestic, the jobless educated men, thanks to Bocandé and his fellow-players, all could feel pride and joy – a pride and joy intimately related to the existence of a Casamançais identity. The Casa Sport functioned as a powerful transmuter, turning individual frustrations into meaningful proto-national claims.  

The transmutation of individual experience

The episode of the Casa Sport (among others), broadcast as it was among the Diola communities throughout Senegal, functioned as a matrix for them to interpret their own situation: here was a successful team, coming from Casamance (with all the traditional gear it took); it was a very good team, and it had won in 1979 against a team from the North; but in 1980, soon after its first victory, because of the jealousy of the northerners, it had been robbed of the Cup. This mirrored the évolutés’ own situation: they were the deserving pupils of the Senegalese state: they had been educated to a rather good level; unlike the majority of the Senegalese or Dakarois population, they had degrees, they could speak French and read; their families had put a lot of effort and sacrifice into their schooling. And then, somehow, they ended up with nothing at all. To make things worse, even the kaw kaw and moodu moodu, the illiterate and boubou-wearing peasants from the Wolof hinterland were faring better, as actors of the developing urban informal niche.

Thus, rather than the play-out of deep sociological factors (the massive interest of the Diola for schools and the subsequent crisis of both school and state), many

45 Tozy makes a rather parallel point, insisting on the role of the repertoire of football in the mobilisation for the Front Islamique du Salut in Algeria: militants are supporters, siding with one team, rather than mere religious fundamentalists. Tozy quoted in Martinez (1998: 296, note 51). The role of football in the ethno-political mobilisations in former Yugoslavia is also well established; the infamous Serbian militia, Arkan’s Tigers were thus formed from one supporters’ club of the famous Belgrade football team, the Red Star; after the war, Arkan bought another Belgrade football team, that of Obilic. To take one last example, Corsican nationalism first went public during a Football Cup Final against Marseille in Paris, in 1972.

46 Most people accuse the referee. Some people also mention the betrayal of the team’s coach for mystical affairs, bought by a Wolof – in Senegal, mystical powers are a common explanation for extraordinary successes and failures: “We were betrayed mystically. It was a Diola woman, married to a Wolof, who came to tell us that she had seen our mystical adviser, Cheikh Badji, with her husband sussing these matters. For the sum of 250,000 francs. We kept it secret. But people wanted to know, they went to the sacred groves, and after a week, he [Cheikh Badji] was dead.” Interview with an ex-player of the Casa Sport from 1975 to 1984, Ziguinchor, 26 January 1999.

47 The ability to speak and to read French were still relatively quite rare in Senegal in the early 1980s, because of the dominance of Wolof and the weaknesses of rural schooling.
came to suspect a conspiracy – what else could explain that so many of them, who were well-educated (and often better educated than their older literate kin who had done well with comparatively little education) and should have had it relatively easy, were faced with such difficulties? A sense of insecurity and frustration was widespread among the Diola évolués established in Dakar. Out of these difficult social situations, stories of frustration emerged, countless episodes, recounted, commented, glossed over in conversations. So many of them were stuck in this trap, or knew others who were thus trapped; all were fearing they, or their dependents, would fall to it sooner or later. In Dakar, where hardships and frustrations were intense, all sorts of stories and episodes were progressively interpreted in terms of discrimination: just it had deprived the Casa of a fair victory, the conspiratorial northern state was accused of favouring the northerners systematically to the detriment of the Casamançais.

A holder of the brevet, Paul Tamba had come to Dakar in 1980 to take the state examinations, but he failed and was forced back to the village. His interpretation is clear – he was a victim of the networks of the northerners:

I took the exams for customs officers, for nurses, for schoolteachers. But it did not work out. The northerners, they always manage to put their own kin. In the offices, you see people who do not even know how to write. As for us, we do not have kin, so nobody can help.

In less violent tones, Soulèye Sambou tells a rather similar story, that of an unfair competition:

It was my headmaster who told me to come to Dakar. He was very fond of me, and he wanted me to become a schoolteacher. But here, it is so difficult. Even if you are a good student, hard-working, [if] you do not have the means, you do not stand a chance. And there are no scholarships. (...) For the people of Dakar, it is easy, they live there. But as for ourselves, even the best fail.

Thus, the individual histories of many Casamançais migrants, and particularly those of the évolués, who were engaged in more and more difficult pursuits, quickly took an archetypal character. Just like the Casa Sport, robbed of its victory by jealous and corrupt northerners, the Casamançais themselves were being victimised – these victimisations were increasingly interpreted in the light of the notion of a Casamançais identity, which was being spread at the time in the same milieus.

Paul Tamba thus insists that the cleavage between the northerners and the Casamançais is of a cultural nature.

48 Interview with Paul Tamba (alias), Thiaroye, October 1998.
49 Interview with Soulève Sambou (alias), Bignona, May 1996.
It is because we are Casamançais that they [the northerners] treat us like this. They think we are savages, that we have no civilisation. So they think we will not speak out. (...) But what is their civilisation? Stealing? Lying? Using mother insults? Sleep with girls and get them pregnant? It is no good.

Attempting to interpret what happened to them, many of the cheated pilgrims resorted to the then much glossed-about Casamançais or Diola traditions, which were conceived as radically different from those of north Senegal. Collective terms were increasingly used to make sense of personal failures. In a rather similar line, Saliou Sané, the head of a Ziguinchor-based NGO, thus ascribes the poverty of the Casamançais/Diola to their cultural lack of interest in money matters – and to the northerners’ cultural greediness:

When it was time to make money, the Casamançais did not do it, they left the others [go first]. If you look at the list of the best mishandlings of state funds, there will be no Casamançais, and if there is one, you will have to dig in: it is someone else. If you give a 10,000 Francs note to a Diola, you come back ten years later, he gives it back to you; you can even note the note number, it is the same. If you go to Dakar, you will find bana-bana [streetpeddlers] everywhere, they are not Casamançais. There is a Diola market at the harbour, but we sell what we produce ourselves. The northerners, they know money, they get around, but as for ourselves, it is only recently that we started to sell mangoes and oranges.

The notion of a Casamançais identity had been so thoroughly broadcast that even rather successful men could interpret certain episodes of their life in terms of a Casamançais identity. One example can be found in the case of Fulgence Sagna, who contributed three pieces to Kelumak. Fulgence Sagna was a rather well-off évoluté: he worked as an anthropologist at the Centre d’études des civilisations, a state research centre created by President Senghor for the study of African cultures, with a special interest in oral traditions. The first of Sagna’s piece in Kelumak was about the Diola calendar, a rather plain piece of ethnography; another dealt with the situation of forests in Casamance - Sagna denounced vehemently the planting of neem trees in Casamance, he insisted on the harmony between the Diola and their natural environment, and how this harmony was troubled by over-exploitation of forested areas, against which the state did nothing; he hinted at the corruption of the state’s forestry office, the Eaux et Forêts. Sagna’s third contribution was a letter of protest about a property of which he was being deprived. Most remarkable were the

---

30 Interview with Paul Tamba (alias), Thiaroye, March 1999.
31 Interview with Saliou Sané (alias), Ziguinchor, 30 January 1999.
32 To our knowledge, Fulgence Sagna has played no part in the MFDC mobilisation, and his connection to Esukolal was brief.
33 See Kelumak 4, April 1982 & 5, July 1982. Interestingly, Sagna’s article on the situation of forests in Casamance had been published two years before in Le Soleil, the Senegalese state newspaper. See Le Soleil, 20 November 1980.
terms in which the editors of Kelumak (then based in Dakar) interpreted Sagna’s resistance: “Fields, house, land to the joola are something untouchable. If you want to deprive him of these, it means death.” Curiously enough, the dispute which mobilised this proud reference to Diola culture and love of land was not over a rice-field in the village; the property was a house in a new district of Dakar, Liberté V, developed by the SICAP (Société Immobilière du Cap-Vert, a state-owned housing corporation) – and there was some cruel irony in that the house was being transferred to another Diola, a Mr Sané. Even in this curious context, the mobilisation of Diola identity (the love of land, a “known” feature of the Diola character) seemed to make sense.

Thus, towards the early 1980s, the individual experiences of hardship progressively coalesced, and were increasingly interpreted in terms of a Diola and/or Casamançais identity, systematically victimised by the state. The idea of a Diola identity had been around among the Diola community for some time, borne by the external traditionalisms, and re-appropriated through many diverse channels, but it had not yet acquired a political relevance – it was progressively used by many évolutés to make sense of their situation. Of all the Casamançais, it was the évolutés who were the most prone to using this notion of tradition, both because they had been most thoroughly exposed to it and because they were the most brutally affected by the crisis of the Senegalese state.

**A continuing ambiguity**

Kelumak’s arrival in Dakar was not a clear start for separatism. As we have seen above, in Paris already, Esukolal was not unequivocally separatist; it plunged its roots in a left-wing radicalism which did not necessarily entail Casamançais nationalism. In a like manner, the Dakar readership of Kelumak had mixed feelings – and among the Casamançais literati, the will and ability to integrate to Senegal had not altogether disappeared. Many literati still made it – in Dakar or elsewhere in north Senegal, they got wives, jobs and land.

A proper illustration of the awkward and ambiguous nature of Kelumak, in both its Paris and Dakar versions, can be found in two articles printed in the follow-up to a conference organised by Esukolal in Paris in January 1982 about “bindanism”, the domestic employment of the young Diola women as maids. Esukolal echoed of the then already old attempts by the évolutés to control female
migration, discussed in Chapter I. The Paris-written account of the conference denounced domestic employment, in a para-Marxist vocabulary, as the exploitation of the poor Casamançais female workers by the “politico-bureaucratic bourgeois”; there was no mention of Diola culture and its spirit of resistance - a further clue about how Esukolal was rooted in left-wing radicalism at least as much as in culturalism and traditionalism. In the same issue, another text, apparently a letter to the editor, touched on the same topic; but this piece was much less theoretical; it was clearly grounded in close local experience and contributed by a Dakar-based reader; it said little of the evil bourgeoisie, made a brief reference to the “life of quasi-slavery” of the migrant girls, and insisted on the ill-will displayed by the young girls, who seemed ready enough to put up with “quasi-slavery” and would rather go work in the cities and earn money to buy clothes, than stay in the villages. Interestingly, the accusation was not that they did not cultivate the rice-fields, for this was a worry for the 1950s and 1960s Catholic priests and administrators and early colonial elites, who feared the corruption and the collapse of rice-production which mass migration could produce. But Lower Casamance in the 1970s was not concerned by rice production, as perhaps were the economic planners of the Senegalese state; the 1970s Dakar contributor of Kelumak was no concerned administrator or Catholic missionary. His problem with female migration was that the migrants girls were not coming back to the village during the holidays and thus did not take part to the “activités de vacances” - the self-celebrating occasions which the young évolutés organised. The end of the article is most illuminating as to the way in which the 1970s évolutés perceived their sisters’ migratory practices – the author declared his hope that the girls would not find more excuses to go “tarnish [the Diola’s] good name in Dakar”. As his letter made clear, this contributor was thus on an integrative trajectory – he wanted to be a part of Senegal, and this was why a “good name” mattered. There was not an inch of rebellion in this contribution.

Many other letters addressed to the editor of Kelumak read the same way: if the notion of a Casamançais or Diola culture was thought relevant, many did not jump to separatist conclusions. Fulgence Sagna’s contributions to Kelumak were very loyalist indeed – he was keen on serving the Senegalese state, all he wanted was a decent house in Dakar; as for the neem trees, Sagna defended the relevance of

---

54 In Kelumak, 5, July 1982.
Diola forestry knowledge, and resented the state agents’ corrupt behaviour – but he had had the piece published in *Le Soleil* before, a sign which may be taken to mean that his unit of action was the Senegalese state, and that he had not lost all hope on the Senegalese state.

Casamançais nationalism was no less ambiguous in Dakar than among the Paris-based scholastic intellectuals of long-distance nationalism. Still, among the numerous Dakarois community of Diola évolués, the notion of Casamançais identity was gathering momentum. Its audience was broadening. But it still had not been stretched to a separatist stance. For this to happen, it took the tense political context of 1970s Ziguinchor.

**Times of trouble: legal politics in 1970s Ziguinchor**

In December 1982, and then again in December 1983, two demonstrations made public the existence of a separatist trend in Casamançais society. That Ziguinchor should have been the location for the two demonstrations that first gave the separatist project its publicity seems logical enough – where else than in the regional capital could the Casamançais separatists voice their demand? But Ziguinchor was not merely an empty stage on which the nationalist entrepreneurs put on their show. As we will see in the present section, deep political changes were affecting the whole of Senegal towards the end of the 1970s.

The idea that Senegal enjoys a degree of ‘political development’ higher than other African countries is very common, shared by both scholars and Senegalese citizens. As Coulon (1999) rightly recalls, the uniqueness of Senegal’s political history should not be overestimated. Still, as has been shown in Chapter III, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, more than most other African one-party states, Senegal had maintained a measure of (limited) democracy inside its single-party, the Parti Socialiste (PS), with internal competition between *tendances*. But towards the end of the 1970s, the political arena went through two profound changes, which will be presently discussed: first, the first legal opposition party, Abdoulaye Wade’s Parti Démocratique Sénégalais (PDS), was legalised in 1974. Second, Senghor organised for his departure, leaving Abdou Diouf, then a young technocrat, in charge. The rules of the political game were thus undergoing profound changes, and a substantial measure of uncertainty was introduced. All these factors contributed to the fall of Etienne Carvalho, the old Creole mayor.
The return to multiparty politics

The first legal opposition party, Abdoulaye Wade’s Parti Démocratique Sénégalais (PDS), created in 1974, ran for its first elections in 1978. Wade was building on a previous attempt by a group of Casamançais cadres, in the early 1970s, to gain official recognition from the Ministry of the Interior for their political group, called “Sunugal” (“our pirogue”, in Wolof). Most of these Casamançais literati hailed not from Lower Casamance, but from the town of Sédhiou, in Middle Casamance. These men later held four of the twelve positions in the original bureau of the PDS.

But it was not in Sédhiou that the PDS made its most significant inroads, but in Lower Casamance, where it probably benefited from the not-so-old PRA-S tradition, and from the exposure of the populations to urban influences through migration and schooling. Many young civil servants from Lower Casamance, like Ibrahima Amah Diémé, Albert Boissy or Marcel Bassène, joined the PDS and were active leaders. In the 1978 municipal and legislative elections, the PDS won over four communautés rurales and the commune of Oussouye, as well as the parliamentary seat for Oussouye. Still on the whole Lower Casamance seemed only marginally more responsive to the PDS than the rest of Senegal; the PDS never was a massive electoral power in the region – the 1978 electoral breakthrough in Oussouye actually had more to do with the PDS’ ability to rally a disgruntled PS big man, Laye Diop Diatta, than with the party’s appeal to the masses.

Whatever its actual strength, in Lower Casamance, the PDS was putting heavy pressure on the PS tendances; the tendances were increasingly challenged to prove that they could actually ‘represent’ the people; at the same time, PDS politicians were equally eager to mobilise and politicise local conflicts.

From Senghor to Diouf: the demise of the barons?

This pressure towards representation became all the stronger when President Senghor progressively organised his departure from power, installing his Prime Minister, Abdou Diouf, seconded by Jean Collin, a French colonial administrator

---

55 See Desouches (1983 : 25-26). Most prominent among these Casamançais leaders of the PDS were Famara Mané, a Ziguinchor-born high school teacher, and Ibrahima Khalil Cissé and Alassane Cissokho, education inspectors, who hailed from Middle Casamance. Interviews with Martin Mané, Ziguinchor, 20 March 2000 and Ibrahima Amah Diémé, Dakar, 30 March 2000.
who had taken the Senegalese nationality after independence and had become Senghor’s right-hand man. President Senghor finally left power in 1980, but Diouf had been in charge for some time already. Diouf was no ‘politician’, he was a bright bureaucrat, and he had had only limited contacts with the Socialist Party. Tension became high between the new ruler and the old Socialist ‘barons’ of the Senghor regime, many of whom thought they were the legitimate heirs to Senghor.

In lieu of the old schoolteachers-turned-political leaders, President Senghor and his prime minister Abdou Diouf started to promote a younger generation of higher-educated technocrats; owing to the old Senghorian need of representativity, all these young men were sent “à la base”. In Ziguinchor, it was Ben Mady Cissé, a young Casamançais technocrat without prior political experience, secretary of state for human development [Promotion humain] since 1975, who was sent looking for a constituency.

As it turned out, the fight often ended with a draw, the young technocrats allying themselves to the old feudatories, and turning into barons – again, in due time, the reciprocal assimilation of elites would work out. Still, for a time, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a clear sense of political indetermination inside the ruling party, and internal political competition was intense: in this new context, whoever could prove his ‘representativity’ – his capacity to mobilise significant portions of the party membership and/or the people – had a chance. This context brought about the fall of Etienne Carvalho, the Creole mayor.

The fall of Etienne Carvalho

In this uncertain context, the PS was thus increasingly sensitive to issues of representativity. The arrival of young technocrat Ben Mady Cissé in Ziguinchor finally opened the war of succession for Etienne Carvalho’s seat. Carvalho’s curriculum reads like that of the typical baron of Senghorian Senegal: he was born in

---

56 On these issues, see Diop and Diouf (1990).
57 Ben Mady Cissé was born in 1927. His father was a marabout from the Saloum, in north Senegal, who had come to Ziguinchor in the colonial era and had worked as a qadi at the tribunal for Muslim affairs in Ziguinchor; Cissé’s mother was a Diola from Mlomp-Cadjinolle. Interview with Ben Mady Cissé, Dakar, 25 July 2002.
58 Thus Robert Sagna, then a young technocrat imposed as a mayor of Ziguinchor by President Diouf in December 1984 as a way to transcend the fights between the local barons, finally formed an alliance with a number of men from the old guard of Emile Badiane, such as Abba Diatta, to strengthen his grip over Ziguinchor. Bassirou Cissé’s final reconciliation with Landing Sané, mentioned in Chapter III above, is another instance of such an assimilation.
1911, a member of the old Creole elite of Ziguinchor, the son of the ward chief of Ziguinchor’s central Santhiaba district. He had received primary education and worked as an accountant in a parastatal; he had taken part to the founding of the BDS section in Ziguinchor in 1950, and had been its secretary-general since then; he was one of Senghor’s first supporters in the region, and one of his personal friends. He had been a member of the Senegalese National Assembly since 1959, and he had seized the seat of mayor in a previous inter-tendances fight from Charles-Bernard Jules in 1966 59.

The game was a complex one, involving extremely unstable coalitions of Socialist tendances. One observer sums it up with remarkable economy:

At some point, Etienne wanted to get rid of Sy to the benefit of Ben Mady Cissé. Sy resisted the attempt and created his tendance. Sy called on Doudou Cissé and many other people to back him up. Since Doudou was better educated and headed the Labour Office [Direction du Travail], he financed the campaign, and thought he should be the mayor. But Sy did not accept. It was not about ideology, it was only about knowing who would be in charge. Doudou created his own tendance. Etienne who had been defeated allied to Doudou 60.

There were thus no less than three potential heirs to Carvalho: Ben Mady Cissé, already mentioned above, Doudou Cissé and Mamadou Ablaye Sy. Doudou Cissé was a young technocrat too, though not one as successful as Ben Mady Cissé. But he was already firmly anchored in Ziguinchor – his family, from north Senegal, had held the canton chiefship of the Bainunk in the colonial era, and he could thus rely on contacts among the Bainunk, who formed an important part of the Ziguinchorois population. As for Mamadou Abdoulaye Sy, he was born in Ziguinchor in 1938 from a Toucouleur immigrant and his Diola wife; he was no high-rising intellectual, a mere municipal agent and local political figure, who had been doing Carvalho’s footwork for years – he was actually Carvalho’s second in the municipal council: while Carvalho spent most of his time in Dakar, Sy was always in Ziguinchor, attending funerals and weddings, distributing hand-outs, listening to peoples’ queries, with a noted skill for this kind of politics 61. Competition was rife, and came to involve governor Mustapha Kane. Sy really looked like he was the less credible contender for the job, but he nevertheless won the day, and was given investiture by

---

59 For the founding of the BDS section in Ziguinchor, see Condition Humaine, 19 September 1950. On Carvalho, interview with Jacques Mendy (alias), Ziguinchor, 14 December 1998. Carvalho had seized the position of mayor from Charles-Bernard Jules.
60 Interview with Samba Sarr (alias), Ziguinchor, March 2000.
61 His activities have earned him the nickname of “Tangal” – sweets, candies in Wolof.
the Ziguinchor bureau of the PS in 1977 – a clear indication that it took some sort of contact with the population to succeed in Senegalese politics...

With the backing of some other local notabilities of the PS and the governor, Sy, the local man, won over most of the party sections, and the PS, despite Carvalho’s apparatchik position, had no choice but to endorse him and grant him investiture. This episode of Ziguinchorois politics, as well as being a testimony of the mode of political representation prevalent in Senegalese politics at the time, was also to play a major part in the development of Casamançais nationalism.

**Autochthony and political competition**

Multipartyism, the transition from Senghor to Diouf and the increase in political competition which they brought about affected Senegal as a whole. But there was something specific to Ziguinchor, something which modified the functioning of the political competition: the specific history of Ziguinchor, its Creole past, and the massive migration which the city attracted during the 1970s, from both rural Casamance and north Senegal, were key factors in a progressive emergence of autochthony as a legitimate theme in legal politics.

When the famed ‘third wave’ of democratisation hit the African shores in the early 1990s, it was accompanied by a noted emergence of issues of autochthony on the African political scene, Ivory Coast and the debate surrounding the nationality of presidential candidate Alassane Ouattara being the most spectacular example. It came to some as a surprise that a good thing (liberal political competition) should come along with a bad one (communalism), but in retrospect, it all seems logical enough: as Bayart, Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2001) note, if voting, at last, is made to matter, it is only normal that who has a right to vote and to be elected should become a crucial issue. To observers of Casamançais politics, this should not have

---

62 “The third wave” is the title of Samuel Huntington’s 1991 book on democratisation. For other examples of African linkages between democratisation and autochthony, see Bayart, Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2001). The Gambia, Senegal’s small neighbour, was not spared this new style of politics. The citizenship of Sanna Manneh, the mayor of Banjul, was thus put in doubt by political opponents. On this point, see The Daily Observer (Banjul), September 7, 2001. During the 2002 Gambian presidential elections, there were repeated rumours that the government was using Senegalese immigrants (and particularly Casamançais refugees) as an electoral backup force. See for instance The Independent (Banjul), November 2, 2001.

63 Apart from the African context, a connection between these two elements seems quite unexceptional. At its origin, during the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, nationalism was very much tied to the principle of the sovereignty of the people: against the will of cosmopolite dynasts, whose power was founded on individual allegiances and/or the will of
been a surprise: it was precisely in the context of Senegal’s early political liberalisation that autochthony had become a feature of Ziguinchorois politics. It is this developing trend in the 1970s and early 1980s ‘legal’ (as opposed to secessionist) politics, and its contribution to MFDC secessionism, that we will now discuss.

Ziguinchor: a city of migrants

During the 1970s and early 1980s, while most secondary towns in Senegal were growing slowly if at all, Ziguinchor expanded quickly as a result of mass immigration. Between the two censuses of 1976 and 1988, the population of the commune of Ziguinchor grew from 69,646 to 123,522 – a yearly growth of 4.9 per cent, a rate higher than that of Dakar and the highest in Senegal if one sets aside the very specific cases of the cities of Fatick (6.1 per cent) and Kolda (5.7): those two cities had then just been upgraded to the status of regional capitals and had for some time a rather artificial growth. Over the same period, the growth rate in the region of Ziguinchor as a whole was only 2.6 per cent. This sustained urban growth was fed by internal migration from rural Lower Casamance, as well as by immigration from northern Senegal (including Casamançais returning from Dakar), Guinea-Bissau and Guinea-Conakry, which were intense during the 1970s.

Internal migration from rural Lower Casamance has been discussed in Chapter I above. As for the migration from northern Senegal, its reasons are well-known – the drought in the Sahel, the attractiveness of Casamance and its good rainfall, and

---

God, democrats and republicans of all sorts opposed the will of the people – people whose embeddedness in specific histories and cultures provided the sense of community and the capacity for collective action necessary to rebel against despotism. The spate of revolutions that set Europe ablaze in 1848 was simultaneously liberal and nationalist. Anderson (1991) suggests this initial connection has been ‘neglected’ by European social science as a result of the reactionary or fascist nationalist experiences of the late nineteenth and twentieth century.

As shall be seen, the debate at the time did not revolve around the legalities of registering and voting – these are contemporary issues, in a context where institutional features of democracy have become central aspects of the debate around political representation; in 1970s Ziguinchor, the crux of the matter was rather more directly centred on who should exert political control. But institutional features of intra-party politics did play a part in Ziguinchorois politics. Bourama Faye Badji, an associate of the Socialist tendance A (and later of the MFDC), argued for instance that it took tendance A’s insistence on a proper process for party elections to defeat tendance B. Interview with Bourama Faye Badji, Ziguinchor, 31 January 1999.

Fatick and Kolda were the only new cities to recognised as regional capital cities following the 1984 administrative reform; this upgrade of administrative status was a major cause for urban growth. Figures are taken from République du Sénégal (1992 : 55) and République du Sénégal (1993 : 46).

The war of independence in Portuguese Guinea, which lasted from 1963 to 1973, and the persistent economic and political troubles in independent Guinea Bissau were major factors for migration.
the hopes of development in the region – tourism, the fishing industry, the orchards of mango trees. Actually it was not the drought itself that stirred migration from north Senegal, but the ensuing crisis of the rural economy there: the migrants were usually not agriculturists in search of land, but retailers and craftsmen. Their interest in the region had a lot to do with the immense hopes raised by the state’s voluntaristic developmental policy in Casamance and the old myth of the ‘rice granary’.

As a result of this migration, Ziguinchor grew and became increasingly cosmopolitan; 1980s figures for the commune of Ziguinchor are not available, but data for the department of Ziguinchor, which includes the commune and a few arrondissements in the 1988 census are clear: its resident Senegalese population (170,210 people) was officially composed of 34.5 per cent Diola, 14.4 per cent Manding, 13.5 per cent Pulaar, 8.2 per cent Wolof, 7.5 per cent Manjak, 5.6 per cent Mancagne, 4.8 per cent Balant, 3.4 per cent Serer; at the same date, the two other departments in the region of Ziguinchor, those of Bignona and Oussouye, had a population more than 80 per cent Diola. Unlike most other secondary cities in Senegal, Ziguinchor thus attracted many migrants, and this gave local politics a particular tone.

Migrants in politics: an African Tammany Hall

These newcomers were often fragile and in search of patrons; they had little or no involvement in the local political cleavages. At a time when politics was getting more and more competitive, they could easily be placated with some land and benevolent administrative tutelage, in return for political fidelity – a classical feature in areas with high immigration, exemplified by the case of the role of Tammany Hall, the Democrats’ political machine for the Irish immigrants in late nineteenth century New York.

In fact, this had been the key to the victory of Mamadou Abdoulaye Sy in 1977. Contrary to Etienne Carvalho, the absentee Creole mayor familiar mostly with the

---

67 Figures quoted from République du Sénégal (1992: 21). Even if they are posterior to the first outbreaks of MFDC activism, these 1988 figures are still appropriate – the reversal of migratory trends and the emigration of northern migrants established in Casamance dates from the 1990s, with the beginning of the guerrilla war.

68 Though there is no mechanical link between massive immigration and the emergence of the autochthony debate, it seems only logical to presume that significant immigration is a pre-condition for issues of autochthony to emerge – Ivory Coast being a case in point. Democratisation is the other component.
central districts of town, Sy and his tendance had the skill to organise and control PS sections in the developing peripheral districts where the recent migrant communities had settled. The implementation of the *loi sur le domaine national*, which was under way in Casamance from the mid-1970s, provided Momodou Abdoulaye Sy and his allies in politics and the civil service with a powerful leverage for patronage in the development and strengthening of their grasp over the new migrants. Eichelsheim (1991) documents the role of Cherif Mohammed Kounta, a civil servant and local PS leader, who hailed from a Mauritanian maraboutic family long-established in Casamance: with the new land laws, Kounta could act as the landlord of his district of Lyndiane, allocating land, raising funds and creating networks of dependents for Sy’s faction of the PS.

Like all clientelistic systems, Sy’s own Tammany Hall could not integrate every one, and stirred organised reactions among the people who were being expropriated from their land. In the district of Kadio, the development of a hotel met with a decided opposition led by Albert Boissy, a Mancagne civil servant who was also a local leader of the PDS. Other districts of Ziguinchor (Tilène and Lyndiane) were also affected, and several future MFDC activists, victims of these land spoliation, were actively engaged in mobilisation around Boissy – Simon Malou, Ansoumana Abba Bodian, Sanoune Bodian, Edmond Bora; most of these men got close to the PDS, hoping to find there some assistance.

In retrospect, this phase of Ziguinchorois politics is usually described as one of the absolute dominance of immigrants from north Senegal over ‘autochthonous’ populations: an unholy alliance of north Senegalese politicians, backed by their ethnic kinsmen in the civil service, in business and in the Muslim brotherhoods, is supposed to have put Ziguinchor at their will. There is undoubtedly an element of truth in this description, but the process was a lot more complex: in 1970s Ziguinchor, many Diola were not quite autochthonous; just like the northerners, and at times more than them, they were recently arrived, and Sy did develop his clientele among them too. Sy’s mother was a Diola, and he himself was no stranger to the

---

69 On land issues in Ziguinchor, see Hesseling (1986, 1990, 1992 and 1994) and Eichelsheim (1991). The implementation of the land laws, combined as they were with the development of tourism in Casamance, also provided for personal enrichment of a portion of the PS.

70 On the 18th of December 1983, Kounta, who was known as a government’s informer, was abducted and murdered by the separatists-in-the-making.

71 Interview with Albert Boissy, Ziguinchor, 28 February 2000. See also an interview of Ansoumana Abba Bodian in *Andè Sopi*, 4, September 1977.
Diolas; he could rely on the support of some important Diola notables, such as Ibrahima Coly, a former canton chief, Séna Tamba, or Sanoune Bodian, a schoolteacher who was playing a key part in popular resistance to land spoliation and who subsequently became a prominent member of the MFDC. There is little doubt that Sy did favour some of his fellow Toucouleur, but his patronage did extend far beyond the Toucouleur community, to include many other immigrants, among which the Diola were not last – otherwise, he would not have been able to win against Carvalho.

The Creoles strike back

This Ziguinchorois Tammany Hall stirred outrage among the Ziguinchor Creoles. The Creoles, who had not been able to lead the political enfranchisement of the whole of Casamance, had nevertheless preserved their control over the arena of Ziguinchor. The demise of Carvalho and the land disputes which Sy’s patronage activities stirred led them to react.

The Creoles’ first reaction dates from 1977, a few months before Sy’s final triumph for the investiture: President Senghor was presented with a “memorandum de la communauté créole-bainunk”. It was a four-column petition, a plea for presidential intervention against abusive expropriations by the governor Mustapha Kane, then considered as an associate of Sy; the petition also denounced the governor’s disdain for Etienne Carvalho, still a mayor then, whom the signatories considered their man.

The general rhetoric of the memorandum illustrates the emergence of autochthony as a theme in 1970s Ziguinchorois politics. The text is signed by forty-six old men and women, with mention of their date of birth: the youngest signatory was born in 1918 and the oldest one in 1885, a year prior to the French take-over of Ziguinchor from the Portuguese – a clear affirmation of Ziguinchor’s Portuguese past. Most patronyms indicate Creole Portuguese ascendancy; all the first names but

---

72 “Sanoune was in the PS with Sy. Sy recruited him, because Sanoune was in the land issues, and Sy needed backing. And Sanoune was a schoolteacher, and he could be useful, he had an ‘elocution’ [rhetorical skills]... He was a good element to recruit...” Interview with Nkrumah Sané, Paris, 26 December 2001.

73 It could actually be argued that Sy favoured some of his clients not as Toucouleur, but as relatives; it seems logical enough that he should have had more relatives (and persons of trust) among the Toucouleur than among other ethnies. A portion of what passes for (and is perceived as) ethnic politics in Africa may actually be little more than (extended) family business...

74 This text was reprinted in one of the MFDC’s papers, La Voix de la Casamance, 45, 1994.
two are Christian. The point being made is transparent enough: it is all about historical pre-eminence – the community “that has founded Ziguinchor” cannot be dealt with in this way by newcomers.

But there is something else to the memorandum, an intriguing ethno-cultural twist: the memorandum is formulated in the name of the “Creole-Bainunk community”. The Bainunk are considered, by both local people and social scientists, to be the “aboriginal” population of most of Lower Casamance, a population progressively superseded and merged into the Diola, when the latter started to migrate to Lower Casamance, around the seventeenth century, from what is presently Guinea-Bissau; Bainunk identity has been maintained to this day only in some small pockets, particularly around Ziguinchor. Most of the so-called Creoles of Ziguinchor are believed to be Portuguese-Bainunk Mestizos. But while, in the colonial period, the Creoles of Ziguinchor would insist they were Creoles and emphasise their prolonged contacts with “Civilisation” and their European descent, thus laying a claim to assimilation to European culture and French citizenship, it is revealing that in Senghor’s post-colonial Senegal, they should add to their Creole denomination a distinctly African ethnonym: in an independent African country, and even more so in the country of négritude, it was felt necessary to make a claim to some African authenticity. Reference to Bainunk-ness was all the more significant in the context of 1970s Ziguinchor, as it allowed a distinction between the supposedly autochthonous Creole-Bainunk and the supposedly allochthonous Diola – precisely those immigrants who were pouring into Ziguinchor at the time, some of whom Sy and the governor recruited with gifts of land.

Other elements in the memorandum confirm the shift towards autochthony in the political rhetoric, such as the quasi-ethnological evocation of a cultural attachment to the land, and particularly rice-fields: “ricefields, to the eyes of those who know nothing in rice-cultivation, may look like abandoned lands, but to our own eyes, it is for the time being the most precious heirloom our ancestors left us”.

This evocation is a classical feature of research on the ethnic groups of the Rivières. African authenticity, or its absence, had already played a part in the coming to power of Etienne Carvalho, who took over in 1966 from the previous mayor, Charles-Bernard Jules, a Franco-Creole Mestizo – many interviewees ascribed Jules’ defeat to the fact that he and his wife insisted haughtily on their French ascendancy and higher degree of civilisation. This circulation of power is exemplified by the geography of Ziguinchor: municipal power has shifted from Jules and the Escale, the French district, to Etienne Carvalho and Santhiaba, the old ‘African’ district, and then to Mamadou Abdoulaye Sy and the recent suburbs of Néma, Kandé, Kandialan and Kénia... For a map of Ziguinchor, see Appendix IV.
du Sud, an old French colonial geographical denomination which included both the Diola and the Bainunk: in his work on Senegambian agricultural practices, Pélissier (1966) proposed the notion of “civilisation of the rice” to qualify the ethnic groups of the Rivières du Sud with their complex rice-cultivation methods, and both he and Thomas (1958-1959; 1963) insisted on the Diola’s attachment to land. Thus the idea of a specific communal tradition, of its political meaningfulness, and the necessity for it to have a political expression (Etienne Carvalho, the man of the Creole-Bainunk, ought to be paid respect by the governor) were becoming increasingly legitimate.

Still these Creole-Bainunk claims were ambiguous. Land issues hid little of political claims, claims about political representation and historical (and social, and maybe even, in a discreet way, racial) pre-eminence. And communalist as it may be, the Creole-Bainunk claim was clearly not a Casamançais separatism, for it considered the migrant Diola as part of the problem, and the Senegalese state as part of the solution. The first political traditionalism to emerge in Casamance thus was a non-separatist Ziguinchorois Creole traditionalism. It was a last and desperate bid for political eminence on the part of a formerly powerful community. But there is little doubt that it fed easily into Casamançais separatism, dependent as it was on the complex set of cultures belonging to the Rivières du Sud rather than on anything strictly Creole.

A slip of the tongue: from Creole localism to Casamançais autochthony

After Sy’s victory over Carvalho, there were other such Creole counter-attacks. The activities of one such association, the COCARZI (Comité pour le Carnaval de Ziguinchor), will provide a good illustration of the ambiguities of the Creole-Bainunk politico-cultural project, and how it could slip into (or merge with) a Diola-Casamançais identity. The COCARZI had started off in 1979. It was based in Dakar, presided over by a wealthy Franco-Creole Mestizo, Adrien Huchard, and included the elite of the patrician Creole families of Ziguinchor. The primary objective, as the name of the association indicates, was to organise a carnival – but

---

76 Interview with Thérèse King, Ziguinchor, 7 August 1999. See also Le Soleil 19 August 1980, 17 November 1980 and 15 December 1980. One more such association, the COREZI, Comité pour la Rénovation de Ziguinchor, was created in October 1979. See Le Soleil, 11 April 1980; its leading figures where all Creoles – Pedro Gomis, Louis Preira de Carvalho, Anna Arcens, Simon and Tony Bareto. The COREZI engaged in local development projects.
the COCARZI also engaged in other activities. It organised social and cultural events in both Dakar and Ziguinchor. Thus, it mounted an exhibition of “Casamançais artists” in Dakar, for fund-raising. It organised parties, recruiting the Dakar-based dance companies of Diola ressortissants; it is typical enough that the Creole had to recruit among the Diola – only the latter had the picturesque dances, which probably included Bainunk elements, while the quasi-extinct Bainunk tradition of Creole Ziguinchor could not provide the dancing youths it took to make shows of négritude...

In December 1979, the COCARZI staged the first carnival of Ziguinchor, in the presence of Adrien Huchard and three ministers, including Assane Seck, a Casamançais big man, then minister for Culture. Father Diamacoune, who would be shortly revealed as an inspirer of the Casamançais separatist movement, also took part. And when Diamacoune gave his famous 1980 Dakar speech on Alinsitowe Jatta, an anti-colonial prophetess, it was the COCARZI which convened the event... Father Diamacoune was a local cultural activist. Born in Senghalène, near Oussouye, in 1928, he had been educated at the mission of Oussouye and at the séminaires of Carabane and Faladio; he was ordained a priest in 1956. During the 1970s, he had taken part to the Diola traditionalist awakening – he ran two broadcasts on the regional radio, one on the history of the Church in Casamance (Foi et patriotisme), and another one for the youths (Papa Kaoulempy).

In his 1980 speech, Father Diamacoune hid little of his dislike for Senegal. He insisted on the historical specificity of Casamance (and particularly of the Diola portion of it), on the region’s long history of resistance; he denounced Senegalese immigrants from the north as cowards and lackeys of the colonial power, and deplored the continuing unjust treatment of Casamance. This kind of speech undoubtedly appealed to the Creole politico-cultural entrepreneurs, its mixture of culturalism, resentment and a defence of Catholicism echoing their own worries. It is no surprise that they should have asked Diamacoune over to Dakar. But Diamacoune talked consistently about Casamance as a fully-fledged country on its own, distinct from Senegal, and called for a radical change. Diamacoune (1980 ; 62) set three aims to the present Casamançais: “Show ourselves deign of our Ancestors in qualities and

77 It is telling of its Creole rootedness that this association should have chosen to promote a Carnaval – a feature typical of Latin cultures.

78 The groups mentioned include Forces unies de Batine, Jeunesse cordiale de Bagaya, Suelle, Thionck-Essyl, Bougarabou, Forêt sacrée, le Fogny.
virtues; Keep to Casamance its everlasting Reality, its moral and physical entity and identity; Haste any process which would bring Casamance to fully and definitely become its own self, in all points of view.” The last sentence could barely be mistaken... Diamacoune formulated his thoughts with so little double entendre that Huchard, the president of the COCARZI, felt the trouble 79: the xeroxed transcript of Diamacoune’s speech includes a short introduction by Huchard himself, a note that insists on the Senegalese inscription of the whole enterprise, through a mention and a quote from President Senghor (“Nous enraciner et nous ouvrir”) and a statement that “Alinsiitowe [Aline Sitoë] is to some a taboo; to us, it is a historical subject which should figure in the history museum of our Senegal.” Still, it is illustrative of the ambiguities of the day – and the progressive constitution of Casamançais nationalism - that such an elite association as the COCARZI could organise such an event - and that it could be organised in Dakar 80.

**Casamançais autochthony in legal politics**

In 1970s Ziguinchor, the claims of the Creoles were politically doomed: the demographic trends were too overpowering for them to retain much political weight against the massive migration from both rural Casamance and north Senegal. But the idea of autochthony was emerging, with both force and ambiguity: who was a Creole-Bainunk? who was a Diola? who was a Casamançais? Diola identity was an altogether more promising line. Rural Diolas were pouring into Ziguinchor at the time. While the COCARZI was little more than a nostalgic and expensive last-ditch attempt by a smallish Creole elite that had largely deserted Ziguinchor for Dakar, the Diola elite emerged on the Ziguinchorois arena: Karambenoor, a pan-Diola elite association was created in 1979 – the idea of a Casamançais and/or Diola autochthonous tradition was finally making it into the realm of legal politics.

---

79 Huchard was not the only one to sense the danger. An account of the conference in Le Soleil, the Senegalese state newspaper, thus mentioned that “Several participants have insisted that Aline Sitoë was a heroin just like Lat-Dior, Maba Diakhou, Alboury, El Hadj Oumar, Lamine Senghor [typical Senegalese ‘national’ heroes], and that she fully deserved to see her name in schoolbooks. They have also demonstrated that her message concerned all Senegalese women, and indeed, all the Senegalese. Thus Aline Sitoë does not belong only to the Diola or the Casamançais, but to the whole of Senegal.” This precision is a clear proof that the audience had not missed Diamacoune’s line... In Le Soleil, 26 August 1980.

80 Huchard and the COCARZI were in touch with another major source of Casamançais proto-separatism: the Paris-based Diola association Esukolal. Esukolal, and more exactly Momodou Sané Nkrumah, a future leader of the MFDC, broadcast in France the tape of the Carnaval. See Kelumak 3, December 1981. On Esukolal, see above.
Contrary to the COCARZI, Karambenoor was created in Ziguinchor, not in Dakar. It did not rely on major *cadres*, but rather on local elites, ex-canton chiefs, schoolteachers, nurses, mid-level civil servants – all were influential members of their communities, and traditional partners of the state, and had a measure of leverage on both the state and the population. Created in 1979, at the height of local political competition, Karambenoor was, to a large extent, an example of the legal regionalism typical of post-colonial Senegal. It was led by the local political elites and it drew a lot (including a number of members) from other regional elite associations of the 1950s and 1960s, such as the Association pour la Défense des Intérêts de Bignona (ADIB) \(^{81}\). But under the control of the local elites, Karambenoor mixed this traditional legal regionalism with emerging trends – that of Creole autochthonism and that of Diola culturalism. The choice of the name is typical: like the Diola community in France, that had replaced the ARSF with Esukolal, the founders of Karambenoor did not go for a bureaucratic-sounding French acronym, as they would have done twenty years before, but for a Diola word – Karambenoor means “mutual assistance”.

Karambenoor was promoting almost explicitly a pan-Diola representation of interests: the stated goals of the association were to “- unite all natives of the Fogny, Blouf, Bainounck, Bandial, Bayotte and Cassa [the various Diola sub-groups], and create between them links of agreement, solidarity and brotherhood; - serve the cause of the Senegalese Nation” \(^{82}\). This last statement was a due paid to the state, and its paranoia against all forms of regional or ethnic associations – but Karambenoor was unmistakably conceived as a Diola movement, in a context where the idea of a Diola tradition was stronger and stronger and where the Diola, a growing portion of the population of Ziguinchor, were becoming a major electoral resource for aspiring politicians.

Like the COCARZI and other elite associations, Karambenoor practised classical patronage, raising funds for health facilities or development projects. But it also came to play a major part in the resolution of land disputes that arose from the rapid growth of Ziguinchor. In the early 1980s, Moussa Ndoye, the new governor of

---

\(^{81}\) The president of the ADIB was Ibrahima Coly, an ex-canton chief, who was also the president of Karambenoor from 1979 to 1987. Interview with Abba Diatta, Ziguinchor, 5 December 1998.

Ziguinchor, was at a loss how to sort out the land disputes that were multiplying with the patronage practiced by his predecessors and Mamadou Abdoulaye Sy; it became an issue of public order. The new governor thus resorted to the classical tactics of Senegalese power: the integration of anyone who seemed to have any sort of legitimacy. Karambenoor, as an association of ‘autochthonous’ (and almost explicitly Diola) local notabilities, thus became a major player in the commission that dealt with the land disputes. Karambenoor seemed politically easy to integrate and control, as it included Diola politicians from the various tendances of the Socialist Party – an almost natural proxy for the Senegalese state. Karambenoor started to intervene in February 1982, ten months before the first separatist demonstration took place in Ziguinchor. Members of the association investigated thousands of cases of land attribution, trying to foster negotiated settlements between the contestants, with variable success. No matter the actual settlement of land disputes, the decision to rely on an association that represented in a quasi-explicit manner the Diola was not devoid of political consequences. The authorities of Ziguinchor were thus accepting the idea that the Diola at large (and not only the Creole-Bainunk) were indeed the autochthonous population of Ziguinchor (and perhaps even of Casamance at large), and that an association which claimed to represent their interests had a legitimate say in the allocation of land.

But the emergence of Diola autochthony was not limited to the realm of public administration – this new force also entered politics. Doudou Cissé refused Sy’s victory, and organised his own faction, the tendance A, to oppose Sy, who formed a tendance B. Tendance A mobilised the themes of the Creoles - Sy’s allochthony and his supposed preference for his ‘ethnic kin’, the Toucouleur – but made an increasing use of a broadened reference to Casamançais autochthony. As Ben Mady Cissé, Sy’s unfortunate former opponent, notes, “in Ziguinchor, people started to ask that the town be run by autochtons. Doudou Cissé was with them. At the time, people said ‘autochton’, one did not say ‘Diola’ yet. At some point, a Diola trend emerged among these people 84. Lobbies of Diola notables were forming in Ziguinchor, around such leaders as Abba Diatta and Mame Bourama Coly. These notables were divided by factional tensions which corresponded more or less to those of the PS tendances, and there was no united Diola voice, but the key point is that in

83 See Eichelsheim (n.d.).
84 Interview with Ben Mady Cissé, Dakar, 25 July 2002.
Ziguinchor, the repertoire of autochthony (Diola and/or Casamançais) was more and more widely used, by the politicians, the notables and the state authorities alike. Related as it was to political representation and to disputes over land, a resource that was very important in a context of rapid urban growth, autochthony was thus becoming more and more ‘real’ for all the Ziguinchorois.

**An urban popular culture of dissent**

Commenting on the context of late 1970s and early 1980s Ziguinchor, we have thus far mentioned mostly local elite politics – how the government and party elites interacted, and how their interaction resulted in an increasing use of the idea of Casamançais/Diola autochthony in the political field. But things were also happening ‘below’, events that were not always related to the idea of a Diola identity but that nevertheless played a part in the subsequent constitution of a Casamançais separatist movement. Those events contributed some important elements to the political repertoires in Ziguinchor.

**A students’ challenge: the strike of lycée Djignabo**

In December 1979, the students of the lycée Djignabo in Ziguinchor went on strike. Students’ strikes are a classical feature of Senegalese public life, and except for its rather high degree of violence, this one could have easily been forgotten if it had not provided the MFDC with a series of assets – the habit of mass demonstration, some leaders (Daniel Malou), and a meeting place. Father Diamacoune himself, leader-to-be of the MFDC, played a noted part in the event.

Like most students’ strikes in Senegal, the Djignabo strike had started around financial matters – the symptoms of the financial crisis of the Senegalese state and its incapacity to cater for the aspiring pilgrims were being felt strongly in Ziguinchor. The arrogant attitude of the headmaster, M. Sow ‘London’, an ex-English teacher, and the strict dress codes he was trying to impose on both students and staff, fueled the tension – he had antagonised a portion of his younger staff, close to the students.

---

and often sympathetic to the renascent semi-clandestine leftist parties and trade unions (most specifically Cheikh Anta Diop’s RND and the SUDES).

Towards mid-December 1979 the students thus went on strike, to demand the departure of the headmaster. The local educational and political authorities refuse to abide, undoubtedly infuriated by the suspected manipulation of the strike by the local leftists; at one point, three teachers and SUDES members were abducted and beaten up by adversaries to the strike – probably men sent by the then mayor, Momodou Abdoulaye Sy. The strike got increasingly violent. On the 21st of December the students ransacked the headmaster’s quarters; later, the house of Mamadou Abdoulaye Sy, the mayor, was set on fire. Some of the leaders of the strike, wanted by the police, took up residence in a bush area in the southeast of Ziguinchor, near the airport (“derrière l’Aviation”). After the Christmas holidays the strike resumed, and violence heightened. On the 11th of January 1980, a young student, Idrissa Sagna, was shot dead by the security forces during a demonstration; two other students were badly wounded. On the 14th of January 1980, the high schools in Dakar joined in the strike, followed by the University of Dakar on the 17th. In the meantime, the women of Ziguinchor under the guidance of the Usana religious associations (see below), got together and put increasing pressure on the local authorities. Finally, with the women and the central government pressing for an agreement, the imprisoned students were released, headmaster Sow was evacuated by plane. The leaders of the strike and the regional authorities met on the 19th. A committee of six students was sent up to northern Senegal to appease the students who had just joined. On the 21st of January, with a new headmaster, class resumed. The students had won an unequivocal victory.

It is often thought that the strike was the first major conflict in which a northerner/Casamançais cleavage came to play. M. Sow hailed from north Senegal, and most students in Djignabo (but by no means all of them) were from Casamance. But M. Sow’s origin was almost never mentioned in retrospective interviews with participants in the strike or its repression, and it seems it never was a

86 The abductions took place on the 6th of January 1980. Among the teachers abducted was Nouha Cissé, a history teacher and political activist who subsequently became headmaster of lycée Djignabo.
87 See for instance Diouf (1994: 127-128). Darbon (1988: 186) sees the lycée strike as an instance of the growing restlessness among the Diola; there is no evidence that the mobilisation of the lycéens functioned along ethnic lines.
point of contention. In fact, at the time, the accusations flew the other way round: Andë Sopi, the RND’s paper, accused Mamadou Abdoulaye Sy, the half-Diola, half-Toucouleur mayor of Ziguinchor, of playing on regionalist feelings against SUDES members. The issue was in fact not seen as a regional one, as is confirmed by the participation of other students’ unions throughout Senegal in the protest after the death of Idrissa Sagna. The strike did not depend on the northerner/Casamançais cleavage. The aspirations of the young pilgrims of the Senegalese state did not have to borrow the language of Casamançais identity – the students’ identity as a generational group, with blue jeans and radical left-wing politics, seemed sufficient. Nevertheless the strike was a landmark in the history of Ziguinchorois politics as a successful instance of a new kind of politics. Indeed the events showed that a local political mobilisation uncontrolled by the established PS elites, and a mobilisation that did not shy from violence could, to a substantial degree, be successful; the strike was thus a major counter-hegemonic event, which gave to many Casamançais a new sense of political freedom. Though it did not build on the idea of a Casamançais identity, the strike undoubtedly set a precedent that played a part in the emergence of the very idea of a Casamançais separatism; this proved particularly true for the first two separatist demonstrations, which borrowed directly some elements from the lycée strike. Another element which the lycée strike contributed was the intervention of the Usana.

**The Usana: a female counter-hegemonic power**

In late 1970s Ziguinchor, there was another counter-hegemonic force that the lycée strike brought into light, that of the Usana, female Diola religious groups. From the 1920s onwards, the growth of the Diola population of Ziguinchor had led to the creation of a number of animist religious associations of women from certain Diola communities around a spirit-shrine. Those associations are usually called Usana, the

---

88 Interestingly, the only people who insisted on M. Sow’s origin during interviews were the ones that were the least closely connected to the strike – they have adopted the retrospective approach which sees the strike as a forerunner to separatism, fully reinterpreting the strike to make it match the later events. As we shall see, our own understanding is that whilst the strike did contribute something to the political climate in early 1980s Ziguinchor, it had nothing to do with the northerner/Casamançais cleavage.

89 See Andë Sopi, January 1980.
Diola name of the silk-cotton trees which shelters the spirit-shrine around which the first such group met, Usana Kasa, in Nyefoulène.\(^{90}\)

As one male observer (and practitioner, as a politician) of the Usana notes, the Usana are strongly organised, groups of women placed under the leadership of one of the women, usually an elder with known mystical powers, who acts as the priest to the shrine:

The Usana are not democratic, they are traditional, they regroup the old people, the oldest women, or those who have supernatural powers. The associations are something different, they function by village affinity, they have an economic finality, they are more modern than the Usana. For the Usana, one has to be an old women, fifty years at least.\(^{91}\)

The women who gather in a Usana usually hail from the same village or region and as in the village associations, the women (or, more exactly, those who have given birth and are thus considered ‘true’ women) are organised in age groups. Just like in village associations, spirit-shrines provide major social occasions. More importantly, the shrines provide ways to deal with both individual and collective hardship: anyone can come to the shrine, bringing offerings, and ask the women to perform rituals in their favour; women then gather at the shrine to pray and sing, and perform sacrifices and have a feast at the site of the Usana. In the worst collective hardship (plagues, drought), the women of the Usana organise prolonged prayers at their shrines, and then form a procession to the place of hardship. There they engage in a mystical fight with the evil spirits – in some occasions, many Usana may join forces, and many more women assemble and join the servants of the spirit-shrines.

Agnès Bassène thus describes one such intervention against drought in Kandialang, a suburb of Ziguinchor:

In Djibock, these is a Usana; it is behind Hotel Diola. In case of a disease for which there is no medical explanation, all women decide on a day. They all have a loincloth, and calabashes. The whole area is invaded. They go to the place of the epidemics, and they find its cause. Sometimes, they even dig up strange things, live cats for instance (...) This was in Kandialan, one year, there was too much rain and women could not transplant the rice. A group of women [the witches] who did not want the water had gathered to block the rain. They blocked it for a month. But the women who were above were losing their crops.\(^{92}\) These women went to the Usana. So all went together to Kandialan to get the

---

\(^{90}\) The Usana belong to the larger family of Diola spirit-shrines, called “boekin” in Diola, or “fétiche” in French. “Fétiche” is an emic designation. Present anthropology now prefers the term “autel”, or altar, because the physical object which is engaged in the performance of the ritual (in Casamance, usually a wooden fork stuck in a hole in the ground) is no more than a symbol of the spirit(s) it is giving access to. Nevertheless, “fétiche” is still in use among the Senegalese.

\(^{91}\) Interview Amadou Sambou (alias), Ziguinchor, 29 March 1999.

\(^{92}\) It seems that the supposed witches had low-lying lands, which were getting too much water, but the other women, those “above”, had fields on the plateau, and still needed rain.
rain back. And the evil women were defeated. This was were they digged out the live cat [which formed part of the spell set by the female witches] 93.

This form of female mystical interventions is a classical feature of village life, but towards the end of the 1970s, the Ziguinchor Usana provided a basis for a powerful form of female collective action. Senegalese women had never been altogether absent from politics: since the emergence of popular politics in 1945, they had regularly been called in the support of the contesting politicians – and this had been particularly true of the women who controlled powerful spirit-shrines, who were considered by politicians as likely political brokers. Marie Afinkoh Diatta, the founder of one of the first Usana in Ziguinchor, Usana Kasa, was thus a staunch supporter of Senghor’s BDS in Lower Casamance 94. In 1970s Ziguinchor, with the Usana, the women came to play a different and more significant and autonomous part in politics. Their influence, which in the village context remained discreet, became both powerful and visible in an urban environment; it was loaded with political meaning.

The strike of the lycée Djignabo gave the Usana women a major occasion to assert an autonomous political line. They got involved early on, and after the killing of the student they took an even more prominent role, as the state was increasingly at a loss to find ways to control the students. On the same day, organising around the Usana, thousands of women marched through town; as one student recalls, “they all wore branches of green leaves, necklaces of coloured beads around the chest and the belly. Breasts and even the intimate parts were exposed. The ritual was there, in its nakedness It made the dance sacred” 95. The women reached the Escale, Ziguinchor’s central district, visited the Gouvernance, the Police station and the jailhouse, demanding the release of all the students that had been arrested. The next day all the students’ demands were granted.

Many things are unclear about the way in which the strike ended. Rumours about the corruption of some student leaders by the PS politicians are frequent, and it might be argued that the women did not unilaterally side with the students, but

94 This was true also in rural areas - Mariama Sonko, the founding priestess of the spirit-shrine Hongo Hongo near Diouloulou, was also a supporter of Emile Badiane. Interview with Mariama Sonko, Ziguinchor, February 2002. In the 1990s, Mariama Sonko became a provider of mystical resources for the Front Nord of the MFDC.
95 La vache qui rit, 26-31 December 1995, quoting a pamphlet by Karimu Sané.
pressed both sides for an agreement. But this does not matter as much as the fact that everybody in Ziguinchor had seen those women invading the central administrative district, in both a peaceful and a forceful manner. For some time the women had had the balance of power shaking at the very heart of the regional capital. The moral strength which many Ziguinchoroïdis granted to the women was such that rumours sprung up about a spell they cast on the daughter of a major official who supposedly died in Dakar, shortly after the events. The interviewees could not however agree over whose daughter had died – the governor’s or the headmaster’s. But it was not the details that mattered in this story; the point of the rumour was to demonstrate rhetorically the strength of the Usana; the morale of the story was its only point, and the morale was that there was no impunity from the women; no official, however high-ranking, could be safe from the women’s magical revenge \(^{96}\).

Thus, again, as with the lycéens’ violent contest, the importance of the Usana mobilisation in Ziguinchor lies not so much with their contribution to the initial MFDC mobilisation, which seems to have remained very limited, than with their counter-hegemonic nature: they were giving an example of a popular mobilisation. But contrary to the lycée strike, which was decidedly modern in outlook, the Usana’s mobilisation exhibited ‘traditional’ culture.

Thus in the early 1980s in Ziguinchor, there was a rift and a growing dissatisfaction with the old political elites; at the same time, the people were discovering that they could intervene directly and influence the course of events, that the state was theirs and owed them something. The Escale was no longer the sanctuary of the state’s unquestioned domination: it was abruptly transformed into a locus for protest.

But this transformation cannot be read as an unequivocal forerunner of separatism. Father Diamacoune did stand by the students during the strike. But so did local politicians from the emerging opposition groups, like the SUDES and the RND, whose platform did not include reference to a Casamançais identity. These movements mattered in exposing, after years of Senghorism, the state’s weakness: unarmed women could challenge it, and would even shame the men on their

\(^{96}\) A recurrent feature in narratives of the strike is the narrow escape of Mr Sow, the hated headmaster, whose plane took off under the stones thrown by enraged students, with President Diouf’s personal pilot flying. This detail dramatically highlights the extent of the women’s power: no skilful pilot, no presidential plane could rescue the official’s daughter.
inaction. Many came to think that everything was possible; and all lived those events as carnivals of inversion and subversion, with unprecedented excitement and exhilaration. These sentiments played a huge part in the subsequent MFDC mobilisation.

An epilogue: the ‘revival’ of the MFDC

In 1981 and 1982, the leaders of the French and Dakarois wings of Esukolal, Momodou Diémé and Momodou Nkrumah Sané, were multiplying contacts in Ziguinchor. Under the cover of a development project funded by the ARSF (the construction of the wall of the Bignona health centre), they approached many activists and militants, meeting with unequal success. Sané thus established contacts with some Ziguinchor-based activists, ex-PRA-S members, who were close to the tendance A – Bourama Faye Badji and Momodou Touré, among others. In April 1982, Sané came to Casamance, and he met for the first time with Father Diamacoune at his Kafountine house:

On the 8th of April 1982, I met with Abbé [Father Diamacoune] face to face, with all my documents, King Sihalébé and these skeletons that I photographed. So I met with my elder. In our society, nothing can be decided without seeing the elder. We talked for three hours, we discussed all possibilities. Between the MAC and the MFDC, we chose the MFDC. I was looking for someone older than me. My wife knew him, and told me he could help. He was so famous, with his broadcasts.

There, Sané got information about Aline Sitoé from Diamacoune; apparently, Diamacoune’s writings were used to write up the leaflets handed out during the demonstration. In August 1982, Sané came to Casamance again. Some members of the Dakarois wing of Esukolal, Momodou Diémé and Mustapha Camara, the two

97 Journet (1994; 340) quote some women saying “The men are too proud, when nothing happens, they boast with their belt... But now that things are serious, they do nothing. Our brothers, all we ask from you is that you lend us your belts, we are going to find a solution!” This is another indication that the devirilisation of the cheated pilgrims, and the tension and competition between genders are important elements of Casamancçois contemporary history.
98 In his research on Renamo mobilization, Geffray insists that, in the early stages of the Mozambican civil war, many Mozambicans felt joy and excitement at the idea that the intrusive and oppressive Frelimo state would be, at last, challenged. See Geffray (1990; chapter III). Historians of Classical Europe such as Thompson (1971), Leroy Ladurie (1979) and Bercé (1994) have demonstrated that political mobilisation, and particularly violent political mobilisation, was also a festive occasion. Agulhon (1979) perceives these festive traits well into the nineteenth century Republican mobilisation in the Var against Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte’s 1852 coup.
99 This account has been written using interviews with participants to the various stages of the ‘revival’, too numerous to be quoted here.
100 When imprisoned by the French, Sihalébé Diatta, a Diola priest-king, had starved himself to death rather than break the royal taboo on eating food in front of anyone else. His dessicated body was apparently sent to the Musée de l’Homme in Paris, and Diola traditionalists wished to get it back.
employees of the IFAN, went along. With unequal success, Sané started to tour various political, social and cultural activists with his crew: he visited for instance Famara Mané, one of the founding Casamançais members of the PDS, Ibrahima Amah Diémé, a PDS member and cultural activist, and Sanoune Bodian, a leader of the land protests. Amah Diémé, a high school teacher from Thionck-Essyl, had been a PDS candidate for the legislative seat for Bignona; as mentioned above, he ran a radio broadcast on Diola culture and history in the regional programme; he had contacts with Father Diamacoune. In 1980 and 1981, he had given a series of talks on the underdevelopment of Casamance... He seemed a likely supporter for Nkrumah Sané’s project. But Diémé rejected flatly Sané’s proposal, wary with the turn the whole affair was taking, while himself engaged in a legalistic strategy 102. Sanoune Bodian proved more receptive to Sané Nkrumah - a schoolteacher, born in 1946 in the Buluf village of Mandégane, Bodian had been a victim of land spoliation, and had been very active in the subsequent protests; once a supporter of the PDS, he had later become a militant in Sy’s faction of the PS, as mentioned above; he was also a leader in the Ziguinchorois Comité Allez Casa. In August 1982, at Bodian’s place, a dozen men gathered to decide on the ‘revival’ of the MFDC, with a separatist agenda: Nkrumah Sané was there, and so were two men from the Dakarois section of Esukolal, Momodou Diémé and Mustapha Camara; at Bodian’s, they would meet with the Ziguinchorois activists – Edouard Sagna, Elias Diémé.

Nkrumah Sané left for France, and came back at the beginning of December 1982. In the meantime, things had been brewing in Ziguinchor - the Ziguinchor activists used the Sunday meetings of the Casa Sport’s Ziguinchorois section as a platform; these meetings took place at the stadium of Néma, but were subsequently transferred further south, near the airport of Ziguinchor - the former meeting place of the student strikers of 1980. People, exclusively men, assembled freely, and arguments over football progressively gave way to all sorts of grudges – land disputes, lack of development opportunities, corruption. One attendant recounts the mobilisation that was under way:

The Casa, it really was a cover. There, they woke the people up, they woke the history of Casamance up. Even in [post-colonial] schools, the history of Casamance would not be taught. But [in the colonial era] there were songs dedicated to Casamance that were sung at school, but these songs were forbidden [by the post-colonial state]. The Senegalese

102 Nkrumah seems convinced Diémé’s initially welcoming attitude to his visit was an attempt to fish for electoral support. Interview Momodou Nkrumah Sané, Paris, 27 September 1999.
were coming here, to do just whatever they pleased [“faire du n'importe quoi”], with the mayor here, a northerner. That was what they talked about, in the meetings\textsuperscript{103}.

The tensions in Ziguinchor at the time were thus being re-interpreted, with reference to the idea of Casamance. The radicalisation of the discussions near the Airport alienated a number of participants. A leading Manding supporter of the Casa Sport withdrew, arguing that if action was to be taken, the Diola would be the best to do it, for the Manding just could not keep a secret – this seems like a polite and cautious exit from someone scared by the radicalisation and the increasingly Diola references. Several non-Diola nevertheless kept participating – for instance, Simon Malou, a Mancagne schoolteacher and PDS militant, who had been actively involved in protests against land spoliation in the Kadio district of Ziguinchor.

While the debates were getting hotter and attracted more and more people, it was decided that the proto-separatists separate from the football supporters; consequently, they moved further away in the bush, towards Diabir. On the 19th of December, in a prolonged meeting, attended by Nkrumah Sané and his Parisian fellow-member of Esukolal, Mamadou Sadio, a march through town was proposed, to be held on the 26th of December. Stacks of leaflets were handed over. The women from the Usana were approached, and some of them organised a night of prayer on the day before the march.

The meetings had not gone unobserved by the security forces; in fact, all this movement, which was not clandestine, was monitored by the police early on. But it was so enmeshed in (legal) local politics that it is likely that the security forces long shied from preliminary action. Nevertheless, after the march was finally decided, the police forces quickly took action. Between the 20\textsuperscript{th} and the 23\textsuperscript{rd} of December, several of the main organisers were rounded up: in Dakar, Momodou Diémé and Bassirou Badji, from Esukolal; in Bignona, Nkrumah Sané and Mamadou Sadio; in Ziguinchor, Sanoune Bodian and Father Diamacoune and a few others. But the process had been started and the demonstration nevertheless took place, on the 26\textsuperscript{th} of December 1982, under the direction of a few men who would in time become the military organisers of the rebellion – Sidy Badji and Léopold Sagna\textsuperscript{104}.

\textsuperscript{103} Interview with Pierre Senghor (alias), Ziguinchor, March 2000.
\textsuperscript{104} Both Badji and Sagna were retired servicemen. Aliou Badji, another retired military and key organiser of the 1982 and 1983 marches, was killed during the 1983 march.
Conclusion

During the 1970s, the idea of a Casamançais tradition and specificity had penetrated deeply, borne by a series of external traditionalisms: the state, the development industry, the Church, tourism had all made Casamançais identity increasingly relevant in their own spheres – government, the economy, religion, culture. From there, among the évolutés who had been heavily engaged in the production and diffusion of these traditionalisms, it progressively became logical to assume that this specificity had a relevance also in the realm of politics, the distribution of social and economic resources, access to job opportunities or gender relations. The Casamançais évolutés depended so tightly on the Senegalese state, the situation of so many of them was suddenly so harsh, and they were left with so little alternative options that they had little choice but to make use of this notion of a Casamançais identity to interpret and cope with their current position.

But to complete the politicisation of Casamançais identity, it took the context of early 1980s Ziguinchor, where the idea of a Casamançais/Diola autochthony was making increasing sense in view of the bitter factionalism inside the ruling PS. In Ziguinchor also, in the early 1980s, the student strikers and the women of the Usana, each in their own ways, had revealed the weakness of the state, and its alien character. Logically enough, the renascent legal opposition sided with all these counter-hegemonic forces, trying to draw local alliances, but so did the PS factions.

In this volatile context, it became possible for some daring entrepreneurs, playing on the ambiguity of the situation, to develop a separatist agenda and gain some support. Building on all these strands, they were thus able to stage the first separatist demonstration in Ziguinchor.
CONCLUSION

An alternative account of Casamançais nationalism

In the framework of this research we have not tried to complete or amend the list of social, economic, cultural, political or religious tensions which are usually taken to account for the constitution of Casamançais separatism. Associating discursive and sociological approaches, we have instead attempted to shed light on the conditions of emergence of the Casamançais nationalist claim. Exploring these conditions, as an alternative between the fixist ethnology which underlies most accounts (those of the government, of the rebels and of many academics) and the silence of deconstructionist approaches on the actual processes of construction of Casamançais nationalism, we have tried to flesh out the social and political history of Lower Casamance since the colonial era. This detour through history alone allows to go beyond the nationalist claim to the heirloom of the anti-colonial warrior and the loyalist depiction of the Diola as primitives; it establishes that Lower Casamance, more than any other region in Senegal, had engaged massively in education and migration.

Of course these changes have had to do with general modifications in the system of constraints and opportunities which the French colonisation deployed in Senegal. For instance, the pacification of a region where circulation had been very limited during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a crucial factor in the development of migration. To take another example, the interest of the Church for the region, and the control of trade by diasporas contributed to directing the Diola youth towards school. But the Diola were not passive, acephalous, self-subsistent peasants, merely reacting to the exertion of powerful external forces; they successfully took to transforming their society into multi-local communities with large strata of évolutés. Following World War II, formal education and migration

---

1 The role of chronology in such processes is very important: see for instance how the first trend in education around Bignona in the 1930s had failed to transform into mass education – it was a time when the French state was in crisis and did not recruit much. But when in 1945, the French authorities started to develop the civil service, education quickly took root in Lower Casamance. If Lower Casamance was available at the time, it was because it had been integrated to the colony of
became social facts of Diola life, playing a key role in the reproduction of village communities; the remittances of the migrants and the new practices and goods which they brought back had a growing part in the villages. The political side to these developments was the sudden emergence of the local *évolués* as political leaders; this was a pan-Senegalese trend, and its liveliness in Lower Casamance had more to do with the pace of the change and the sheer number of *évolués* than with the specificity of Casamançais or Lower Casamançais culture *per se*. The terms of the incorporation of Lower Casamance to Senegal were so favourable during the 1950s and 1960s that it was quick and massive.

The generation of the 1950s and 1960s had marched a successful pilgrimage towards the Senegalese state, but they were followed by a generation which has not had it so easy. The terms of the pilgrimage suddenly degraded during the 1970s: the multi-local communities which the Diola had formed, spanning between the village, Ziguinchor and Dakar, entered a profound crisis – the pilgrimages of the men suddenly went wrong; often, the huge sacrifices which people consented to for education came to nought. Educational pursuits would not lead to jobs any more, and formal education had by then acquired such a legitimacy among the Diola that changing pathways was not an easy thing. Thus while the Diola women were still thriving on their pathway of informality, the men’s situation degraded quickly; for them, marrying became a difficult matter.

Along with these sociological developments, the *évolués* of all standings played a key part in the production and diffusion of a traditionalist sensibility about Casamance. At first this sensibility was borne by powerful external institutions seeking to formulate policies in Casamance; in these processes, Lower Casamance usually appeared as a particularly traditional place, in a kind of necessary rhetorical contrast to the rest of Senegal. These understandings were not unjustified, for Casamance and the Diola indeed had their lots of traditions, but this is not the point: fixing and diffusing such understandings, these institutions profoundly influenced Casamançais and Diola self-consciousness, which was considerably homogenised. In these processes the Diola *évolués* had acted as middlemen and interpreters of the ‘traditional’ rural world, and they quickly reappropriated these traditionalist

---

Senegal later than other regions. In the other regions, there was an hysteresis – other pathways had been explored
tendencies; to them, homogenised Diola traditionalism became almost an occupational ideology, an element in their status.

It was this nexus between sociological and ideological changes which allowed for the development of a nationalist interpretation of Casamançais political and social life among the ‘scholastic’ counter-elites of the Diola diaspora. This nationalist interpretation gathered momentum in the changing and complex context of local politics in Ziguinchor, the regional capital: there, political competition was rife both inside and outside the ruling party and the city was developing fast. There, the cheated pilgrims of the Senegalese state and their organic leaders could formulate a Casamançais nationalism. The problem in Casamance thus stems less from the unbridgeable gap between a particularly ‘traditional’ Lower Casamance and modernity than from the actual proximity between Lower Casamance and the Senegalese state: more than any other region in Senegal, Lower Casamance has built its access to modernity through a close connection with the state.

Thus, against the usual focus on the Diola peasant, we have insisted on another character, that of the Diola évolué. The évolués’ numerical and social importance in Lower Casamance is the key to understanding the degree to which exogenous traditionalist discourses were appropriated by the Lower Casamançais, and were subsequently transferred to the realm of politics. It was this conjunction between the évolués’ social and ideological positions during the 1970s which allowed for the constitution of Casamançais nationalism. Grievances were no weaker in Middle and Upper Casamance. Indeed, Médina Gounass in Upper Casamance, an area peopled by north Senegalese Peulh and Toucouleur migrants and by autochthonous Peulh, has often been seen as offering a context very similar to that of 1970s Ziguinchor – in the two cases, north Senegalese migrants, backed by the state and controlling trade, were in a position of domination. But resistance to allochthonous migrants in Upper Casamance could not draw on the repertoire of Casamançais nationalism – in Upper and Middle Casamance the évolués were very few, remained integrated to the circuits of the Senegalese state, and had little cultural self-consciousness to speak of...

---

2 On Médina Gounass and other aspects of social conflicts in Upper Casamance, see Villalon (1993), Ngaïdè (1998) and Fanchette (2002).
Some conclusions for the study of nationalism

The case of Casamançais nationalism allows us to form some conclusions for the study of nationalisms.

First, it is useless to try and distinguish in these processes between “interest” and “norm” – the classical tension between nationalism as a rational strategy in the defence of objective interests and nationalism as a sincere defence of values is futile – norm and interest are never found in their pure forms, separate from each other. Nationalism is both about objective interests and about subjective values, and there is no telling which one dominates. The évolués’ sense of betrayal is evidently related to their personal economic difficulties, but also to a sense of justice, of what they morally deserve - we are thus talking less about economic situation here than about status 3.

Second, it is very important to look into the internal function of nationalism. Justin Willis (2000; 141-142) is undoubtedly right to denounce “the primordialist straw man now widely favoured for target practice” by social scientists. But in the case of Casamance, the straw man seems lively enough, interpretations of the conflict are encumbered with stereotypes, and it seems well worth spending a few arrows at the straw man. Still, this research has another, more crucial, target: it aims at demonstrating that Casamançais nationalism was not only a reaction to external forces – the state, the northerners – but also a political project with an internal purpose, a new “cultural politics” within Diola communities. In Casamance the internal role of separatism (vis-à-vis the women and the cadres) has been at least as important, and perhaps more important, than its external role (vis-à-vis the north Senegalese invaders or the Senegalese state). Both cadres and women have had a less conflictual relationship to Senegal; their own pilgrimages still work out rather well, and tensions are frequent between these two groups and the disgruntled literati. Casamançais nationalism was thus an attempt to call to order those somehow deviant groups which seemed not to take part in the general ordeal.

This does not mean that only cheated pilgrims of the Senegalese state took part to the rebellion. As seen in Chapter VI, in rebellion as in other activities, they were often led by their organic intellectuals, teachers and cultural entrepreneurs of all sorts – Father Diamacoune and Nkrumah Sané being prime examples. In the beginning

3 This brings us again close to Thompson (1971) and his insistence on the existence of historically construed standards of economic morality...
too, the women of Ziguinchor were mobilised in the framework of the Usana, but their mobilisation was very ambiguous. As for the village-based elders and the animist religious institutions they control, they played no apparent part in the early stages of mobilisation. As for the Casamançais cadres, despite the paranoid interpretation of the Senegalese state, it seems that, when approached, they by and large declined to support the movement – it was simply not theirs; it is only in the recent years, after decades of violence, that a new form of scholastic nationalism developed among some cadres.

The future of Casamançais nationalism

Since 1983, with the continuing violence in Casamance, the logics of alignment became increasingly complex. Over the years political alignment in favour of, or against, separatism has mixed with all sorts of other factors – revenge against the often indiscriminate use of violence by Senegalese security forces or the MFDC, economic issues or local disputes over land. For instance there is evidence that the local PS leaders have not infrequently denounced their legal opponents, and particularly those from the PDS, as rebels. This facilitated in turn the affiliation of a number of PDS supporters to the MFDC.

In fact the plugging of the nationalist agenda into other types of conflicts has been a major feature of the subsequent developments of the Casamançais conflict. Thus, to various degrees, under the apparently evident cleavage between the separatists and the Senegalese state, all sorts of things have been happening - inter- or intra-village feuds, vendettas, political competition inside the Socialist Party and the state structure, ambitions of the legal opposition parties, illegal circulation of weapons, drugs and legal goods (smuggling and diversion of wood or cashew nuts), maneuvers by neighbouring countries or international patrons, have all combined in complex ways to the separatist claim. As a result of all this plugging and grafting of

---

4 There are indications that, in the armed branch of the MFDC, the évolutés have progressively given way to younger boys who often have not had an experience of migration and do not have much education. The relative failure of the rebellion seems to have discouraged Casamançais with education from joining in the bush; despite the continuing difficulties in male migration, Dakar seems preferred to the bush. The first rebels to ‘get out’ when ceasefires were signed were not infrequently the most educated ones, often because they were sent to represent their groups in negotiations – see for instance the case of Abdoulaye Diédhiou, who completed secondary education (without getting his baccalauréat), entered the École Nationale d’Économie Appliquée and worked for NGOs before entering the rebellion, where he served as an administrative secretary. Interview with Abdoulaye Diédhiou, Ziguinchor, 31 January 1991. This qualitative observation was formalised and confirmed in the course of discussions with Martin Evans.
other issues and disputes, it is difficult to tell the future of the Casamançais nationalist project. Our study of the sociological and ideological foundations of Casamançais nationalism does not mean that the issue can be dealt with “socially” – it is no longer about schools and jobs, it is now something else.

One cannot help think that even if almost all Casamançais feel so, and if many agree with the idea that they have a specificity and that they have been badly dealt with, Casamançais nationalism has still not quite succeeded: there still are many Lower Casamançais pilgrims to Dakar, and many of them still achieve something out of these pilgrimages. In fact Lower Casamançais are increasingly exploring other pathways, further away from the state – business, emigration to Europe and the United States... Will these changes produce more scholastic, long-distance intellectuals and fund-raisers? Or will they result in the weakening of the basis for the rebellion? It is hard to tell. No doubt the idea of a political relevance of Casamançais identity has caught the imaginations throughout Senegal, among northerners and Casamançais alike. Once set in motion, indigenised and diffused, how could such an idea altogether disappear?
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and articles on Casamance and Senegal

——. “Tradition and change: a social history of Diola women (Southwest Senegal) in the twentieth century.” Unpublished PhD, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 1983.
- Manley, Andrew. *Guinea Bissau/Senegal: war, civil war and the Casamance question*. Writenet, 1998 [available from C:\Mes documents\Casamance\Articles Casamance\RRojas Databank The Róbinson Rojas Archive_-Guinea Bissau-Senegal War, civil war and the Casamance question_- 1998.htm]


- Ndiaye, Malick. L’éthique ceddo et la société d’accaparement ou les conduites culturelles des Sénégalais d’aujourd’hui. Vol. 1. Le Goorgi type moyen de la société
Other books and articles

—. *Fighting for the rain forest: war, youth and resources in Sierra Leone.* Oxford: James Currey, 1996.

**Newspapers and news journals**

Afrique nouvelle
Andé Sopi. Mensuel d’opinions et d’informations politiques
L’AOF. Echo de la Cote occidentale d’Afrique, Organe officiel de la fédération SFIO
Bingo
Bomboelong. Bulletin bi-mensuel d’information de la Section de Casamance de l’Union Démocratique Sénégalaise
Bulletin de l’Afrique noire
Bulletin de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit
Bulletin de la Chambre de Commerce de Ziguinchor
La Casamance. Organe des sections MFDC-BDS
Condition Humaine : au service de la révolution sociale
Courrier du Sud
The Daily Observer (Banjul)
Dakar-matin
Fagaru
Horizons Africains. Revue catholique mensuelle
Indépendance africaine, bulletin central du PRA-Sénégal
The Independent (Banjul)
Le Journal du Pays. Le grand mensuel casamançais
Kelumak Casamance
Paris-Dakar
Réalités africaines
Réveil. France Combattante. Organe de la fédération d’AOF
Réveil d’aujourd’hui. Organe de l’Union Démocratique Sénégalaise, section sénégalaise du RDA
Sénégal d’Aujourd’hui
UNAC. Unité et action. Bulletin bimensuel d’information et de liaison de la section de Ziguinchor de l’Union démocratique sénégalaise
L’Unité africaine
La Vache qui rit
Wal Fadjiri
La Voix de la Casamance
La Voix de la Casamance. Organe mensuel d’informations du MFDC
Réalités africaines
Le Soleil
Sud Hebdo
Sud Quotidien
Takusaan