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TRADITION AND CHANGE: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF DIOLA WOMEN (SOUTHWEST SENEGAL) IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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TRADITION AND CHANGE:
A SOCIAL HISTORY OF DIOLA WOMEN (SOUTHWEST SENEGAL)
IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

by

Alice Joyce Hamer

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(History)
in The University of Michigan
1983

Doctoral Committee:
Professor Louise A. Tilly, Co-chair
Professor Godfrey N. Uzoigwe, Co-Chair
Assistant Professor Hemalata Dandekar
Professor Thomas Holt
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To my sister Faye, 
and to my mother and father 
who bore her
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

AIMS OF THE STUDY

Djikilior Djiba of the village of Thionk Essil witnessed the effects of significant changes that have influenced Diola women throughout the twentieth century. Born between 1890-1900, many of the events of her childhood anticipated those that were to accelerate as the century moved to the present.¹ Those included: the widespread integration of her community into the international economic market structure, the cultural borrowing of other indigenous and European techniques of production as well as educational institutions, the religious conversion of the Diola from their traditional faith to Islam, and migration. This dissertation discusses both the evolution and consequences of these transformations in the lives of the women of Thionk Essil since 1900.

This dissertation argues, for one, that the economic and social changes that took place in the twentieth century were disadvantageous to the women under study. It is undeniable that some existing literature has already made this point. Notably, some scholars have convincingly argued
that the colonial experience in particular has weakened African women's social and economic position vis-à-vis men in their respective societies. While reiterating this proposition, this dissertation seeks to offer a different perspective by means of countering a somewhat distorted image projected by this argument. One of the inferences of the contention that twentieth century change had deleterious effects upon women is that women's initiative was considerably, if not totally, weakened in the process. Thus one of the ironies is that this sympathetic stance in some ways supports those sterotypical images of third world women as passive acceptors of their fate, and as inert backdrops in the march of their own history. In fact this image is not peculiar to third world women; it has been projected upon Western women as well. In contrast this dissertation argues, first and foremost, that these women exercised considerable initiative in shaping their own lives. More specifically, it seeks to illuminate this point by means of exploring the creative mesh that women forged between their own cultural traditions and the changes at hand. An examination of this synthesis was facilitated by utilization of the subtheme of tradition and change.

Another aim of this study is to balance the literature on African women and change by focusing on the rural sector. In West Africa, the broad geographical region in which the Diola are located, the population is sixty-eight percent rural. Yet in spite of this the experience of the rural
African woman remains comparatively under represented in the literature. The relative neglect of rural women is in some ways made apparent by the fact that many publications, particularly those covering broad continental regions or specific countries, fail to make a clear distinction between rural and urban women. Although the experience of the two is usually dissimilar and rural lifestyles more commonplace, there is comparatively less information across the spectrum of disciplines in regards to rural women and change in such activities as colonialism, market activities, and religious affiliation. Among the studies of Senegalese women, for example, no publication on rural women approaches the depth of Colette le Cour Grandmaison's study of the lifestyles of Dakar women. Although several studies have focused on rural women in the past decade, they have not sufficiently counterbalanced the emphasis given to urban women.

A historical approach to the study of rural women has the potential of providing a fresh perspective. It can, for one, correct certain distortions that appear in the literature about African women. Take, for example, publications on African female elites that erroneously suggest that they are typical. This misconception is most common in studies of urban women, but exists in studies of rural women as well. The value of research on women such as those like Djikilior Djiba is that they are more representative of the majority of African women. A historical study also has the potential of providing
insights into the interaction that takes place over time between various social institutions and their impact upon women. This offers a different and perhaps more realistic picture of women's actual experiences than studies that isolate one historical or social phenomenon. For example the argument that the principal motivation in Diola female migration is economic, as presented in Henk van Loo and Nella Star's demographic study of Lower Casamance, could be greatly enriched by a discussion of the expanded role of currency in Diola women's fertility associations. In brief, the historian can possibly present a fuller picture of the dynamics of change in women's lives and their response to them.

It would be wrong, however, to give the impression that there have been no publications on either African women and change or historical studies of African women. Nancy Hafkin's book which explores the theme of African women and change in both urban and rural settings, and Margaret Strobel's historical study of Muslim women in Mombassa are more recent examples of works on both subjects. Nevertheless, the relative paucity of such publications attests to the fact that there is a need for additional research on African women in general, and on African women concerning such related themes in particular. A survey of contemporary bibliographies on African women reveals further that there is an equal, if not greater, need for focus and redirection as there is for greater quantities of studies.
Research aimed at shedding light on the predicament, motivations, and behavior of African women should be among the priorities.

**THE THEME OF TRADITION AND CHANGE**

The theme of tradition and change may be of considerable utility in the study of rural women in Africa. This is because of the nature of tradition and traditional societies which serve as useful starting points by which one can measure the extent of change. Edward Shils, who has written an important theoretical analysis of tradition, says that "'Traditional' is used to designate whole societies which change relatively slowly, or in which there is a widespread tendency to legitimate action by reference to their having occurred in the past or in which the social structure is a function of the fact that legitimations of authority tend to be traditional." One of the most important points that Shils raises in his analysis in regards to societies which are traditional is that there is a dynamism inherent within them. Contrary to stereotypical notions of such communities being static and unchanging, he argues, traditional societies have always been changing. Although this change usually takes place very slowly, it occurs nevertheless. Seen from this perspective it is understandable that erroneous images of traditional societies would be commonplace among western writers whose perceptions are colored by experiences with more rapid rates of change that took place in their respective societies.
Furthermore, Shils raises several important considerations related to this dynamism between traditional societies and change, namely the factors which stimulate changes in tradition, the reaction of traditional communities to such change, and the differential impact, if any, on the plurality of groups in a given society. It is in posing such questions that one can assess the complexities of change. Answering such questions is crucial to our understanding of the contemporary situation of all groups within the society, especially those groups whose experiences with change are still greatly in need of further exploration.

In some ways the theme of continuity and change is especially appropriate for the Diola. This is because they were incorporated comparatively more recently and perhaps even more slowly into the nexus of international economic and cultural exchange that the other regions of Senegal. Between 1854 and 1865 Louis Faidherbe rapidly brought approximately one third of modern Senegal under French rule. In contrast the colonial administration's attempts to exert its new and fragile authority over the region in which Thionk Essil is located began only in 1906 and was followed by a relative neglect of Lower Casamance during the colonial period. Because of this it would seem that the Diola can offer a fresh and potentially more illuminating picture of change within rural African societies in general and among rural African women in particular.
The theme of continuity and change also serves as a useful model to examine the complexities of human behavior. This is suggested by William Bascom and Melville Herskovits' edited collection of essays which adopts this theme as a structural base to explore culture change in Africa. Bascom speculates that in the future African cultures will be "reinterpreted modifications". As such he implicitly argues that past events and experiences, particularly in traditional societies, play a major role in shaping people's behavior and lifestyle. The ways in which the past and present are synthesized, it follows, play an important role in shaping human behavior. When we can identify the elements that are processed in the synthesis as well as the dynamics that the synthesis itself calls into play in regards to rural African women, we will have taken another step towards understanding most women in Africa.

Historians' use of the theme of continuity and change has been on subjects other than African women. Both its ideological origins and early development were closely affiliated with African nationalism. Historians established their first links with nationalism not through the theme of continuity and change itself, but rather through African history in general. This may be said to have begun in 1953 by K.O. Dike, who is the founder of the new African historiography based on the work of professionally trained historians. At that time he strengthened the bonds between African history and cultural nationalism by warning that
independence would be a meaningless experiment if Africans did not honor their own unique culture and historical heritage.\(^{17}\) By the time that the theme of continuity and change became popular among historians many had come to see their profession as a potentially major contribution to nation-building. It first drew attention of historians in 1963 at the International Congress of African Historians in Dakar, Senegal.\(^{18}\) J.F. Ade Ajayi, in a paper entitled "The Continuity of African Institutions Under Colonialism", attempted to dispel two myths concerning African history. The first was that Africans had no history prior to the arrival of Europeans, and the second was that African societies were stagnant and unchanging before the colonial presence sparked social change to life. These notions, Ajayi argued, are erroneous not only because change was constantly taking place throughout African history but also because the colonial experience was not a complete departure from the past. It was simply one event among the many in African history.\(^{19}\) In essence Ajayi’s argument was for the recognition of an African initiative, something which vividly reflects the tenet of African dignity fundamental to African nationalism.

Although the theme of continuity and change was targeted as one important to the future of African history by Africanists eager to fashion innovative approaches, historians were neither the groundbreakers nor the monopolizers of it. It is arguable that the theme was first
anticipated by scholars who wrote cogently in defense of African culture and history. There were several such precursors such as Africans like J. Africanus B. Horton and J.E. Casely Hayford. In addition, there were various scholar-administrators such as Louis Faidherbe and Maurice Delafosse whose works reflect an interest in African history, ethnography, geography and linguistics. More recently an important precedent of the theme at hand was set by Negritude, the literary movement launched in Paris by blacks from Africa and the Caribbean in the 1930’s. The most well known contributor, who was also one of its founding fathers, was Senegal’s Leopold S. Senghor. Strongly influenced by the Harlem Renaissance of Afro-Americans, the movement was essentially a reaction of black intellectuals to their cultural domination. Among other things it examined the African psyche, which was purported to be a culmination of the African experience, past and present. In extolling the African past and African culture that made crucial inputs into the African personality, Negritude writers made an early argument in defense of the continuities of the African experience.

Just as historians were not the exclusive proponents of the theme, neither were they the sole Africanists to make use of it in their writing. While among historians its use to explore resistance movements has been comparatively limited, it has played a more significant role in studies of colonialism. If we accept the idea that the theme can be
expressed in studies of various types of institutional change, then the work of other social scientists along these lines has been considerable. Among anthropologists it has served as a base for analysis of various types of such change, as demonstrated by studies of different kinds of institutional change in small scale communities, theoretical discourses on social change, or contemporaneous phenomena such as urbanization. Similarly, among political scientists the theme has been expressed in studies of different types of institutional and social change. David Apter's examination of political modernization and Mark Tessler's focus on ethnicity and identity both serve as examples. Such works, in addition to Peter Gutkind's bibliography on tradition and change in Africa, with approximately 3,000 citations, indicate that scholars have already given the theme considerable attention.

Because of the volume of literature on the theme of tradition and change in Africa, it may seem that we already know a great deal about the phenomenon. However, if we stop and ask ourselves how various types of change have affected all groups in Africa, it becomes apparent that the utility of the theme has not been exhausted. Attempts to explore the impact of change on the plurality of groups in Africa has in part been addressed in studies of various groups such as the African military, elites, and more recently peasants and labor. This literature indicated that our knowledge of some groups is clearly greater than it is for others.
The significance of research on rural African women is that it contributes to our understanding of the predicament of all peoples in Africa.

**METHODOLOGY**

This dissertation is based primarily on oral interviews conducted in the village of Thionk Essil. A discussion of oral history is warranted here both because of its relevance to studies of rural women, and because of questions scholars have raised as to its historical adequacy. Perhaps the most crucial consideration is the fact that the study of rural women calls into question the conventional utilization or oral data. In African history the most common source of oral data is oral tradition, whose definition reveals some of its limitations in regards to any data acquisition on rural women. According to anthropologist Jan Vansina, oral tradition has two distinct characteristics. One is that it is "testimonies concerning the past which are transmitted from one person to another." The other is that it must be unauthored, "testimonies that narrate an event which has not been witnessed and remembered by the informant himself." These criteria are significant to rural women insofar as they do not lend themselves to any substantive data collection on them. This is because oral tradition favors elites, particularly political elites. The fact that many of the publications based on oral tradition are political in orientation reflects this. Moreover, problems of oral data acquisition is exacerbated in stateless societies where
there is no designated role function to remember the past.  
Most of the information that oral tradition does provide on rural women must be extrapolated from the information it yields on cultural factors and social institutions.

Consequently, the historian interested in reconstructing the history of rural women must search for ways to step beyond the conventional use of oral history. In this regards, some of the trends in American history may be instructive. From its origins at Columbia University in 1948 to the present, data collection has taken the form of interviews with individuals who have lived and experienced the events about which they are interviewed. However, as a breech from the earlier stages of oral history in the U.S. when it was used primarily to gather additional information on political elites, its overall function was transformed in the decade of the sixties. One consequence of the radicalism of the decade was that oral history became a tool to unlock the history of several groups, including blacks and labor. The works of Theodore Rosengarten and Studs Terkel, for example, provide useful examples of innovative possibilities for oral history and the study of rural women in Africa. Rosengarten's book is a successful experiment in reproducing a direct transcription of a single life history. Similarly, Terkel's book is an interesting interpretation of one American historical event, provided by a collection of oral interviews of numerous individuals who witnessed it.
The second major consideration, that of oral history's historical adequacy, is linked with dilemmas concerning both ways to interpret oral history and the methodology used in data collection. When oral history's level of popularity rose among historians in the 1950s and 60s, the period of African history's "renaissance", it was envisioned by its advocates as a means of compensating for the paucity of written documentation. In view of the fact that its role was to be that of a methodological panacea, it is ironic that it introduced more controversy than it hushed. Most of the controversy has not been centered around oral history per se, but rather around oral tradition. The greatest debates have been over the various approaches to its interpretation. Predictably scholars have registered a diversity of opinion. For example, while Melville Herskovits took the position that the interpretation of oral tradition as historical fact is contingent upon the existence of supportive historical evidence, Uli Beier has argued that is is only reliable for information on philosophy or the history of thought. Moreover, while E.S. Hartland expressed the opinion that oral history was only valuable for studies on migration and cultural diffusion, Ivor Wilks' assertion was that oral tradition should only be regarded as myth. In brief, the crucial point of difference is not so much over whether oral tradition is of any significance, but rather over the meaning of its significance.
Another point of sensitivity related to oral history, but not directly on it, concerns methods of data collection. The methods for quality data acquisition have, understandably, been discussed most frequently by anthropologists in regards to their fieldwork experience. In a comprehensive critical analysis of field work techniques Maxwell Owusu targets several of the possible major sources of poor quality data collection. Among them is the frequent inability of the researcher to speak the language of the relevant culture, something which limits one's capacity to understand that culture, as well as one's communication with the informant, which is necessary for good information. Another potential problem is the use of interpreters, which has sometimes ended in a reliance on persons who adversely affects the quality of the information obtained. This can become both the cause and consequence of the researcher's ability to communicate fully his/her ideas to the interpreter and, in turn, to the informant. Owusu also cites several potential sources of epistemological difficulty. One is Eurocentric attitudes and perspectives that taint and even fog the cognitive "lenses" of the researcher. Another is an uncritical imbibition of fallacy-laden assumptions, theories and ethnographies, frequently acquired through academic study.

These limitations draw attention to the fact that many historians opened a veritable methodological Pandora's box by courting oral history. The fact that among social
scientists, anthropologists have pioneered the use of oral tradition for data collection in the field is a strong indication of the unconventional exigencies that oral history places upon the professionally trained historian. On the one hand the interests which draw both the historian and the anthropologist to the same or like methodologies are often similar. These are frequently questions concerning the history, social institutions, and culture change within a society. On the other hand, the bent towards using written sources in conventional historical training is in sharp contradistinction to the techniques of the ethnographer or cultural anthropologist. This gives rise to a discomfort among historians in regards to using nontraditional methodologies, something which is reflected in the literature. In spite of the push that Africanists gave to oral history during the "renaissance", comparatively few publications based primarily on oral history have been produced. Most historical studies still rely almost exclusively on written sources.

The implication of the foregoing discussion is that oral history is a risky and irksome method that historians would do well to avoid. This is far from the point that I wish to make. The controversies over oral history signal more of the need of social scientists, historians included, to make a methodological and interpretative techniques of oral history more precise, as opposed to abandoning it altogether. Mention of the controversy is important because
we can afford to neither ignore nor pooh-pooh such considerations if we are to advance in future social science scholarship. While methodological issues are not the topic of this dissertation, its research and analysis were conducted with those considerations in mind. Moreover, this dissertation will hopefully serve as an invitation to others to add to the paucity of publications on methodological and interpretative techniques in oral history. Little has been written on methodologies of historical data collection outside of the articles constituting the interesting debate between G.N. Uzoigwe and Phillip Curtin on the most appropriate field techniques.\textsuperscript{43} Similarly, little has been written on methods of interpreting oral data outside of publications by Jan Vansina and David Henige.\textsuperscript{44} Data on these issues might reorient and redirect the interests of historians towards local communities whose histories are much more representative of Africa's past.

The limitations of oral history also have implications for the training of historians. Oral history requires an eclecticism that is particularly demanding of historians. It is important to note that this eclecticism is in contradistinction to the notion that other disciplines are too esoteric to allow for an understanding of basic concepts without all the professional training of social scientists specializing in the field. Interdisciplinary borrowing, the kind which oral history requires of historians, has long been heralded as a desirable approach by Africanists from
different disciplines. However, historians as well as other social scientists could benefit from training that takes the interdisciplinary approach more to heart. What the situation calls for is ongoing innovation which, after all, is one of the most important lessons to be extrapolated from suggestions made by "renaissance" historians in regards to future historical scholarship.

**GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING AND BACKGROUND**

In the most recent national census of Senegal, the Diola numbered 300,000, which is approximately nine percent of the country's ethnically diverse population. As with most peoples of Senegal, the Diola predominate in one particular geographical region which serves as their homeland. They are centered in the area furthest southwest in Senegal known as Lower Casamance which lies between the Gambia and Portuguese Guinea, lying on both sides of the Casamance River. This region, which totals some 75,000 square kilometers, extends eastwards to the Sougrougrou River. Although this region covers considerable ground, it is ethnically homogenous. The Diola comprise some eighty percent of Lower Casamance's population.

Undoubtedly the climatic feature of Lower Casamance which distinguishes it most from all the regions of Senegal is its rainfall. Whereas forty percent of Senegal averages
Map 2  Ethnic Map of Senegal
Map 4  Major Culture Zones of Lower Casamance
Map 5 Former Administrative Cantons of Lower Casamance
Map 6  Villages of Lower Casamance
only 300 to 700 millimeters of rainfall a year, precipitation in Lower Casamance ranges from approximately 1,200 to 2,000 millimeters annually. Another one of the region's unique ecological features is its amphibious landscape. Much of Lower Casamance is also penetrated by numerous tidal river channels called marigots which are sometimes quite wide, such as the case of the Baila and Diouloulou marigots. For the most part the region is very flat. However there are sandy plateaus which reach a modest fifteen to twenty feet above sea level on which the Diola frequently construct their villages. The landscape is further punctuated by forests both within and between villages, many of which are used for circumcision rites or other religiously based activities. Several forests which previously existed are now cleared to plant groundnuts and millet and sorghum.

Ecology has been a significant factor in Diola culture. It has been perhaps most influential in regards to production insofar as ecological factors have been the main determinant of the crops that people in the Lower Casamance cultivate. What the Diola cultivate is greatly influenced by the existence of marigots, which flow through valleys covered with rich alluvial materials and which become flooded during the rains. This creates excellent conditions for wet rice cultivation, which is the principal type of production in which most Diola are engaged. A comparison of
the land area in Senegal under rice cultivation as opposed to millet and sorghum cultivation is illustrative of the uniqueness of the principal agricultural activity of Diola peoples. The figures compare 71,000 hectares versus 865,000 hectares respectively.\(^49\) Equally noteworthy is the fact that the Diola of Lower Casamance produce at least three fourths of Senegal's rice on some 50,000 hectares of their homeland.\(^50\) A comparison on a wider geographical scale also offers an interesting perspective. In West Africa as a whole rice is not a major crop. There are two principle types of rice production along the coast, neither of which engages numerous people. In the first case rice is grown in permanent swamp fields recovered from the mangrove, representing the agriculture of the Diola, the Balanta of Portuguese Guinea, and the Baga of coastal Guinea. The second type, which is dry or mountain rice, is grown by shifting agriculturalists who cultivate further inland; this technique is undertaken by the Mande-speaking people of Sierra Leone and Liberia.\(^51\) Although rice is grown in a large part of the Ivory Coast as a major crop, it is still not among the most significant crops in West Africa.

Differing ecological conditions within Lower Casamance itself have also been the principal determinants of subregional differences in production among the Diola. The amount of rainfall in particular seems to account for variation in the kinds of crops cultivated. In the southern-most portion of Lower Casamance where precipitation
is heaviest, averaging 1,800 to 2,000 millimeters a year, most production is labor intensive wet rice farming. In the western region where precipitation averages slightly less at 1,600 to 1,800 millimeters, somewhat similar amounts of land area are under rice and peanut cultivation. In the northeastern region not only is rainfall considerably less, averaging only 1,200 to 1,300 millimeters; there are also no large river systems. Unlike elsewhere in Lower Casamance, the main subsistence crops there are millet and sorghum as well as peanuts which are the country's principal cash crop.52 These plants, which grow well in semi-arid environments, are the principal crops grown in the other regions of Senegal.

Ecology has also played a significant role in shaping other cultural factors among the Diola. Undoubtedly the physical isolation fostered by the forests in Lower Casamance account for residential patterns that were antithetical to political centralization. The separation of the Diola from their neighbors, which the natural environment created, nurtured a ferocious independence that may explain the ascephalous nature of Diola society. It is interesting to note that this independence has strong historical continuities. Not only was Lower Casamance the last region to be politically annexed to Senegal; Diola resistance proved to be the fiercest and most iron-willed of Senegal's people. As recently as the 1940s a few isolated villages south of the Casamance River actively
resisted efforts by the French to subjugate them. This independence is even reflected by the organization of Diola villages insofar as they are frequently an amalgamation of autonomous wards. Moreover, the political annexation of Lower Casamance with Senegal is looked upon unfavorably by the Diola who, in some ways, still tenaciously maintain a separate identity. This is demonstrated by the fact that the Diola still refer to visiting Dakar as "going to Senegal".

The isolation of Diola people from one another also accounts for much of their cultural diversity. While common origins have rendered the Diola culturally homogenous in many respects, their seclusion from one another fostered many subcultural differences. Perhaps nothing illustrates this more than linguistic diversity; there are some fifteen different dialects spoken by Diola people, although one in particular is commonly spoken. Similarly, anthropologists distinguish between the same number of distinct subgroups among the Diola. Thus although relatively small in number the Diola are exceedingly diverse. Nevertheless one can generally divide the Diola into three broad cultural subregions based upon varying degrees of culture retention. In the southern zone of Casamance, the Kasa region, the Diola have retained more of their traditional way of life. In the second culture zone, which envelops Fogny, Combo and Boulouf, the Diola have overwhelmingly abandoned their traditional faith and embraced Islam. In the eastern most
region of Lower Casamance, which constitutes the third zone, the Diola have adopted virtually all aspects of Mandinka culture including their agricultural techniques and their language as well as Islam.⁵⁶

Lower Casamance's religious diversity is undoubtedly one of its most distinctive characteristics. Outside of southwest Senegal the country as a whole is fairly homogenous in terms of religion. Senegal as a whole is about eighty-five percent Muslim. However, in Lower Casamance there are various mixtures of Muslim, Christian, and animist religious affiliations. While most Diola south of the Casamance River still adhere to their traditional faith, there is still a sizeable Christian population and even a modest Muslim presence there. In contrast Muslims predominate north of the river in spite of the religious diversity that exists there. In some villages and towns north of the river Christianity figures prominently in the society. For example in Bignona, the principal town north of the river, there is a sizable Christian population. Moreover, in a few villages such as Elana and Affingham the population is predominantly Christian. In several other villages Christians are a small but committed minority.⁵⁷

There is at least one other subtle distinction to be made in regards to religious affiliation north of the Casamance River, one that is of particular interest to historians. This is that religious conversion differed historically among the Diola Fogny and Boulouf. The
conversion of the Fogny, who converted near the turn of the century, was one of the ultimate consequences of the religious incursions waged against them by the Mandinka. The more recent conversion of the Diola Boulouf of the 1930s was, in contrast, attributable to a more general economic and cultural annexation of the Diola to the outside world. It is not so much the different processes of conversion, but rather the different religions to which the Diola converted that pose especially intriguing questions concerning the impact of religious conversion on Diola women.

To a large extent cultural and ecological factors are not unrelated to the modern political organization of Lower Casamance; villages with the strongest cultural and ecological similarities are usually found in the same administrative units. The contemporary political organization of the region differs little from the colonial political infrastructure. During the colonial era local level administrative units increased in scale from cantons to circles. While the post-independence political reorganization closely responds to these wards, their nomenclature has been changed to arrondissements and departments respectively.

Thionk Essil is one of the twenty one villages in the arrondissement of Tendouck, which is in the department of Bignona. Located 12°30' longitude north and 16°30' longitude west, it is divided into four major wards. These large wards of Daga, Niaganane, Kamanar and Batine are
further divided into fourteen subwards which constitute the smallest village organizational units. In the most recent census of 1976 Thionk Essil's population was approximately 8,000, which makes it the largest among the 500 villages which are part of Lower Casamance. It is part of the culture zone of the Diola Boulouf, which comprised the cantons of Djougoutes or Djugut north and south in the colonial period. The Boulouf have no dialect particular to them as a group. In fact Thionk Essil has a dialect of its own which differs significantly from those of its neighbors. Thionk, as in most Diola villages, is ethnically homogenous; there are few non-Diola residents. The fact that it is predominantly Muslim also lends it a considerable degree of religious homogeneity. Again, the historical features of Boulouf villages such as Thionk Essil which make them a unique subject of study are that the region's incorporation into the world market system was comparatively more recent and that its inhabitants converted to Islam in the 1930s only.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Living among the Diola renders the search for a practical utility for such studies such as this one, one borne in this case from my own natural inclination, even more compelling. They are an exceedingly practical people who critically question the utility of studies such as this. My principal objective is that this study help supply the information needed to plan for the integration of rural
women in development schemes. We now know that although women play a crucial role in the development process that they have been neglected as resources in rural development. As Nici Nelson has pointed out, rectifying this imbalance is contingent upon a thorough comprehension of the role of rural women in the process of change. Because the world is changing so rapidly one cannot expect socio-historical studies to provide all the answers needed to orchestrate and implement effective and efficient development planning for men and women. Nevertheless they have a definite value insofar as they can explain the origins and evolution of structural inequities. It is also my hope that this dissertation will rekindle the creative imagination of development planners and others interested in the implementation of successful development programs that improve the lives of women such as these under study as well as of their families.
Footnotes to Chapter 1

1 Most elderly villagers do not know their age. Age can be estimated based on Thionk Essil’s male circumcisions. In most Diola villages virtually all the males between approximately ten and fifteen years of age are circumcised about every twenty years. These male circumcisions, which generally date back to the origins of each village, are the most celebrated and important cultural event of the Diola. The data of the twentieth century circumcisions are well remembered and those preceding 1900 can be estimated. In Thionk Essil there has been a total of 18 such circumcisions, all of which are listed in the appendix. Estimates of age can also be made based upon a list of key historical events composed by census takers in the Department of Bignona to facilitate age calculations for the 1976 census.

2 Louise A. Tilly provides an interesting historical case that refutes the conventional representation of European women as passive and inactive. Her historical data on the participation of women factory workers in France near the turn of the nineteenth century indicates that women actually were engaged in strikes to a considerable degree. In “Paths of Proletarianization: Organization of Production, Sexual Division of Labor, and Women’s Collective Action.” Signs, Vol. 7, No. 3 (Winter 1981): 400-417.


5 Colette le cour Grandmaison, Femmes Dakaroises: rôles traditionnels feminins et urbanisation, Annales de l'Universite d'Abidjan, Ethnosociologie, Serie F, tome 4 (1972). This study, which was originally written as a master's thesis, is a comprehensive treatment of Dakar women. It includes a discussion of: traditional economic institutions and the impact of colonialism, the education of girls, the individual and social role of females, marriage and social life in urban centers, and the economic
activities of urban women.

6 This does not mean that there is no literature published on African women. Edna Bay points out that Ester Boserup's *Woman Role in Economic Development* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1970) was pivotal in turning attention to women in African agriculture. By definition this meant a predominantly rural focus, albeit primarily economic in nature. Bay discusses historiography in regards to African women in "African Women's History and Africanist Historians", Unpublished paper presented at the annual conference of the African Studies Association in Washington D.C., held November 4-7, 1982.


8 In studies of rural women this misconception is given by works that focus on typical cases where women were political elites. Take, for example, Carol P. Hoffer, "Mende and Sherbro Women in High Office," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 6, 2 (1972): 151-164. This unusual situation is covered in more detail in the same author's doctoral thesis entitled "Acquisition and Exercise of Political Power by a Woman Paramount Chief of the Sherbo People," Ph.D. dissertation, Bryn Mawr, 1971. In another article the author focuses on women who were political elites in several states described by anthropologists and early travelers, although she does modify this emphasis by giving a survey of the more typical traditional roles of women in several societies. See Annie M.D. Lebeuf, "The Role of Women in the Political Organizations of African Societies," in Denise Paulme (ed), *Women of Tropical Africa*, trans. H.M. Wright (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963): 93-119.


13 Ibid., pp. 151-159.

14 According to Peter Mark this was the first year that the colonial administration exercised a concerted effort to collect taxes among the Diola of Boulouf using force if need be; "Economic and Religious Change Among the Diola of Boulouf, 1890-1940; Trade, Cash Cropping and Islam in Southwestern Senegal". Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University 1976, p. 108.

15 The issue of the means by which historians may address themselves to human complexities is addressed in Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis (New York: The Free Press, 1969). Berkhofer encourages historians to adopt a behavioral approach to historical analysis, which he defines as the use of theory formulation and testing in the social sciences and a new orientation to the study of man's behavior. This is a broader definition than the one conventionally used, which takes the behavioral approach to mean quantitative analysis of human behavior. A significant effort to employ quantitative techniques in African Studies appears in Joseph P. Smalldone, ed., Explorations in Quantitative African History, Foreign and Comparative Studies/African Series, XVII (1977). A good illustration of how the use of quantitative historical methods can add new perspectives on women is provided in a study of the impact of industrialization on women's work in England and France from about 1700 to 1950. See Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott. Women, Work and Family. New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1978.

16 See the introduction of William R. Bascom and


18 This conference represents one among several in the 1950s and 1960s on African history and archaeology, which were an outcome of the new popularity or "renaissance" of African history in particular. They were initiated in the 1950s with the meetings at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in 1953, 1957, and 1961. Another representative conference was the International Congress of African History, held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in October 1965, which dealt with several dimensions of African history: its emerging themes, its methods, and the instruction of it. There were also interdisciplinary conferences with similar concerns as themes for African Studies as a whole. For example, in December, 1962 the First International Congress of Africanists was held in Accra, Ghana to stimulate scholarship and research on Africa. The proceedings have been published in Lalage Bown and Michael Crowder, eds., The Proceedings of the First International Congress of Africanists (London: Longmans, 1964).


22 Conventionally negritude is said to have begun with the founding of the student newspaper, L'Etudiant Noir, by Aime Cesaire, Leon Damas, and Leopold Sedar Senghor in the mid-1930s. However, it is arguable that the movement
began in 1932 with the publication of *Légitime Défense* by the West Indian Etienne Lero, which traces the origins of a consciousness among blacks in France to events in America and Europe. For a concise historical overview see Abiola Irele, "Negritude or Black Cultural Nationalism," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 3, 3 (1965): 321-348.


24 Irele, 1965, pp. 321-48. As the author points out, the Harlem Renaissance was not the sole influence significant to Negritude. Additional phenomena affecting it were: Afro-Cubanism, the Haitian literary renaissance, Marxism, a strain of social consciousness that pervaded French literature in the 1930s, and the contributions of anthropologists whose works helped legitimize black cultures. Although the Harlem Renaissance itself (a cultural awakening among black Americans in urban centers) was expressed in different art forms, it is best known for the work of literary artists such as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, Sterling Brown, etc. Many of the themes of Negritude were similar to those expressed by renaissance writers. As a good source of information on the Harlem Renaissance see Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971). For a comprehensive article touching on the major themes of Negritude literature, see Abiola Irele, "Negritude—Literature and Ideology, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 3, 4 (1965): 499-526.

25 One of the most comprehensive historical accounts on colonialism is a multivolume collection. See:

- **Volume 1.** The History and Politics of Colonialism, 1870-1914, eds., Lewis H. Gann and Peter Duignan.
- **Volume 2.** The History and Politics of Colonialism, 1914-1960, eds., Lewis H. Gann and Peter Duignan.
- **Volume 4.** The Economics of Colonialism, eds., Peter Duignan and Lewis H. Gann.


26 Victor Turner provides an interesting study of


28 Peter C.S. Gutkind, A Select Bibliography on Traditional and Modern Africa, Occasional Bibliography No. 8, Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs (Syracuse New York: Syracuse University, 1968).


30 The specific methodology and problems encountered are discussed in the appendix.


32 Ibid., pp. 19-20.

33 For examples, see Steven Feierman, The Shambaa Kingdom. (Madison Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974); Robert S. Smith, Kingdoms of the Yoruba (London: Methuen, 1969); Jan Vansina, Kingdoms of the Savanna (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966). Jan Vansina has pointed out that while oral history is good for political history, it is weak on historical data on ceremonials connected to the life cycle, and the history of the arts. Oral history is a good source of information on
social structure only from approximately 1850.

In many centralized societies certain individuals in the past and present are delegated the responsibility of remembering the past. Although griots are the most well known, there are others who have this role. For example, Jan Vansina noted that in Rwanda genealogists were responsible for remembering the lists of kings and queen-mothers, memorialists kept mental note of the most important events of the various reigns, and rhapsodists were in charge of remembering the panegyrics on kings.

Paul Thompson, The Voice of the Past Oral History (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 54. This book is a fascinating account of the use of oral history historically and internationally. According to Thompson oral history was a much utilized and respected source of historical data in European history, where historical scholarship was pioneered, until the nineteenth century when the spread and popularity of printing diminished the stature of oral data. At present oral history is used most in American history, followed by northwest Europe. Considerable attention is also given to it in South America, Australia, Israel, and of course Africa.

Theodore Rosengarten, All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw (New York; Alfred A. Knopf, 1975). This book is an autobiography of an illiterate black tenant farmer, born in 1885 in east-central Alabama. The account of his life, which was in many ways typical of the exploitation of black sharecroppers in the early twentieth century, was transcribed and edited for publication. Also see Studs Terkel, Hard Times (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970). This is an oral history of the great depression in the U.S., as seen through the life experiences of the individuals who lived through the ordeal.


Ibid., pp. 2-18.


One of the most interesting kinds of studies, one which serves as an excellent source of historical reconstruction for women, is a biography. In an unusual work, for example, Mary Smith transcribed the life history of a Muslim Hausa woman in Baba of Karo (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955).

Philip D. Curtin, "Field Techniques for Collecting and Processing Oral Data," *Journal of African History*, IX, 3 (1968), pp. 367-385; G.N. Uzoigwe, "Recording the Oral History of Africa: Reflections from Field Experiences in Bunyoro", *African Studies Review*, XVL, 2 (September 1973), pp. 442-468. Briefly, the major source of contention between the two stems from the expenses involved in each one's advocated techniques of data collection. Curtin's recommended historical data retrieval techniques entail a costly procedure of taping and transcribing. Uzoigwe takes issue with this approach, arguing that such procedures are financially wasteful and unnecessary, a situation he seeks to rectify by offering useful alternatives.


In 1970 the ethnic distribution of Senegal was as follows: Wolof as 40.5%, Serer as 16%, Peul (Fulani) and Toucouleur as 22.8%, Diola as 8.4%, Manding and Bambara as 8.6% and 3.7% as others. *World Bank. Migration and Employment in Senegal*, (September, 1976), p. 5.

Olga Linares, "From Tidal Swamp to Inland Valley: On the Social Organization of Wet Rice Cultivation Among the Diola of Senegal". *Africa* 51 (2) 1981, p. 557. Casamance itself, the southwest portion of which constitutes Lower Casamance, is one of eight administrative regions of Senegal. The other seven are: Cape Verde, Thies, Sine-Saloum, Fleuve, Diofung, Louga, and Senegal-Oriental. Casamance itself is divided into three major administrative units, which are known as regions: Lower Casamance, Middle Casamance, and Upper Casamance. On the next level of administrative organization Lower Casamance is divided into three different departments: Bignona, Oussouye and Ziguinchor. Each of these departments is further parceled into the smallest scale of administrative organization, that of the arrondissement. The department of Bignona, of which Thionk Essil is a part, consists of four different arrondissements: Diouloulou, Sindian, Tendouk, and Tanghori. The department of Ziguinchor is comprised of two
arrondissements: Niaguiss, and Niassia. There are also two 
arrondissements in the department of Ouassouye: Loudia-Wolof 
and Kabrousse.

47 This figure excludes the principal towns of 
Lower Casamance, Bignona and Ziguinchor. van Loo and Star, 

48 Olga Linares, "Agriculture and Diola Society." 
In African Systems of Food Production, ed., Peter McLoughlin 

49 Ibid., p. 197.

50 Ibid., p. 198.

51 Ibid., p. 197.

52 Ibid., p. 199.

53 Christian Roche provides a detailed account of 
the resistance of the people of Lower Casamance in his well 
respected Conquête et resistance du peuples de la Casamance 

54 Diola Fogny is the dialect spoken by most 
Diola, about which J.D. Sapir has written. See his A 
Grammar of Diola-Fogny. London: Cambridge University press, 
1965, "Kujaama: Symbolic Separation Among the Diola-Fogny." 

55 Louis Vincent Thomas distinguishes between 
some 17 subgroups among the Diola. He divides up the Diola 
south of the Casamance River as follows: Floup, Diamat, 
Her, Dyiwat, Pointe Saint-Georges, and Brin-Seleyk. His 
list of the Diola north of the river is as follows: Karone, 
Bliss, Djougout, Kalounay, Kadiamoutay, Narang, Kombo, 
Fogny, Djiragone. Les Diola (Dakar: Institut Fondamental de 


57 I hesitate to quote figures on the proportions 
of the Diola that adhere to different faiths, because any 
figures must be treated with great caution. This stems from 
the fact that religious affiliation is an issue subject to 
misreporting. In their demographic study of Lower Casamance 
van Loo and Star, Op. cit., p. 91 report that 64% of the 
population is Muslim, 12% is Christian, and 24% Animist. 
Islam is most significant among the Manding and in the 
district combining the Diola Fogny and Boulouf, in both 
regions eighty-eight percent of the population is Muslim. 
Christianity in Lower Casamance is virtually synonymous with 
Catholicism. Most Christians among the Diola live south of
the Casamance River where, excluding Ziguinchor, they total twenty percent of the population.

These villages are in the Boulouf region, of which the village under study is a part. It is in these two villages alone in Boulouf that Catholics are in the majority. Those villages in the region that have Catholic wards include Tendouck, Thionk Essil, Mangagoulack and Kartiak. A list of Boulouf villages is included in the appendix.

The wards and subwards of Thionk Essil are listed in the appendix.

Thionk Essil's population contrasts sharply with the regional average. Although the population varies from village to village the mean population is between 400 and 500 "inhabitants", van Loo and Star op. cit., p. 69. Of further note is the fact that the Boulouf region, of which Thionk Essil is a part, has a comparatively high density. Van Loo and Star report that while the density for Lower Casamance averages 31 inhabitants per kilometer, that of the combined Fogny-Boulouf regions is 39, Van Loo, op. cit., p. 69. Annie Lo Quay reports that when the density of the arrondissement of Tendouck is isolated, it averages significantly higher at 45 inhabitants per kilometer. She calculates Thionk Essil's density at 69 persons per kilometer; "Thionck-Essyl en Basse Casamance: évolution récente de la gestion des ressources renouvelables," Thèse du doctorat du 3e cycle, Université de Bordeaux III 1979, p. 6.

Previously there were 18 cantons in Lower Casamance which serve as the basis for contemporary arrondissements. In the Department of Bignona they were Bignona, Djougout-Nord, Djougout-Sud, Kalounaye, Djiragone, Kadiamoutaye Sud, Kadiamoutaye Nord, Fogny-Combo Bliss, Karone and Narang. The former cantons of the Department of Ziguinchor they are: Adeane, Bainouk, Bayot, Brin, and Mandjak. In the Department of Ziguinchor the former cantons are: Floup, Diembering and Pointe Saint-Georges.

In 1979 Annie Lo Quay, Ibid., p. 9, reported that there were only six families in Thionk Essil of non-Diola origins. These were Peul families, all of which were engaged in trade.

Nici Nelson identifies several areas in need of research to aid in intelligent development planning for women. They include action-oriented studies of female labor force participation, the impact on family life women's roles in household management, women's consumption patterns, women and new technology, and evaluations of women's programmes. She also identifies several kinds of theoretical research in
need of further investigation: socio-historical studies, women's perceptions of their roles, men's perceptions of their roles, women's social structures, and the relationship between women, family, class, and education. See chapter four of her Why Has Development Neglected Rural Women? (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979) pp. 54-75.
CHAPTER 2
WOMEN AND THE RURAL ECONOMY: A PARADOXICAL DILEMMA

Djikilior Djiba's generation, the most senior of those of the twentieth century, was the last to have cultivated rice exclusively. Although the productive activity of her peers was altered by a regular interchange with the international market system initiation at that time, they were less affected by it than were later generations. For example the lifestyle of Sarata Diatta's generation, who was born in 1952, had both similarities and dissimilarities with the production patterns of previous generation. As with the women borne before then in this century, Sarata's contemporaries maintained identical roles of women in rice production. Yet their lives were still radically and irrevocably altered by the introduction of nontraditional crops in Thionk Essil. This chapter explores: (1) the role of the women of Thionk Essil in the traditional rural economy, (2) the integration of Thionk Essil into the international market system, and (3) the impact of this integration on women.

WOMEN AND THE TRADITIONAL RURAL ECONOMY

Understanding the contemporary role that the women of
Thionk Essil play in the rural economy is contingent upon a comprehension of their traditional role in the rural economy. Defining the traditional rural economy is in some ways problematic. If it is defined as those activities of production that occurred before the colonial era, then the historian's task becomes more complex. Both the written accounts of explorers and the documents left by colonial officials were notoriously silent on the whole concerning women.¹ Undoubtedly this is more a reflection of the ways in which acculturation shaped expatriates' curiosity and interests than it was of women's significance in their respective societies. Thus what one may reconstruct of Diola women's past in the eras prior to living human memory is to a large measure simply speculation. A more appropriate definitional of the traditional rural economy is that economic activity whose products and organization of production lie in the precolonial period.

In Thionk Essil, as in all Diola villages, precolonial production was centered around rice cultivation. The accompanying division of labor, which is comprised of tasks particular to each of the sexes, has remained relatively unaltered there in the twentieth century. According to oral accounts changes affecting agricultural activity there since 1900 engendered few changes in men's and women's participation in rice production.² Two of the most significant characteristics of the sexual division of labor in rice production in Thionk Essil are both the
complementarity and asymmetry of each sex's participation; there is a strong relationship of interdependence between tasks performed exclusively by each sex. In general it is the men who prepare the soil and it is the women who do the planting and the harvesting.

This relationship of interdependence, however, is not synonymous with equality. A look at the calendar cycle in Thionk Essil suggests that there is a disequilibrium in actual work activities. The cycle of rice production in this village stretches over nine months extending from approximately May to February, the exact time depending on the climatic conditions for that year. The men initiate activities in Thionk Essil during the early rains by preparing the soil, the nurseries, and rice paddies. This primarily involves furrowing and ridging the soil from about May to the end of July. Men are privy to knowledge of soil and water conditions in different paddy fields at different times. Because Thionk Essil's rice paddies are primarily rain-irrigated, the men there are spared the chore of building dikes in more inundated paddies, such as conditions require in many villages south of the Casamance River. Following soil preparation in Thionk Essil, with the exception of the potentially lengthy process of weeding and broadcasting, men's participation in rice production is virtually nil.

As this description suggests, women's role in rice production in Thionk Essil is preeminent; of the tasks
associated with rice production and preparation most are performed by women. Their labor in the crop's annual cycle begins at some point between the end of May or early June when they prepare, transport, and distribute fertilizer.\textsuperscript{6} Notably women describe this as their most arduous task, partly because it necessitates carrying heavy baskets laden with fertilizer over long distances.\textsuperscript{7} Women also select the rice seeds that their husbands broadcast in the nurseries. Only women are familiar with the numerous varieties of rice, which differ in their maturation and needed water exposure. Not uncommonly a woman may select from five to fifteen varieties. Utilizing numerous varieties enables women to adapt their planting strategies to varying natural circumstances and social needs so as to maximize yields. Thus in the event of unforeseen events such as insufficient rains, sickness or kinship obligations, the flexibility that these varieties engender enable a woman to reduce the risks of crop failure.\textsuperscript{8}

Women's role in transplanting rice is complementary and important to that of seed selection. It is they who pull up the seedlings by their roots and transport and transplant them either the same or the following day. This phase, which extends from approximately August to October, requires a special knowledge of different rice varieties. The basic strategy is to plant faster maturing varieties in more shallow fields and slower growing varieties in deeper fields. However, because unforeseen climatic conditions can
alter the anticipated water conditions, alternative varieties may be successfully substituted for "normal" seeds in the rice paddies. Thus women need a thorough knowledge of the appropriateness of rice varieties for different parcels under ideal as well as less than ideal circumstances. Moreover transplanting may tax women's physical stamina even more than it does the sophistication of their comprehension of the proper balance between rice, soils, and ecological conditions; not infrequently women transplant rice in knee and even waist deep water from dawn to dusk. To this task we must add harvesting, which is performed by women from about November to January. It is a particularly precise undertaking insofar as each small rice plant must be cut individually. Finally, it is women who must pound, winnow, and cook the rice as it is needed.

Obviously the amount of time that women devote to rice production and preparation is enormous. This is confirmed by contemporary studies of the time allocation of the sexual division of labor in rice production. For example, it is corroborated by Olga Lilnares' investigation of agricultural activities in Jipalom, a Diola village with a sexual division of labor of rice production that is identical to that of Thionk Essil. Analyzing the time input of one individual in the preparation of five rain fed fields in five parcels, she calculates that the male tasks of nursery preparation, furrowing, and ridging the fields consume 124 hours. In contrast transplanting and harvesting (excluding
the time spend in fertilizing the fields and rice pounding) take up some 404 hours. Clearly women's labor in Thionk Essil's rice production, while interdependent with that of men, is more significant.

Today if one separates rice production from other traditional kinds of agricultural labor and economic activity it still seems as if women's labor is preeminent. Prior to this century the men of Thionk Essil may have chosen to spend the dry season hunting, fishing, constructing and maintaining houses, or simply indulging themselves in serious leisure. More recently some men have busied themselves with a number of additional activities, a subject to which I shall later return. Briefly, these include commercial fishing, cultivating fruit orchards, and palm oil fabrication — all of which are seasonal. However, women's schedules remain comparatively more rigorous insofar as they are almost always engaged in one or a number of traditional activities, some of which go on throughout the year. Such daily tasks include household maintenance, cooking, drawing well water, and childcare. Among those seasonal duties that have precolonial origins are collecting and transporting cooking wood, fishing for oysters and certain varieties of small fish, gathering wild fruit, and collecting and processing salt. Since the 1890s some women have added palm oil fabrication, and only since the 1960s have others added market gardens to their work load. While a yet unaccomplished comprehensive analysis
of the sex differences in time expenditure of these tasks is crucial to any final conclusions, it appears as if the women of Thionk Essil have played a bigger role in traditional agricultural and non-agricultural labor of the village. The fact that African women on the whole do disproportionately more of such work than do men has been pointed out by Esther Boserup, who reports that women in Africa generally do more than half of the agricultural work and in some cases perform about seventy percent of the labor.16

Thionk Essil's system of land tenure is another crucial component of its economy. In this village women as well as men inherit rice paddies, something which occurs in only a few Diola villages.17 When males and females marry they each receive rice fields from each of their parents. This sexual equity in rice paddy distribution is also expressed in the organization of granaries. Each spouse, whether male or female, has their own granary and entry to any but one's own is rigorously prohibited.18 Similarly, both men and women have a somewhat equal role in the distribution of rice itself. In the early years of this century this took the form of a system whereby the spouse of each sex supplied rice from their own fields for their nuclear family, excluding cowives, for half of the agricultural cycle. However, the system was inequitable insofar as only first wives in the polyamous society were fed by their spouse throughout the rainy season. For at least the first few decades of the twentieth century a man provided all the rice
consumed by his children and his first wife throughout the rainy season. He furnished rice to additional wives during the rains only on those days on which they planted or harvested in his fields. Given that women rotated their labor so as to work two days for their husband and three days for themselves, wives of secondary or tertiary status were provided only about forty percent of the rice they consumed for the season. During the dry season every married woman, irrespective of her rank, fed both her children and herself as well as rotated feeding the husband with cowives. Thus, depending on the woman's rank as a wife, during a full calendar year she provided at least half or better of the rice eaten by both herself and her children. Following to the wide scale Islamic conversions in Thionk Essil in the 1930s it became the practice of men to provide equitable portions of rice to all their wives.

Both Thionk Essil's system of land tenure as well as its patterns of rice distribution must be seen in the context of the cultural diversity of Diola peoples. The Diola vary significantly in regards to many cultural factors, including land tenure, the sexual division of labor, and food distribution. This complexity has been most carefully studied by Olga Linares, who conducted a comprehensive comparative analysis of three Diola villages in Lower Casamance, each of which lies in a different geographical subregion. Sambujat, located south of the Casamance River, is in the Diola region known as Kasa.
Jipalom, a village somewhat representative of the Fognyspeaking Diola, is situated north of the Casamance River in the area called the Kajamutay. Fatiya is located further east in a region closer to Manding people and their influence. While all three villages exhibit some similar cultural traits in respect to land tenure, there are other aspects of cultural practices particular to each locale. In each village under study patrilineal principles are exercised in the land inheritance of males only. However in each village there are differences in the degree to which each of these villages permit utilization of the land through borrowing, especially in regards to women. In Sambujat women may neither borrow the rice paddies of uterine kin nor distant agnates. In Jipalom lending rice fields to women is allowed provided the women requesting such a privilege have only temporarily returned to their natal village. In Fatiya women who were born there but who are married to strangers actually pass on the paddies they have worked before and after marriage to their children.\textsuperscript{22}

Notably there is an analagous differentiation in the division of labor in these three villages, much of which is reflected in the cultivation of crops other than rice itself. In Sambujat, where rice is the exclusive crop and grown in tidal swamp paddies that are diked, desalinated, and irrigated, the division of labor between men and women is both complementary and equitably distributed, although most tasks are performed by only one of the two sexes.\textsuperscript{23}
Thus while it is the men who do the heavier work of ridging and dike-building, it is primarily the women who transplant the rice. However, a few tasks engage both men and women. Both keep a watch on the paddies to ward off birds who might damage the crop, both harvest the rice, and men sometimes even assist women in the transplanting.

In contrast the division of labor in the other two villages is less fluid, but at the same time more elaborated by peanut cultivation. In Jipalom where peanuts were introduced around 1920 men and women have had tasks in both rice and peanut cultivation that were exclusive to their sex. The men of Jipalom, whose rain-fed fields do not require diking, prepare the soil by furrowing and ridging for their paddies as well as their peanut fields. The womenfolk of Jipalom plant and harvest both crops alone. In Fatiya, the village understudy lying furthest east, the sexual division of labor between men and women is completely separate. Whereas the men perform all labor associated with ground-nut cultivation, women do all the work linked with rice production, including soil preparation. This differentiation suggests that the numerous cultural traits of Diola society have varying degrees of cultural homogeneity. The fact that Jipalom is more representative of the fairly numerous Fogny-speaking Diola suggests that its sexual division of labor typifies that of comparatively more of this people. Insofar as Thionk Essil's sexual division of labor is virtually identical to that of Jipalom
it may be said that this aspect of their economic obligation is typical of numerous Diola villages. The same may be said in regards to peanut cultivation, a subject to which I shall later return. However, the inheritance of paddies by women in Thionk Essil continues to be a rare phenomenon.

**THE RURAL ECONOMY AND FEMALE SOCIAL STATUS**

Because the economic organization of Diola people is so fundamental to the society as a whole, one is compelled to look there first for an explanation of the social status of Diola women. The fact that Diola women enjoy a comparatively higher social status vis-à-vis the men in their society as compared to most Senegalese women has been commented upon not infrequently elsewhere.25 On one hand the cultural heterogeneity of the Diola suggests the possibility of intra-group variation in women's status, no matter how subtle. At the same time an apparent pervasiveness of an elevated status of the women everywhere among the Diola suggests that this phenomenon is attributable to some ubiquitous cultural feature. Perhaps the most obvious uniformity in the economic system in particular has been the crucial role that women play in rice production.

In building a link between the social status of Diola women and their role in rice production it may be useful to discuss the importance of rice in Diola society. One of the most conspicuous and yet meaningful indications may be found in the Diola language itself. In comparison to the
terminology associated with peanuts, which is a fairly recent arrival among the Diola, the nomenclature associated with rice is both rich and elaborate. In Linares' study of Jipalom she found that there were different words for each step of cultivation, planting, and harvesting. There are also different words for the varied approaches to each of these stages of rice production. For example there are separate words that distinguish planting rice seeds directly in the paddies as opposed to first broadcasting the seeds in a nursery. There are also special words to describe transplanting half of a plant by thinning and allowing the plants to grow taller in the nurseries before transplanting. While these words may reflect, in part, the greater elaboration of tasks associated with rice production, they also reflect a disproportionate importance given to rice within Diola society itself. In Thionk Essil's own particular dialect this is illustrated most dramatically by the verbs associated with different kinds of food consumption. While one verb is used to describe the consumption of any food item, there is one special verb that indicates the consumption of rice in particular.

The importance of rice is further reflected in certain beliefs and practices concerning the crop. For instance, there are certain meaningful differences between the ways which peanuts, Senegal's cash crop, and rice are handled subsequent to their harvest. Whereas transactions with peanuts are public and have a secular meaning, those
associated with rice are more private and take on some sacred overtones.\textsuperscript{28} For example, in Thionk Essil peanuts are bagged openly in the fields and sold at the end of each peanut cycle. In contrast there is a great deal of secrecy surrounding rice, much of which is linked either directly or indirectly to certain practices regarding storage. In Thionk Essil the privacy of one's granary is rigidly reinforced by an interdiction against entry by anyone but the owner. Violation of this taboo, it is believed, invites misfortune on behalf of the transgressor.\textsuperscript{29} Moreover there are other prohibitions that reinforce the importance given to rice in the society. In Thionk Essil rice is not pounded openly under the skies during the rainy season, lest the rains be adversely affected.\textsuperscript{30} Nor does one wear the color red into the rice fields since it is said to cause a diminution of rains.\textsuperscript{31} Finally, disputes over rice fields have historically been the most frequent cause of inter-village and even intra-village disputes.\textsuperscript{32}

The importance of rice to the Diola is also attributable to rice's social function in this society. For one, rice plays an important role in social intercourse insofar as it is consumed in communion at ceremonies celebrating every major life transition -- naming ceremonies, circumcision festivals, marriages, and funerals. Of further importance is the fact that rice is a major indicator of wealth everywhere among the Diola. For this reason as well as the practicality of planning for leaner
years Essilians sometimes stockpiled as much as fifteen years of rice. Conversely a shortage of rice symbolized misfortune and oftentimes poverty among the Diola. Thus in Thionk Essil lending rice to kinfolk or friends has traditionally taken place secretly in the privacy of night. The negative meaning of depleted rice supplies also explains one of the early responses of Thionk Essil residents to the drought which began in 1968. When failing conditions forced many villagers to buy rice, a common reaction was shame at having to do so. No matter how apparent the widespread nature of hardship was at the time, there was no escaping the feeling that to openly purchase rice was a public pronouncement of one's misfortune.

The social significance of rice is not unrelated to Thionk's religious practices, which represent another type of social intercourse. There can be no doubt that rice has a secular dimension, even to the point where potentially nonsecular dimensions are oftentimes of marginal importance. Thus a poor rice harvest may be attributed to worldly factors such as poor rains or poor planting strategy as opposed to malevolent forces. Yet even if the cause of failed rice crops is sometimes attributed to mundane factors, attempts to ensure abundant yields took on unmistakeably nonsecular dimensions. In Thionk Essil this is demonstrated most clearly by the former position of kingship. The principal functions of the king, known as oeyi, were not political in nature as the name suggests;
rather they were almost wholly religious in nature. His principal duty was to officiate at an annual rain ceremony believed to insure propitious rains, something in which generally all villagers participated. The point here is that these practices were a means to one common end, namely the realization of ample rice yields. As such both the position of kingship as well as the annual rain ceremony itself constituted the institutionalization of the significance of rice in Diola society.

It is also important that women are crucial to religious ritual associated with rice. Within Diola cosmology there is a strong association between earth and female fertility, so much so that in some ways women play a more prominent role that do men in certain rituals performed for earth fertility. Thus while both men and women conduct annual rituals to ensure good rice yields, women conducted disproportionately more in the past in Thionk Essil. Women's participation in these rituals may serve as the direct link between women's status and their association with rice. Not only may the status of women be partly attributable to the prominent role they have always played in rice production; it may also stem, in part, from this connection between earth and female fertility.

While the status of Diola women may ultimately be related to their fertility, it is undoubtedly linked with the political organization of Diola society. Elsewhere it has been noted that the status of women in small scale societies
appears to be inversely related to the level of political centralization. Generally women have a comparatively lesser status in such societies which are highly centralized and highly stratified. Conversely societies in which women have a somewhat elevated status are more likely to be decentralized in nature. Thus the fact that the Diola are an acephalous or decentralized society with a social emphasis on egalitarianism must be of some significance to the status of Diola women. At the risk of oversimplification, political decision making in Diola society usually involves the eldest male lineage members in each community. This description does not do justice to the complexities of Diola political organization insofar as these are less visible but nonetheless meaningful influences that play a role in the decision-making processes. Nevertheless the general structure of decentralization is relevant to social interactions in Diola society, including those of women. Undoubtedly whatever social position women may derive from related economic, social and cultural factors would be ill sustained without the appropriate political structure to support it.

Just as one is compelled to look for a common thread to explain women's elevated social status in Diola society, so it seems necessary to pinpoint some common cultural expression of it. In contemporary Diola society one of the most conspicuous culturally specific phenomena related to women is their migratory patterns, to which I have devoted a
chapter. With rare exceptions Diola women migrate disproportionately more than do other Senegalese women, something which suggests some connection between their social status and women's physical mobility. One of the major limitations of migration as a social indicator concerns its temporal dimensions. The modern rural-urban migration of women only began in the 1930's, and as such is inadequate as a precolonial index of women's social status. Whatever indicators are used, it is clear that the status of Diola women is a product of a dynamic interplay of various cultural phenomena in the society at large.

**TRADITIONAL AND PRECOLONIAL TRADE RELATIONS**

Providing a complete picture of women's role in the traditional economy of Diola society requires more than a discussion of agricultural production and land tenure; it also necessitates an inquiry into the evolution of economic exchange. The integration of the Diola into the world market economy was preceded by a system of economic interchange in traditional society that took two forms. One was a redistribution that took place through obligatory gift giving and food consumption at certain ceremonies. Understandably this kind of exchange was primarily intravillage in nature and did not lend itself easily to expansion beyond a small scale. A second type of exchange involved trade for agricultural and nonagricultural items with standard units of a particular agricultural product. This type of exchange, perhaps because it was less linked to
familial obligations, proved to be more adaptable to growth in scale. Thus in precolonial Thionk Essil a significant part of this exchange consisted of a barter system practiced with other neighboring villages. For example, in precolonial Essil women exchanged standard units of rice with the women of Thiobon for pottery.43 Again, the nature of precolonial data leave many pertinent questions regarding women unanswered. Thus little is known about the volume of this economic interchange or about sex differences in the level of participation.

One of the facts that has been established with certainty is that in the precolonial era economic interchange did not occur exclusively between different Diola peoples. The Diola also traded with other peoples, the first of whom were probably their Manding neighbors to the north and to the east. Written sources suggest that the origins of trade between the Diola and Manding dates back to the fifteenth century and may have even been part of a nexus of trade established at that time.44 In 1507, Valentim Fernandes noted that a Manding king named Casa Mansa ruled Casamance, meaning that the Diola may have been a western vassal state of the Malian empire. In this event the Diola would have been incorporated into a long distance trading network of muslim traders known as dioulas. Apparently this trade has persisted for several centuries, as indicated by Pere Labat in 1728 when he observed that the Manding were then regular traders along the Casamance River.46 Among the
few known facts concerning this trade is the fact that the Diola primarily traded their rice for iron. They also traded rice with the Manding for cotton which they wove into pagnes, a skill commented upon by Fernandes in his early nineteenth century publication. Unfortunately we do not know the degree to which women participated in this trade. However given that iron obtained through trade was primarily used for men's tools of cultivation, it is unlikely that women played a major role in it.

Judging from existing records, the origins of the integration of the Diola hinterland into the world market system was rooted in a precolonial trade initiated with the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. This trade initially consisted of the export of beeswax and later of slaves. The trade of beeswax in particular began in the fifteenth century shortly after the first visit of Casamance by the Portuguese. Judging from Labat's accounts of the export of beeswax in the seventeenth century, this trade spanned at least two centuries. Again, the role that women played in this type of trade is difficult to establish. However the division of labor associated with beeswax suggest that it was monopolized by men.

The role that the Diola played in the slave trade has only recently been give some attention. In spite of the neglect of this issue, written sources clearly indicate that in the nineteenth century the Diola were actively engaged in slave raiding and trading. Thionk Essil was notorious for
its participation in these activities. Although nothing is known of the origins of Thionk Essil's participation in the slave trade, it is known that when the French established their first outpost at Carabane in 1836 they found the village actively engaged in slave raids. In fact slave raids became a source of tension and even conflict between Thionk and French colonial officials. As a consequence of the village's continued participation in these raids in spite of orders given by the French to cease such activity, the French organized a punitive expedition against Thionk Essil in 1863 led by Pinet Laprade. Beyond this our knowledge of slaving operations there are scanty. Nevertheless, the sexual division of labor data suggests that Diola women played a marginal role in such activities as captives as opposed to captors. Given the exclusive participation of males in military affairs in the precolonial era in Thionk, it is not likely that women played a role in the Diola aggression against other Diola peoples either in the organized slave raids or against isolated individuals. Limited sources actually reveal that they, as well as children, predominated amongst those captives traded. While the Diola south of the Casamance River traded captives to the Portuguese at Ziguinchor, north of the river the Diola sold them to the Manding.

There are at least two other commodities that the Diola traded with Europeans that may be assessed in regards to female participation. Before 1850, Lower Casamance exported
significant quantities of a deliciously perfumed honey. Moreover, there is evidence that even before 1840 the Diola had begun trading rice at the French outposts of Carabane and Sedhiou. In the nineteenth century the Diola also began hiring themselves out as temporary laborers to the French, as indicated by Lieutenant Vallon who observed that the people of Boulouf in particular went to Carabane in search of employment in factories as well as in rice production. Notably women may have played a role in the latter activities. It is possible, yet unclear, that women participated in a trade of rice by either trading it themselves or indirectly through male intermediaries. However the role they played in rice production make it probable that women were involved in remunerated labor associated with rice production. Reports indicate that those persons engaged in such activity constituted a seasonal labor migration that was very limited in nature. Thus in the context of Diola society as a whole, whatever role that women may have played in this labor migration was probably marginal.

In fact, the historical circumstances of the nineteenth century suggest that on the whole trade in the region was moderate in scale. Throughout this century the safety of travel so necessary for the establishment of regular trade, was hindered by several phenomena. One such factor was an ongoing warfare endemic to the region. Even during the first decades when pacification was supposed to be at its
zenith in Lower Casamance, inter village disputes were commonplace. In Boulouf this kind of aggression persisted until the end of World War I. For example, in 1900 Bagaya was at war with Diatok and in 1902 was also involved in other confrontations with Mandegane and Djimonde. In 1903 not only were Thionk Essil and Tendouk engaged in acts of aggression on the Diola Kasa of south shore Casamance; Mandegane and Djimonde were also in conflict with one another.

In the latter quarter of the nineteenth century economic interchange was also hindered by a series of holy wars in the Senegambia known as the Soninke maraboutic wars. When this warfare, which began in the Gambia in 1850, finally reached the Diola in 1878 the Diola of Boulouf were not immediately affected. While these jihads ravaged the Diola Fogny for about ten years, the Diola in the Boulouf region remained relatively unaffected. The only attacks made against Boulouf, which were nominal, were led by Birahim N'Diaye and Fode Sylla. It was the aggression of Fode Sylla in particular that most affected Thionk Essil. In 1886 he attacked Thionk and was defeated. He met with misfortune again two years later when ambushed by the combined forces of the Boulouf villages of Tiobon, Mlomp, Kartiak and Thionk Essil while camping at Dianki. Such religious warfare in the region was quelled in 1893 with the defeat of Fode Kaba by the French.

Both inter village disputes and the resistance to
jihadis reflect a more general hostility of the Diola to a penetration of any kind. Largely isolated for centuries by geographical conditions unfavorable to sustained communication, Diola villages developed a ferocious independence which could only have adversely affected trade. European accounts of the dangers inherent in making contact with the region, although scattered, suggest that the reputation of the Diola was instrumental in deterring the penetration of the region. In 1802 J.L. Durand wrote that the Diola resisted any communication with whites. More than a century later in 1911 one colonial administrator noted that it was dangerous to conduct trade among the Diola because they often killed and abandoned traders to prevent any kind of intrusion.

Understandably the establishment of a regular and sustained trade awaited the pacification of the region, which did not come easily. The tradition of Diola independence made for a prolonged and protracted resistance. In response to such obstacles the French colonial administration developed a trio of tactics. One of these concerned the acquisition of treaties in various villages, most of which were obtained between 1836-1914. Undoubtedly this phase of colonial expansion set a precedent for what Frances Leary succinctly describes as "piecemeal pacification".

The impact of these treaties was diminished by two different factors. One was the nature of political
organization in Diola society. Because power was diffused in Diola communities, there was in fact no central authority figure to either legitimize or enforces such treaties. Secondly these treaties were signed with no intent to obey them. Often as soon as the French had obtained a treaty with one village and moved on to another, the one which appeared subdued reneged with seemingly vengeful nonchalence. Experience proved that the village that was passive today might be in rebellion tomorrow.

Taxation was another tactic by which the French sought to pacify the region. Unlike treaties, taxation was a powerful aid to colonial penetration. This stems largely from the fact that taxation provided an entree for the coercion which ultimately legitimized the colonial regime. In fact the two were inextricably linked; taxation was meaningless without enforcement. That this may not have been immediately apparent to the colonial administration is suggested by a sequence of historical events. For more than a decade the Diola of Boulouf, for example, resisted through either default or by a display of force. Taxation of the Diola officially began in 1893 when Fode Kaba signed a treaty in which he pledged the Diola Fogny to annual taxes of 5000 cfa. Nevertheless in the 1890s Thiobon was the only Boulouf village to pay taxes with any regularity. A more direct resistance emerged after a full decade. In 1902 after Thionk Essil and Diatok challenged taxation with a show of force with guns and spears Dianki, Mlomp and Kartiak
joined the opposition.\textsuperscript{72} This was followed by widespread nonpayment in Boulouf in 1903 and 1904.\textsuperscript{73} Only during the dry season of 1905-06 did tax collection begin to have any modicum of success in the region.\textsuperscript{74}

It is significant that the implementation of the third tactic, the use of force, coincided with a greater regularity of tax payments. One example in Boulouf of the way in which taxation provided an opportunity to use coercion may be seen in the village of Kartiak. The nonpayment of taxes in Kartiak was, however, not the only factor that was probably used to justify force. The audacity of Kartiak lay not so much in its outstanding recalcitrance to taxation as it did in its criticism of surrounding villages that did pay. Because such circumstances offered a potentially dangerous precedent, the French reacted with resolve. In 1905, the colonial government dispatched an army colony to Kartiak. When this failed to induce voluntary payments the colonial government installed an administrative post there, no doubt to serve as an imposing symbol to surrounding villages of the advance of colonization in Boulouf. Nevertheless Kartiak was not accommodating to these measures. In 1907 the residents of this village attacked the newly built outpost and the colonial militia was sent to quell the disturbance.\textsuperscript{75} Given the nature of resistance it is no small wonder that the tentacles of the colonial government only took firm root in Boulouf after an infantry was established in permanence in
the locale. It was not until 1917 that the colonial administrative infrastructure was firmly established.

Unfortunately the scantiness of historical data reduces the role of women in the resistance to colonial conquest to an issue of speculation. According to oral accounts women never fought as warriors in precolonial Diola society. However the limited historical data which does exist suggests that women played other kinds of roles in war related activities. For example, when Kartiak attacked the colonial outpost in 1907 many women collectively sacrificed a cow and conducted certain rituals aimed at ensuring successful resistance. Women in Kartiak are also reported to have vigorously encouraged the men to resist. Thus even if women were not themselves physically engaged in military activities, they appear to have been participants in a warrior tradition. Part of this has some religious overtones. In Thionk Essil war activities were always preceded by divination performed by women as well as men. Moreover some data suggests that women may have participated in selected war councils. Evaluating the role that women played in the tax revolt of Balingore in 1905, Lieutenant Diverres, who was then a résident of Fogny, commented, "It is the will of the women which is dominant and decides matters of tax or war". Even if this observation is an overly favorable interpretation of women's participation in decisions concerning war, it still suggests that women played a significant role in this regard.
COLONIAL TRADE RELATIONS

With all likelihood trade was partly both the cause and consequence of the pacification which was largely instrumental in curbing the warring of the region. In the latter quarter of the nineteenth century there was a blossoming of commercial incentives which was linked to certain events that were taking place in Europe. Both the growing industrialization and urbanization at that time created a vast market for two West African products which were found in Casamance. The demand for rubber stemmed from an increase in the industrial use of the product for items like springs, hose, tubing, etc. Moreover this need was nurtured by the development of the pneumatic bicycle tire in the 1890s and the automobile in the early twentieth century. Industrialization also created a corresponding demand for palm oil, whose derivatives served several purposes. Palm oil was used in the manufacture of industrial lubricants as well as soap and candles. Palm kernels were also used to manufacture margarine and to process the residue to make food for cattle. The notion that this whet commercial appetites and, in turn, resulted in an escalation in pacification is corroborated by an overlap in the increase of exports and the adoption of a policy of forceable compliance. Both grew rapidly in the 1890s.

Undoubtedly the most significant consequence of the exchange of rubber and palm oil by the Diola with Europeans
was a new pervasiveness in trade relations. Part of this was associated with the expansion in the quantity of exports. For example, the expansion of rubber exportation was spectacular. The quantity exported from Casamance rose from 59 metric tons in 1883 to practically 400 tons in 1893. So high was the hope of gain that the colonial administration itself initiated rubber plantations in Casamance. Both projects initiated in 1895 and Mangakunda and Seju were badly maintained and abandoned. Undeterred, the colonial government attempted similar plantation schemes at Ziguinchor and at Sinedone. Nevertheless the use of rubber as a surrogate for currency in tax payments probably played a special role in the rise in rubber exportations. Given rubber's economic potential at the turn of the century, commercial optimism was only dampened by a decline in the demand for West African rubber. Following a rise in the prices of rubber, an increase in the availability of high quality rubber from Southeast Asia beginning in 1913 permanently depressed the international market for West African rubber.

Pacification also stimulated a trade in palm oil and palm kernels. This is evidenced by the fact that a sharp growth in palm exports coincided with the close of the religious warfare of the region. As with rubber, the rise in palm exportations was sharp and rapid. The annual average of 198 tons of palm clusters exported between 1869-1877 grew to a new average of 287 tons from 1884-1886.
Palm oil enjoyed a similar spurt in exportation; between 1881-1886 its exports quadrupled from five to twenty tons. During the period in which the Diola exported both palm produce and rubber simultaneously, they alternately exported greater volumes of those items most favored by different market factors. Similarly market factors determined the life span of the trade of both palm produce and rubber. Favorable market conditions for the trade in palm produce outlasted those of rubber by almost two decades. It was not until the 1930s that the trade in palm produce was sharply curtailed.

The void in international trade in Lower Casamance was filled by peanuts, whose cultivation and exportation began much earlier in other regions of Senegal. The origins of peanut production in Senegal began in 1833 when a small purchase of peanuts was made in Gambia, and eight years later about a ton was purchased in Senegal..."In 1854 about 5,500 tons were exported and the amount kept rising." Thus the extensive participation of the Diola Boulouf in peanut production in the 1930s, which followed the failure of two crops more favored by the region's environmental conditions, was in some ways belated. Tardy as it was, this trade in peanuts placed the Diola alongside the other people in Senegal in terms of their choice of a cash crop. Throughout the twentieth century Senegalese farmers have cultivated peanuts more than any other agricultural item as a cash crop. Historical data suggest that the growth in exports
may have been in some ways linked to the consolidation of colonial hegemony throughout Senegal. The annual average in peanut exports grew from 50,000 tons in the 1890s to 723,000 tons in 1937.  

**WOMEN AND THE MODERN ECONOMY**

Much of the ambiguity surrounding women's roles in precolonial trade relations diminishes in the more modern historical period. Fortunately oral data clarifies much of their role in international economic exchange since about 1875. For one, accounts clearly indicate that the pervasiveness of the modern economic order has had special implications for women. While it does not seem that Diola women in particular were greatly involved in earlier international trade, they have played a significant role in this exchange in the twentieth century. An analysis of activities associated with palm produce suggests that women were involved in its production and trade because their labor was crucial. Generally the men collected foodstuffs and women processed it. Thus in Thionk Essil it was primarily the men who collected the latex and the women and children who coagulated it and placed it in salt water. Similarly it was the men who mounted trees to collect palm clusters and the women who prepared palm oil. This sexual division of labor was accompanied by a corresponding sexual distribution of foodstuffs for market liquidation; while the proceeds from palm oil was kept men, that of palm kernels went to women. Judging from oral accounts, the financial
implications of this practice were not appreciably different for women and men alike. According to migrants this lack of disparity in incomes between the sexes is applicable to the rubber trade as well. There were no vast disparities between the income which males and females made from rubber and palm produce trade.\textsuperscript{94}

In some ways the cultivation of peanuts in Boulouf represents a meaningful departure from the precedents set by rubber and palm produce. Unlike these agricultural items, men cultivated peanuts either alone or with minimal assistance from women. Thus in Thionk Essil women still only assist in planting peanuts, which is not as demanding as is planting rice. In contrast it is the men who have furrowed and ridged the soil, harvested, stacked, dried, threshed, winnowed, and sold peanuts. On the occasions where women have assisted men in these latter activities, they have been given a small portion of the crop which is used for household consumption as opposed to market sale.\textsuperscript{95}

The significance of this division of labor lies not so much in the sexual assignment of tasks per se as it does in the economic implications of this differentiation. It is usually the men alone who own, sell, and therefore profit from peanuts. This means that since the 1930s the women of Boulouf have been virtually excluded from the principal rural cash mainstay. Even the diversification of certain aspects of the modern rural economy has not altered the preeminence of peanuts as a source of rural income. In
1976, Klaus de Jonge estimated that 30-40 percent of all rural revenue in Lower Casamance was obtained through the sale of peanuts. Although accurate, this figure masks subregional variations insofar as it aggregates the rural income of all the relevant subregions into one global estimate. Thus in Thionk Essil, whose participation in peanut production is significantly higher than that of the population south of the Casamance River, peanuts may represent a greater proportion of overall rural income.

The introduction of peanut production marks a contemporary distortion of the rural economy insofar as women were by and large excluded from the most remunerative crop. Throughout the twentieth century this economic disenfranchisement of women seems to have been accentuated by additional diversification in the rural economy. Next to peanuts, fishing holds the most promising economic possibilities. In Thionk Essil there has been an expansion of two different kinds of fishing since independence which have different implications for men and women. Since independence there has been an escalation of men’s participation in deep water fishing of a more commercial and less household consumption type nature. Women may sometimes participate in this type of fishing only insofar as their husbands may employ them to smoke and dry the fish for preservation and to transport and sell it in urban markets where profits are maximized. Nevertheless there are striking differentials in the gains men and women
engaged in this kind of fishing. According to one report, women earn only from 10-40 percent of the earnings of their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{98}

Among the most profitable alternatives open to women of Thionk Essil are those associated with certain foodstuffs which they can market in urban centers. One such item is oysters, which constitutes a major commercial fishing activity that women themselves dominate. Although women have fished for oysters since the precolonial era, this activity only became a commercial endeavor in the 1970's.\textsuperscript{99} Since then many women have formed small groups to prepare them for market liquidation. This has meant that one or more women have traveled to an urban center to sell them. Of the sources of income available to the women of Thionk Essil, marketing oysters has been one of the most promising. Similarly, selling palm oil in urban markets has been potentially lucrative. Nevertheless estimates of the maximum yields from these activities do not exceed those that men may make in the countryside.\textsuperscript{100}

These sex differences in economic alternatives clearly demonstrate that women's economic potential is linked with urban as opposed to rural centers. Whereas men may frequently remain in the countryside to make an income, women must usually go to an urban center to earn money. This, no doubt, has served as the seed of women's participation in a seasonal and rural-urban migration which began in the 1930s in Thionk Essil. The connection between
this migration and women's exclusion from rural economic opportunities is unmistakable. When the depression of the 1930s stifled the demand for palm products, peanuts still remained a viable economic alternative. Thus proliferation of peanut production in Boulouf in that decade may be seen as a male response to the new direction that economic circumstance had then taken. Similarly the seasonal migration of women to urban centers may be seen as the female equivalent. In both its origins and its evolution female rural-urban migration continues to be an outcome of structural imbalances in economic opportunities for men and women in the modern rural sector.

Some additional perspective is gained on the plight of Diola women if other transformations in the rural household economy are discussed. For both men and women the expansion of household monetary obligations has surpassed rural income. The combined emergence of a money economy and the availability of manufactured products introduced a revolution in terms of household necessities. By the 1970s the demands placed on the women of Thionk Essil in this regards were considerable. It appears that most but not all women have been expected to furnish the daily supplies of soap, kerosene and sugar. Most women have also been responsible for providing clothing for both themselves and their children as well as any costs associated with their children's education.

Men's financial obligations are equally if not more
demanding. Among the major expenses are taxes, a possible bride price, and occasional household improvements such as roofing and even construction. Men also usually provide the daily condiments for rice as well as millet for his entire nuclear family during the month of Ramadan. On the whole the picture seems to be one in which women assume expenditures for daily utilization while men take on those which are more intermittent. The precise economic burden that this represents for men and women alike awaits further investigation. What seems clear, however, is that the distorted integration of women into the modern economy has crippled their capacity to deal with their economic household obligations.

The paradoxical nature of women's role in the contemporary rural economy is rooted in the duality of that economic system as it has evolved. On one hand women's participation in the rural economy remains as complete and full as it was before Thionk Essil became integrated into the nexus of international trade. Women still play a preeminent role in rice production, the importance of which is underscored by the fact that rice is still the principal crop cultivated by the Diola. This takes on additional meaning when it is realized that the Diola produce of Senegal's rice, which is the principal item of consumption in the nation as a whole. Yet inspite of the importance of their role in rice production they are only shadows in the more modern component of the rural economy. Women receive
only marginal benefits from peanuts, the cash crop which serves as the key source of rural revenue. The fact that women must travel to urban centers for virtually any economic gain exemplifies their exclusion from rural economic opportunities. In short, broader structural changes in the rural economy have been accompanied by a dual level of significance attributed to Diola women's labor; while their labor is intrinsically valuable and crucial to rice production, the inability of rice to command rural incomes has resulted in the devaluation of their labor.
Footnotes to Chapter 2

1 In fact not only women, but the Diola as a whole, are dealt with only negligibly in early explorers' accounts. For example, there is only scanty information on the Diola in the first two available documents of this type. The first one is Valentim Fernandes' report of his journey to the Casamance in 1507, Description de la Côte Occidentale d'Afrique (French Translation: Th. Monod, A. Texeira de Mota and R. Mauny, eds., Bissau, 1951). The second edition is an account of the Sieur de la Courbe's travels in the region; see P. Cultru, ed., Premier Voyage du Sieur de la Courbe fait à la côte d'Afrique en 1685 (Paris, 1913). Although French administrative reports of Casamance actually began in 1836 when they first established a trading post at Carabane, accounts up until about 1890 are intermittent. There are two significant records of administrative visits to Thionk Essil in particular, neither of which treats women in any detail. They are: M. Bertrand-Bocande's account of a visit to Boulouf in 1850, "Voyage au pays de Kion," Archives Nationales du Sénégal (hereafter ANS), 1G 23; and Pinet-Laprade's report of his expedition against Thionk Essil in 1860, "Expédition de la Basse Casamance," ANS 1D 16). Subsequent colonial records, on the whole, are sparse in their treatment of women.

2 Thionk Essil Historical Texts, B-107. These texts are a collection of three notebooks in which I recorded my field interviews and notes over a period of 15 months in Thionk Essil. Throughout the thesis they are abbreviated by the acronym TEHT as well as one of the first three letters of the alphabet, depending on the notebooks in which the interview appears. The page numbers of the texts are also cited. The distribution of persons interviewed appears in Appendix D.

3 A detailed description of the agricultural tasks of men and women alike during the heaviest agricultural activity, from May to January, is provided in Annie Lo Quay's, "Thionck-Essyl en Basse Casamance: évolution récente de la gestion des ressources renouvelables." Thèse de Doctorat de 3e Cycle, Université de Bordeaux, 1979, pp. 171-182.

4 Olga F. Linares provides the most thorough account of subregional differences in rice cultivation, taking both
ecological and cultural factors into account; see her, "From Tidal Swamp to Inland Valley: On the Social Organization of Wet Rice Cultivation Among the Diola of Senegal," *Africa* 5(2) 1981: 557-595.

5 Rice matures in 90-120 days, depending on the variety. In the event that weeds grow extensively, this could require that men expend considerable energy weeding. In those areas where fields are most inundated, primarily south of the Casamance River, men also put in time caring for the dikes they construct there while the rice is maturing.


7 Ibid. The fertilizer itself is a mixture of cattle feces which is combined with such rubbish as rice, bark, dried leaves, and ashes from household cooking.


9 Ibid.

10 TEHT, B-55.


12 TEHT, C-28.

13 TEHT, C-53.

14 TEHT, A-50.

15 TEHT, A-184.


17 The acquisition of fields by women in Thionk Essil may actually be looked upon as a dowry. Although rare, a similar system exists in Affiniam. Paul Pelissier, *Les paysans du Sénégal: les civilisations agraires du Cayor à la Casamance* (St. Yrieux: Fabreque, 1966) pp. 690-691. Pelissier also notes that in some Diola villages women acquire rice fields only if they satisfy certain conditions. In Séley a women who marries only receives rice fields if she is returned to her original family upon her death. In Fintioc, a Fogny village, a woman who marries receives rice fields only upon the condition that she marry someone from the same village. Pelissier theorizes that the acquisition by women in these villages of rice fields is a product of a disproportionately greater availability of rice fields there. He also mentions the fact that in Thionk Essil men
often receive their rice fields prior to marriage so that they may acquire some rice reserves to begin their new household.

18 TEHT, B-191. Diola granaries may be located in one of several places in or near a household, depending on the importance of the harvest and the availability of space. South of the Casamance River rice is frequently kept in one of several special rooms where one sleeps or between the ceiling and the roof on slats of mangrove or ronier. North of the River the Diola may use one of three types of granaries: those which are located on either the roof or the ceiling, granaries constructed outside of the house, and those which are built in one part of the kitchen; Louis Vincent Thomas, Les Diolas: essai d'analyse fonctionelle sur une population de Basse-Casamance (Dakar: IFAN (Memoires Vol. 55), 1958) p. 245. It is also interesting to note that among the Diola the rice from men's granaries is frequently used to feed guests, including frequent visits from relatives. The rice from women's granaries is frequently used to nourish their nuclear families.

19 TEHT, B-46. There are a few other Diola villages that have a similar system. In Bliss-Karone the children are nourished for the first six months of the year from the granaries of the womenfolk, and the last six months from those of the husband. Odile Journet, "Rôles et status des femmes dans la société Diola (Basse Casamance," These du 3e cycle, Université de Lyon, 1978, p. 109.

20 TEHT, B-202. This supports one general observation that I made in the field concerning the impact of Islam on women. On the whole social solidarity between women seems to have been strengthened by Muslim religious conversion. At the same time the social distance between men and women seems to have been accentuated. A more equitable distribution of food by a man among his wives would certainly contribute to a greater social cohesion among women.


22 Ibid., p. 571.

23 Ibid., p. 575.


25 Journet, op. cit.

26 Olga F. Linares, "Agriculture and Diola Society,"
27 In Thionk Essil's dialect the word fou-ting is used to connote the consumption of all food other than rice. The word fou-choho is a special verb earmarked to describe the consumption of rice alone.


29 TEHT, B-67.

30 TEHT, B-75.

31 TEHT, B-78. Traditionally Essilians wore indigo cloth for not only rituals performed for abundant rice yields, but also for many other important ceremonies such as funerals and weddings. The significance of this color is that it resembles rain clouds.

32 The continuity in this phenomenon is corroborated by both archival documents at the turn of the century as well as more contemporary studies of the region. In 1901 Lt. Nourri, in an administrative report of his tour of Boulouf, commented upon internecine conflicts that resulted from disputes over rice fields, ANS 13G 498 5. In more recent field observations, Linares notes that there are some Diola villages where disagreements over the boundaries of rice plots still results in skirmishes among the Diola; op. cit., "Agriculture and Diola Society," p. 209.

33 TEHT, B-66. Oral accounts indicate that it was much more common to have rice reserves for 3-4 years, at least in the twentieth century. Thus the figure fifteen may reflect more ideal as opposed to actual reserves.

34 TEHT, B-191. There was also a practice in the past whereby pounding rice directly under the sky was prohibited during the rainy season, lest it impede propitious rains. The significance of rice is also reflected by the fact that in many Diola villages the women are prohibited from leaving (in cases of divorce) during the rainy season to insure that the rice fields do not go uncultivated.

35 TEHT, C-71. This is corroborated by Olga Linares, "Agriculture and Diola Society," p. 220. In the village under study, Jipalom, people take great pains to keep their having to buy rice a secret.

36 TEHT, B-86. There were, however, some limited political dimensions to the king's duties in Thionk Essil. The king did settle some land disputes in the community.
The limitations of the political realm of his powers is reflected by the fact that he did not participate in the council of elders, which was noted by Bertrand-Bocandé in 1850 when touring the region, ANS 1G 23.


39 It is interesting to note that the ascephalous nature of Diola society was mirrored in the precolonial era by both residential patterns as well as architecture. Bertrade-Bocandé's account of his visit to Thionk in 1850 indicates that each family lived in an isolated compound which was fortress-like in construction, ANS 1G 23.

40 Political decision-making and residential patterns, until recently, were closely linked. Community decisions were generally made by a consensus of the elders within it. The scale of the community in which such decisions were made was limited primarily to the compound. Each one was comprised of two or three generations of male descendants of the one particular elder along with their families. This may have averaged about 15-20 people per compound. The dissolution of the traditional compound in Thionk, which began in the 1920s with migration, has escalated in the past decade because of the construction of the Commune. This is a centralized portion of the village in which housing is constructed in accordance with the nuclear and not the extended family.

41 Serer women also migrate disproportionately more than do most Senegalese women. I do not mean to say here that these women's social status is the sole factor that explains their physical mobility. However, their social status may play a significant role in this phenomenon.

42 The nature of exchange in "primitive" economies is discussed at length in Karl Polanyi's, Primitive, Archaic, and Modern Economies (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books 1968).

43 TEHT, A-37.

44 Jean Boulègue, "La Sénégalie: du milieu du XVe siècle au début du XVIIe siècle." Thèse du 3e cycle (Paris),
Although it is likely that the peoples with whom the Diola first traded were Manding, it is possible that their first trading partners may have been Wolof.

45 Fernandes, op. cit., p. 57.

46 Père Jean-Baptiste Labat, Nouvelle Relation de l'Afrique occidentale, Paris, 1728, Vol. 5, p. 232. This is the earliest identification of the indigenous non-Diola peoples with whom the Diola traded.


50 For example, see Charlotte A. Quinn, Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972) p. 26.

51 Actually frictions had developed between Thionk Essil and the French were preceded by disagreements with the English over the same issue. At the turn of the century Bocande observed that the English who had established a trading post at Elinkine, a village south of the Casamance River, quarreled with Thionk because of its participation in slave raids. Bocande himself described the people of Thionk Essil as pirates, ANS 1G 23.

52 Mark, op. cit., p. 44. It may have begun much earlier insofar as the Portuguese traveled throughout Casamance since the sixteenth century in search of beeswax, slaves, and even ivory which was then available in the region. Some of the earliest details of Boulouf's participation in slave raids appears in Hyacinthe Hecquard's, "Rapport sur un Voyage dans la Casamance," Revue Coloniale (May 1852), pp. 431-432. He indicates that these villages traveled by canoe southwards across the Casamance River where they pillaged villages and captured victims to sell as slaves. Their trade in this commodity was directed northwards to the Manding who sold captives to English traders established along the Gambia River.

53 "Expédition de la Basse Casamance par Pinet-Laprade." ANS 1D 16 108. Some nineteenth century accounts of Diola trading activities indicate that the Diola
participated in the slave trade until at least the 1880s; Alex Mitchinson. The Expiring Continent (London: William H. Allen, 1881), p. 413.

54 In his description of Boulouf slave raids against the south shore Diola region, Lt. Vallon reports that primarily women, children and cattle were taken, op. cit., p. 457. According to Thomas, op. cit., pp. 222-223, male adults were often massacred during slave raids while women and children were kept and sold as slaves.


56 Ibid., p. 86.

57 Vallon, op. cit., p. 472. His records also indicate that the Diola

58 Mark, op. cit., p. 54.

59 ANS 13G 374 2; ANS 13G 375 2.

60 ANS 2G 3 44.

61 Birahim N'Diaye, who migrated from the East to the Fogny region, was a trader before converting to a religious warrior. In 1884 he attacked the village of Djimonde but withdrew with news that several other Boulouf villages had mobilized to rally to Djimonde's defense. Those villages included Bagaya, Diatok, Tendouck, and Mangagoulak, ANS 4B 74 30.

62 ANS 1D 50.

63 ANS 13G 463 2.


65 ANS 1D 11.

66 Pelissier, op. cit., o. 676.


68 Pelissier, op. cit., p. 676.
76 After WWI three companies of tirailleurs were established at Bignona to stabilize conditions. This was part of more stringent measures taken by Governor General Clozel who advocated a more aggressive disarmament policy in Lower Casamance.

77 The administrative organization of the entire region of Casamance was established by 1917. It was divided up into three conscriptions: Upper, Middle, and Lower Casamance. All three units fell under the administrative jurisdiction of an Administrative Superior. Lower Casamance was further divided into three circles, each of which was administered by a resident, or commandant de cercle; one was situated at Ziguinchor, another at Bignona, and the third was at Kamoboul. The resident of Bignona, the circle in which Thionk is located, was assisted by eight chefs de cantons who he nominated. Beneath these canton chiefs were chefs du villages (village chiefs), who were charged with collecting taxes and enforcing forced labor.

78 TEHT, B-113.

79 Roche, op. cit., p. 291-292.

80 TEHT, A-21.

81 ANS 13G 375 2.


83 A.G. Hopkins, An Economic History of West Africa
The most rigorous efforts made by the French to dominate their possessions in Casamance began in about 1890, but extended until approximately 1920. During the first ten years of this period the colonial emphasis was on establishing several military posts among the Diola and in the second half they emphasized crystallizing the colonial infrastructure by means of military enforcement; Antoine Tendeng, "Les Sources de l'histoire de la Casamance aux Archies du Senegal (1816-1920)," Universite de Dakar, These du Maîtrise, 1974, p. 23. There is also some overlapping with other decades in regards to the trade in rubber. Although the African rubber trade began to peak in the 1890s, it actually became an object of commerce in Lower Casamance around 1879-90. Roche, op. cit., p. 193. Reference to Boulouf participation in the rubber trade first appears in official documents in 1885, ANS 4B 74 23.


Roche, op.cit., p. 194-195.

Rubber was not the only item used as a surrogate for currency for tax payments. The Diola also paid with rice, millet, and even cattle. However, when rubber was exported from the region it was more valued as a substitute by the French. This complemented certain attitudes of the Diola insofar as cattle and rice are both highly valued by the Diola and generally not willingly relinquished.

Harms, op. cit., p. 74.


This decline was attributable not so much to a general decrease in trade that resulted from the depression as it was to other market factors. In Senegal, for example, the decline in palm produce was caused by a switch to the exportation of groundnuts as opposed to palm products; the two are to some measure substitutive. In British West Africa the decline of the palm produce trade in the 1930s was primarily attributable to a rise in the cocoa industry in Ghana; Hopkins, op cit., pp. 167, 174, 176-7.


TEHT, A-60.

Although both men and women fish in Thionk Essil, as elsewhere among the Diola, their participation is of two different types. Generally men fish individually and women fish collectively. Moreover, the instruments that each of the sexes uses varies considerably. Whereas women usually fish with baskets or wicker traps, men usually fish with harpoons, and nets. The use of different instruments undoubtedly stems from the fact that women usually fish in shallower waters such as ponds and deep rice fields for smaller fish. Conversely, men usually fish in deeper waters for larger fish. As a result men usually draw the market profits from large fish as women do from oysters today. Villagers estimate that industrious men who market fish can earn 50-100,000 cfa ($250-500 annually). Women who sell oysters average about 30,000 annually ($150).

Whereas women estimate that they can earn up to approximately 40,000 cfa ($200) from palm oil annually, men may earn 30-60,000 cfa ($150-300) from the proceeds of their fruit orchards alone. This does not include sales from their peanut crop.
CHAPTER 3

THE ENCOUNTER OF CULTURES: WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE IN
TECHNIQUES OF PRODUCTION, DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMS, AND EDUCATION

Just as contact between Thionk Essil and other cultures
introduced change in the rural economy, so too did cross-
cultural interchange alter villagers' lifestyle in other
significant respects. Diola contact with French and
Mandinka cultures in particular was the catalyst to many
changes that took place. Other kinds of permutations often
made headway into the village by means of certain segments
of the population. Because of certain aspects of
traditional Diola society, as will become apparent, women
have had a considerable potential to affect certain types of
change in community life. Yet the development of these
capacities were never fully realized, as evidenced by the
neglect of women's educational potential. This phenomenon
is exemplified by the contrast in the educational
experiences of two women of similar age in Thionk Essil. In
1979 Cire Sadio, who had completed ten years of formal
education, was an anomaly among her feminine peers. In
contrast Adama Sambou, whose educational attainment was far
more representative, had never attended school. The purpose
of this chapter is to explore the neglect of rural women's
potential as agents of change in regards to (1) techniques of production, (2) development programs, and (3) formal educational instruction.

**WOMEN AND CHANGE IN TECHNIQUES OF PRODUCTION**

Uncovering past events in regards to techniques of production, particularly as they relate to rural women, resurrects the dilemma that scant documents present. While there is some historical data on certain changes in techniques of production that have taken place, there is virtually no information on the role of either of the sexes in this regards. However, one may infer from the division of labor that innovations in production made inroads by means of one or the other sex. Because men prepare the soil, those changes associated with either the tools or techniques of cultivation were probably introduced by them. Similarly, women's tasks of seed selection and planting identifies them as the likely agents of changes in these aspects of production.

Given their role in rice production, it was probably men who introduced important innovations in the primary tool of cultivation, the kajendo. The kajendo is an indigenous fulcrum shovel made of iron with a curved wooden scoop attached to the end of a long wooden handle approximately 2.5-3 meters long. Improvements in this instrument seem to have been linked with the use by the Diola of a better quality of iron, the acquisition of which may have been fostered by their contact with Muslim and possibly European
traders in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. This iron, which was used to cover the cutting edge of the kajendo, probably increased the efficiency of the tool. This in turn, may have resulted in more abundant crop yields by means of facilitating the reclaiming of highly fertile wet rice fields from the mangrove swamps.

Improvements in the kajendo and the subsequent increase in the efficient use of arable land may also have given impetus to a crucial shift in alternative types of rice farming among the Diola. Olga Linares, who dates the origins of Diola wet rice cultivation to approximately 300 A.D., postulates that it had several stages of development among the Diola. Based on shell middens from Lower Casamance she concluded that dry rice cultivation was a precursor to the wet rice cultivation practiced today. Although the time period in which the Diola may have made this switch is unknown, it is clear that such a change was contingent upon the more efficient use of iron.

In contrast women probably served as the principal agents of change in regards to rice varieties. Again, women's labor tasks of seed selection and planting in rice production means that it is most likely they who introduced one of the two major families of rice now cultivated by the Diola. The numerous varieties of rice that exist today among the Diola fall under two major families. Oryza Glaberrima, known locally as red rice, is indigenous to Africa. The other type, Oryza Sativa, which is of Asiatic
origin, reached West Africa by the Middle Ages. Today Oryza Sativa is the principal family of rice cultivated by the Diola. Although it first reached these people some two centuries ago, its complete diffusion throughout the hinterland was hindered by the isolation of Diola villages from one another. Asian rice did not reach the Diola Boulouf until between 1920-1930 and its cultivation expanded along with that of the peanut. No matter when Orza Sativa became a feature of Diola rice production, it is likely to have been introduced because of female initiative.

One of the inferences of change, particularly in Western cultures, is that it promotes advance of one kind or another. While this notion is substantiated by both adaptations in the kajendo as well as the utilization of different seed varieties, more recent changes subsequent to culture contact with the Mandinka have had negative implications for women. In the latter half of the nineteenth century numerous villages in the Diola Fogny region came into close contact with the Manding, primarily as a result of military contact with the Diola. Some of these zones, which lie north and east of Boulouf, adapted the Diola traditional division of labor in rice production to that practiced by their Manding conquerors. In Mandinka societies, women prepare the soil in addition to all other labor in rice production. Thus Diola women in the relevant hinterland zones took on additional tasks over and above
their normal duties of seed selection, planting and harvesting rice. It is difficult to quantitatively assess the increase in physical output that this labor role adaptation has exacted from women whose labor in rice production is identical to that of Mandinka women. However, more aggregate figures of sex differentials in labor among the Mandinka may provide some insights. One study of the Mandinka in Gambia reports that the women in Mandinka society work fifty percent more than the men.\(^7\)

The adoption of the Mandinka division of labor in rice production has also had adverse effects on rice yields. In a comparative study of Diola regions where men and women divide the labor in rice production and those in which women perform all such labor it was found that the latter zones have an inferior agricultural output. Whereas rice yields in the zones where men and women both performed the labor ranged from 450–800 kilograms per hectare, others in which the labor of rice production was exclusive to women ranged from only 300–600 kilograms per hectare.\(^8\) One reason for the decrease in agricultural output is that women's physical limitations hinder adequate dam construction necessary for good irrigation comparable to the ones constructed by men prior to this labor reallocation. Consequently those rice fields with the highest yield potential, the most flooded ones, have ceased producing at their maximum levels because there is either an insufficient supply of water or women abandon them. The adoption by some Diola women of the
Manding tool of cultivation, the daba, has also contributed to the decrease in rice yields. In comparison to the traditional Diola kajendo, the daba cultivates more superficially in spite of the fact that it facilitates more rapid work.9

The contact of the Diola with the French in the twentieth century in regards to rice production differed in at least one significant way from that of other types of culture contact. In contrast to cultural encounters that had some impact on rice production, that with the French in the colonial period had little impact on rice production, at least in Thionk Essil. Undoubtedly this was partly due to economic reasons. The fact that the French did not export rice commercially accounts for the lack of interest in bolstering its yields.10 Moreover, some cultural differences may also account for the comparative inattention given to women and production in general. On the whole the colonial administration was oblivious of the crucial roles that women played in agriculture. Because colonists were products of societies in which women's roles in agricultural and industrial production were more peripheral, overlooking women's potential as agents of change came naturally.10 Almost predictably the administration's selection of people to introduce agricultural innovations was, for the most part, exclusively male.11

The fact that colonists imposed their culture's values concerning women's labor on Diola people is illustrated by
the introduction of certain kinds of plant seeds. One of the earliest institutional efforts made by the colonial administration to introduce agricultural change was to establish the Société Indigènes de Prévoyance (SIP) in 1921. It was through this agency that the French disseminated different agricultural innovations. Although in Boulouf the agency began by distributing peanut seeds, it later circulated various types of fruits to promote the cultivation of fruit orchards. Predictably, administrators focused on men as opposed to women to introduce the seeds. Yet women would have been a more "natural" choice as agents of this innovation. This stems from the fact that it was normally women who performed the specific agricultural task most affected by the introduction of new seed varieties. Notably, peanut production required neither changes in the means of soil preparation nor the principal tool of cultivation itself. Rather it simply called for the utilization of different kinds of seeds. The fact that women alone were familiar with different rice varieties and it was they who planted them made them a more "natural" agent for this type of change. That it is primarily men and not women who plant and profit from peanuts today is thus in some way incongruous with the traditional division of labor in Diola peoples.

In Thionk Essil the introduction of different seed varieties constitutes the bulk of the agricultural innovation introduced by the colonial administration prior
to independence. As these changes suggest, agricultural innovation itself only occupied a small part of the colonial budget and was not an administrative or economic priority. Nevertheless the very fact that men received the lion's share of these modest innovations still had negative social and economic implications for women. First and foremost the income derived from peanuts, and later even fruit or hedges, made Diola women the economic unequals of men. However, it also probably adversely affected the value normally given to Diola female labor. Peanuts in particular served as a major link between the villager and the modern world, while rice has remained almost exclusively a product of household consumption. It has been primarily the money generated from peanut cultivation that has provided a greater access of rural people to modern facilities and products. Thus the association of men with peanuts may have identified them more with modern institutions and lifestyles. In contrast the rice production in which women have remained more narrowly engaged is associated more with past traditions. Thus it is possible that as a new nexus of symbols evolved that men came to represent the new and women to personify continuities with the past.

WOMEN AND CHANGE IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The idea of utilizing rural women as a valuable resource in agricultural development was first realized in the formation of Animation Rurale, a government development program for rural communities. Begun in 1959 its principal
objective was to "animate or activate the rural population to modernize their living conditions." From the very beginning plans were made to use women as well as men as channels of change. Animation Rurale was designed to funnel change into rural communities by means of disseminating information through village representatives chosen by members of their respective communities. Male representatives known as animateurs, and female representatives known as animatrices were theoretically to bring back information to their villages from meetings in centralized locations at which representatives from several other surrounding villages met with technical agents. These technicians, along with administrators, formed training units for different zones. Initially it was hoped that all of rural Senegal would be divided up into administrative units, which corresponded roughly, if not in fact, with former colonial circles. It was for these units, known as Centers for Rural Animation (CAR) that groups of approximately fourteen technicians and administrators were grouped to organize animatrices and animateurs and disseminate information. The potential in channeling a wide range of information through village representatives is evidenced by the fact that CAR staff members were attached to various technical services: rural economy, health, public works, education, cooperatives and social promotion.

Although oral accounts of Animation Rurale in Thionk clearly indicate that the program did not have a significant
impact on the village, the reasons that explain its low level of influence are less clear. Nevertheless, a critical analysis of the weaknesses of Animation Rurale on a national level may shed some light on the dynamics at work in Thionk Essil. Generally there were four basic problems with the program.\textsuperscript{21} One was that animateurs and animatrices were sometimes badly selected. For example, village chiefs sometimes chose individuals of low status who were not respected by the communities with which they had to work. Another source of difficulty was the resistance which Animation staff sometimes met from local leaders and farmers who were afraid of losing their power or reluctant to abandon their past way of life. To this one may add the problem that the inadequate training of staff members to deal with this resistance presented. Moreover members of the CARs sometimes fell short in their training of animateurs and animatrices because of their inability to coordinate the work of various technical service agents. Such factors had the potential to obviate the well-intentioned objectives of development schemes for men and women alike.

The notion of women as important agents of rural innovation in production as well as other aspects of rural life served as a basis for later developments in social services which later came to Thionk Essil. In 1972 another social service, which was to be of considerable importance in the village, was begun. The objective, structure and
function of Maison Familiale were similar to those of Animation Rurale. It too had the goal of improving various aspects of rural life and was operationalized by a task force of men and women who were responsible for disseminating information. However one crucial point of distinction was the fact that the men and women whose job was to bring innovative ideas and techniques to the village level were not representatives of the village. Rather these people, known as moniteurs and monitrices, were recruited from everywhere in Senegal. Moreover they received most of their training in certain designated urban areas as opposed to local rural training centers.

It is unclear if the fact that Maison Familiale's staff was not indigenous to the community initially sparked a xenophobia among women and men alike. Whether because of this or for other reasons, neither males or females were particularly responsive to Maison Familiale when it opened in April 1972. When Alphouseyni Diedhiou arrived as the Director with his staff of six he was both enthusiastic and hopeful. A Diola himself from the Fogny region, he knew how to adhere to the proper rural etiquette to begin the important consciousness raising component of the program. Often discussing the objectives and intentions of Maison Familiale with noted traditional authority figures, he relied upon them to call meetings to sensitize villagers to the need for community involvement. In spite of these efforts to legitimize their presence, however, the Director
and his staff found most villagers indifferent to their efforts. The fact that the people of Thionk Essil seldom participated in projects for which they had virtually pledged their support suggests a kind of deliberate boycott. In totality it took almost three years for Maison Familiale to recruit several committed adherents.\textsuperscript{23}

The dynamics involved in the slow and unenthusiastic acceptance of Maison Familiale were probably multifaceted. One possibility was that villagers' familiarity with a certain way of life, which constituted a kind of tenacity of tradition, impeded the arousal of enthusiasm for change. Moreover, the fact that there were few visible gains from participation in Maison Familiale's projects likely contributed to the general lack of community motivation. At a time when some tenable advantages may have proven especially valuable in winning community support, it was undoubtedly the most difficult to establish. In its early years of existence the return of the program's development projects to village participants were not appreciable.\textsuperscript{24} It is even possible that Essilians, both male and female, perceived the staff's efforts to staff a series of different projects as an imposition.\textsuperscript{25}

The fact that projects for men and women were separate and differed significantly in emphasis seems to account for sex differences in villagers' response to them. Of the incentives Maison Familiale provided economics was the most overriding. Those with potentially the most rewarding
financial profit were centered around improvements in production and were oriented towards men. For example, one project for men taught them how to graft fruit trees and to cultivate fruit gardens, whose yields were successfully marketed. This is not to say that women's projects had no money making potential whatsoever. The most notable evidence to the contrary were projects which taught women how to grow market gardens in the decade of the seventies. For such ventures women organized themselves by subwards to plant vegetables like tomatoes, onions, and lettuce. Theoretically these items were to be transported regularly to nearby urban markets in Bignona and Ziguinchor to be sold. In actual fact Maison Familiale's efforts to secure regular transportation were unsuccessful. With no means to get their produce to urban areas on a regular basis, vegetables spoiled on several occasions. Thus Maison Familiale's meaningful ventures in securing economic profits for women and perhaps even feminine motivation itself were unintentionally and yet soundly stifled.

It would be a historical distortion, however, to suggest that some community based programs were of no benefit whatsoever to women. Among those services offered the most valuable were those related to health care. The almost immediate responsiveness of women to these programs is undoubtedly attributable to the way in which health care complimented certain aspects of tradition. In both the past and present a woman's stature in Thionk Essil has been
largely determined by her number of living children. It was modern health care's potential to reduce child mortality and morbidity that attracted a pioneering female clientele. Thus when Thionk Essil's dispensary first opened in 1953 women were its most frequent visitors.29 They used the facility not so much for themselves, but rather for their children.

The very fact that women were reluctant to use the dispensary for many of their own personal health concerns highlights some degree of cultural alienation that also characterized the dispensary when it was first established in the village. When Thionk Essil's dispensary first opened in 1953, its organization was in some ways antithetical to village traditions. Prior to the implantation of these health services, gynecological problems were usually treated by females.30 This was especially true of prenatal care and child delivery. The fact that health service attendants were male could only have discouraged women from using it for their own health needs. Consequently much of the potential that modern prenatal care and child delivery held for reducing child mortality for approximately the first decade of the dispensary's existence in Thionk went untapped. This suggests that the very way in which innovation made inroads into Diola society itself constituted a pedagogy whose effectiveness was in some ways shaped by the compatibility between tradition and the changes at hand.
That the community was particularly responsive to projects with positive health implications for children is further corroborated by another kind of development initiative in Thionk Essil. Villagers in the subward of Daga Bougotir opened a nursery in 1970. Its function was to provide adequate childcare during the rains when parents were preoccupied in the rice fields and when disease was most prevalent. The success of this venture lie not only in the fact that most mothers in the subward sent their children there; another of its achievements was to solicit the participation of men in terms of management and administration.

WOMEN AND CHANGE IN FORMAL EDUCATIONAL INSTRUCTION

The issue of the pedagogy of innovation surfaces questions concerning the nature of formal educational instruction into sharp focus. One of its most striking characteristics has been sex differences in level of educational instruction for all twentieth-century generations. This has meant the unequal development of women in Thionk Essil as a valuable human resource. The importance of educating women lies most in their roles as the primary nonformal educators of children. Thus an untapped potential to exhaust women's possibilities for channeling innovation to youths in particular makes educational inequities all the more unfortunate.

In twentieth-century Senegal formal educational instruction has been associated most with cultural
encounters with the French educational system. As with agricultural innovations, provisions made by the colonial government for school were generally modest. Although moderate, its precedents in regards to women have not radically changed, even in the post-colonial era. These early patterns concerned sexual differences as well as low levels of educational instruction. Perhaps nothing symbolizes sexual inequities in education more than pupil attendance in Thionk's first primary school which opened in 1933. All total, Ecole Niaganane was in existence for thirteen long years before the names of female students began to appear on the rosters. Some forty-five years later both sex disparities and low levels of educational instruction, hallmarks of the colonial legacy, were still intact. Of Thionk Essil's total population in 1979 as much as 62 percent had never received any formal educational instruction. Of those villagers who had received some French education, 81 percent had only some level of elementary school instruction, and only 56 percent of all elementary school attenders proceeded beyond the fourth year. When these figures are disaggregated by sex, the constraints are striking. Of all villagers with no formal educational instruction, women constitute 73.2 percent. Moreover only 26 percent of those women who begin elementary school completed the entire six year cycle; as much as 40 percent of female elementary school pupils drop out after three years of attendance.
It is interesting to note that during the first decades of the school's existence, villagers expressed a reluctance to enroll boys as well. Indeed there is evidence that it took between ten and fifteen years for Essilians to warm to French education at all. During the years immediately following November 1, 1933 when Amadou M'Backe and Idrissa N'Diaye officially opened up the school doors of École Niaganane, the enrollment varied between 65 and 80 students. The school log suggests that the school attendance and perhaps even enrollment fell short of desired targets insofar as the headmasters sometimes relied on the clout of outside colonial officials to keep the school system alive. In 1936, for example, the Commandant du cercle and the Chef de canton lent a hand in enrollment recruitment. Because of inconsistencies in reporting it is difficult to gauge the extent of the participation of colonial officials in student recruitment. At least one incident that appears in the school records suggests that their involvement was long lasting. In 1948, fifteen years after the school first opened, the headmaster attributed an effortless recruitment to actions taken by Abdou Diatta, the Chef de village. Apparently he had exercised some aspects of his political clout to insure community participation in the school. Although the measures that he took were unspecified in school documents, it is clear that villagers' support of the school was for some time contingent upon the intervention of political leaders.
Many of the events recorded by village headmasters in the school log suggest that solicitation of intervention by authority figures was a pragmatic response to villagers' apathy and at times even hostility. With apparent dismay and anger schoolmasters complained of students' irregular attendance, something which sometimes spurred them to action. In 1945, for example, the headmaster finally got students to return to school after he had alerted both the Chef du village and Chef du canton of students' erratic attendance. Moreover, villagers' negative sentiments manifested themselves in other ways other than poor attendance. When teachers solicited the collective aid of villagers to improve the school's facilities, few answered the call. In August 1940 villagers assisted in rebuilding the school only after the threatening appearance of soldiers sent by the colonial administration. Similarly, many of the normal activities of community life clearly took precedence over school. When the festivities for the male circumcision of Bagombane were launched in 1940, École Niaganane was emptied. Of 177 enrolled students, only 37 attended school. Similarly at the height of agricultural activity parents sometimes retained their children for their labor. In 1948 after fifteen arduous years of planting the seeds of French education, the headmaster complained that "...The inhabitants of the village were busy in the rice fields; one can only get students on the days of leisure." Clearly the traditional way of life held the upper hand for
the first few decades of the school's existence.

Thionk Essil's response to École Niaganane during its early years may be explained, in part, by disparities in objectives between French colonial education and the traditional educational system with which it had to coexist and which preceded it. Indeed those who disseminated French education met with indigenous educational systems which existed since the origins of the Diola themselves. As one author notes"... Schooling in the sense of institutionalized induction into the life of a society is a comparatively recent development in Africa; education in the sense of initiation into the life of the adult community is a very ancient concept."40 The source of conflict is the fact that in an abstract sense each form of education had different goals. Traditional education's most fundamental raison d'être was to insure continuities and coherence in community life from one generation to the other. For example, one of its most important components has been the instruction of children of all the institutional relationships within the community and all the rights and obligations of its members. Consequently one significant difference between the two types of education was the teachers of each. Most of a child's traditional instruction in Thionk was transmitted by members of their nuclear and extended family. However, every adult within the community had a right, even a responsibility, to play a role in the education of children. Thus the "classroom" of traditional
education was the entire community itself.

The emphasis in French colonial educational instruction was strikingly different. Its ultimate objective was to build support structures for the colonial regime in terms of both ideology and skills. However it was not in objectives alone that colonial education differed radically from its traditional counterpart. One unprecedented factor that it introduced was a certain kind of elitism in the level of instruction. In contrast to the "race of unqualified teachers" who taught children in precolonial Thionk Essil, French colonial instruction in the village's primary school was given only by a designated few. Moreover these teachers were, more often than not, strangers to not only Thionk but to the whole Diola milieu as well. They were themselves students and not authorities of the nexus of social institutions that were the central focus of traditional education. Perhaps no factors served more to symbolize the elitism and exclusivity of the new educational system more than the language used for instruction as well as the place of instruction itself. In contrast to the use of the local vernacular which facilitated community pedagogy, the use of French in colonial education served as a major impediment to community involvement.

One possible source of tension between colonial and traditional educational systems was centered around agricultural labor. One crucial role of traditional education in Thionk Essil was to transmit the agricultural
techniques to younger generations necessary to the community's survival. In contrast the colonial schools were viewed by villagers as disruptive of normal agricultural activities. And in fact this was to some extent true. While western school did not radically alter traditional labor patterns, it did affect them in those households that had enrolled students. Among males it reduced the available labor supply of boys who acted as herders. Among females it had the effect of shifting certain household tasks, such as pounding rice and drawing well water, to older age groups. Although the school cycle was not particularly disruptive of the labor associated with rice production which the community valued most, a public image of it as deleterious to production hampered its gaining popularity.

In retrospect there must have been little at hand to drum up support for Thionk Essil's primary schools in the first decades of their existence for either of the sexes. Although the school log records are incomplete, they suggest that incentives emerged only after World War II. From approximately 1948 onwards there was a small but nevertheless steady flow of youths from Thionk Essil migrating to urban areas for secondary education. Here it is important to note that the primary education available to students in the village in and of itself probably did not significantly change pupil's lives. Rather secondary education, obtainable only in schools located in urban centers, held more promise of increasing one's life chances.
Thus for at least fifteen years colonial education was probably perceived as an institutional deadletter. The enrollment of Essilians in secondary schools seems to have been attributable to certain administrative changes made concerning education throughout Africa. As a consequence of major political and economic reforms following World War II, the French poured in more economic aid into French West Africa between 1947 and 1958 than they had in the previous fifty years of their rule. Educational institutions benefited enormously; both primary and secondary school enrollment more than doubled in Senegal between 1947 and 1957. It is interesting to note that during the latter part of this period villagers' interest in École Niaganane, so long at low ebb, finally picked up considerably. In the academic year 1955-1956 there were 212 applicants for only 65 openings in school. Within twenty years schools were established in each ward to meet the burgeoning demand for education; Kamanar, Daga, and Batine established school in 1961, 1968, and 1974 respectively.

While the tardy arrival of educational incentives may sufficiently explain the low enrollment of primarily male students in the first decades of École Niaganane's existence, it does not fully explain sex differences in education that have existed for so long. Again, differences between traditional and French educational instruction elucidates the dynamics that were probably at work. The sexual desegregation practices in modern educational
institutions, for one, may account for Essilians' thirteen year coolness in allowing girls to enroll at all. In the traditional system of education males and females frequently received their instruction separately, something which reflects the rigid sexual segregation that still exists in Diola society. In fact at about the same age at which a child's training becomes more sexually segregated in the traditional system of education, about age seven, they were thrust in a situation of sexual desegregation in French colonial primary schools. Moreover, there was yet another way in which the prospect of female school attendance may have brought into sharper focus some incompatibilities between tradition and change. Women's roles as childbearers and rearers were crucial because of the major role they play in instilling values and behavior patterns that insure group cohesion. In view of this community sentiments were that the importance of whatever females could do outside of household oriented activities could not exceed in importance that of their traditional household related duties. This may account for the fact that the disparities in education between male and females in Thionk Essil constitute an ironic difference between official colonial policy and actual realities regarding women and education. In point of fact, the colonial regime was officially committed to equal educational opportunities. In 1944, eleven years after the school's doors had first opened in Thionk, the French colonial administration adopted an official resolution to
educate girls as well as boys.\textsuperscript{49} The fact that this resolution was made after colonial schools had been functioning in some areas for several years suggests that the colonial regime was cognizant of the sex differences of the students in its school system.

The meaning and impact of educational disparities between males and females are complex phenomena. Perhaps the principal source of this complexity is the fact the education became inextricably linked with social status in the modern-day period. An association with Western educational institutions, once a source of community ambivalence in Thionk Essil, eventually came to carry certain levels of prestige. However, over and above this there were more immediate benefits to be reaped by school attendance. One rather surprising fact is that colonial schools were associated with learning better agricultural techniques and health care. Indeed, Thionk Essil's records confirm the argument that colonial education was less unidimensional that its conventional image suggests. The popular notion of French colonial schools is that they were completely imitative of their metropolitan counterparts with no adaptation to indigenous cultures whatsoever. Yet beginning in 1930 the French administration adapted both the structure and content of its West African curricula to meet some of the needs of the respective local communities. The administration was particularly interested in disseminating technical expertise to increase productivity and economic
growth, which it operationalized through projects on agriculture and health care.\textsuperscript{50}

These administrative changes shaped the orientation of Thionk Essil's primary schools from the very beginning. During the first academic year in 1934 the instructors had school children cultivate peanuts, millet, potatoes and manioc.\textsuperscript{51} Peanuts along with oysters and palm kernels were sold to purchase pupil's clothing and various items of consumption. In 1938 when instructors taught students how to plant trees, they planted 198 trees of various types in one year alone including guava, orange, mango, papaya, cashew and banana trees.\textsuperscript{52} Moreover there is evidence that students profited from medical visitations and vaccination at times during the school's early decades of existence. On the whole benefiting from these ameliorations was contingent upon official enrollment. Because the participation of females in modern education facilities has been marginal, they have profited less than males from these benefits.

Although French education became the crucial yardstick of education in the twentieth century, it was not the sole source of formal educational instruction in either Senegal or in Thionk Essil. Formal education that was affiliated with Islam had a far greater audience than did its French counterpart. In terms of cultural influence, this type of education most reflects the contact of the Diola with the Mandinka, which played a significant role in Thionk Essil's religious conversion. Koranic schools in particular have
been the most widespread institutional expression of Muslim religious instruction. Its origins in Thionk were found in the massive religious conversions that took place in Thionk Essil, as elsewhere in Boulouf, in the 1930s. Koranic schools began in Thionk as informal groups led by the first religious converts and rapidly proliferated throughout the village to embrace every child at some point. Although no data are available to evaluate the sex composition of Koranic schools, oral accounts indicate that participation has been overwhelmingly male. Villagers report that while females have attended Koranic schools since their origins in the 1930s, they have been consistently underrepresented and received religious instruction for lesser periods of time. Both phenomena were negative for the women of Thionk Essil. It provided an institutional structure for a comparatively less meaningful participation of women in Islam, which may have established an early precedent that shaped other kinds of educational programs. It also offered neither alternative models to formal government schools nor to an Arabic school established in Thionk in 1977. In this school, which stressed literacy in Arabic as much if not more than religious instruction itself, females have still been disproportionately underrepresented.

There has been at least one other significant kind of education to which people in Thionk Essil have been exposed, that of adult education programs. This type of education differed from others primarily in focus. First and foremost
it has been aimed at a different age group in rural communities; as the name suggests its participants have been adults as opposed to children and adolescents. The purpose of this type of instruction was to provide students with information and training that would improve the quality of life in the village. The concept of adult education was first acted upon by the colonial administration in the 1930s during, when the French established programs aimed at improving sanitation and agriculture. Thus in 1934, 180 adult education courses were established throughout French West Africa, which involved some 8,000 to 10,000 adults. Although some adult education programs were launched in Thionk Essil before 1960, the thrust of it was a post-independence phenomenon.

Part of the significance of Thionk Essil's experience with adult education is that it has important implications for the utility of mobilizing women as agents of change in the community. Much of women's adult education has been focused on health education; the incentive for this was that it improved the health status of children in particular. Such health instruction was delivered not through health education programs per se, but rather through other kinds of health programs in which health education was one single component. Some of Thionk's experience in this regards is instructive. In 1972 the Catholic Relief Service launched one of several of its Programmes de Protection Nutritionnelle du Sénégal (PPNS) in Thionk Essil. The objectives of the
program were twofold, to instruct mother of the nutritional needs of their children and to provide some health assistance by means of dispensing milk and identifying real or potential health problems through monitoring children's weights. Judging from the expansion of the program over nearly a decade, women were receptive to the program. Between 1972 and 1979 women's participation in the program grew by eighty percent.

Another experience with health education has some important implications for pedagogy and its ability to affect change. This particular experience is centered around efforts to involve women in the use of Thionk Essil's maternity ward, which was installed in its dispensary in 1960. The central figure responsible for winning supporters was not a woman but a man named Nkhor Mbengue who arrived in Thionk Essil as the newly appointed nurse at the dispensary in 1965. In point of fact there were several factors working against him, the most deleterious of which was the fact that he was male. The Diola have a strong taboo against men witnessing childbirth. Yet the sex of the health educator was not the only barrier. Even his predecessor, herself a female, was unable to radically alter certain aspects of women's health behavior. Madame Sophie N'Dow was the first person to open the maternity at the dispensary. A Wolof who had married into the village, she was elected by the community to be trained in prenatal care and child delivery. Yet even the knowledge of the
satisfactory completion of her training failed to attract mothers to the dispensary. Undaunted she went to women's homes to deliver children, which probably was a crucial factor in establishing the community's confidence in her abilities. Even though many women began to use the maternity after the first three years of its existence, most continued to deliver at their homes. The fact that women were slow to respond to Madame N'Dow's solicitations for clients at the maternity ward means that the sex of the person providing health services at the dispensary was not the only variable that accounts for women's lack of participation. When M'Bengue arrived to work at the dispensary he would also have to surmount perhaps what amounted to a general reluctance to depart from the traditional, in addition to his gender.

Yet within a few years M'Bengue managed to turn women's utilization of the maternity ward from exceptional occasions to a fairly frequent practice. This is primarily attributable to the ways in which M'Bengue dealt with a number of delicate issues that were crucial to winning women's favor. On more than one occasion M'Bengue turned his liabilities into assets. Under other circumstances his ethnic background as a Wolof would have lessened his credibility on so sensitive an issue. However his extraordinary efforts to assimilate into Diola society transformed him into a charismatic figure. He waged a painful and yet successful battle to master the village's
dialect, displayed a high regard and sensitive understanding of the culture and actively participated in community activities—all of which vicariously won community support for the maternity ward. Moreover the way in which he sought patronage for the maternity was crucial. He won over the acceptance of many of the most respected women of the community who themselves encouraged women to use the maternity services. The fact the women's use of the maternity ward increased in spite of the factors working against Mbengue suggest that his unique personal appeal had a positive impact on community participation in Thionk Essil. Apparently charisma was a powerful factor in implementing change.

In concluding it may be said that the roles of women in traditional Thionk Essil rendered them ideal agents for certain kinds of change in the community. Because of the knowledge of different seed varieties that seed selection in rice production requires, women were the appropriate segment of the population to introduce changes in various kinds of seed varieties. Similarly, women were in crucial ways the ideal agents for educational innovations. Their prominent role in childcare means that they hold the maximum potential for disseminating the values as well as much of the knowledge that formal education engenders. Although their capacities in these domains went largely untapped, a glimpse of women's potential as agents of change is visible in their experience with health related innovations. Women's
responsiveness to health programs is primarily attributable to improvements that it brought about in health status of their children, something that has wider implications for other kinds of projects in Thionk Essil. It suggests not only that the means by which change is introduced is crucial to its acceptability; it also suggests that rural communities are responsive to change when given the proper motivation, in spite of a tenacity inherent in tradition.
Footnotes to Chapter 3


2 Olga Linares, "Shell Middens of Lower Casamance and Problems of Diola Protohistory," West African Journal of Archaeology, Vol. 1 (1971), p. 49. Although the dates of the transition from dry to wet rice are not known, some useful points of demarcation do exist. Joseph Jerome Lauer argues, for example, that wet rice farming and its accompanying techniques of desalination, ridging, and transplanting, probably antedate the first European contact; "Rice in the History of the Lower Gambia Geba Area", Master's Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1960. It is also important to note that wet rice cultivation is not the only kind of rice production in which the Diola are engaged today. Dry rice or mountain rice, is cultivated by many Diola peoples on plateaus in regions where inundated fields are less numerous. Moreover, other primary and secondary crops grown by the Diola are cultivated by means of dry cultivation. Peanuts and millet, grown by 74 percent and 65 percent of all peasants in Lower Casamance respectively, are the other two primary crops cultivated by the Diola. Secondary crops include sorghum, fonio, manioc, beans, sweet potatoes, onions, and tomatoes; Henk van Loo and Nella Star, "La Basse Casamance, Sud-Ouest du Sénégal: données de bases démographiques et socio-économiques, Thèse du 3e cycle, Université de Leiden, 1973, pp. 132-142.

3 The Senegambia is believed to be the second major center of diversification of Orza Glabberima, the major rice family indigenous to Africa. Its principal center is believed to be in the bend of the Niger River; Roland Porteres, "Berceaux Agricoles Primaires sur le continent africain," Journal of African History, 3, 2 (1962), p. 198.

4 Tadeusz Lewicki, West African Food in the Middle Ages, According to Arabic Sources (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974, pp. 33-34. These two families are the major ones which are cultivated in West Africa. There are two others in the region which grow in a wild state,
Oryza Barthii and Oryza breviligulata.


6 Much of this contact constituted religious holy war of Mandinka peoples against the Diola. The bulk of these military incursions were led by Fode Kaba who, although himself was a Diahanke and not Mandinka, found most of his support among Mandinka peoples. He directed his military attention primarily towards the Diola in the regions of Fogny and Combo, west of the Songrougrou River to the Atlantic, between the Casamance and Gambian Rivers. For details see, Frances Anne Leary, "Islam, Politics and Colonialism: A Political History of Islam in the Casamance Region of Senegal (1950-1914)," Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1971, pp. 122-163.

7 Péliissier, op. cit., p. 557. Although women's reactions to this reallocation of labor are not well documented, there are a few recorded cases of feminine resistance. In 1954, for example, women refused to proceed with the preparation of the rice fields, thereby, forcing men to resume their cultivation of the rice fields with the kajendo which they had abandoned, op. cit., p. 804.

8 Rapport general du CINAD-SERESA, Mission Lebret, Dakar, 1960, le partie, 1-3, 2e partie 11.8(10 à 11.8(20).

9 van Loo and Star, op. cit., p. 155. The kajendo still remains the more commonly used tool of cultivation in Lower Casamance. Among all ethnic groups in Lower Casamance in 1972 some 70 percent used the kajendo, and approximately 30 percent used Manding instruments. While the Manding tool of cultivation used by women is the daba, that which is used by men for the same task is the donkoton.

10 Actually some Diola do sell rice, albeit few who do so. In 1972 between 3-10 percent of the population in the Fogny and Boulouf regions sold some rice. Only in the regions of Manjak, Brin-Séléky and Oussouye did more than 10 percent of the peasants sell rice in that year. The quantities sold were unspecified; van Loo and Star, op. cit., p. 163.

11 The comparative neglect of rural women in regards to rural development may be generalized for the post-colonial as well as the colonial period in the developing world as a whole. Generally women have been underrepresented in terms of funding, economic planning, and employment in the administration and implementation of development projects. These issues are discussed at length in Nici Nelson, Why Has Development Neglected Rural Women? (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979). Barbara Rogers, "The


13. The very fact that peanut production did not call for a radical departure from traditional means of rice cultivation contributed to a complementarity that exists between the two crops. Two other significant factors in this complementarity are its fit into the Diola calendar cycle and the kinds of soils on which peanuts are grown. This plant is not cultivated in inundated fields that most Diola use for rice cultivation. Rather they are usually grown on uninhabited and unused plateaus that are often forests cleared to cultivate rice. Moreover peanuts are not planted at the same time as rice and therefore do not compete with rice for their labor. These factors, in addition to the fact that peanuts are not labor intensive, probably facilitated the proliferation of the crop among the Diola; Olga Linares, "Agriculture and Diola Society," in African Food Production Systems, P.F. McLoughlin, ed. (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1970), pp. 212-217.

14. Women's role in rice production has special implications for future innovations in rice cultivation. Linares, op. cit., pp. 225-226, speculates that there are three target means by which rice yields may be increased by the Diola: (1) a more systematic use of chemical fertilizers, (2) the use of soil resistant rice varieties, (3) double-cropping by irrigation and the additional cultivation of upland rice, with the possible use of selective herbicides. Theoretically the success of all these, particularly the first two, are contingent upon women's participation in these areas of change.

15. There were other agricultural projects in Lower Casamance during the colonial period that I have not evaluated in this chapter. This is attributable to the difficulty in retrieving historical documents on the subject, and to the fact that not all development projects launched in the region took place in Thionk Essil. One of the complexities of development programs is that they are an array of types that are not distributed uniformly to every village. Because of this it is difficult to say if Thionk is typical in regards to its development experiences that seem to have had no significant influence on either men or
women. For example, PIDAC (Projet Intérimaire pour le Developpement de la Basse Casamance), which now orchestrates all agricultural development schemes in the region, sold and is selling chemical fertilizer to villagers. However, the expense has deterred its widespread use. Today one central office coordinates development programs of all kinds in Lower Casamance, Société de Mise en Valeur Agricole (SOMIVAC). A thorough assessment of programs in the region which affect women awaits needed cataloging and investigation.

Generally the modest level of agricultural innovation during the colonial period may be explained by two factors. Perhaps the most fundamental reason was the fact that traditional methods produced satisfactory yields of peanuts, the principal export corp. It is also possible that the failure of some of the earliest attempts to introduce agricultural innovations discouraged the proliferation of such projects. One such fiasco was a largescale mechanized plantation begun in 1921 in Kaolack which was unsuccessful because of the high costs of the labor and equipment required. These factors probably account for the meagre efforts made by the colonial administration to introduce modern agricultural equipment in the countryside before 1945; Sheldon Gellar, Structural Changes and Colonial Dependency: Senegal 1885-1945 (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1976), p. 59-60.

Jeanne Marie Moulton, "Animation Rurale: Education for Rural Development," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1977, p. 5. Animation Rurale is an outgrowth of a liberal Catholic movement in France which has existed for nearly twenty years all over the world. It exists in certain countries in Latin America and Asia as well as four African countries including: Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, and Senegal.

Initially this institutionalization of change that Animation Rurale engenders was envisioned by government planners in Senegal as a structural means of achieving African socialism. By developing human resources on a local level, it was thought that villages could be transformed into autonomous communes. Planners' political intentions for Animation Rurale in Senegal were later superseded by more economic objectives. Early plans for Animation Rurale were also that it would eventually mobilize every village in Senegal, and in this its achievements have been impressive. Between 1959 and 1967 alone some 8,300 animateurs and animatrices were trained and working in 2600 villages; Moulton, op cit., p. 91.

Moulton, op. cit., pp. 25-35.

Moulton, op. cit., p. 74. Some of the projects
that Animation Rurale implemented in Casamance included those regarding reforestation, improvements in village coconut and palm plantation, soil conservation and fire prevention as a means of raising rates of crop productivity. Health projects include the establishment of rural health centers, the construction of wells with sterilizing filters, the installation of covered latrines, and the health education of mothers in regards to vaccinations and periodic health check-ups for children. Additional activities include the establishment of cooperatives and training in the relevant management skills to operate them. They also involved civil education, or instruction in people's national identity, rights, responsibilities, and the importance of development.

21 Moulton, op. cit., pp. 77-81.

22 Another important distinction between Animation Rurale and Maison Familiale is the fact that Maison Familiale is far less pervasive as a program. In 1978 there were only two Maison Familiales in Lower Casamance, that of Thionk Essil and the other of Adiane. Within the entire region of Casamance itself there were only two additional ones, that of the Peul village of Tankanto-Escale in the Department of Kolda, and the other of Sembandy-Balant which is a Balante village in the Department of Sedhiou.

23 Thionk Essil Historical Texts, hereafter TEHT, B-211.

24 The earliest phase of Maison Familiale's activities was devoted to consciousness raising, or informing people of the purpose of the program and the importance of rural development to Senegal. Some of the earliest projects included market gardens for women and tree grafting for men, neither of whose income potential was immediately apparent to villagers. One useful index of Maison Familiale's success in villages where they are located is membership cards which are sold to villagers for 100 cfa. Comparisons between these cards in Thionk Essil and Adiane reveal that the program has been less successful in Thionk Essil. Between 1976 and 1978 Adiane's membership grew from 223 to 452. In the same period Thionk's membership declined from 579 to 206. Officials attribute Adiane's success to financial incentives provided through its banana plantation, and Thionk's lack of success to seasonal migration. I am grateful to Monsieur Henri Coulibaly, Coordinator Regional des Maison Familiales de Casamance, who passed this information from his records to me in an interview November 17, 1979, TEHT, B-179.

25 One of my own field observations is that this village was very suspicious of activities affiliated with the government. Villagers often express their feelings that
it takes advantage of peasants. In this light it is probable that in the early phase of these projects, when they yielded little for the labor input required, that villagers simply tolerated them as opposed to sincerely welcoming their presence.

26 An itemization of men's and women's projects implemented in Thionk Essil illustrates the sex differences in profit potentials. Women's projects include sewing, cloth dyeing, cooking, health education, and market gardens. Men's projects include tree grafting, animal care, fish and peanut cooperatives, and civil education (instruction about political rights, national identity, and government services). Peanuts and fishing hold the highest income potential; TEHT, B-212.

27 A few subwards exercised initiative in solving their dilemmas with transportation. The women of Bougotir, for example, pressed the staff at Maison Familiale to secure transportation from an alternative government service that assisted in rural development schemes, Promotion Humaine. Some other women made arrangements through the staff to carry their produce to nearby cities by a motorized canoe.

28 Although this statement applies to most women in Thionk Essil, there are a few exceptions. In a few wards women continued to cultivate market gardens. In a few others motivation was curbed only temporarily insofar as some women in a few subwards contemplated resuming these gardens in the late 1970s.

29 TEHT, B-172.


31 TEHT, B-193.

32 Contemporary data on school attendance still reflects sex differences in education. Of all primary school students in Senegal, 61 percent are boys and 39 percent are girls; Atlas pour l'Amenagement du Territoire (Dakar, 1978) p. 125.

33 These figures were drawn from my own random sample taken in Thionk Essil.
Cahier École Niagane, hereafter (CEN). Village schools such as this one give up to six years of elementary instruction, each of which has a special name: (1) Cours d'Initiation (CI), (2) Cours Préparatif (CP), (3) Cours Elémentaire, 1st yr. (CE₁), (4) Cours Elémentaire, 2nd yr. (CE₂), (5) Cours Moyen, 1st yr. (CM₁), and (6) Cours Moyen, 2nd yr (CM₂).

CEN, p. 75.
CEN, p. 45.
CEN, p. 21.
CEN, p. 19.
CEN, p. 76.


The exclusivity of the French language in indigenous communities in Lower Casamance is reflected by the distribution of languages spoken by the population of Lower Casamance. Almost all inhabitants speak Diola and approximately half speak Manding. In contrast only 15-20 percent of peasants speak a little French and a little better than 5 percent read and write French; van Loo and Star, op. cit., p. 26.

TEHT, B-199; A-157; A-144.

CEN, pp. 70-136.
CEN, p. 232. Another example of the significance that French education took on in Thionk Essil is illustrated by villagers' response to Alphabetisation, a national educational program implemented in Thionk Essil by the staff at Maison Familiale. Its objective was to train villagers to read in their own indigenous language and in so doing serving as a pedagogical tool to expedite the dissemination of modern ways of life. When the program began, it did not enjoy widespread participation; rather villagers sent several children who had not performed adequately in school and therefore been permanently dismissed. Due to the lack of "quality" human resources and motivation, the staff discontinued the program; TEHT, B-212.

TEHT, A-111, C-19. This attitude was nurtured by colonial realities. As Walter Rodney points out, nowhere in Africa did colonial governments make provisions for educated women. Civil service employment, which constituted the bulk of remunerated labor, was reserved for men; How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1972), p. 251.


CEN, p. 15.

One reflection of this association was the rapid proliferation of koranic schools in the decade in which mass religious conversions took place in Boulouf. By 1934 there were 85 schools officially acknowledged in the circle of Bignona, which then accommodated the fifth highest volume of school attendance in the sixteen circles of Senegal (ANS 2G 34 5).

TEHT, C-3; C-52.

TEHT, C-40.

in writing and the verbal use of language with which adults are familiar, (2) the dissemination of professional techniques that help improve the process of change (3) the economic, moral, and civil training of the population to resolve conflicts between modernity and tradition as well as to foster a national identity; P. Fougyrollas, Fatou Sow, and F. Valladon, Eds. *L'Éducation des adultes au Sénégal* (Paris: UNESCO, 1967), p. 11.

57 In Thionk Essil adult education has been primarily encapsulated in those programs implemented by Maison Familiale in this chapter.

58 TEHT, B-254. I would like to thank Mr. Bill Rastetter and Mr. Etienne Cisse who passed on this information from their records during interviews on August 8 and 12, 1980.

59 TEHT, B-77.

60 TEHT, B-8.

61 TEHT, B-256.
CHAPTER 4

THE CRESCENT AND THE CROSS: THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS CONVERSION ON DIOLA WOMEN

Changes that took place in the lives of women of Thionk Essil in the twentieth century also engendered several cultural and social changes that made headway by means of religions conversion. One of the most meaningful events in this regard took place on one of the mornings of a dry season between 1925-1930 when Aminata Badji set out by foot from Thionk Essil to Thiobon, a village approximately five miles away. Her sojourn was the outcome of a momentous decision that would prove fateful for every woman of Thionk Essil. This decision was to undergo excision, or female circumcision, a practice which the women of Thiobon had pioneered in Boulouf. It was based upon the belief that excision is a religious obligation for women. Aminata Badji's excision itself was uneventful, but her return was not. Villagers' repugnance of her act was reflected by a hostile and icy reception that was followed by prolonged ostracism. In view of later developments it is ironic that women constituted the vanguard of her opposition, many of them jeering and taunting her whenever she walked through the village. She became the object of women's songs of
ridicule and opprobrium sung collectively when she appeared.¹ Yet by at least 1960 she was transformed from anti-hero to hero. So complete had been the change in attitudes that women in Thionk who had not undergone excision became the brunt of a ridicule similar to that undergone by Aminata Badji for having done so.

If this experience illustrates the veritable revolution in some of the religious ideology of Thionk Essil, there is yet another incident that further dramatizes the radical nature of the relevant changes as well as the whirlwind velocity with which religious conversion swept the region. R.L. Touze, resident of Bignona in the 1950s, recounted an experience he had while passing through a Diola village named Suelle. Once while there he noticed a group of men who were burning one of the small stools the Diola use for seating. After asking the reason behind this atypical occurrence he learned that a Muslim traveler had not long ago been in Suelle. So repulsed was the population by what this itinerant represented that they chose to burn the stool on which he had been seated as a symbolic denial of all he represented. Yet within only ten years after this incident most people from the same village had converted to Islam.²

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the nature of religion and religious change as it relates to the women of Thionk Essil. It discusses: (1) the role of women in traditional Diola religion, (2) the penetration of Islam and Christianity into Thionk, and (3) the impact of religious
change on the women of this village.

**TRADITIONAL DIOLA RELIGION AND WOMEN**

Religious conversion in Thionk Essil cannot be fully understood without a discussion of the religion from which villagers converted. Moreover, a comprehension of traditional Diola religion serves as a reference point to analyze both points of continuity and discontinuity between this indigenous religion itself and other alternative religions. In traditional Diola society, religion was centered around the belief in a supreme being, or God, called Emitay. His omnipotence and the veneration in which he was held were expressed in a formal system of protocol by which people communicated with him. Traditional Diola belief held that only certain spirits, particularly those of ancestors, could make direct contact with God. These spirits were housed in shrines specially constructed for them, and known as sinaati among the Diola Boulouf. Sinaati were often unassuming forked stakes in the ground, frequently shielded by a roof of straw. Although located in different places, shrines were most often found in either clearings in forests or at the foot of a large tree, especially a fromager.

The protocol by which people made contact with God was further elaborated by a procedure by which shrines were entrusted to select individuals. Custodianship was most frequently exclusive to a particular lineage, one member of which became the shrinekeeper. The principal role of the
The shrinekeeper was to give an animal sacrifice, libation, or offerings that facilitated communication between the spirits housed in the shrine and Emitay. Thus the shrinekeeper was the most fundamental link between the human beings and ultimately God.

One point of particular interest concerning Diola shrines was their individuality. Each shrine had a unique personality insofar as it had specific functions and powers. While most shrines were multifunctional, there was usually one function that predominated. That these shrines were numerous is illustrated by the fact that Louis Vincent Thomas, who is the foremost ethnographer of the Diola, has cited one hundred shrines in Lower Casamance. My data on Thionk Essil suggests that he lists only a modest sample of the plethora of shrines in Thionk, several of which were duplicated in different wards throughout the village. Moreover, villagers were secretive in regards to certain shrines, particularly shrines associated with male rites and rituals. Thus there is reason to believe there were even more than what informants were willing to discuss. Nevertheless, an understanding of the various shrines known to exist is facilitated by classifying them. Thomas has provided eight broad categories, grouping them into shrines: (1) of confession; (2) of consecration; (3) of redemption; (4) of professionals, which are for special groups such as blacksmiths; (5) of lineages; (6) of mortality; (7) of religious preservation; and (8) therapeutic or sickness
shrines.

Some of the most distinctive characteristics of Diola shrines center around the constraints placed on one or the other sex regarding the trusteeship and utilization of shrines for worship. Although men and women were shrinekeepers and clients of Thionk Essil's shrines, various restrictions limited each sex's access to certain shrines. Sometimes the use and custodianship of shrines was exclusive to one particular sex. Often shrines of consecration, particularly circumcision shrines, have been located in secret forests from which women are strictly forbidden entry. Similarly certain shrines, such as Diamondiegue which is used for earth fertility, were limited in guardianship and used only by women who had already borne children.

Other variations in the sex of those who were the clients and shrinekeepers of certain shrines served as a source of further complexity. While guardianship of shrines was almost always limited to one or the other sex, they were often utilized by either both sexes, or the sex opposite that of the shrinekeeper. Moreover, the distribution of shrines with similar role function was sexually heterogenous; both priests and priestesses superintended shrines that had similar or related powers. Fertility shrines are a good example. Although cared for by either a male or female shrinekeeper, fertility shrines were used almost exclusively by women. Foupiyeu, the most popular
fertility shrine in Thionk Essil, was kept by a male member of certain lineages. Yet it was used primarily by women trying to conceive. However, other fertility shrines had priestesses. Among them were shrines to insure the life and longevity of the children of Gaenaelene women, those who had several of their children die. In Thionk Essil these shrines have different names in different wards. Foonin in the ward of Daga, Fouremban in Batine, and Gadjinghe in Niaganane were all dedicated to Gaenaelene women.

Mortality shrines further illustrate the ways in which shrines with similar functions were distributed among both sexes. While these shrines varied substantially in terms of their special powers, they were similar insofar as they enforced particular values deemed important by Diola society. A few examples demonstrate these points. The former shrine Ebak once located in the subward of Bouloup, is said to have inflicted sores all over one's body that would not heal. Whereas it was maintained by a priest, other mortality shrines has priestesses. In the neighboring subward of Baronkol a woman kept the shrine Foucancoule, which enforced one of the many taboos linked with pregnancy and childbirth. More specifically it was linked to the prohibition against witnessing childbirth by anyone other than women who had undergone that experience. It is said that when such individuals, whether male or female, saw childbirth they have began to experience mounting degrees of head pain and a swelling of their limbs that usually
resulted in death if Foucancoule was not consulted.\textsuperscript{13}

It is important to note that the distribution of shrines in traditional Diola society reflected other social realities. This is apparent, for example, in the hierarchy of shrinekeepers who constitute the clergy of Diola cults. Among the highest ranking religious officials were kings and queens, whose principal role was to oversee the most powerful shrines. Unlike what their titles suggest, the influence of kings and queens was limited almost exclusively to religious as opposed to political spheres.\textsuperscript{14} Yet although both sexes were in the upper echelon of this religious clergy, women neither occupied the highest position of religious leadership, nor were they as numerous as the elite male clergy. At the very summit of the hierarchy was the king located in Kerouhey in Portuguese Guinea.\textsuperscript{15} On the second highest level were king priests and queen priestesses. However, women's participation at this level was tempered by the fact that males on this level outnumbered their female counterparts at least three fold. Whereas Louis Vincent Thomas identified only three queens among the Diola in the 1950s, he cited at least nine king priests.\textsuperscript{16} These positions reflect the fact that while women's social status in traditional Diola society was somewhat elevated, it was not equal to that of men.

There is yet another social reality that Diola religious cults reflect. Most priests and priestesses occupied the third hierarchical level of religious
leadership where most shrines were found. My data on the full range of shrines maintained by men and women was limited by the fact that informants withheld information about certain shrines. Nevertheless, the information I gathered suggests that the distribution of shrines among the sexes reflects the social roles of men and women in Diola society. Men's predominance as political leaders was reflected in the fact that they had a disproportionate number of shrines that regulate social behavior and therefore social control. Women's preeminent roles as childbearers and childrearers was mirrored in the preponderance of fertility and therapeutic shrines entrusted to them.17

In spite of the comparatively limited role of women at the apex of the religious hierarchy and men's dominant control of shrines that regulate social behavior, shrines were still an important source of influence for Diola women. An explanation of the significance of shrines in this respect is facilitated by two theoretical constructs. One widely used theoretical framework is that of Michelle Rosaldo who popularized the dichotomy between public and private domains of influence in society. She defines the domestic sphere as "those minimal institutions and modes of activity organized immediately around one or more mothers and their children." Conversely she defines "public" as "activities, institutions, and terms of association that link, rank, organize, or subsume particular mother-child
Scholars conventionally treat these dichotomous spheres as separate and distinct entities, the public domain being that in which power and influence are virtually exclusively exercised. Because women fall for the most part into private domain in this construct, they have been characterized by several scholars as largely powerless. Yet at least one critical analysis of this construct argues that one notable limitation of this oft-cited theoretical construct is that it oversimplifies the dynamics at work in the allocation of influence and power. Speaking of African women in particular, Niara Sudarkasa contends that in traditional African societies the public and private domains often overlap.19

Beverly Chinas has developed a useful alternative theoretical framework that accommodates the dynamics at work in the allocation of influence. Fundamental to the theory are the concepts of formalized and nonformalized roles. Formalized roles are those which are distinctly visible, clearly defined, and easily understood. Conversely nonformalized roles are neither clearly visible, precisely defined, nor simply understood. Both of these more and less easily discernable roles exist, she argues, in the dichotomous spheres of the public and private domains of society. Consequently, Chinas' role categorization breaks down into four types: (1) public formalized, (2) private formalized (3) public nonformalized, and (4) private nonformalized.20 This construct allows for an understanding
of the full dimensions of female influence. Universally men predominate in public formalized roles in which the most significant amounts of powers and influence are vested. However, there is a real and often very significant but neglected influence exercised by women through public nonformalized roles.

Undoubtedly shrines provided the means by which Diola women operationalized this type of influence prior to religious conversion. Women were not the primary decision makers in matters of lineage, ward, or village level affairs. Nevertheless they demonstrated substantial initiative in shaping their community's activities. This stems not only from the fact that women controlled many of the shrines upon which the community was believed to be dependent for its well being; women sometimes used certain shrines reputed to bend the will of men in women's favor. 21

THE PENTRATION OF ALTERNATIVE RELIGIONS

Both Islam and Christianity are religions to which the people of Thionk Essil converted in the twentieth century. Although conversion in this village to the two faiths took place virtually simultaneously, Islam was far more successful in winning adherents. In the Department of Bignona, of which Thionk is a part, it is estimated that at least eighty percent of the population is Muslim. 22 The means by which this more popular religion spread throughout Diola Boulouf is both typical and atypical of broad patterns of Islamic conversion in West Africa. One regional trend
which has a parallel in Boulouf is an association between Islamic conversion and trade.\textsuperscript{23} Since Islam's appearance in West Africa in the eleventh century, it has proliferated principally by means of traders who traveled from North Africa and Egypt by way of the Sudan.\textsuperscript{24} Similarly, in Boulouf widespread Islamic conversion accompanied the establishment of regular trade relations by the Diola with merchants outside of Boulouf. Yet while some historical data suggest that trade between the Diola and Muslim traders dates back to the fifteenth century, the conversion of the Diola Boulouf is directly linked to their trade of palm oil produce begun in the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{25} More specifically, it was associated with a seasonal migration during which migrants lived among the Muslim people with whom they principally traded throughout the dry season.

Both the connection between migration and early conversion, and the association between Islamic conversion and trade are highlighted by concrete examples in Diola Boulouf. Most of the early Muslim converts in Thionk Essil were migrants. Mamadou Diatta, said to be the very first convert, had migrated seasonally for several years prior to his conversion to the Gambia as a palm produce trader.\textsuperscript{26} Likewise, the early convert Alkaly Badji, who later became one of the first marabouts indigenous to Thionk had also been a seasonal migrant prior to becoming Muslim.\textsuperscript{27} Also noteworthy is the fact that the contemporary distribution of Islam among the Diola reflects the historical links between
Islam and trade. Today Islamic villages are among those most heavily engaged in market activities, particularly with peanuts which are the principal source of rural revenue throughout Senegal. Conversely those villages which have retained, for the most part, their traditional Diola religion, are still almost wholly involved in traditional wet rice farming. In 1977 Diola villages that were either totally or almost totally Islamisized used from 30.6 - 42.6 percent of their cultivatable surface for peanut production. In regions where the traditional religion still predominated peanut production consumed only 7.8 percent of the same type of land.28

Another West African pattern relevant to Diola conversion concerns religious leadership. Historically Muslim scholars were often able to persuade many to convert in West Africa, such as they did in the ancient kingdom of Songhai, by virtue of the prestige and influence that recognition of their learning gave them.29 Similarly, the influence of Muslim scholars and clerics played a crucial role in Islamic conversion in Djugut. The earliest ones to reach Boulouf came primarily as itinerant travelers, while those coming after 1900 are reputed to have won over many converts. Of particular renown in Diola Boulouf is Cherif Muhammed Mahfuz Haidara, who was of Mauretanian origin. A figure of charismatic appeal, he traveled often throughout Djugut from 1900 until his death in 1919, and is reputed to have attracted countless adherents to the faith.30 One
reflection of his success at recruitment was two centers that he established for the religious training of converts in the region in 1901 and 1913. Both were called Dar Silamé. The importance of the Islamic clergy in winning adherents is dramatized by the belief that Islamic conversion was partly attributable to magic; in Thionk Essil it is commonly held that marabouts obtained converts by pouring holy water in the wells.

As in the case of Islam, leadership was crucial to the religious conversion to Catholicism as well. In this regards there was one consistent phenomenon in Boulouf that suggests there was a particular pattern in West Africa as a whole among Christian conversions. While the spread of Christianity is not conventionally associated with trade as was Islam, it was very much dependent upon the leadership efforts of Christian missionaries and catechists. Two factors illustrate this point. One was that although Catholic itinerant missionaries occasionally visited Ziguinchor since about 1645, Christian conversion among the Diola awaited the permanent residence and numerical increase of missionaries. Another is that the contemporary distribution of Catholicism, the dominant Christian faith among the Diola, reflects the importance of evangelical efforts. Most in Lower Casamance are located in relatively few villages around which most proselytizing took place. The village Elana, for example, one of the rare Boulouf villages with a Catholic majority, has the oldest Catholic
division in the subdivision.\textsuperscript{34}

In spite of the similarities that Islam and Christianity had with certain patterns of religious conversion in other parts of West Africa, there were certain aspects of conversion peculiar to Lower Casamance. One was the relative tardiness of the region's conversion. Although the arrival of Islam in Senegal in the eleventh century remained relatively quiescent until the fifteenth century in some areas and much later in others, most of Senegal was Muslim by the end of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{35} In contrast it was only in the 1930s that massive Boulouf conversion took place among the Diola Boulouf. Viewed in the broader national context, even Catholic conversion in Boulouf was belated. In 1817, fearful of the competition of Protestant missions in West Africa, the Roman Catholics attempted to stay the rivalry by founding the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Cluny. Although their sending of missionary sisters further north in Senegal was an expression of real zeal and good faith, Catholic missionary efforts remained weaker than those of Islam for some time.\textsuperscript{36}

Another factor unique to the region was the likeness of religious conversion there, both Muslim and Christian, to a youth movement. Louis Vincent Thomas, who was perhaps the first to suggest that conversion had some elements of youthful rebellion, estimated that most converts changed their religion when they were between the ages of fifteen and eighteen.\textsuperscript{37} This interpretation explains otherwise
perplexing cases in which some migrants converted only upon their return to Thionk Essil. For example, Omar Diatta from the subward of Kamanar Bouloup converted only after his return from migration to the Gambia. Religious conversion seems to have been the way in which youth asserted their autonomy and challenged traditions that placed them on the periphery of the social hierarchy.

This argument is supported elsewhere by the notion that conversion reflected a generational conflict stemming from new-found economic independence. Again, most of the very first converts in Thionk Essil were migrants for whom the palm produce trade served as a major source of income. This income, which was for the most part unprecedented, provided youth with a means to become relatively independent from their extended families. One line of thinking is that a social pressure placed on migrants to share most of their financial resources earned while away may have aggravated a desire for social liberties whet by financial independence. The argument is lent weight by the fact that generational tensions were clearly mirrored by shifts in residential patterns that took place between approximately 1920-1940. Over this period the pattern of the extended family compound gave way to that of nuclear family households. In the traditional family household younger men were subjected to the patriarchal authority of older men within it. Both the experience of living outside parental control and having an independent income seem to have given young men an autonomy
that they were unwilling to totally compromise.

While conversions to Christianity and Islam both received impetus from generational conflict, there were fundamental differences between the two religions that account for the substantive variation in their success rates. On the whole the advantages enjoyed by Islam were immeasurable, as the nature of its leadership suggests. One of the major strengths of leadership was the fact that it was indigenous to Africa, which accounted for the difference in the number of Muslim and Catholic clergy. Although exact figures are unavailable, the number of Muslim clergy appears to have been comparatively substantial. In comparison the Catholic clergy was pathetically understaffed. As late as World War II there were only eight missionaries for all Casamance, most of whom were French. 40 Evidently few Catholic clergymen found the exigencies of braving another lifestyle particularly attractive. That the origins of most Islamic clergymen was African also probably meant better administrative planning. As products of African cultures, high-ranking personnel likely utilized their comprehension of the African psyche to fashion the most effective proselytization tactics.

Yet perhaps the most advantageous aspect of leadership in relation to Islam was that the government set an early precedent of placing Muslims in leadership positions as colonial officials. In fact, many of the first converts throughout Boulouf acquired these posts. For example,
Ansoumana Diatta, who was appointed canton chief in 1916, was the first Muslim in Tendouk. His successor Afan Sonko, who replaced him in 1925, had been the first to convert in the village of Bessire. It is difficult to imagine what more the colonial regime could have done to hasten the legitimation of Islam.

There is something to be said of the oft-cited argument that Islam was more amenable to African cultures than was Christianity. For example, it permitted various practices such as polygyny and its notions of the family were compatible, even congruous with the African concept of "extended family". Its toleration of certain rites in African societies was particularly relevant to the Diola insofar as it was compatible with bukut, the circumcision of males, of great importance in Diola society. Moreover, its ideas on magic were in some ways related to some Diola beliefs. While the Diola believed in several types of magic, there were at least two kinds easily transferable to local Islamic practices. One genre was that exercised in traditional amulets often made with special herbs. Another was the magical powers endowed upon certain individuals, often either priests or priestesses. This may account for the fact that Essilians adopted certain practices related to beliefs in magic, presumably by means of some superficial contact with Muslims. According to Thionk Essil's oral history there was a considerable demand for magical charms known locally as gris-gris since at least the mid-nineteenth
century. It is also noteworthy that the Diola have consistently perceived the marabouts who make these charms as magical wizards. This probably accounts for a charismatic appeal that many Muslim clergymen had among the Diola. In a real sense Islam supplied the Diola with alternatives roles and role models to those of their vanishing shrinekeepers.

Most of these advantages to Islam were matched correspondingly with disadvantages for Catholics. It may not have been its late arrival so much that retarded Christianity's advance as it was its intermittent efforts after having once made initial contact. The first contact between the Diola and Catholic missionaries had virtually no consequences. After the arrival of the Portuguese in Ziguinchor in 1645 the city received visits occasionally from missionaries from Cacheo, the capital of Portuguese Guinee. Although Catholic missions were established in Sedhiou in 1875 and in Carabane in 1880, the recruitment of adherents in Boulouf was not affected until 1886 when missionaries made contact with Tendouk, one of Thionk's close neighbors. In 1900 yet another abortive effort was again made at Tendouk. Ten years elapsed before another mission was established in Djugut in the village of Kagnobon; only two years later in 1912 it was abandoned. Evangelical efforts were not launched in Thionk Essil until 1925 by a Father Jaquin. Considering the sparseness of early evangelical efforts it is no wonder that there were
far fewer Catholic converts.

The root of these sporadic efforts was the fact that early Catholic leadership consisted of expatriates. Consequently the ranks of the administrative personnel were consistently inadequate. This was, in part, because death and disease were at times distressingly damaging to the already understaffed leadership. For example, the mission established at Tendouk in 1900 failed because the catechist Aloys Samba, who had been left there to man the mission, had to be recalled when the two priests at his home station in Carabane both died of yellow fever. The dependence on expatriates meant that any small circumstance could virtually paralyze evangelical activity. Between 1943-1946 Catholic recruitment was slowed down considerably because two of the priests had been called away during World War II. As if understaffing was not enough the geography and environment imposed additional problems. Not only were Europeans often unfamiliar with the geography, but sometimes they had to get through areas with crocodiles and swamps in order to recruit. Truly evangelism was a life and death matter for the Catholic missionary brethren.

Because of persistent understaffing the Catholic priests recruited indigenous manpower whom they trained as catechists. In spite of the potential of a warmer welcome that the employment of Diola people themselves promised, Catholic proselytes were frequently treated with contempt. Events in Thionk Essil support the notion that this
antipathy was aroused by an intolerance registered by Catholicism for Diola traditions. That Catholicism was unyielding was best captured by the controversy that arose over Christians' new interpretation of male circumcision in Thionk Essil. Although no other event in Diola culture had been more respected and venerated, missionaries throughout Lower Casamance sometimes forbade its practice. No doubt it was precisely the importance of bukut which led many Christians to believe that their demystification and discrediting of it was a laudatory display of conviction and commitment. Thus in 1929 several young men in Thionk divulged the secrets of the precious bukut to missionaries, sang the secret songs of bukut publicly in the village and made the sound effects of cannibal witches. The reaction was decisive and swift. Villagers destroyed the church recently constructed by the new catechist.

Unfortunately this event made a lasting impression insofar as it ushered in a series of other events that were particularly adverse to Christians. So great became the threats against Christians and intense became the tensions that Catholics in the ward of Daga, who had been dispersed throughout that community, moved together for their self protection by forming a new subward called Grande Place. Furthermore, if the allegations of Catholics are true, even this did not allow escape from a subtle and yet violent sabotage. According to them they were systematically killed by villagers who put poison in their unattended palm wine
and drinking water.\textsuperscript{58} This assertion is lent credibility by the testimony of Augustin Coly, the catechist who resided at Niaganane from 1926-1936; he left Thionk Essil because he was afraid of being poisoned.\textsuperscript{59}

This hostility towards Catholics in Thionk Essil was not an isolated incident. On one occasion in Tendouk, a neighboring village, the Catholic community barely escaped death when the word leaked out that villagers had planned to exterminate them.\textsuperscript{60} The failure of the mission in the Boulouf village of Kagnobon during the years of 1910-1912 was attributed to a lack of cooperation with the community.\textsuperscript{61} Surely the relative inflexibility of Catholicism accounted for the apparent widespread rejection of the religion.

There are other noteworthy aspects of Catholicism which the Diola probably found culturally alienating. As if condemning the use of sinaati, Diola shrines, was not enough, it also prohibited a man from taking more than one wife. In a society where people view children as future security, and where child mortality was high, marriage to only one potential child bearer appeared unreasonable and unpropitious. Equally if not more unreasonable from villagers' perspective was the restriction of Catholic fathers and sisters from marriage and bearing children. In a culture where only the most cursed and depraved are exempted from these crucial roles, this Catholic practice was undoubtedly estranging. Perhaps most alienating was the
fact that Catholicism was the religion of Senegal's colonizers, and as such a symbol of cultural domination and emasculation. As among the Wolof in Senegal, Islamic conversion may have been a form of protest against colonialism itself. Moreover, the prerequisites for conversion to Catholicism probably contributed significantly to the religion's slow growth. While Islam required only a simple declaration of faith to become Muslim, Catholicism required a prolonged period of catechism that usually took at least one year.

However vast the differences between Christianity and Islam, they both made significant headway into Thionk Essil at approximately the same time. Among other things, this suggests that both religions share some factors which account for conversion in common. One such factor was the construction of roads that took place in Djugut in the first two decades of the twentieth century. This facilitated the movement of Muslim and Catholic clergy and trade, both of which are associated with religious conversion. The similar timing in Catholic and Muslim conversion also suggests that the socio-economic changes caused by seasonal migration took several decades to work their way deep into Diola culture. While seasonal migration began in Boulouf in the 1880s and 1890s, it was not until the 1920s that it had become a way of life for many villagers in Thionk Essil. Significantly, the first Muslim and Catholic converts in Thionk Essil converted in that decade. By the late 1920s
the number of converts had increased but they were still nothing more than a minority. When conversion finally did rapidly accelerate, virtually all the proselytes were Muslim. So deleterious had been the disrespect to bukut displayed by Catholics that it not only retarded but even reduced their numbers in the village; many Catholics converted to Islam.

Mass religious conversion throughout Boulouf coincided with a series of misfortunes that befell the region in the early 1930s. At that time both economic depression and a series of natural disasters struck the region. The first blow was the worldwide economic depression beginning in 1929 that had a direct impact on Djugut. In one quick stroke of misfortune the collapse of peanut prices and elimination of palm produce as an item of trade wiped away Boulouf's source of tax payments and commercial exchange. In 1930 peanut prices in the circle of Bignona dropped by more than fifty percent of their figures for preceding years. In the same year palm oil exports in Gambia, the location of most palm produce activity of Boulouf migrants, were seriously reduced due to a credit cut off induced by the depression. To compound the misfortune, grasshoppers invaded Casamance in 1931 and there was very little rain in the same year. No less distressing was a cattle plague that hit the circle of Bignona, where Djugut was especially affected. Conditions were clearly catastrophic.

That these disasters and religious conversion took
place at the same time strongly suggests a connection between the two. It is possible that people found their traditional religion could not help them to cope with these problems. The fact that misfortune repeated itself several times may have strengthened people's doubts about the traditional religion's efficacy. This may have been especially so among the region's youths, who were less committed to traditions than were older Diolas. Calamitous conditions may have stimulated the practice of new religion insofar as they provided individuals with alternative resources to seek relief. Villages may have attributed the improvements that eventually came, in part, to their adoption of other religions. In this sense the timing of the new religious could hardly have been more fortuitous.

**RESISTANCE TO RELIGIOUS CONVERSION**

The fact that religious conversion occurred in the early 1930s en masse somewhat masks the fact that many people in Thionk Essil, as elsewhere in Boulouf, resisted its entry into their culture. The resistance took several forms. One of the most common forms of opposition was the refusal of parents to support the conversion of their children. In such cases adherence to another religion may be seen as an act of defiance and belligerence. However, in many cases there were more subtle attempts to reverse whatever gains the alien religions had made. The initiative of women as well as men did not go unchallenged. Thus in some families the father of an unconverted woman married to
a Muslim would give his daughter palm wine secretly. Sometimes the kin of Muslim children would force them to drink palm wine in their parents' absence. And upon occasion, keepers of the old faith would coax converts to comply with some aspects of Thionk's traditional religion. Thus when Niema Badji had her first child the elderly women of Batine repeatedly warned her that it would be detrimental not to take the newborn before her lineage's shrine. One occasional form of resistance was the refusal of unconverted parents to consent to the marriage of their daughter to a Muslim. Thus although Ecadium Diatta in the ward of Daga was betrothed to Famara Diatta when she was yet a child, her parents revoked their consent when the groom-to-be converted to Islam. This is related to what was likely one of the strongest detriments to male conversion; it was widely rumored that Muslim men would never find wives.

There does not appear to be any historical evidence of differences in the degree of villagers' resistance to the conversion of men and women. Nevertheless, women displayed comparatively little initiative in regards to the earliest conversions. Female conversion began in the early 1920s, as did that of men, and was spearheaded by the wives of the first male converts in Thionk Essil. For these women being the first converts was not an indication of zealous and committed pioneering. It simply meant that they were the first to enter into marriages where conversion was to be a nuptial obligation. Their lack of initiative was apparent
in the difficulties that the first male converts had in finding marriage partners of the same faith. For example, when Omar Diatta converted early in Thionk he married an unconverted woman. Likewise, after Alfred Diatta became one of the first Catholics he took an adherent of the old faith as his wife. For virtually a decade most male converts followed suit. After the large scale conversions of the 1930-1935, the situation began to ease. Thus whereas the early convert Bacary Badji could not find a Muslim fiancee in 1925 for his first wife, he was able to select a second wife in 1936 from among the female Muslims.

Yet even after having married a Muslim, females who were unconverted were usually slow to accept the new faith. One measure of this was the time elapsed between women's marriages and their conversion. Most women who married early converts waited for approximately two years before converting. Moreover, some women managed to defer conversion indefinitely. Binta Sambou, the wife of one of the first converts, married in about 1917 but did not convert until 1925. Seynabou Sagna in the ward of Niaganane was wedded to a Muslim in the late 1930s but refused to covert until after the death of her parents in the 1960s. There were, moreover, scattered examples of women who unflinchingly resisted religious change in spite of their Muslim spouse. This was often the case for women who were priestesses, which suggests a greater commitment to certain aspects of tradition. Thus Sariana Diatta, queen of
the secret forest of Batine, never converted but remained with her Muslim husband until his death. Goumoumingue Sambou, priestess of one of the shrines in the ward of Kamanar was a similar case. However her circumstances were atypical because of her husband's response to his wife's defiance of his pressures to make her convert; at one point El Hadji Sambou responded to Goumoumingue's indomitable will by striking her. Also significant were the rare cases in which wives and not husbands converted, as in the case of Aissatou Mane and Djisambou Niassy.

This lack of enthusiasm and ambivalence expressed on behalf of women married to Muslim converts was not the only response that females had to conversions. On the whole younger and single females, usually adolescents, were more receptive to conversion. While they were not the very first females to convert, they eventually outdistanced their seniors in conversion as its momentum began to build. The generational conflict implied by this age difference is substantiated by some event surrounding the female circumcision of Muslim adolescents in Thionk Essil. So great was the opposition to circumcision that it was a clandestine affair for many girls throughout the 1930s and 1940s. During this period many of them were excised surreptitiously outside of their village. To receive the operation they frequently went to either another Boulouf village, to the Gambia, or even to another ward in Thionk Essil itself that practiced excision earlier than did
their own. While it is difficult to say exactly how much of the resistance to excision was attributable to generational as opposed to peer conflicts, there is some evidence that indicates that tensions between different age groups in this regards was considerable. One was the fact that parents frequently refused to send food to disobedient daughters during the period of time spent in a secret forest following her circumcision. Another was that girls were often aided and abetted by their brothers who had themselves converted; girls often underwent excision when migrating seasonally with them. Even among Catholics, brothers sometimes assisted their sisters in defying parental authority. Sympathetic to his sisters's subjection to the constant scolding of their parents due to her conversion, Elizabeth Diatta's converted brother allowed her to move from home to his household.

THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS CHANGE ON WOMEN

In many ways there was no difference in the impact of Islamic conversion on men and women. In the most simple human terms conversion for both sexes alike meant abrupt change in some aspects. Islamic conversion meant a commitment to abandon palm wine, which was perhaps the mightiest barrier to its success. Part of palm wine's previous significance lie in its role as bride price, which made it a key agent in building solidarity between two families soon to unite by means of nuptial contracts. Moreover, palm wine was far more than what at a superficial
glance might seem a savory alcoholic beverage. Essilians has used it for centuries for ritual functions, which made it an important source of continuity with tradition. Traditionally used for libation, it served as a tangible link between ancestors and spirits. In this light new ascetism may not only have been more than difficult, but indiscreet as well.

The arduousness of abstaining from palm wine was reflected in the ceremony of conversion itself. When the neophyte appeared before the Muslim community to make a public declaration of his conversion, the imam often asked the convert if he or she could truly give up palm wine. The difficulty of foregoing palm wine is also reflected in the widely accepted interpretation of the reversion to the traditional faith of several men who had migrated and converted in the Gambia around 1900. Fode Diatta, Lamine Diatta, and Bacary Djiba were all among those believed to have given up their new religion, in part, because of the difficulty in resisting palm wine. This difficulty also manifested itself in one of the sources of the intergenerational rift which was to arise in the 1930s. One source of tensions was the anxieties of elders long past tree-mounting age, who feared that Islam would prevent them from obtaining palm wine.

Islamic conversion permeated other facets of life for men and women alike. The consumption of pork, a heretofore preferred meat, was thenceforth forbidden. In addition,
there was the Muslim month of fasting, the Ramadan, to which each neophyte had to adapt. Even under normal circumstances this was trying, but when fasting fell during the height of either planting or cultivation it called for an exceptionally trying sacrifice on behalf of the new disciples. No wonder that a few converts like Cire Sambou in the subward of Kamanar Bouloup decided to forego fasting for the first few years of conversion. Furthermore, Islam compelled men and women alike to learn a new method of prayer, including: the regimentation of prayer five times per day, the physical motions for prayers, and the memorization of the Arabic verses of prayer. Arabic did not make inroads in Diola society by means of prayer alone. It entered everyday vocabulary with exceptional rapidity as converts adopted new names as symbols of their transition. Literally overnight Djibengor became Mamadou and Apoumbadiour renamed Bintou. In short, many of the changes brought about during the early stages of religious conversion were as demanding as they were rapid.

There were yet other changes brought by Islam in particular that were not sex exclusive. One concerned new standards of hygiene. The demands of the new religion exempted neither men nor females from stricter standards of cleanliness. Part and parcel of this was dressing. Islam introduced new apparel to men and women alike. Moreover, with the prohibition of alcohol the mood of social gatherings changed insofar as men and women no longer
engaged in drunken brawls as they had previously done. Even the most grudging probably had to acknowledge the respectability commanded by Islam's austerity.

Conversion to Catholicism also meant some rapid change for both men and women. As with Islam its introduction resulted in rapid name changes. As if with the stroke of a wand, Atending became Alfred and Djipeugneu changed to Denisia. Yet unlike Islam it did not necessitate a prohibition of the consumption of palm wine and pork, as did Islamic conversion. This seeming lack of change masked more radical permutations brought about in the Catholic community. One example of Catholicism's lack of tolerance of African lifestyles is reflected in Catholics' almost total abandonment of Diola shrines in Thionk Essil, known as sinaati.

While some of the changes that conversion brought about were shared by both sexes, many of them were particular to women. Among them were ephemeral changes which lasted throughout at least the 1930s when religious change temporarily placed certain traditional practices in a state of flux. Some of these temporary modifications were of the traditional practice of bride capture. In the 1930s it served as a popular recourse for youths who had difficulties in arranging marriages with the families of unconverted girls. In the face of opposition a man would sometimes force a women to live in his compound. Or at times a woman could willingly consent if her family disapproved of her
spouse selection. In such cases the couple often resided in the same ward or subward as the girl's parents.\textsuperscript{101} It was perhaps the audacity of this residential arrangement that served to postpone the eventual marriage settlement between the captor and the family of the captured women. After her parents had reconciled themselves to the marriage the groom would remit the bride price retroactively. Upon occasion the waiting was, comparatively speaking, protracted. For example, Ciaje Badji lived with her husband for one full year before the marriage was finalized.\textsuperscript{102} Another interesting phenomenon related to marital changes brought on by Islam was the mixture of religious affiliation within a single household; occasionally keepers of the old faith and Muslim lived together unperturbed by the differences in their faiths. Thus when Saly Diatta was remarried to her deceased husband's eldest brother, as levirate dictated, she became the only Muslim in a household with her new husband and his two co-wives.\textsuperscript{103}

Even in circumstances where marital consent was given willingly by the parent of an unconverted girl, Islamic conversion still introduced unprecedented factors for the man to be wed. One particularly irksome problem centered around bride price. Whereas palm wine remained an acceptable bride price among Christians up until at least 1970, prohibitions against alcohol consumption restricted its acceptability immediately to the Muslim convert.\textsuperscript{104} But in Muslim circles kola and currency made inroads as the new
souces of marriage transactions. Nevertheless most parents who adhered to the old faith, particularly before the massive conversions of 1930-1935, did not attach the same importance to these as they did to palm wine. Thus most families at that time insisted upon the traditional bride price payment. In consequence men such as Bacary Badji were faced with the problem of obtaining something to which they no longer had easy assess. In the days of old, men tapped their own palm wine for the bride price. However, to be Muslim meant not only ceasing to consume palm wine, but to tap it as well. Badji, as did most men like himself, remedied this by relying on male relatives who had not converted to mount the trees on his behalf.

Some other changes brought about by religious conversion were more long lasting and for this reason were perhaps more meaningful. Accompanying Islamic conversion, for example, was the adoption of a world view in which men and women were far from social equals. One almost immediate and yet enduring effect of Islam on women was their relinquishing of many of their roles in religious leadership and much of their active participation that characterized their traditional faith. This is demonstrated most clearly by religious worship. Whereas prior to Islam both men and women had their own sexually exclusive locales of collective prayer, which were for the most part in secret forests. Only men were provided with them in Islam. The mosque, the facility in which men often worship, was barred
to women until after childbearing age. Women were obligated to pray elsewhere, usually individually in their homes. Whenever a woman's husband prayed at home with her, she prayed behind him, something which symbolized both his heightened religious leadership and her subordination. The sexual inequality in Islam also introduced a new kind of dependency on men, as indicated by the religious education of both sexes. On the whole the religious instruction given to women was inferior to that given to men. Whereas many men who were early converts like Mohammed Diatta received an average of two years of religious education, many female converts like Cire Sagna received only enough religious training to recite prayers. In fact the lack of female leadership meant that all the earliest female converts were wholly dependent on men to learn how to pray. Most females in the village were like Mariétou Badji whose husband taught her, or Aminate Diémé whose brother taught her, or Binta Sambou who learned her prayers from a marabout. With the advent of Islam, the days when females received their religious instruction from other females were no longer the same.

Undoubtedly this relative exclusion of women from religious participation accounts for the ways in which women have retained their traditional faith. On the whole women's preservation of Diola religion has been far more tenacious than has that of men. This is evidenced by several things. One is the fact that of the remaining shrines, more are kept
by women than by men. A reduction in the use of shrines most commonly took the form of shrine abandonment. As more and more Essilians converted, the ranks of shrine succession became depleted. While men did not totally abandon their shrines, they gave them up more than did women. The probability that my data for shrines are not complete makes it difficult to calculate precisely the proportions of abandoned male and female maintained shrines. If the ward of Kamanar is representative, then it is quite clear that fewer priests exist today than do priestesses. While five of eleven acknowledged shrines formerly maintained by males existed in 1979, eight of the ten previously kept by women were still functioning.¹¹¹

Women's conservation of their traditional faith is also reflected in innovative means by which they have kept certain shrines ongoing. In some cases women have taken on shrines formerly kept exclusively by men. In Niaganane the shrine Gassemo, which reputedly cures a skin disorder similar to leprosy, was traditionally maintained by men only. Yet when all the potential priests who had converted to Islam refused the position, it was passed on to females in the same lineage. In approximately 1930 when the shrine's priest Fibacol Djiba died, his daughter became priestess.¹¹² In the ward of Kamanar, Fatou Sambou became the priestess of the shrine Bourague, which was against theft, when her father died around 1920.¹¹³

It is also interesting to note that Essilians have been
remarkably resourceful in prolonging the life of some shrines used principally by women, even when their overseers have remained masculine. The fertility shrine Foupiyeu is a case in point. It is unique insofar as it was the only shrine that existed in every ward throughout the 1970s. Its longevity is attributed, in part, to the importance of fertility in Diola society. But in a much more fundamental sense it was due to the innovative means devised in the 1960s to keep it functioning. In the past the successor to the shrine was always the eldest male in the family which was responsible for it. When the unconverted among those in line for succession began to die out the families that maintained the shrines in all but one ward requested that the traditionalist Ainamba Djiba take over the shrine. Although he was a kinsman of each of the families in question, he was not a natural candidate for succession for any of the shrines that he took over. Moreover, his kinship to the families responsible for Foupiyeu was atypical; he was related to several through matrilineal as opposed to patrilineal blood ties.  

The predominance of female initiative in the preservation of shrines does not mean that men had no role whatsoever in their endurance. Although men have used shrines less than women since the advent of Islam, they have at times aided the continuation of Thionk's shrines. One of the more common situations is represented by Bacary Sagna in the ward of Kamanar. Despite his conversion, he willingly
took over the shrine kept by his lineage when his father Adiolaho Sagna died in the 1950s. Moreover, some adaptations of shrines to contemporary conditions attests to male initiative in preserving traditional Diola religion. Such was the case with Gounéhé, which required rice as a sacrifice throughout the twentieth century. In the early 1970s the Chief of Batine changed the sacrifice of this shrine for which he was priest from rice to 100 cfa in response to the depleting rice reserves caused by the drought rather than abandon the shrine.

Female initiative in maintaining a continuity with religious traditions has manifested itself in more than just shrines. There is evidence that there has also been a persistence of at least some aspects of women's religious rituals. This was made apparent in their resurrection of certain religious phenomena to counter the deepening drought in 1975. In that year an elderly woman from the Boulouf village Kagnobon, who was respected for her psychic abilities, dreamed that the drought was attributable to either the burial of destructive maraboutic charms or magical pieces by people with supernatural powers in every Boulouf village. In response to women of Kagnobon convoked a subsequent meeting in which women throughout Boulouf were represented, at which they collectively decided to have a purge.

The collective hunt which ensued was totally unprecedented in Djugut. For two days in the dry season of
1975 women throughout that region systematically visited every village in the area. One essential component of the purge was that the leaders, a core of women known for their psychic powers, indicated the "bad spot" responsible for the calamity in every village. Reportedly the charms or magical pieces were exhumed and burned or thrown in a nearby stream. This was followed by proceedings with many characteristics remarkably similar to traditional practices. To begin with every woman present was required to wear indigo cloth, the cloth traditionally worn for rain and marriage rites. Of further interest is that the traditional prohibition of females who had not borne children from entering women's secret forests and from participation in certain rituals was invoked; only women who were mothers were allowed to take part in the purge. Moreover, the dancing which followed the rites to exercise the evil which lasted throughout the night included special ritual dances and songs used prior to religious conversion to nullify witchcraft.\textsuperscript{117}

For the women of Thionk Essil perhaps the most significant change made by Islam has been the introduction of clitoridectomy. Islam came to Djugut by way of Gambia. The historical circumstances surrounding its inception there began in the village of Thiobon when a Mandingo woman named Fanta Sagna migrated there from her village in Gambia, Sabajy, between 1900-1903. Sagna's husband Bourama Diamban, a long time migrant, settled upon Thiobon as a permanent resident because he had relatives there. These kin were
part of a migration from Guinea Bissau to Thiobon that began in the 1880s. Had Sagna arrived twenty years earlier when villagers had not yet begun to convert to Islam, she may have found Thiobon hostile to her introduction of excision. However, when Sagna arrived she found that perhaps two decades of migration to the Gambia had created conditions more receptive to her initiation of excision. Not only had many migrants been exposed to the Mandingo custom, but some had converted to Islam as well.\textsuperscript{118}

The reasons for the adoption of female circumcision may be found in the teachings of Muslim holymen in Thionk Essil. Men like Cisse Koukaly and Thierno Sy taught that excision was an important rite of purification for females, the female equivalent of male circumcision.\textsuperscript{119} It was said that unexcised girls were unclean and to be prohibited from cooking food and drawing well water, which they would contaminate with impurities. Most Muslim holymen in Thionk were either themselves Mandingo or Peul. The fact that both these cultures practice excision suggests that its adoption in Boulouf was a cultural borrowing.\textsuperscript{120} Had Islam been brought by the Wolof, who do not practice excision, Boulouf probably would not have begun the practice. It is important to note that clitoridectomy's popularity was due, in part, to the fact that women had no exposure to alternative interpretations of Islam. Unlettered and unschooled, their adoption of it was in some ways uncritical.

Ironically one factor sorely limiting women's exposure
to Islam, poor religious instruction, may have retarded women's acceptance of it. There was no other phenomenon associated with Islamic conversion that penetrated Thionk Essil with such difficulty. In every ward the first women to undergo it faced ostracism and opposition. \(^{121}\) Supporters of excision were frustrated by its critics' fury. One critical factor that provoked its opposition was the support given to numerous adolescents who became excised without parental consent. The origins of this aid occurred in about 1930 when three Kamanar women, coaxed by their husband, invited Fanta Sagna to their ward to excise them. In that same year in the midst of adversity these three women took twelve adolescents to Thiobon to be circumcised. \(^{122}\) This precedent having been set, women in some wards of Thionk excised girls who came disobediently from those wards which had not yet begun the practice. In Batine adolescents went collectively to Kamanar three times before the rite was actually begun in their own ward. \(^{123}\) Nevertheless, the threat of adversity was sometimes enough to deter surreptitious circumcision within the village. Mindful of the potential controversy, the women of Kamanar refused to circumcise a group of seven girls from Batine in 1937. \(^{124}\) Instead they went to Kagnobon, another Boulouf village. It was perhaps the fact that the religious education of women was initially so superficial that it took many years for clitoridectomy to be practiced within each ward itself. Altogether it took approximately twenty-five years for
excision to make headway in every ward of the village. Kamanar pioneered these rites in 1930, Batine followed in about 1938, Niaganane about 1955, and Daga started in 1960. In contrast to the lightening speed of the 1930-1935 conversions, the acceptance of excision in Thionk Essil was exceedingly slow.

Separating the responses of men and women to excision provides an interesting perspective. While it is difficult to determine the exact role of men in the early opposition to excision, it is quite clear that their resistance has been in some ways the most aggressive and definitely the most long lasting. Most important is the fact that the response of many men has been consistently negative. In the pioneer ward Kamanar the men from the subwards Baronkol and Yeumeuk, who condemned and banned excision for at least two decades, threatened violence at one excision ceremony. Having been deterred from this by the supportive males of the third Kamanar subward, Bouloup, they retaliated by refusing to donate rice for the festivities. At least on one other occasion men from these two subwards went so far as to penetrate the women's forest in Bouloup where excision was conducted to send back participants to their subwards. In Batine the men tore down the first enclosure built in the forest by women to seclude their proceedings. In Niaganane some of the men in the subwards Kaffanta and Diouate, who condoned excision in the 1950s, later banned it from their communities. When
Daga, the last ward to adopt the practice, finally initiated it in 1960, the reaction of men in that ward was extreme. They ended the last phase of the circumcision in disorder and disarray by charging the women who were bathing girls in a stream.  

It is difficult to explain why men have remained consistently opposed to female circumcision. This is primarily because men would not openly discuss these issues. One reason may be that men themselves have been responding to the physical complication that must have sometimes followed excision. Tetanus, delivery complications, frigidity, and even sterility are all real risks of excision.  

No data were available to measure the extent of physical disorders caused by excision, as it is forbidden for women to reveal any information about the intimate details of the operation. However, in a society in which tetanus was a major cause of infant mortality until at least the 1950s, it is likely that the lack of sanitation sometimes resulted in these complications.  

Perhaps most compelling is the question of why women have consistently undergone excision in spite of the serious physical risks and male opposition. Women's adoption of circumcision in Thionk Essil counter the popular argument that it is a practice imposed on women by men. It is possible that women's insistence on practicing excision is a form of protest at their relative exclusion from religious participation. No matter how negative the consequences of
excision may have been it has allowed women a special kind of control of their own sexuality. The ability to influence their lives in this way may, in a certain sense, compensated for their loss of influence in their communities that was operationalized through shrines. Thus excision may be a behavior of women not only to protest but also to equalize their status vis-à-vis men.

The case of Catholic conversion resulted in a curious mixture of equity and inequity. Religious instruction, comparatively speaking, was less discriminating between the sexes; males and females received the same religious training before conversion. Furthermore men and women began to worship together, a factor which was a radical change from the primarily sexually exclusive worship that characterized traditional Diola society. Nevertheless, there were some aspects of Catholicism that stripped Catholic women of some of the minimal religious participation exercised by Muslim women. Catholic women on the whole have not been as avid church goers as men. This may stem from the fact that they have few, if any, leadership roles in their congregations. In this sense they are more disenfranchised than their Islamic sisters. At least Islam was flexible enough to allow Muslim women the occasion to shape and fashion the religion in their own image. Their continued use of traditional shrines and rites afforded them a more meaningful religious participation, albeit reduced in comparison to that formerly exercised. In
contrast Christianity's dogmatism and paternalism closed this opportunity off to its female followers. For Catholic women religious conversion meant an abrupt and final termination of traditional worship.

The overall impact of religious change on the position of women in Thionk Essil has been disadvantageous. The structure of Diola traditional religion was such that women were afforded some degree of influence in terms of the general welfare and regulation of social behavior in their communities. While it would be inaccurate to say that their influence in either of these domains was equivalent to that of men, one can say that the influence they exercised was considerable. Neither Islam nor Christianity offered women the means to exercise these roles from which they were displaced. In the case of Islam, women's lack of participation, and their poor religious instruction were, no doubt, the principal factors which account for the continuities between Diola traditional and modern lifestyles. Islam's flexibility allowed for a syncretism that incorporated some aspects of the traditional religion that has shaped Diola women's lives for centuries. It is ironic that Islam, the religion most explicit in the ideology of the subordination of women, has been the least culturally disenfranchising of the two religions. It has afforded women a special means of protest, if not power. In contrast Christianity allowed neither cultural retentions of the traditional religion, nor marginal leadership roles.
Catholicism's disenfranchisement of its followers was more complete, more farreaching. For Diola women religious conversion only furthered the negative consequences set in motion by widespread economic change.
Footnotes to Chapter 4

1Thionk Essil Historical Texts (TEHT), Interviews with Aminata Badji, June 23, 1979, B-94-5, July 13, 1979. Henceforth information from these texts will be abbreviated, citing the book number and page(s).


4Ibid., 595.

5Shrine inheritance differed somewhat for men and women. For men shrine succession passed directly from the deceased to someone of direct kinship in the designated lineage. For women shrine succession was determined by both consanguine and affinal ties. Succession often passed from sister-in-law to sister-in-law. The priestess was sometimes the wife of a brother or a relative of the husband of the deceased. Among women succession can also pass from sister to sister, as is common among the Diola of Bliss-Karone. Or it is passed to the niece of the deceased woman (her sister's daughter). Shrine succession is usually restricted to one or the other sex, there being some exceptions. It is interesting to note that queenship among a neighboring people, the Manding, is similar insofar as it passes from sister to sister and can be determined by affinal kinship. For information on female shrine succession among the Diola see Thomas, op. cit., pp. 658-9, 665-6. For information on female shrine succession among the Manding see Matt Schaffer and Christine Cooper, Mandinko: The Ethnography of a West African Holy Land (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1980), pp. 58-62.

6Thomas, op. cit., pp. 591-95.

7Ibid., pp. 609-10.

8In Thionk Essil it is believed that a woman who ventures into the men's secret forest will die during childbirth. Women are also strictly forbidden to see male initiates during the time in which they are kept in the
secret forest, a period which today lasts only a few weeks as opposed to the previous several months spent there. During this period women keep far away from these forests and other wooded areas from which initiates may suddenly appear. It is said that if a female sees an initiate during this period, that she will die upon eating the rice newly harvested for that year.

9 TEHT, B-60; C-54, C-57, C-78.
10 TEHT, A-79; B-119, B-152.
11 TEHT, B-86, B-101; C-88.
12 TEHT, B-84, B-164; C-64, C-56.
13 TEHT, B-77.

According to Louis Vincent Thomas in the precolonial era Diola kings were vested with legislative, executive, and judicial power. While this was probably true of the Diola south of the Casamance River, it is unlikely that whatever kings existed north of the Casamance River exercised the full realm of these powers. For example, while the king's functions were primarily religious, he did regulate land disputes in the village. In Thionk the king, known as oeyi, had principally the role of officiating certain agricultural rituals. His ritual importance was dramatized by particular beliefs and practices. It was thought that the king did not have ordinary biological needs and functions, and as such upon his death it was said the he was either gone or missing as opposed to deceased. The king was also exempted from cultivating his own fields, which was done by ordinary villagers in Thionk Essil.

15 Thomas, op. cit., p. 646.
16 Ibid.
17 The predominance of women as the shrinekeepers of maternity shrines in particular was noted by Odile Journet in her thesis entitled Rôles et statuts des femmes dans la société Diola (Basse-Casamance), These du 3e cycle presentée devant l'Université de Lyon II, 1978, p. 86-87. She states that many such shrines with priestesses were concerned with sacrifices given at childbirth, and rituals for deceased pregnant women. These shrines were also associated with resisting sickness and the fertility of rice fields. She also points out that in traditional Diola thought it was believed that there is some connection between the fertility of the fields and women's fertility. (Ibid., p. 82). This may explain why women often perform special rituals when there is no rain. (Thomas, op cit., pp. 735-6). The belief that only women who have had
at least one child can invoke rain highlights the connection between earth and female fertility.


21 My informants did not specify the exact way in which this was done. However the fact that some shrines could be used to women's interest was corroborated by Robert Baum, a Ph.D. candidate at Yale University, who conducted extensive dissertation field research on Diola religion in the Department of Oussouye. His data also indicates that women sometimes used female shrines to coerce males into acting in their behalf.

22 L.V. Thomas, "L'habitat Djugut," Notes Africaines, No. 120 (October 1968), pp. 109-120. This figure is deceptive in the sense that it does not take into account subregional variations in the distribution of Islam. While the Diola north of the Casamance River are predominantly Muslim, those who live south of the river constitute only 4-6 percent of the population. While south shore Lower Casamance has the lowest number of Muslims in the region, it has the highest number of animists. This is reflected in the estimate of Abbot Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, a Diola himself, who has assembled both respected and impressive historical data from his own field interviews as well as documents kept by missions in south shore Lower Casamance. In 1979 he calculated the distribution of religious affiliation to be at 20,000 animists, 10-12,000 Christians, and 5-7,000 Muslims.


25 Jean Boulegue argues that trade was initiated between the Casamance and the Malinke regions in the interior in the fifteenth century in "La Sénégal: du milieu du XVe siècle au début du XVIIe siècle," These du 3e cycle (Paris), 1968, p. 97.

26 TEHT, C-3. He had migrated to the village Gunjur in the Gambia.

27 TEHT, B-91. He had migrated to the village Tujering in the Gambia.

28 Journet, op. cit., p. 190.

29 Skinner, op. cit., p. 660. There is one other major way in which religious conversion was obtained. This was jihad, or holy war. There were several in the Senegambia. The first one in the region began in Mauretania by Nasir al-Din approximately 1645-75. The second jihad in the Senegambia was that of Malik Daoud Sy of Bundu in the 1690s. The third was in Futa Jallon in Guinea, begun in 1726. In the 1700s the fourth jihad was staged in Futa Toro where holy war was again declared in 1852 by El Hadji Umar. A series of jihads took place in Casamance in the second half of the nineteenth century. Those affecting Fogny, but minimally the Boulouf, were jihads begun in the Gambia by Maba Diakhoun known as the Soninke maraboutic wars. During this period jihads took place throughout much of Casamance. Those of the Upper Casamance were led by Moussa Molo, a Peul and those of the Middle Casamance were led by Fode Kaba, a Manding. There were offshoots of the Gambian wars that affected the Diola Fogny especially. There were four Diola aggressors. The two who were Wolof were lesser threats. Birahim N'Diaye led slave raids against the Diola Fogny 1884-1888 and Mangone Seye not long thereafter did the same. More threatening was the aggression of Fode Sylla and Fode Kaba. Fode Kaba, the more powerful of the two, waged military campaigns 1885-1901 which greatly ravaged the Diola Fogny. Fode Sylla came closest to military incursion in Boulouf. He attacked Fogny 1877-1894, twice advancing troops into the Boulouf area, but was defeated by the collective efforts of several Boulouf villages. For information on the early jihads in the Senegambia see Philip Curtin, "Jihad in West Africa: Early Phases and Inter-Relations in Mauretania and Senegal," Journal of African History, XII, I, (1971): 11-24. For a full discussion of jihads throughout all Casamance see Frances Anne Leary, "Islam, Politics and Colonialism: A Political History of Islam in the Casamance Region of Senegal (1850-1914)" Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1970.
The most complete account of his life is found in Paul Marty, Études sur l'Islam au Sénégal (Paris, 1977).

Leary, op. cit., p. 217, argues that the first Dar Silame established by Mahfuz was preceded by another center for Islamic conversion in Thiobon, the Boulouf village which actually pioneered Islamic conversion in the area.

LEHT, B-82, B-91. There are a few slight variations of this story. One is that herbs and not holy water were placed by marabouts in the wells. The other is that something was placed in ponds from which people drank.

According to the historical records kept by the Abbot Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, the visits by Catholics from Cachéo were exceedingly sparse. Even when the number of Catholic fathers residing in Casamance increased after 1900 they remained an exceptionally small staff. Before World War II there were only eight missionaries for all Casamance, most of whom were French, (B-182). The real catalyst in Catholic conversion was the training of indigenous catechists whose understanding of the language and psyche of the culture were crucial assets in attracting adherents.

The mission in Elana was begun in 1947.

A major turning point in the Islamization of Senegal occurred in the late nineteenth century when the dominant ethnic group of the country, the Wolof, converted en masse to Islam. Although Muslims had lived for centuries in predominantly pagan villages and entire Wolof villages had become Muslim preceding the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the degree to which all the Wolof had become Muslim by the late nineteenth century is a matter of conflicting opinion. Whatever the religious preference of the Wolof, they rallied around the religious leader Sheikh Amadu Bamba, who founded the Mouride brotherhood in 1886. Studies of the Mouride brotherhood include: Donald B. Cruise O'Brien, The Mourides of Senegal: The Political and Economic Organization of an Islamic Brotherhood: (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); Paul Marty, Les Mourides d'Amadou Bamba (Paris, Leroux, 1913); Vincent Monteil, "Une confrérie musulmane: Les Mourides du Sénégal," Archives de Sociologie des Religions, No. 14 (1962): 77-101.

Geoffrey Parrinder points out that very early, but fruitless evangelical efforts were made in Senegal. In the fifteenth century missionaries visited the Senegambia and in 1489 a Wolof king named Chief Behemoi, having traveled to Portugal, was baptized. However he later expelled the missionaries from his community. See Geoffrey


38 TEHT, C-3.

39 Peter Mark, "Economic and Religious Change Among the Diola of Boulouf, 1890-1940: Trade, Cash Cropping and Islam in Southwestern Senegal" Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1976, pp. 139-141. The credibility of this argument is contingent upon the existence of economic obligations of migrants to the compound in Thionk of which they are members. However, Olga Linares points out that the households that comprised these compounds may have been economically autonomous familial units. Under such circumstances migrants would probably not have been motivated by a desire for economic autonomy in establishing independent household dwellings; "From Tidal Swamp to Inland Valley: On the Social Organization of Wet Rice Cultivation Among the Diola of Senegal," *Africa*, 51, 2 (1980), p. 578.

40 TEHT, B-182. Again, this information is from the historical data gathered by Abbot Augustin Diamacoune Senghor.

41 Mark, *op. cit.*, p. 104.


44 Traditional amulets were frequently herbs sealed in an animal's horn or tooth. In contrast Muslim charms consist of kuranic verses enclosed most often with a leather covering. Both traditional and Islamic amulets are reputed to have a wide range of magical powers, such as protecting people from snake bites, repelling particular illnesses, and even the ability to inflict death.

45 Traditional Diola cosmology holds that certain individuals have supernatural powers that can be used either positively or negatively. Those who use them negatively are cannibal witches that eat people's souls, and have the ability to fly and take on grotesque forms. Persons who use their supernatural abilities positively are said to often have the ability to foresee, which they use to warn individuals of impending danger. L.V. Thomas, *Les Diolas*, p. 616.

This information is from the historical data of Abbot Senghor. However, in Les Diolas, p. 772, L.V. Thomas fixes the origins of temporary visits to Lower Casamance by missionaries to be in the sixteenth century.

I wish to express my thanks to Father Jean Pierre Diatta, who shared with me his Cahier de la Mission Bignona containing historical records kept by the Catholic fathers preceding him.

In spite of the challenge that Catholics presented to make toward circumcision in Thionk Essil in 1929 (forthcoming in text), they still continue to take part in it.

According to this widely held interpretation, the rapid popularity of the Mouride brotherhood was attributable to the fact that it provided alternative avenues of relief and resistance against colonial rule. This idea was expressed in two works on the Mourides previously cited: Donald B. Cruise O'Brien, op. cit., pp. 32-33 and Paul Marty, Études sur l'Islam au Senegal, (Paris, Leroux, 1917), p. 251. This two volume work by Marty
is an expansion of his previous publication on exclusively the Mouride brotherhood, *Les Mourides d'Amadou Bamba*.

63 This is a conservative estimate of the duration of catechism for early Catholic converts. Often times early female converts like Irma Diatta received religious training for two and sometimes even three years before actually converting. However this may be an indication of the lack of female initiative in early conversion. *TEHT*, B-178; C-51.

64 French initiatives in road construction were initiated in 1907 when they cleared a pathway between Bignona and Karitak, probably for the objective of military defense. Extensive road construction was launched in the 1920s, beginning in late 1921 when a road was built connecting Bignona to Tobor. The financial input into road construction a few years thereafter was probably a follow up to the push to involve more of Boulouf in cash crop production. Most of the colony's credits for transportation development went to the Casamance in 1924 and 1925. *ANS 2G 25 43; "Senegal, rapport politique annuel."

65 Most migrants in the first quarter of the twentieth century were not of the generation group Djegele, which was circumcised in approximately 1900. Rather most were of the generation of Eforsé which was circumcised in 1920. Given that villagers did not seasonally migrate then until they were adolescents, around the time that men were circumcised, migration probably first became considerable only in the 1920s.

66 Mamadou Diatta of Kamanar, who converted around 1920, is said to have been the first villager to permanently convert and remain in Thionk Essil. Actually there were others who converted earlier, only to revert to their traditional religion later. There may also have been a few Essilians who converted in the Gambia after or before permanently migrating there. According to two of the earliest Muslim converts in Thionk Essil, the very first man to convert was Arfansou Sagna. Although he was from Thionk Essil, he became a permanent migrant to the Gambia; *TEHT*, A-25, C-19. No known villagers converted to Catholicism prior to the evangelism that began in 1925. *TEHT*, A-25.

68 Two such persons are Baboucar Niassy and Abdoulaye Djiba, both from the subward of Kaffanta Niaganane, which is where many Catholics reconverted to Islam. *ANS 2G 31 14.*
I am indebted to Bacary Badji, the imam of Batine Bah, for this insight which was confirmed by subsequent interviews.

This was evidenced most by the transition of the characteristics of females who were excised. Initially the wives of converts became excised. However, when the practice caught on and was conducted en masse, it was principally adolescents who took part.
Essilians describe three principal components of religious conversion: (1) the shaving of convert's hair (all for the men and only a small portion for women), symbolizing the beginning of a new way of life; (2) the proclamation of faith in Islam before a Muslim cleric and often the community, (3) the distribution of kola.

Some of the Muslim names which Essilian's often adopted for women are: Aissatou, Khady, Binta, Seynabou, and Maimouna. Examples among men include: Omar, Ousmane, Djibril, and Idrissa.

Some of the female pagan names that Catholics shed were Essekadione, Daba, and Djiguene; for men they were Koumalo, Adjiogo, and Silonkany.

According to Louis Vincent Thomas in "Animism et Christianisme," op. cit., p. 7-8, Catholics in south shore Lower Casamance still practiced much of their traditional faith, which gives rise to a syncretic new faith. However in Thionk Essil as perhaps elsewhere in Boulouf, conversion to Catholicism has resulted in a much more radical discontinuance of Diola traditional religion.


There is an uncanny connection between traditional Diola beliefs about menstruation and those of Islam.
TEHT, B-70, B-93, B-151.

TEHT, C-56, C-57-8. I am indebted to Ousmane Sadio and Coumba Sambou, the parents of my interpreter Cire Sadio. They openly and frankly discussed the transition of the shrines in their ward.

TEHT, B-238.

TEHT, C-57. Bourague is said to cause bones to break easily if a person steals something from nearby the shrine.

TEHT, B-152-4.

TEHT, C-56.

TEHT, B-119.

TEHT, B-135, B-136.

TEHT, B-131-2.

TEHT, C-52

As Awa Thiam points out, female circumcision and infibulation is practiced by Christians, animists, and Muslims alike. Those countries where these practices exist include: Benin, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Mali, Guinee, Niger, Senegal, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Afars and Issas, Saudia Arabia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and southern Algeria; La Parole aux Negresses (Paris: Gonthier, 1978), p. 78.

TEHT, A-137; B-80; B-166; C-22.

TEHT, C-7-8.

TEHT, B-160.

TEHT, B-112.

These dates are estimates based on certain events that people can remember surrounding female circumcision in their wards. For example, in the ward of Batine several women remembered that Bajat Diatta was born the same year as the ward's excision.

TEHT, B-160.

TEHT, B-121.

TEHT, B-142.

For a discussion of the pros and cons of female circumcision, see "L'excision: base de la stabilité familiale ou rite cruel?", *Famille et Développement*, 2 (avril 1975): 13-17. Female circumcision is not the only example of cultural practices physically harmful to women. Suttee, the burning of women alive with their deceased husbands, was practiced widely by Hindus in India prior to its condemnation by the British in the nineteenth century. As with excision, suttee was linked to a certain kind of purification of women. Among Hindu women suttee was both proof of a woman's virtuousness and a mark of bravery and family honor; Dorothy K. Stein, "Women to Burn: Suttee as a Normative Institution," *Signs*, 4, 2 (Winter 1978): 253-273.

This statement is based on my own participant observation of sex differentials in church attendance.
The combination of economic change, religious conversion, and the effects that they had on Thionk Essil significantly affected women's traditional associations. Of those that existed, Gaenaelene, a women's traditional fertility association, experienced the most far-reaching transformations. The most extensive of these changes were initiated by the Gaenaelene in the subward of Kamanar Yeumek in 1954 when one particular woman became the focus of its collective aid. Prior to this assistance the mortality of Soy Soy Diatta's children had been especially grievous. She had lost six children either during pregnancies or her children's infancy. Having accepted the succor of Gaenaelene, the bereaved closely cooperated for three consecutive years with the group's efforts at helping her child born later that year live. The close of these years was marked, as usual, by a celebration. Yet Soy Soy's festivities were atypical and represented a major departure in the operations of this traditional women's organization. These changes of 1954 were a precursor of others soon to follow in Gaenaelene that reflected similar transmutations
in other village institutions. The purpose of this chapter is to explore: (1) the origins and traditional role functions of Gaenaelene and (2) the continuities and discontinuities between the contemporary and traditional operations of Gaenaelene.

SOCIAL MEANING AND STRUCTURE

The precise origins of Gaenaelene are unknown. While the oral history on the association is not extensive, it does suggest that the institution predates Thionk Essil itself. Oral accounts hold that Gaenaelene was among those institutions brought by migrants to the village from its parent village Essil when they settled in its present location around 1620. Unfortunately there is no historical data in Thionk Essil on the organization preceding that period. However, if the most essential raison d'être of the association was any indication, the origins of Gaenaelene may have extended back to the very origins of the Diola people themselves. On a functional level fertility associations are institutional responses to high child mortality. While there is no data on child and infant mortality in the precolonial era, contemporary figures suggest they were excessive. According to the 1978 World Fertility Survey in Senegal, the rate of infant mortality for rural women was 137 per thousand as opposed to 17 per thousand in the U.S. In addition, child mortality before the age of five was found to be very high; the mortality rate between the ages of one and five was 177 per thousand
for the period 1968-1972. Given these levels of mortality decades after modern health care facilities were placed in the countryside, it is probable that precolonial figures were consistently high.

Undoubtedly the pervasiveness of child mortality accounts for the existence of fertility associations among different peoples of Senegal. For example, among the neighboring Mandingo, Gaenaelene finds its equivalent in the association called Dembajasa. These associations also attest to the fact that fertility is very highly regarded among many agricultural people such as the Diola. In Diola society, in particular, the noteworthiness of fertility in traditional thought was expressed in several ways. One is that motherhood constituted a veritable initiation rite for Diola women. Mothering at least one child satisfied the criteria for membership into another type of traditional female association, the Ehounia. Primarily religious in function, Ehounia's chief activity was conducting certain rituals, many of which were connected with the fertility of the rice fields. Moreover, a woman's social status in traditional Thionk Essil was largely determined by her fertility. Acceptance by a woman's affinal kin in particular was dependent on a woman's ability to have children. Motherhood also earned her a respected position amongst other married women in her concession and household. Consequently infertility and child mortality were a principal cause of familial rejection and social
exclusion. To be without children was perhaps the most
dreaded fate among women.

While the value given to fertility is one commonly
shared by various agricultural people, there were other
beliefs particular to the Diola that shaped the functions of
Gaenaelene. One of them concerns the cause of childhood
death. In traditional cosmology it was not child mortality
per se that was perceived as atypical, but rather the
frequency of death which was regarded as unnatural. Thus
when a woman had several children die successively,
villagers in Thionk Essil attributed the deaths to the
supernatural. More specifically this mortality was often
believed to be the work of cannibal witches. These were
said to be individuals who used their powers malevolently to
deavour people's souls, something which eventually resulted
in death. Cannibal witches, it was believed, formed clubs
which met regularly in the sea to eat the souls of
individuals which were transformed into some type of animal
meat, such as that of a pig or cow. At each meeting a
different member of the group was responsible for providing
someone's soul.

Another traditional belief that shaped the operations of
Gaenaelene concerned a cannibal witch's selection of their
victim. It is said they consumed the souls of their kinsmen
almost exclusively. In a sense this belief is antithetical
to the ideal functions of the kinship system itself. If the
kinship network is meant to foster social solidarity and
group cohesion, then malevolent and intentional acts to kill family members is not only personally but structurally pernicious. Viewed from another perspective, this belief is simply a reflection of particular tensions inherent in the kinship system. In simple societies, such as that of the Diola, interpersonal relations have been the most intimate among blood kin. Not only do relatives reside together throughout their lives, but most personal and contractual obligations are made with family members. While the intimacy that this frequent contact engenders fosters group solidarity, it also fosters countervailing sentiments such as distrust, jealousy, and personal offense. The belief in the intra-familial selection of victims by cannibal witches is a reflection of these opposing forces. These tensions also find expression in the belief that the successive deaths of a woman's children were caused by someone who lived in the compound or even in the very household of the woman herself, insofar as she lived with either conjugal or consanguine kinsmen.

One of the most significant ways in which beliefs concerning cannibal witches have affected Gaenaelene may be seen in both the way in which a woman becomes an Anelena and changes her residence during the time she was assisted. In traditional Diola society those women who became Anelena were most often those who had children die successively, having usually lost at least three children. When a woman suffered such misfortune, members of the Gaenaelene
association of her subward took her from her household and placed her in another upon learning about her new pregnancy. Because the intent of this residential change was to remove her from a setting where she was easy prey to cannibal witches, Gaenaelene placed her in a household where she had neither affinal nor blood kin. Altogether a woman remained in another household between two and three years, time enough to allow the birth and growth of the child beyond its most vulnerable life period. During this time she was prohibited from any communication with family members.

The placing of Anelenas by the association in another household is symptomatic of more wide ranging responsibilities assumed by Gaenaelene in behalf of the women it assisted. In the past the association assumed the role of guardian and protector of Anelenas, roles normally assigned to these women's husbands. In fact there are further analogies to be made in regards to the assumption by Gaenaelene of certain masculine roles. There were, for example, interesting parallels in the masculine overtones in one alternative marriage transaction previously employed by men and the way in which Gaenaelene initiated its obligations to Anelenas. In some ways notification given to women of their new status as Anelena was remarkably reminiscent of bride capture. In executing bride capture the woman was abducted by the groom, her ignorance of impending events aiding the captor in his aggression.
Similarly, a woman was kidnapped by Gaenaelene when she became an Anelena. Unaware of the group's decision to help her, the unsuspecting woman was usually lured from her home by one of its members. When she reached the vicinity where the group waited in hiding, the members of Gaenaelene came out to steal her. The lack of any physical coercion that might take place during bride capture is in some ways compensated for by other factors. Having become an Anelena, a woman became subject to an authority similar to that which marital relations normally engendered. An Anelena was held to submit obsequiously to the commands of the association. This obedience was reciprocated by certain obligations; Gaenaelene provided all the women it assisted with whatever food and clothes that were necessary.

There was yet another traditional belief crucial to understanding the operations of Gaenaelene. This was the belief that the efforts of women themselves could affect the fate of the children of Anelenas. Diola traditional cosmology holds that child mortality is an interference with God's will by someone or something. Perhaps the most crucial aspect of the notion was the idea that the source of this misfortune was rectifiable. Since most children met their death through some sort of disease, Gaenaelene's most strenuous efforts to subvert impediments to child life focused on health care. Thus the most essential role function of Anelena was preventive and curative healing for what was believed to be both metaphysical and physical
sources of illness. In traditional Diola society there were various remedies for all these types of disorders.

On the whole a series of cultural practices themselves served as therapeutics for maladies with metaphysical causes. Among them one of the most important was the community's recognition of the status change of an Anelena. The period during which a woman was an Anelena served, in effect, as a rite of passage for them. According to Victor Turner this type of liminal period was one in which the person making the transition undergoes either a loss of status, or at best a position of status ambiguity. One of the culturally specific manifestations in Thionk Essil was the prohibition of an Anelena from wearing normal clothing. Suggestive of some degree of social deprivation, an Anelena wore a tattered and dilapidated sack as a makeshift pagne. Deviating from this costume resulted in an Anelena's subjection by the community to physical and verbal reprimand. The ambiguity in an Anelena's status change was perhaps expressed most symbolically on the day that she returned to her normal household; on that day she wore men's as opposed to women's apparel. The very fact that a woman's status changed while an Anelena dramatizes the fact that in traditional Diola society the ability to bear children that survive was an important part of a woman's sexual identity.

While dressing may have expressed both an Anelena's status ambiguity and an inferior status, several other
practices were more suggestive of the latter phenomenon. One was the fact that during the three years during which a woman was absent from her household she was obligated to work virtually as a slave for her community; members of the community could utilize her labor without giving any economic recompense. Moreover, an Anelena was subjected to both public insult and ridicule, something which was accentuated by her acts of buffoonery during public festivities. On such occasions Anelenas sometimes performed socially unacceptable acts, such as publicly displaying their genitals. An Anelena's public behavior was also shaped by her obligation to enliven public festivities by dancing throughout their duration. While dancing was an activity favored by women under normal circumstances, an Anelena's obligation to dance could be painfully demanding. Thus when Mama Badji's father died, not only did restrictions to visit kin prohibit her from attending her father's funeral; she also had to dance at public festivities soon thereafter when she was still mourning his death. There were certain beliefs implicit in these traditional Diola practices that explain how they acted as healing agents for metaphysical ailments. Embedded in practices which require sufferance on behalf of a childless woman was the notion that this in some way could help her child live. Hard labor, obligatory dancing, and subjection to public insults were all, in a certain sense, testimonies to God of the extent to which a woman would endure hardships
for a child. Thus these practices may be considered as vicarious supplications for God's goodwill. While these customs were indicative of a more indirect approach to forestall misfortune, there were others exhibitive of more direct interventions. One was Gaenaelene's practice of giving an Anelena a fertility baton believed to ward off malevolent forces that could be harmful to the child. Another like practice was that of changing the name of a woman while she was an Anelena. This was believed to circumvent ill luck by confusing the malevolent forces responsible for the deaths of an Anelena's children.

On the whole, physical disorders were treated in the past with a variety of herbs. For preventive healing a woman bathed twice daily with herbs given to her by the most elderly Gaenaelene members. A woman also bathed her child with these herbs for the duration of her service as an Anelena. Similar herbs were used for curative healing. Again it was usually the eldest members of Gaenaelene who were familiar with plants appropriate for certain disorders. As a mark of seniority an Anelena became privy to information concerning herbal medicines as she grew older.

While healing was the predominant function of Gaenaelene in traditional Thionk Essil, there were other less significant subfunctions. One of these was Gaenaelene's role as a contributor to social solidarity and group cohesion among women. This was fostered by the group participation of Gaenaelene members. Among such relevant
group activities were meetings in which the welfare of women currently serving as Anelenas were discussed, as well as special festivities. The most significant social gathering exemplifying the latter phenomenon was a modest feast given by Gaenaelene for each individual about to return home with her child following her three year service as an Anelena. While these events were instrumental in furthering social solidarity, they were somewhat limited insofar as membership recruitment in Gaenaelene was restricted to those women in each subward who were then present or former Anelenas. Nevertheless, considering the high rate of infant mortality that probably existed, group participation in Gaenaelene was likely substantial.

Another subfunction of Gaenaelene was economic. This may be seen most clearly in the mutual obligations between Gaenaelene and Anelena. The provision of daily food, clothing and even shelter may be thought of as goods to be reciprocated by an Anelena. The free labor that Anelenas provided to the community as a whole throughout the relevant three-year period may be considered as their reciprocal exchange. While economic exchange was not the most overriding function of Gaenaelene in the precolonial era, it was still a noteworthy component part of Gaenaelene operations.

As late as the 1970s there were significant continuities with the Gaenaelene practices of traditional Thionk Essil. Undoubtedly the principal source of all
continuities with the past in this respect was the persistence of the value of fertility. Its ongoing importance was evidenced, in part, by some folklore concerning childless woman. In that decade stories were still recounted that dramatized the misery of such women. Childless women, it was said, felt the depravity of their situation most acutely during the festivities surrounding Bukut, or male circumcision. Among the Diola the participation of one's child in Bukut has remained a source of tremendous prestige, a sort of pinnacle of parenthood. Conversely, to never have a child participate has remained a source of profound ignominy. According to ongoing oral traditions some childless women, unable to endure the torment at this time, wandered mad aimlessly through the forest to be found later aided in their deaths by wild beasts who left them there both mutilated and decayed.  

Fertility's significance in contemporary life is also exemplified by the retention of several beliefs and practices, several of which are related to traditional religion. For example, on the whole, fertility shrines have been unrivaled among surviving shrines in their resiliency. Whereas many other shrines became defunct in the twentieth century, in 1979 there were as many as seven of the former nine fertility shrines known as Foupiyeu in three wards.  

Moreover, while several ideas in regards to women had changed by the 1970s, many others related to childbirth were still important to the belief system. For example, the
prohibition against anyone other than mothers from seeing childbirth was still exercised. Consequently when Kadialy Mané in the subward of Batine Bah was obligated in an emergency to assist Mansata Diatta in the delivery of her youngest daughter in 1975, he gave propitiation at the appropriate shrine Foucancoule afterwards. This belief explains many villagers' ongoing wonder at the fact that the men who were part of the medical staff in Thionk's dispensary, albeit non-Diolas, have assisted women in childbirth since at least the mid 1960s. However, the most telling practice, something unrelated to traditional religion, concerned divorce. That childbearing has remained an implicit obligation of marriage is exemplified by the fact that sterility has remained a frequent grounds for divorce in the 1970s.

In a real sense the very survival of Gaenaelene itself is as strong a testimony as any of the continuing significance of fertility. This point takes on expanded meaning when it is realized that at least two subwards have banned the practice completely. Neither in Gandong nor in Grande Place where Catholics reside was Gaenaelene practiced in the 1970s. In the case of Catholics, the intolerance of indigenous practices offers a convincing explanation of the abolition of the association; but the case of Gandong warrants another explication. Gandong is a unique subward insofar as its population is almost exclusively Tijāniyya, a more conservative Muslim sect. Gandong abolished
Gaenaelene, its residents have argued, because it is viewed as contrary to the tenents of their more orthodox interpretation of Islam. Nevertheless in all the other subwards, where the population primarily adheres to the Qädiriyya sect, Islam has accommodated Gaenaelene.

**CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS OF GAENAELENE**

While there is much about Gaenaelene that has changed in the twentieth century, there is still much concerning the association's activities that have not yet changed. An enumeration of several unchanged beliefs and practices is a telling comment on the continuities with the past: the belief that cannibal witches who are most often the kin of Anelenas, are the ultimate source of infant mortality; Gaenaelene's most essential *raison d'être* of healing; the residential change of Anelenas; the "bride capture" of Anelenas; the two-to three-year period of time serving as an Anelena; the provision of food and clothing by Gaenaelene to Anelenas; the use by Anelenas of fertility batons; the changing by Gaenaelene of an Anelena's name; the use of medicinal herbs, and the existence of a celebration of the return home of an Anelena. Because so many aspects of Gaenaelene have remained unchanged throughout the twentieth century, whatever changes that did occur may be viewed as superimpositions on a firmly rooted skeletal structure.

Yet this century, particularly during the last forty years, has witnessed noteworthy changes in Gaenaelene.
Undoubtedly the most notable change in the association has been the expansion of its economic functions. For the most part this has meant the extensive use of currency by Gaenaelene, especially on the celebration of Anelena's return home. Because the fete given for Soy Soy Diatta was the first to involve some monetary expense, it was a watershed in the transformation of Gaenaelene's role function. Once Gaenaelene began to incur expenses, its spending rapidly accelerated. When Soy Soy Diatta returned to her household in 1954, she not only had the good fortune to be accompanied by her child; she also had several gifts, including a new fertility baton amply decorated with beads and expensive cowrie shells, a blouse and a pagne adorned with elaborate handicrafts. Much of the escalation in Gaenaelene's expenses occurred within the following fifteen years alone. When Ebatoua returned home in 1963 she was given several additional gifts: shoes, socks, sunglasses, a mirror and two outfits. Only five years later another Anelena's gifts surpassed even this. Above and beyond the gifts given to Ebatatoua she received an umbrella, cookware, dishes, and a total of four outfits. By the mid 1970s the expense incurred for this was further augmented by an increase in the number of outfits given, ranging between a total number of five to seven. Moreover, depending on the subward and the funds available to it, some Anelenas also received a bed, a mattress, a wardrobe for their child, toiletries, a watch and even rice.
In spite of the expansion of Gaenaelene's expenditures for the women they aided, this does not represent the bulk of its contemporary fiscal output. More recently the heaviest expense has been on clothes that every member of Gaenaelene wears during the festivities for an Anelena's return. This practice, which began between 1965 and 1970, was significantly affected by changes in the organizational structure of the association itself.46 By at least the 1960s membership recruitment in each Gaenaelene was open to all married women of their respective subwards.47 Nevertheless Gaenaelene's purchase of clothes for its members was initially an individual and not collective endeavor in some subwards. In the subward of Batine, for example, each woman purchased her own outfit for the fete separately in the early 1960s.48 Soon thereafter it became standard practice to appoint a delegation of Gaenaelene members to select and purchase uniform attire for its members.49 Even in this regard certain significant changes took place. When Gaenaelene first began purchasing clothes collectively for its members, each woman received only one outfit. However by 1978 the number had multiplied to four, including two "completes", two grand boubous and two pagnes.50 It is also important to note that the expense incurred for these clothes has been not only for cloth alone; it has also included fees for the labor of the weavers and tailors who sew all the costumes as well as transportation of the Gaenaelene's delegation itself to a
city, usually Dakar, to orchestrate the preparation of the uniforms. Outside of what has been spent on these clothes, there is at least one other potential major expense. In the 1970s Gaenaelene began to pay for the transportation of all the married women of the relevant subward to the home of a returning Anelena to celebrate there in the event the woman was not from Thionk Essil. In 1979, for example, when a woman who was an Anelena in the subward of Niaganane Diouate returned to Gambia, Gaenaelene moved all the festivities there.51

Not all Gaenaelene expenditures have been on celebrations of successful Anelenas. Some of the more recent disbursements reflect more farreaching societal influences, a point to which I shall later return. At least one has been the result of ecological changes. While variations in rainfall have always characterized the region, the severe drought beginning in 1968 has had serious economic implications for all Boulouf as a whole. More than ever before rural people in the region have had to purchase the rice they previously produced in sufficient amounts for their subsistence.52 Similarly the practice of supplying Anelenas with rice has sometimes necessitated additional expenditures for Gaenaelene. Other expenses reflect changes in the lifestyles of rural people. When soap, kerosene, and sugar became routinely used by villagers, Gaenaelene began to systematically purchase them for Anelenas.53 Another kind of expense reflects both the influence of modern health
care as well as Islam. Since at least the 1960s Gaenaelene has paid the cost of various pharmaceuticals and the services of modern Muslim clerics believed to have healing powers.  

The realities of opportunities for rural income have forced the women of Thionk Essil to be extremely resourceful to meet these escalating financial needs. One of the most significant changes engendered by this has been transformations made in the traditional female work association, called Ekufo. Ekufo is essentially a mutual aid society in which women help one another with agricultural labor, particularly for rice harvesting and planting. Oftentimes women either rotated working in one another's fields, or hired their labor out to someone who was unable to work their rice fields in the time allotted. In the case of the former no recompense was required; in the case of the latter remuneration took the form of foodstuffs, the employer furnishing both a sumptuous meal and palm wine. However beginning between approximately 1960-1965 this remuneration of Ekufo became increasingly monetized. Accompanying the widespread use of currency was the establishment by each Ekufo of standard rates which they charged for each agricultural task. Inflation drove their fees up considerably in all Ekufos. For example, while the fees for rice planting and harvesting around 1965 was 1000 cfa respectively, in 1978 they were 2000 cfa. 

Another interesting change engendered by the need to
generate capital has been an elaboration of Ekufo's remunerable tasks. Prior to 1960 the labor performed by Ekufo was confined almost exclusively to rice planting and harvesting. Since then females in the association began to offer their services for additional duties: the transport of cooking wood, the preparation and transport of traditional fertilizer, and occasionally the pounding of rice. Another innovative change in Gaenaelene has been the association's more recent participation in commercial ventures. Around 1975 women began pooling their labor to prepare oysters and palm oil which a delegation has taken to sell in cities such as Dakar and Ziguinchor, where profits are maximized. Virtually all the funds accumulated by Ekufos have been used collectively for the fetes of returning Anelenas. This serves as a microcosmic case of the incidence of continuity and change that pervades the institution as a whole. While the utilization of Ekufo's remuneration for these fetes is unprecedented, the collective nature of that utilization itself is not. In the past each member of Ekufo donated a small portion of rice which was pooled for their collective consumption at fetes.

Women's resourcefulness in monetizing Ekufo has also resulted in organizational change. The adoption of currency transactions in the early 1960s was accompanied by an intragroup fissioning of Ekufos into more numerous subgroups differentiated by more narrowly defined age strata. In 1978
each age stratum generally spanned approximately ten years. Although it is not possible to reconstruct accurately the tempo with which these groups subdivided, existing evidence strongly suggests that in some cases this fissioning took place within five years, between 1960-1965. By 1978 each subward had between five and nine Ekufos depending on the size of the subward itself, each consisting of between two and twenty members.

The notion that this organizational change may be a practice borrowed from neighboring Mandinka women who work in similarly age defined groups is partly substantiated by the fact that the excision practiced by Diola women in Boulouf has been largely imitative of these women's. The idea that financial need was the immediate impetus for this change is lent weight by a comparison between male and female associations. Men, who have more numerous possibilities for rural income, have not instituted such parallel fissioning. Moreover, the introduction of currency remuneration and fissioning occurred at approximately the same time. No doubt, financial considerations also contribute substantially to the adoption of still another practice by women of Thionk Essil. The 1960s also witnessed the formation of a kitty to which every Gaenaelene contributed a fixed sum, the amount varying for different age groups. The money has usually been acquired by means of individual efforts made from the proceeds of employment or commercial activities in urban
centers to which women migrate seasonally.

**CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF GAENAELENE**

It is interesting to note that Gaenaelene has circumvented some potential expenditures for an Anelena's return home by several means. One has been by celebrating the return of more than one, usually two, Anelenas at the same time. Of even greater significance has been the delegation of limited economic responsibility for the festivities to both the husbands of Anelenas and the Anelenas themselves. Since at least the 1940s husbands have sponsored at least one day of a celebration. In 1943 Khady Diedhiou's husband provided a goat for his wife's return, something to which the husbands of Anelenas later augmented over the decades. In 1979, contemplating an appropriate contribution for his soon-to-return wife, Niankouky Mané anticipated providing considerably more: one hundred kilos of rice, fifty kilos of millet, forty liters of cooking oil, a case of sugar, and sufficient amounts of meat such as beef, goat or fish. Moreover, the duration of the festivities sponsored by an Anelena's husband had increased over the years. By the 1970s these spouses hosted festivities from two to four days depending on the subward and the financial means of the individual. Moreover, in some wards Anelenas themselves have incurred expenses for an additional day of celebration. Just prior to her return home in 1970, Mama Badji provided fish, twenty-nine chickens, onions, sugar, syrup and sizeable quantities of
In spite of the day of celebration which an Anelena may personally sponsor, she has remained the principal beneficiary of Gaenaelene's expanded economic role. It is interesting to note that there is evidence that suggests that this has been accompanied by an increase in work obligations of Anelenas. According to the oldest generation of women their duties were less exacting than those of the younger generations. For example, Elinjoy Camara only worked for members of the community who were usually physically unable to work themselves. An expansion of labor obligations may be regarded as a structural means of compensating for Gaenaelene's pecuniary obligations to Anelena.

This monetization of Gaenaelene is reflected in other social institutions in Thionk Essil. Undoubtedly the most pioneering precedent in such monetization concerned the negotiations for marriage. Prior to Islam bride price was transacted with palm wine. In those days a man sent palm wine to his bride-to-be's relatives on two major occasions. One was for the engagement, the day when he and a girl's father agreed upon a mutually satisfactory time for the wedding. On this day he gave his bride's father enough wine to be distributed among all his brothers. The second occasion was on their wedding day itself when the wine was shared by all of the bride's extended family then present.
Religious conversion ushered in an abrupt departure from this tradition insofar as both currency and kola became the surrogates for palm wine. For the engagement men exchanged a certain sum of money for the promise of a bride, and as a dowry men also gave money to his bride's family.  

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the monetization of marriage transactions was the rapidity with which it took place. Within one short decade the celerity of religious conversion brought about not only a new medium of marriage transactions; it also came to symbolize the very essence of the marital contract between a bride and groom. In the 1930s one of a man's new premarital obligations was the giving of a small amount of money to his intended, her acceptance of it serving as a contractual agreement to a series of marital obligations. A woman's consent to these terms was symbolized by her "consumption" of this money; women have usually purchased some food item which they alone ate. Adherence to this unprecedented practice has played a significant role in integrating currency into social relationships. Not only have villagers accommodated this "individual contract fee" since its debut in the 1930s; they have also institutionalized marital gift obligations that entailed greater monetary expenditures. Thus in 1968 El Hadji Diatta supplemented the dowry given to his new affinal kinsmen with a goat. When Saliou Sambou took a bride a decade later, it was not uncommon for men to supplement their dowry with a cow, which was considerably more
Some men even took on further financial expenditures by purchasing clothes for members of their prospective family. Thus a man might provide new attire for either his bride, or one or both of her parents, or all three of them.\(^8\)

The comparatively early monetization of marriage transactions raised the compelling question as to why currency did not make more rapid inroads to Gaenaelene than it did. The relatively late penetration of currency in women's social institutions is probably attributable to women's marginal position in the modern economy. Unlike women, men have earned rural income from peanuts since the 1930s. Consequently it is not surprising that the monetization of men's work association in Thionk Essil, the male equivalent of Ekufo, seems to have preceded those of women by more than a decade. According to several men of the generation of Bagombane, who were circumcised in 1940, their respective associations received currency as well as the items received as payment for their labor no later than 1950.\(^8\) In contrast the monetization of women's associations appears to be correlated with an increase in female rural-urban migration around 1960, which has served as women's principal source of revenue for several decades.\(^8\)

While changes in the economic functions of Gaenaelene have been the most farreaching of transformations in the association in the twentieth century, there were other types
of change that took place. The social functions of Gaenaelene have expanded, albeit to a lesser degree in both scope and intensity. As with other social institutions in Thionk Essil, many of these changes were attributable to religious conversion. On the whole Islamic conversion has resulted in a diminution of traditional social activities because many of them were associated with either palm wine or traditional rituals. For women and men alike several social activities have been completely eradicated. One of the most meaningful has been that of several dances which had special social functions in village life. Many of them were linked with rites marking important life transitions and, as such, aided the community's readjustment to the altered circumstances as well as group cohesion. The dances were sex specific. Thus Emalacore, which had a male equivalent, was danced by women at the funerals of females. Similarly Emanthiouwaye, one of the two acknowledged male dances in traditional Thionk Essil, was danced by men during male circumcision rites. Although both men and women participated in traditional dance, it appears to have been more widely performed by females. Of the six acknowledged traditional dances, four were performed exclusively by women. In the 1970s only one of these dances was still regularly performed by women, the others were either totally abandoned or performed at the funeral rites of unconverted villagers. In the case of traditional dances it was probably their association with
religious rituals in particular which account for their disappearance.

In the past there were two other social activities whose connection with palm wine consumption was likely their chief source of incompatibility with Islam. One of them, Boutedj, was a wrestling match held principally among adolescents between the planting of rice and its harvest. The other practice, Bougnoukene, was a four day fete held annually following the harvest to celebrate the arrival of older adolescents at marriageable age. At both Boutedj and Bougnoukene females consumed large quantities of palm wine. The notion that this was a factor contributing to its disappearance is supported by the fact that at some point women temporarily substituted palm wine with a nonalcoholic drink made from ginger.

The void created by the eradication of these activities has been filled, at least in part, by Gaenaelene's expansion of the duration of the fete of a returning Anelena. Although it is difficult to say with certainty when Gaenaelene began to increase the days of its celebration, it seems to have been initiated by obligating husbands to sponsor a day of feasting. The fact that this practice had clearly begun by 1945 is evidenced by the fact that one Anelena's husband organized a celebration for one day for her in 1943. Over the decades Gaenaelene further lengthened the festivities. In 1958 when Aballo Sadio returned home, the Gaenaelene of her subward celebrated for
three days. In 1979 a subward in Kamanar feted another Anelena's return for five days. These events, at which women usually dance continuously, provide some of the recreation and social solidarity that some vanished practiced once provided.

Additional changes in Gaenaelene's organizational structure have also been conducive to the strengthening of social solidarity. In the preceding decades the membership recruitment of a Gaenaelene was confined exclusively to the former and then present Anelenas. Over the years, membership recruitment expanded to include all the married women of a particular subward, although former Anelenas constituted a core leadership group within the association itself. Oral data suggests that this transformation occurred in the 1930s. For example, when Oumy Diedhiou became an Anelena in the early 1940s, Gaenaelene had already broadened its organizational base. The implications of this structural transformation are both political and social. On the one hand it strengthened group solidarity among women insofar as it expanded the collective participation of women and institutionalized more widespread cooperation. On the other hand it heightened women's political participation in the sense that it broadened a structural means of decision-making. While the scope of these decisions' influence may not have been comparable to that previously exercised through their traditional shrines, it certainly consolidated a significant amount of decision-
making among women concerning their own lives. What appears to be a more frequent intervention by Gaenaelene to assist women who have had numerous children die in more recent decades may be one manifestation of this phenomenon.  

Islamic conversion may also have been a principal impetus in changes in the dressing patterns of Anelenas. Whereas the most elderly Anelenas in Thionk Essil dressed in makeshift clothing from dilapidated sacks, the women of the most recent generations have been very fashionable. This transition seems to have begun in the 1940s. Elder women attribute this change to the ideological emphasis in Islam on personal hygiene and cleanliness. This may have been further accentuated by female migration which exposed women to more modern lifestyles. Indeed in more recent decades dressing among the women of Thionk Essil has become a symbol of women's integration into the modern world. The styles, quantity and quality of cloth have become contemporary status indicators among women. This explains not only the expense that Gaenaelene has incurred for clothing all its members as well as Anelenas themselves. It also suggests that the fashionable dress required of Anelenas in more recent decades may be a result of the projection of women's desire to be what they perceive as modern.

**ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN GAENAELENE**

One of the most significant influences of Gaenaelene concerns the techniques used by the association for healing. Among the more recent changes has been the association's
routine employment of marabouts, or Muslim clerics, to safeguard the health of mother and child. While Gaenaelene's reliance on marabouts has been for both metaphysical as well as physiological disorders, most of their consultations have been for non-secular problems.99 This is partly explained by the fact that marabouts themselves are perceived as having the supernatural abilities necessary to combat the supernatural sources believed to cause some kinds of illness and misfortune. One of the principal skills they possess which expedites this is a clairvoyance reputed to aid Anelenas in circumventing negative occurrences. Some of the advice most frequently given by marabouts in this regards concerns the selection of a household favorably disposed to the survival of an Anelena's child, and whether or not a child's return to its mother's household would be disadvantageous to his or her life.100 Of further utility has been marabouts' diagnoses of child morbidity and mortality, which they attempt to remedy by fabricating various types of amulets that protect individuals from malevolent forces.101

The similar timing between the regularization of Gaenaelene's use of marabouts and the monetization of the association in the 1960s is not likely to have occurred by chance. A tally of all the maraboutic fees that Gaenaelene incurred for a typical Anelena in 1978 amounts to a sum that, without the establishment of regular revenue, would be otherwise unmanageable.102 One of the most significant
changes since the 1960s in regards to these clerics has been Gaenaelene's practice of selecting a marabout for each Anelena to act as her "physician" throughout their three-year service as an Anelena. Gaenaelene's adaptation to alternative modes of healing has also involved an interesting incorporation of Western influence. Since perhaps the 1960s Gaenaelene has used modern health care services both within and outside of Thionk Essil. The availability of this type of health care prior to the association's utilization of it may, in part, reflect an ambivalence women have in regards to Western medicine in general. According to several of the most influential Gaenaelene members in the ward of Batine, Western health care services have been used for diagnostic purposes equally if not more than for curative ones. Apparently Gaenaelene associations have greater confidence in the traditional herbs on which they have remained heavily dependent. An ambivalence is also suggested by Gaenaelene's differential utilization of marabouts and modern health care service. While it is clear that there is a disproportionately greater use of marabouts, an empirical study is necessary to determine the precise nature of the difference. Such a study might also answer questions concerning the different kinds of physiological illnesses treated by Western traditional medicines.

Among other Western influences that have had a substantive impact on Gaenaelene is the automobile. The
increase in mobility it has engendered has, for one, affected the residential patterns of Anelenas. Serving as an Anelena outside of Thionk Essil is not without precedent. Some of the eldest members of Gaenalene were Anelenas in other Diola villages.\textsuperscript{106} However, other recent trends are without precursors. One such change is the greater frequency of women serving as Anelenas outside of their natal village; another is the greater incidence of temporary residence of Anelenas in places further away from their parental home. Unlike before, these greater distances occasionally have resulted in urban residence.\textsuperscript{107} Women have also utilized this mobility to increase their economic resources. Not only have women migrated seasonally in search of employment to meet their pecuniary obligations to Gaenaelene; greater mobility has also enabled women to send delegations selling commercial foodstuffs to urban centers with relative facility, particularly Dakar, where profits can be maximized.\textsuperscript{108}

Another result of increased mobility is a greater frequency of contact between culture systems. The extent to which this has affected the perspectives or rural women is, in some ways, reflected by the names the women of Thionk Essil give to Anelenas and Ekufos. Again, women change an Anelena's name because it is believed that it averted misfortune by camouflaging those whom it previously frequented. As in the precolonial era, women have continued to select names that reflect either their personal
circumstances, physical characteristics, or personality of the mother and child. Predictably many of the names have been Muslim. One Anelena, whose tragedy was to witness the death of nine children, selected a female name for her surviving son in a desperate effort to deceive misfortune; she gave him the Muslim name of Mariétou. When Mansata Diatta became an Anelena in 1961 she was named Kalena Diallo because she was the same lighter skin color of Fulani women who typically bear that name. Several names have been French. When Mama Badji became an Anelena during the same week that repairs were begun on the centralized zone of the village where all wards were to relocate, she was given its colloquial name of "Commune". Moreover, when Commune gave birth to a son during a special social event which was illuminated during the evenings by gas lamps, he was named "Lumière", the French word for "light". Not all names have been Muslim or French. Reflecting her despair, Aballo Sadio chose the Manding name Mandiki for her son in 1958, meaning "I do not even hope that you live". Occasionally Anelenas have been given even English names. In 1979 the Gaenaelene in a subward of Niaganane named its most recent Anelena "Washington", which likely reflects the frequency of its mention in international radio broadcasts and press coverage.

Women's exposure to culture systems outside their own is also reflected in Ekufos, each one having its own name. Judging from naming patterns, the predominant cultural
influence has been that of the Wolof. Many of the names reflect Ekufo's association with food. For example, "Tangel" means candy, and "Narre Mburu" means "two loaves of bread". Some of the specific names chosen have evolved from certain amusing incidents. For example, an Ekufo in Gandong named "Et Demie", the French phrase for "and a half", refers to a woman remunerating the association with food, who provided only half a liter of cooking oil to prepare food for at least twenty women. Another name further reflects women's creative utilization of other languages. Several Ekufos have been named "Sanse" which is a corruption of the French word "changer", meaning "to change". Women consciously chose this name to reflect their ineptness in speaking standard French. Although English has been far less influential, it has had some impact on the naming of Ekufos. In 1978 there was at least one association named "Apollo" and another named "Miss".

Women's fertility associations reflect both broader societal continuities and changes in the twentieth century in several ways. On the one hand it is the embodiment of traditional beliefs and institutions that still exist. On the other hand it reflects a series of important changes that took place. The monetization of Gaenaelene as well as Ekufo reflects not only the penetration of modern currency per se, but its integration in other social relations, as well, marriage transactions in particular. Gaenaelene also reflected religious conversion insofar as its expanded
social roles appear to have been a structural means of compensating for Islam's eradication of several social activities. Furthermore these associations mirrored women's contact with certain aspects of more modern technologies and the languages of other cultures. Finally it mirrors, to a lesser degree, the seasonal migration of Diola women which is the source of many important changes in their modern lifestyles. This is the subject of the final chapter.
Footnotes to Chapter 5

1 In traditional Thionk Essil there were two other types of women's associations that existed in addition to Gaenaelene. Both of them are discussed in this chapter. Ehounia, one type, was religious in orientation and function. Ekufo, on the other hand, was a labor self-help group which enabled women to assist one another with arduous agricultural tasks.

2 Thionk Essil Historical Texts (TEHT), Interview with Cire Sadio, July 7, 1980, C-47. Henceforth information from these texts will be abbreviated, citing the book number and page(s).

3 TEHT, A-144.


6 Odile Journet, "Rôles et statuts des femmes dans la société Diola (Basse Casamance)" Thèse du 3e cycle, Université de Lyon, 1978, pp. 112 and 154. Ehounia was grouped on three different levels: that of ward, that of a village, and that of several villages within a particular region.

7 Ibid., p. 153.

8 TEHT, A-55-6.

9 Ibid.

10 Although this is the most common type of fertility problem addressed by Gaenaelene, there are two other types which may merit the association's intervention. Gaenaelenes sometimes assisted and still assist women who had and have children of the same sex, usually all females. It also aided women who had difficulties conceiving children; A-23.
Theoretically a woman never requested to be an Anelena, but was selected by Gaenaelene. A selection process was facilitated by the fact that old and new pregnancies, and consequently eligible women, are common knowledge to the community. One possible reason why not all eligible women have been selected may be because either a woman is herself believed to be a cannibal witch or because she is believed to have an irreversible biological condition that prevents childbearing. Oral data suggests that appeals may have been made by some women vicariously through affinal and consanguine kin. For example, in the ward of Batine, Malang Sagna requested that his wife be taken as an Anelena and Coumba Djiba’s sisters requested that she be assisted to the relevant Gaenaelenes, TEHT, A-152; B-67.

13 TEHT, A-149.
14 TEHT, A-32.
15 TEHT, B-37, B-57. There were several ways in which disobedient Anelenas were chastised by Gaenaelene. Among the most common were piercing an Anelena’s ear lobes in several places with sharpened sticks, and upon occasion defecating in a disobedient Anelena’s room.

17 TEHT, C-47.
19 TEHT, A-50.
20 TEHT, B-53. In the past as physical reprimand villagers sometimes spat on Anelenas who did not conform to dress patterns deemed appropriate.

21 TEHT, B-90.
22 TEHT, A-2.
23 TEHT, A-50.
24 TEHT, A-33.
25 TEHT, B-27.
27 TEHT, A-25, A-34. When an Anelena
dies her baton is inherited by the daughter for whom she served as an Anelen. In the event that the child was male, the baton goes to his wife.

28 TEHT, A-150.
29 TEHT, A-33.
30 TEHT, A-170.
31 TEHT, A-34.
32 TEHT, C-10.
33 TEHT, B-152.

34 TEHT, B-71. According to him, this incident was followed by headaches and weight loss. This prompted him to give propitiation at the shrine in Kamanar known as Foucanoule, at which the priestess gave him herbs to drink daily for two weeks. Following this all his symptoms reportedly vanished.

35 TEHT, B-256. The first male to assist women in delivery was Niokhor Mbengue, a Wolof, who was Infirmier d'Etat (nurse) in Thionk Essil 1965-1975.

36 TEHT, B-59. This information was confirmed in informal discussions by two village chiefs who, as part of their role functions, sometimes mediate in marital disputes. In fact both of them had obtained divorces for reasons stemming from their respective wives' infertility.

37 TEHT, B-44; A-157.
38 TEHT, A-162.
39 TEHT, op. cit., B-44.
40 TEHT, A-32-5.
41 TEHT, C-47. A pagne is a waist-skirt worn by women.

42 TEHT, B-14.
43 TEHT, B-29.

44 TEHT, A-159; A-168; B-1, B-43, B-49. Several Gaenaelenes receive a number of outfits which often corresponds with the number of Ekufo in the subward. In such cases each Ekufo purchases at least one outfit for the returning woman.
These dates are based on women's estimates using the last male circumcision of 1962 as a reference point.

This date may be a little conservative. Some Anelenas reported the membership recruitment had changed in their respective subwards by the 1950s.

Some Anelenas reported the membership recruitment had changed in their respective subwards by the 1950s.

Women associate the origins of monetization with independence in 1960. While Ekufos were significantly monetized between 1960-1965, the acceptance of currency as payment by these associations was not completely unprecedented. Several Ekufos report their occasional remuneration in currency in the 1950s. Nor has Ekufo been completely monetized insofar as they still accept payment in kind, which is usually with rice.

In 1978 the typical fees for Ekufos were as follows: 1500-2000 cfa (U.S. currency, $7.50-$10.00) or planting and harvesting rice; 500 cfa for pounding rice; 500 cfa (U.S.-$2.50) per trip for transporting wood, fertilizer and other items. These figures are estimated for the employment of one Ekufo, which is approximately 15-20 women. However all the Ekufos of a given subward hire themselves out collectively, in which event their fees are more expensive. For example, in the subward of Bougotir the cost for hiring the collective labor of all the Ekufos of the particular subward was 5,000 cfa (U.S.-$25.00). In 1979 the exchange rate was approximately one U.S. dollar = 200 cfa.

The U.S. equivalents are
approximately $5.00 and $10.00 respectively.

59 TEHT, C-81.
60 TEHT, B-7.
61 TEHT, A-177; B-199.

62 In Thionk Essil women attribute the eradication of the collective pooling of rice to the paucity of rice resultant of the drought. However this practice is still observed among some Diola women. See Journet, op. cit., p. 144.

63 TEHT, A-144.
64 TEHT, A-50; B-49; C-34.

65 Most of the proceedings surrounding female circumcision in both cultures are kept in utmost secret. However, some similarities concerning female circumcision among these peoples are readily apparent. They include: the identical physical operation of clitorectomy, the same dances performed at public ceremonies celebrating and ending the circumcision, and the age at which girls are circumcised (approximately 3-6).

66 TEHT, C-66. Male work associations are still organized by circumcision generations, each male entering the secret forest to be circumcised on a given occasion being considered a member of that particular generation at hand.

67 For example, in the subward of Batine Bah women in 1978 contributed to the kitty according to three general groups. Members of the youngest generation (approximately age 20-30) each gave 25,000 cfa, those of the middle generation (approximately 31-50) gave 20,000 and the oldest generation (approximately 51 and above) each gave about 15,000 cfa. TEHT, A-35.

68 TEHT, B-11.
69 TEHT, B-208. This does not include his estimates of several supplementary items to garnish or complement those already mentioned; four liters of syrup (fruit drink concentrate), tomato paste and adequate proportions of onions for the meat sauce, and milk.

70 TEHT, A-33.
71 TEHT, B-27.
72 TEHT, B-36.
In 1979 the monetary equivalent for a goat in Thionk Essil was approximately 15,000 cfa ($75) and 50,000 ($250) for a cow.

Rural-urban migration, which is the subject of the final chapter, has its roots in an earlier rural-rural migration that preceded it by almost half a decade. Beginning in the 1880s and 1890s the people of Diola Boulouf migrated seasonally to Gambia where both men and women were engaged in palm produce production. During the depression of the 1930s, however, Europe curtailed its imports of palm kernels. This closed off rural income for women in particular. While men found other sources of rural income, women were obligated to look to cities for it. During the depression years women from Thionk Essil increasingly left for cities in the dry seasons. For a study of contemporary female migration among the Diola see Chapter 9 in Henk L. van Loo and Nella J. Star, op. cit., pp. 194-221.
Several of the eldest former Anelenas reported that one manifestation of the more frequent intervention of Gaenaelene is a pattern whereby the association now frequently assists women who have had fewer of their children die. Although this is difficult to completely substantiate, the idea is lent weight by a few random examples of more contemporary Anelenas. Cases where women became Anelenas after losing two as opposed to three or more children are not hard to find. Combe Djiba of Batine became an Anelena in approximately 1965, for example, after losing two children. TEHT, A-152.

For example, one former Anelena of the 1940s wore her own clothes while an Anelena (TEHT, B-14). The evolution of dressing appears to have been gradual in the sense that Anelenas did not go immediately from rags to fashionable attire. There was a period, perhaps from 1940-1955, when they wore their regular clothing. Moreover evidence suggests that the most essential of the previous criteria, that a woman have deceased children, may have eased somewhat. When Binta Badji of Batine became an Anelena in approximately 1963, none of her children had died. She became an Anelena when her six month old twins' illness was attributed by women in the community to witchcraft. (TEHT, B-90).

This statement is based on participant observation. Well dressed and fashionable women in Thionk Essil, as in many of Senegal's major cities, are greatly admired. The importance of dressing has some precedent in traditional Diola society. On special occasions, particularly for religious rituals, women (and men) previously dressed in indigo pagnes. Among the Diola, who called this color black, the significance of the shade lie in the fact that it was associated with rain clouds which were similar in color. Traditionally on certain special occasions women dressed elaborately in this cloth as a means of displaying their wealth. This was the case with Bounyoukin, the festivity held by women after the harvest for girls who had just reached marriageable age. (TEHT, A-185).

It is believed that in some cases malevolent forces either await the child in its parental household. In such cases the child is frequently left in the household where the mother
served as Anelena. It is also believed that clothes worn regularly by an Anelena sometimes alert malevolent forces of her whereabouts. If an Anelena's marabout foresees this fate, he may request that she give all her clothes away.

101 TEHT, B-97.

102 In 1978 the Gaenaelene in the subward of Bougotir, which was typical of other subwards in regards to its use of marabouts, paid them with money and in kind for their services. In that year they were paid either 30,000 cfa or with a cow, which were approximately equivalent. Gaenaelene's usually pay marabouts, who acted as Anelena's "physicans" only when these women were about to return home. The survival of an Anelena's child to this point was interpreted as proof of the marabout's competency, TEHT, B-90.

103 TEHT, B-21.

104 TEHT, A-158; B-57.

105 TEHT, A-33.

106 TEHT, A-174, A-179. For example, several of the eldest Anelenas in Thionk Essil were Anelenas in Gambian villages like Gunjur and Kartung as well as villages in the Diola Fogny and Kasa regions northwards and southwards respectively.

107 TEHT, B-29. For example, Abijan Diatta was an Anelena in Ziguinchor approximately 1968-1970.

108 TEHT, B-7. Palm oil, smoked oysters and dried fish are the items most commercialized in this manner because they command the best market prices.

109 TEHT, B-10.

110 TEHT, A-1.

111 TEHT, C-47.

112 Ibid.

113 TEHT, A-164.

114 TEHT, B-7.

115 TEHT, B-49.


117 TEHT, B-1.
CHAPTER 6
MODERN FEMALE MIGRATION:
UNPRECEDENTED DEPARTURES FROM TRADITION

Modern migration in Thionk Essil drew less on traditional social and economic institutions than did other kinds of change in the twentieth century. While certain aspects of modern migration integrated some of the village's traditional way of life, it also engendered unprecedented change. One of the more recent trends in regards to the declining age of female migrants is illustrative. In the dry season of 1973 Fatou Djiba, for example, a girl of eleven from the subward of Kaffanta, left Thionk Essil bound for Dakar. During the same season of 1975 Fatou Diedhiou from the subward of Yeumeuk and Khady Badji of Baronkol followed suit. They were both nine years old. In the following year Maimouna Djiba also set out for Dakar. She was only eight. The age of these girls raises questions concerning not only the historical factors giving rise to such contemporary migratory patterns; it also raises questions regarding to the meaning of such migratory patterns for the lives of contemporary migrants as well. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss: (1) the historical roots of modern migration in Thionk Essil, (2)
the evolution of this migration, and (3) the impact of modern migration on the women of Thionk Essil.

**WOMEN AND MIGRATION IN TRADITIONAL DIOLA SOCIETY**

Contemporary patterns of modern female migration cannot be fully understood without an overview of the role of females in the evolution of migration itself. The fact that females shared the initiative in migrations among the Diola cannot be stressed enough. They were, for example, an integral part of the first type of migration to affect the Diola. This migration, which affected various peoples of Africa, was primarily motivated by adverse ecological conditions which resulted in famines, the need for new grazing lands for cattle or better soils and lands, and disease. Among Diola people this type of migration was often motivated by a search for better rice fields. The first population movement of the Diola was northwards from the coastal region of contemporary Guinea Bissau. Based on linguistic data, David Sapir convincingly argues that this was the point of Diola origins from which they dispersed. Not only does the Diola language bear a strong resemblance to the Manjaku people situated in this region but the two peoples also practice wet rice farming, using similar tools of cultivation. Although the exact date of the origins of the Diola is unknown, there is more conclusive evidence concerning their initial settlement in south shore Lower Casamance where they are presently situated. Based on archaeological excavations Olga Linares traces their
existence in this region to 100 A.D. Both men and women participated in the migration northwards from the original homeland of the Diola in Guinea Bissau as well as other similar population movements that would follow.

One such migration, of which women were an integral part, was that of the Diola even further northwards across the Casamance river. Boulouf was one of the regions of resettlement. The founding of Thionk Essil, which was a result of this migration, dates back several centuries. Judging from the complete list of circumcisions that I collected in the village, each one occurring approximately twenty years apart, the first settlers arrived at Thionk in approximately 1720. As with some earlier Diola migrations, the immediate stimulus to their migration into Boulouf was probably a scarcity of rice fields. This is somewhat corroborated by the meaning of the name of both Thionk Essil and its parent village Essil located south of the Casamance River. Essil, which was among the earliest villages founded after the initial relocation of the Diola in Lower Casamance from Guinea Bissau, means "to cook" and Thionk Essil means "to stoop to cook". Both these names suggest a preoccupation with food, of which food shortage may have been the impetus.

The prospects for intra-regional travel among the Diola were unfavorable for both men and women alike for centuries. Possibilities for a more temporary migration over shorter distances were hampered for both sexes, for one, by the
internecine warfare between various Diola villages that took place until the end of the nineteenth century. These ongoing disputes, frequently a result of disagreements over the boundaries of rice fields, made conditions for travel precarious for not only the Diola, but for others as well. J.L. Durand's observation in the early nineteenth century that "Both sides of the Casamance River are inhabited by the Feloupes (Diolas); they do not desire to have any communication with whites, and are always in battle with their neighbors," seems to bear this out. Even Diola architecture appears to reflect a belligerent isolation on their behalf; Diola houses were constructed in a fortress-like manner for defense and security against outsiders. Moreover, the Diola's predilection for seclusion was complemented by dense vegetation that made travel cumbersome and hazardous.

Nevertheless there does seem to have been some intra-regional travel by the Diola Boulouf, a type which favored male as opposed to female mobility. Although it is difficult to establish the existence and extent of such travel prior to the nineteenth century, there is evidence of at least two types of short term migration by canoes in the nineteenth century. Archival accounts clearly describe seasonal travel by the Diola of Boulouf to expatriate outposts such as Carabane to trade rice, and in some cases to even work there. Thionk Essil took part in another significant type of short term travel which, similarly, was
dependent upon canoes. According to both oral tradition and archival records they participated in raids on fellow Diolas for cattle as well as slaves in at least the last half of the nineteenth century. ¹⁰ One interesting aspect of this migration, which differed in at least one principal respect from prior and subsequent ones, was its direction southwards as opposed to northwards. So active was Thionk Essil in slave raiding in particular that its failure to curtail such activities in the face of repeated warnings by the French led to a punitive expedition against the village in 1863, led by Pinet Laprade. ¹¹ While women and children alike were among those victimized by such aggression, the raids themselves were probably conducted by men alone.

This type of mobility among men raises a question as to the degree to which physical mobility was previously exercised among women. While it is difficult to determine the extent of female mobility in precolonial society there has been some meaningful speculation on their past freedom of movement. According to Odile Journet, Diola women had comparatively more mobility during this period than did many African women. Unlike many African women the Diola women in the precolonial era were not rigidly confined to the household or secluded in the compound. ¹² On the whole they had greater personal freedom, something which was reflected in Diola women's practice of short-distance travel. These women sometimes left the village in groups to process salt or fish for a day or two. This as we shall later see, may
have been especially relevant in the formation of contemporary migratory patterns.

No matter how uncertain the sparse amount of data renders the role of women in intra regional migration, they emerge in available sources as prominent figures in more modern migrations. The most fundamental distinction between modern and premodern migrations concern the differences in their motivation. Modern migrations have primarily been migrations of labor and not of the total resettlement of people, as those induced by failing ecological conditions. They have also usually been movements of longer distance, shorter durations, and greater frequency. More than any other factor these phenomena were dependent on the security of travel in the region which was facilitated, indeed forged, by the consolidation of colonial rule from approximately 1875-1900. It was not colonial rule per se but rather peace and tranquility that account for a kind of physical mobility whose frequency and scale had few traditional precedents among Diola people.

**WOMEN AND EARLY MODERN MIGRATIONS TO THE GAMBIA**

The relative security of travel engendered by the colonial presence was accompanied by regular trade relations which stimulated the migration of men and women alike. The first regular migration of the Diola Boulouf was northwards into Gambia for commercial trade. However, this movement was preceded by a brief migration of a similar type into Lower Casamance itself. Between 1879-80 rubber, which was
abundant in Lower Casamance itself, emerged as a major export to Europe. This sparked off the movement of intermediaries who infiltrated the Diola hinterland where rubber production thrived until the collapse of the wild rubber market in 1913. The Akous descended from the Gambia southwards into the Fogny region, and the Manjaks moved northwards among the Diola from Portuguese Guinea to tap this commercial resource. The significance of this rubber trade to future migratory patterns was twofold. First, it established regular international trade relations between the Diola and the world community, integrating women as well as men into this exchange network. Both women and men were involved in processing rubber and its trade, a commercialization which would eventually lure them further northwards. Second, the rubber trade sparked off a more small-scale but nonetheless significant migration of the Diola Boulouf to the Gambia. To circumvent paying tariffs to middlemen, Diolas from several Boulouf villages, Thionk Essil included, ventured to Gambia themselves to sell their rubber.

Both the regularity of trade relations and the commercial contacts it established in the Gambia in particular built important links for the palm produce trade, which initiated regular migrations of the Diola of Boulouf. Even before the collapse of the rubber market in 1913 Diolas had begun to migrate to the Gambia exploit the demand for
palm products. From there both palm oil and palm kernels were exported to Europe where they were used as both vegetable oils, industrial lubricants, soap, and candles. The Diola virtually monopolized the palm oil trade because of their exceptional skill in climbing trees, a talent developed over the centuries from tapping palm wine. The absence of this skill among the Mandingo probably stems from their earlier Islamization in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Although Diola men alone climbed the trees to gather palm kernels, it was primarily Diola women who processed palm oil from these kernels. In fact, the participation of Diola women in this particular migration since its inception undoubtedly stems from the division of labor in palm oil production. While men gathered palm kernels, women played a major role in processing palm oil.

Sexual differentiation and specialization in labor also ultimately appears to have been responsible for the sex differences in the system of sponsorship that developed between migrants and their hosts. Every work unit that migrated from Thionk Essil secured a household in the village in which it resided to act as its sponsor. The hospitality extended to Diola migrants reflected the sex roles of both the Diola and their Manding hosts. While men were provided cooked meals, female migrants were wholly responsible for their own cooking. Undoubtedly this reflected the fact that it is usually only women who cook in Diola society. Nevertheless both male and female migrants
received some of the same reciprocal rights. In return for certain gifts, all migrants were granted rights to use palm trees freely and to reside unhampered in huts they constructed on the periphery of the host village. In return migrants gave their hosts and their wives a portion of their produce, establishing certain patterns of gift exchange that again mirrored sexual differentiation. While Mandingo men were given palm oil, their wives were given palm kernels.

The economic incentives manifested in palm produce trade were to constitute one of the most meaningful precedents and continuities with different kinds of male and female migration. The paramountcy of economic incentives may be seen in the destination of migrants. The fact that migrants traded in Gambia as opposed to in Senegal was a result of differential economic policies. The terms of trade in Gambia were significantly more favorable than those in Senegal. This not only meant that lower duties on imported products commanded higher prices; it also meant that lower duties on imported products permitted consumers to maximize their spending power. The continuation of differences in economic policies between the British and French colonial powers gave rise to an ongoing contraband. Some of the earliest migrants to the Gambia from Boulouf who smuggled goods established a pattern of clandestine night travel by canoe to avoid taxation at customs posts along the normal routes. So widespread and persistent did the illegal entry of manufactured goods become that it was
institutionalized as a significant factor in government planning. According to a study in 1969 by François Mendy, the Gambian government imported goods in excess of the normal Gambia demand in anticipation of illegal purchases. Among the manufactures most frequently purchased by migrants that are particularly relevant to women have been textiles, matches, and household items.\(^{23}\)

Although favorable prospects for financial gain probably predominated among those economic incentives that stimulated the migration of men and women, there were also economic incentives of a different type. For instance taxation may have played a significant role in increasing migration.\(^{24}\) While the enforcement of tax collection began in the first decade of the twentieth century, it was not until the second decade that taxes were sharply increased. Between 1918-1920 taxes doubled from 5-10 francs, and after 1922 the French increased their efforts to collect higher taxes.\(^{25}\) Admittedly the chief objective of these dramatic increments in taxes was to stimulate the production of cash crops among the Diola. However, it also affected the flow of migrants to the Gambia who were primarily engaged in palm product activities. Again, the interdependence of both sexes in processing these items meant that the movement northwards included women as well as men.

The early migrations of men and women to the Gambia were not wholly economically inspired. At times the motivation was more closely, perhaps completely, linked with
migrants' dissatisfaction with certain conditions under which they lived. Focusing on migration from the Ivory Coast into Ghana from 1900-1945, A.I. Aswaju convincingly argues that migration was sometimes used as a form of protest against colonial policy. The movement from French to British colonial territories sometimes stemmed from an awareness of the differences in the policies of the two colonial powers. On the whole, British colonial administration was reputed to be more lenient in terms of taxation, forced labor, and conscription. This argument is particularly relevant to the Diola in regards to conscription. During World War I the migration of many Diola was probably partially responsible for the rapid population increase in the Gambia from 147,000 to 186,000 between 1912-1918. Oral history in Thionk Essil attests to the fact that some villagers permanently migrated to Gambia in protest of the manner in which taxes were collected. Apparently default in payment occasionally resulted in the head of a household being tied nude in the blazing sun in shame and helplessness before his family and neighbors. Although such indignities were probably suffered by men alone, women were also affected by the migration that this abuse stimulated, insofar as it involved the resettlement of whole conjugal units.

There were yet other types of colonial policies that undoubtedly resulted in similar types of permanent migrations. Indigenat, the French system of forced labor
may have played such a role. Imposed on indigenous communities from 1921 to the end of World War II, it was passionately hated by those affected. Thionk Essil's refusal to comply with it in 1929 serves as but one example of the antipathy sometimes manifested by the Diola to it. Some elderly men in Thionk still recount with bitterness some of the most distasteful aspects of their coerced services; they were flogged as they worked and not even provided food for their labor. Some villagers also describe random acts of cruelty practiced by some despotic indigenous officials, who abused of the powers delegated to them by colonists. Although the magnitude of the permanent migration of conjugal units that resulted from these indignities is difficult to determine, they were probably not large in scale. Perhaps their greatest significance lies in the fact that they provided an alternative for women and men who were dissatisfied with the conditions under which they lived.

One interesting and related incentive that also stimulated the migration of whole conjugal units was associated with the Diola belief system. Traditional thought holds that a change of residence can affect one's life chances. Residential change, it was believed, enabled a person to avoid certain sites that misfortune frequented. For example, it sometimes relocated people who had unknowingly constructed their homes on paths along which malevolent forces traveled. Under such circumstances, it
was said, ill luck plagued those who lived in these spots. Consequently, even prior to the migration of the residents of Thionk Essil beyond the village, people who suffered repeated misfortunes sometimes moved permanently to different wards within Thionk Essil itself. As another reflection of this, many of the migrants who established residence permanently in the Gambia were those who left because of recurring misfortune in Thionk Essil. Infertility, morbidity, or child mortality were often the principal motivations of this type of migration. Thus Abdoulaye Sadio, the eldest migrant in the village of Gunjur, settled there with his family after most of his children either died or became sick in Thionk. Judging from oral accounts, the first resettlements of migrants motivated by these factors took place in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

**PATTERNS SET BY EARLY MODERN MIGRATION**

Early modern migrations to the Gambia set patterns for far more than migratory incentives alone. It also established particular migratory patterns that would persist over decades. Perhaps its most important pattern was that of the seasonal nature of migration. Prior to the last decades of the nineteenth century most Diola migrations were principally village resettlements of a more permanent type. Migration to the Gambia initiated a trend whereby villagers left for Gambia in the dry season and returned during the rains to cultivate. Thus seasonal migrants usually left in
January and returned when the rains began in May or June. Although permanent migrations out of Boulouf would become increasingly significant in the twentieth century, seasonal migration would remain the most prevalent type of regularized population movement of females and males alike for several decades.

Another early practice that would set a significant pattern until the 1950s was the mode of travel to the Gambia. Although most of the journey was made on foot, part of it was made by canoe as well. In January migrants traveled in small groups by canoe as far as one of several villages along the marigot in the Fogny region, such as Diouloulou and Kubanank. From there migrants continued to Gambia by foot, first to Brikama which served as a focal point for dispersion. The journey consumed one day. However, if no canoe was available villagers walked from Thionk to Gambia, which took two days. The journey seems to have been arduous only insofar as migrants were laden with the rice they would consume during their months away, cooking utensils, and personal effects. When the regular mode of travel changed decades later to automobiles, the volume of migration rapidly increased.

The residential patterns of early migrants also set important precedents. The movement among the Diola Boulouf was clearly northwards, as exemplified by Thionk Essil. From the Gambian town Brikama migrants dispersed to numerous villages in Gambia reputed to have an abundance of palm
trees. Many of the first villages chosen remained the destinations of considerable numbers of seasonal and even permanent migrants. Gunjur, Kartung, and Siffo all serve as examples. One of the most noteworthy aspects of this pattern is that it was rural-rural in nature. This point must be emphasized in light of the fact that more contemporary migrations of the Diola have had urban as opposed to rural destinations.

The early trend in rural-rural migration in which Diola Boulouf women took part was first broken by women from the southwest region of Lower Casamance who migrated seasonally to Zigunichor, where they worked alongside men as laborers. They were first employed by a firm called Compagnie Agricole et Caoutchoutière de la Casamance at the end of the nineteenth century to carry rubber and peanuts for steamships in Ziguinchor as well as along the Casamance River. In 1905 another company, Mauprom, began to employ Diola women to unload bricks and oil coming from Europe. Although the proportion of males who were also engaged in this activity is difficult to determine, there is conclusive evidence that such labor was essentially a female endeavor by 1911.

Among the precedents set by early modern migration was that of the superimposition of kinship links on residential patterns. Essentially this was reflected by two factors. One was the household composition of seasonal migrants either within or on the outskirts of the villages in which
they had hosts. Because of the interdependence of women and men in processing palm oil, either siblings or spouses migrated together as work teams. As a rule each couple resided together in a make-shift hut constructed especially for their temporary residence. Similarly kinship links significantly affected the destination of seasonal migrants. Migrants often relocated seasonally in those Gambian villages where they had kin who had resettled there permanently. Such residential patterns maintained strong continuities with traditional patterns of rural residence with which migrants, both male and female, were well acquainted.

**SEX DIFFERENCES IN ALTERNATIVE RURAL-RURAL MIGRATION**

Several of these precedents, some of which were established at the beginning of the 1880s, remained largely unchanged. Others underwent some significant modifications beginning in the 1930s. Undoubtedly colonial policy played the largest role in affecting these changes. In Boulouf measures taken by the French to include the Diola in peanut production in particular had farreaching consequences on the migration of Diola women in particular. Because the French introduced peanut cultivation as a male endeavor, male's opportunities for rural income expanded while women's contracted. In the 1930s the participation of the Diola Boulouf in cash crop production, which had already significantly increased in the 1920s, exacerbated women's
inability to generate rural income. This tendency was strengthened by the substitution of palm products for groundnuts for exportation in Senegal.\textsuperscript{44}

Men's participation in peanut production generated a new type of rural-rural migration of which they were the major beneficiaries. This migration bears a close relationship to a contemporary migration more common to other Senegalese people who migrate seasonally as agricultural laborers into the peanut basin to cultivate peanuts in exchange for lodging and a portion of the crop cultivated.\textsuperscript{45} A similar exchange of crops and labor was made, for example, by some villagers from Thionk Essil to the Gambia.\textsuperscript{46} Furthermore, the points of destination of such seasonal migrants from Thionk Essil suggest that better prices secured for peanuts were critical in shaping the direction of migration. Again, differences in the French and British economic policies attracted most migrants engaged in peanut cultivation to the Gambia. Indeed these economic differentials served as the basis of the ongoing illegal transport of peanuts within Gambia for more favorable exchange. François Mendy estimated that in 1968/69 some 70,000 tons of peanuts from Senegal were sold in Gambia, three-fourths of which came from across Senegal's border in Casamance.\textsuperscript{47} Diola women were minimally affected by this peanut migration. They were discouraged from participating in peanut production by the scant profits made by women who assisted their husbands in the crop's planting
and harvesting.

Among the alternative avenues to rural income stimulated by the reduction in palm product trade was a seasonal migration of fishermen. While it is difficult to determine whether or not the origins of this migration came before or during the great depression, it is clear that a migration of Diola fishermen was actively practiced by the 1950s. Writing about his observation of this between 1957 and 1959 Louis Vincent Thomas observed that some villages like Bandial and Ponta were emptied after February when men traveled by canoe to Niomoun, Diouloulou, Diembering, and Portuguese Guinea. The small number of fishermen in Thionk Essil meant that this type of migration was of minimal significance there. Moreover, fishing appears to have become an alternative commercial activity in Thionk in the 1960s only. Prior to that decade fishing was done primarily for household consumption.

Another type of alternative male seasonal migration also took place among the Diola south of the Casamance River. Further elaborating on his observations of 1957 and 1959, Louis Vincent Thomas made mention of a seasonal traffic of palm wine tappers. At that time the direction of migration was mostly northwards across the Casamance River into Diola regions rich in palm trees, including Diola Boulouf. Boulouf was the destination of temporary migrants from mostly Nioumoun and to a lesser extent Hillol and Itou. Documentation also confirms a similar migration of palm wine
tappers from the area south of the Casamance River near Point St. Georges into the Diola region known as Diamat north of the same river. In this type of migration, as well as peanut migration, wives sometimes relocated seasonally with their husbands.

WOMEN AND RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION

The exclusion of women from new alternatives for rural income left them with few options outside of rural-urban migration. Judging from women's oral accounts, they began to migrate in the later 1920s and 1930s to urban centers, where they worked as domestics. Although this redirection of migration differed significantly in some ways from the prior palm product trade, it was not a dramatic rupture with migratory patterns established in the 1880s. To begin with, migration remained seasonal in nature; women continued to migrate in the dry season and to return home during the rains to assist in rice planting and harvesting. The retention of kinship network configurations also remained largely unaffected. Female migrants continued to travel frequently with relatives as well as to reside with kin who had permanently settled at their point of destination.

Even the occupations of female urban migrants displayed some overlooked continuities with rural lifestyles. Most were employed as domestics, something which called upon the same skills developed in their household tasks prescribed by the traditional division of labor. Women's traditional duties have, in fact, been the source of further
continuities between their employment as domestics and their previous labor in processing palm products as rural seasonal migrants. If one thinks of cooking as food processing, which is an important duty of most domestics, then the relationship between the two becomes more apparent. The continuity in women's roles as food processors is in some ways illustrated by the names of contemporary Ekufos, women's work associations. Many of the names in particular reflect women's roles as food processors in urban cities. Several of them have been borrowed from the "market language" that domestics responsible for cooking must use when purchasing food. For example, "Narr Mburu" is Wolof for "two loaves of bread" and "Dioma L'ignon" means "give me some onions." 55

Undoubtedly the growth of the seasonal urban migration of Diola women since 1930 has been significantly affected by the opportunities available for domestic service. This, in turn, has largely been a function of the growth of urban centers. The lack of empirical data on female migrations makes it difficult to determine the rate of their migration over time. However, certain inferences may be made based upon the growth of urban centers in Gambia from approximately 1930 to approximately 1960 when it was the pole of attraction among most migrants from Diola Boulouf. While there are no published figures of urban growth in the Gambia during this period, the overall rise in urban growth in the Senegambia during that period suggests similar trends
there. The fact that a significant number of female migrants to the Gambia were from Diola Boulouf is corroborated by one administrative report of 1958. Moreover, Dakar's growth was rapid during the years that the Diola began to increasingly migrate there. According to the administrative census of 1961, between 1955 and 1961 Dakar's population grew from 230,000 to 370,000, an increase of 62 percent. Even if the migration of Diola women responded only minimally to the expansion of urban growth, it mounted significantly over the years. Indeed the differentials in migration rates revealed in some data suggest that women were more than minimally responsive. In Dakar in 1961 there were 100 Diola women for every 60 men.

Senegal's political independence, attained in 1960, serves as an important line of demarcation for the flow as well as direction of migration among the Diola. In the preceding decades seasonal migration, both rural and urban, had been to the Gambia. Beginning in the 1950s and subsequent to independence, Dakar became the pole of attraction of migrants throughout Senegal primarily because of changes made in governmental policies. One concerned a greater emphasis on infrastructure and the initiation of regular transport. Not only were more paved roads constructed at this time to convert the capital with the provinces, but also a network of regular transport into the countryside was improved. Consequently there was a far greater accessibility of rural people to cities further
away. Another factor drawing migrants to Dakar in the decade was the further concentration of industry and public facilities such as schools and hospitals in the capital. These opportunities had a magnetic appeal to migrants, something which is partially reflected in the decline of Senegalese immigrants to the Gambia in the decade of the 1960s. Between 1963-1973 the Senegalese proportion of the total foreign-born African community in Gambia dropped from 60.5% to 48.7%.

Although the Diola played a significant role in the expansion of migration to Dakar in the 1960s, it is difficult to determine the exact extent of their participation. Most data on migration concentrate on the decade of the 1970s. This is explained by both national and international concerns over a severe drought which affected the entire Sahel region. Beginning in 1968 the drought lasted over a period of six years, during which time there was a rainfall deficit of about one fifth in the farming zone of the Sahel. Social scientists have established a direct link between the drought and migration, insofar as they have identified migration as a the major demographic response to this ecological problem. In response to the decline in rains, the Diola and many other people of the region experienced an increase in migration.

The migration of the Diola was first appreciably measured in a demographic study conducted in 1972 by Henk van Loo and Nell Star. They calculated that in that year
33,500 people out of a total rural population of 225,000 in Lower Casamance left their native village in the dry season. This accounted for 15% of the total number of inhabitants. According to their figures females comprised almost 50% of this migration; some 48% of all migrants were single women and 1% were married women. Of the remaining absentees 43% were unmarried boys and 9% were married men.

This migration was further characterized by subregional variation, with those areas south of the Casamance River generally having disproportionately more female migrants. Furthermore, they verified that this migration, for males as well as females, was primarily seasonal and rural-urban in nature. Migrants temporarily relocated in cities in the dry season and returned to the countryside during the rains to farm. Female migrants usually repeated this trek for approximately seven consecutive years, after which time they most often returned to the rural area permanently to marry.

This demographic study of 1972 reported yet other significant trends in migration that persisted until the end of the decade. Undoubtedly the most striking of these was the young ages at which females migrated. In 1972 girls in Lower Casamance began to leave at an average age of eleven and-a-half years of age, which had the effect of reducing the female population between the ages of 10 and 19 by 50% in the dry season. Another significant characteristic of migration measured at this time was the movement to Dakar.
Although substantial numbers of migrants went to Bathurst, Ziguinchor, and Bignona, a full 45% of all migrants went to Dakar in 1972. Although the study did not precisely measure the various kinds of employment in which migrants were then engaged, it did confirm the fact that most female migrants were employed as domestics. This comparatively greater concentration of female migrants in unskilled labor was reflected by the report's figures concerning migrants who leave to pursue an education. While a total of 30% of all male migrants left for educational reasons, only 15% of all female migrants left for this reason.

My analysis drawn from household samples taken in 1978 in Thionk Essil adds some additional perspectives to this migration. Overall my data suggest that the population of Boulouf is considerably more mobile than previously supposed. Seasonal migration alone accounts for less than half of Thionk's migration. While 15% of the village's total population migrated seasonally in 1978, 18% of the total population were permanent migrants. Thus at some point in the calendar cycle as much as one third of the village is absent. My findings concerning the sex differences in migration were not, however, radically different from those of van Loo and Star's. The sexual composition of migrants in Thionk was 51.4% female and 48.6% male, representing a slightly greater proportion of females than previously calculated. Moreover, the overall youthful character of migrants has remained the same. Among all
migrants some 70% migrate by age 25. However, disproportionately more females migrate at younger ages. While 67% of Thionk's total female population between the ages of 11 and 20 migrate, some 43% of the total male population in this age range migrate. Much of Thionk's migration is still directed towards Dakar, the same 45% previously reported for all Lower Casamance. The second major pole of attraction is the Gambia to which 20% of all migrants go.

Again, a look at the occupations of female migrants at all points of destination reveals that most women are engaged in unskilled labor. The importance of domestic work among female migrants is reflected by the proportion of women who are domestics among all women who migrate and among women who are employed. Better than half, 57%, of women who migrate for reasons of employment, marriage, and education, are domestics. However, domestic labor engages some 84% of those female migrants who are engaged in remunerated activities. In spite of the unskilled nature of domestic work, there are no significant differences in the educational levels of domestics and other female migrants. While 73% of domestics have had no formal education, 71% of those female migrants engaged in other kinds of activities have a similar level of instruction. This reflects the general low level of education of all Diola women. Of further note is the fact that maids are comparatively younger than the total female migrant population. While 70%
of domestics were 16 years of age or younger, only 25% of the non-maid female migrant population were the same age. This reflects the tendency for girls to migrate at increasingly younger ages.

Employment as a domestic maintains some continuity with rural lifestyles insofar as it taps skills developed there. Again, domestic work draws upon skills in household upkeep and maintenance that Diola women have practiced for centuries. Duties usually include one or a combination of the following: general cleaning, cooking, laundry, and child care. Although female migrants often performed the same or similar tasks, their remuneration in 1978 was dependent on a combination of factors. Generally their wages were determined by both the number and difficulty of tasks that they performed. However, age and experience are also important considerations. In addition, the ethnic background of the employer was important insofar as ethnicity is strongly correlated with economic and social status in Senegal. The rank order of social status, which corresponds to the order of wages given domestics, is Europeans, Lebanese, and Africans. The residence of female domestics also determines wages for two reasons. One is that women who reside in their place of employment receive lesser wages. Another is that wages vary depending on the city in question, Dakar offering the most attractive economic opportunities for all migrants.

Another interesting characteristic of female migrants
employed as domestics is their marital status. This type of
labor is dominated by single women. Whereas 89% of the
female single migrant population of Thionk Essil were
domestics in 1978, only 31% of female married migrants were
maids at that time. In fact the occupational distribution
of married women portrays migratory patterns significantly
different from those of single migrant women. It is
noteworthy that married women participate more in a
commercial trade, which in some ways is similar to that of
the women of other West African people. A total of 20% of
married migrant women reported leaving for commercial
reasons in comparison to 5% who had the same motive of
departure among the single female migrants. Even more
striking is the volume of married female migrants in
relation to the total seasonal migrant population in Thionk
Essil. While the demographic study of 1972 fixed the rate
of this type of migration at 1% of all the seasonal
migration of Lower Casamance, my data for Thionk Essil
reveal that it is 10%.72

The difference in these figures may be attributable to
two factors. One is that this commercial migration either
expanded or began subsequent to the drought. Reports
indicate that this migration began in Thionk Essil in
approximately 1974-75, which suggests that it was a response
to the drought of 1968-72. Another possibility is that this
migration may have been underreported as a result of the
methodological procedure utilized. Conventional definitions
of seasonal migration do not take commercial migration that may last for half of the dry season or less into account. Commercial migrations are often of much shorter duration than normal seasonal migrations, the length primarily depending on the time it takes to dispose of whatever produce a women has to sell. Most frequently women take either palm oil, dried fish, or smoked oysters to sell. The advantage of these products is not only that they command the greatest profit; they are also less perishable than other marketable items such as fresh vegetables. Although these movements usually do not extend throughout the dry season, their economic significance alone warrant them further investigation.

The commercial migration of married women may be seen as women's creative resourcefulness that was given impetus by worsened ecological conditions. One of the most distressing consequences of the drought among the Diola has been their increasing dependency on imported rice. In 1972, the worst year of the drought, approximately 80% of the households in Diola Boulouf were forced to purchase rice. Consequently the principal motivations for migration among the Diola, for married as well as single women, have been overwhelmingly economic. For females as a whole, migration is virtually the only means to generate income. However, for married women in Thionk Essil the pressures produced by the drought have been especially acute. Married women feed their children throughout the dry season, the men providing
food the the months of rain only. Moreover, the need to contribute money sometimes to the funds pooled for a returning Anelena can add to the pressures that push married women to migrate. Undoubtedly it is the unusual nature of this migration that accounts for villagers' unfavorable view of this type of migration. When married women migrated in the past, they were accompanied by their husbands. When the rural-urban migration of Diola females began, it primarily consisted of single women. From this perspective the migration of married women is without a nineteenth century precedent and is attributable to adverse ecological conditions. Thionk's discomfort with the seasonal migration of these women may also be explained by some grim and threatening urban realities. Securing either temporary employment or even selling all of one's produce can be extremely competitive and difficult. The necessity to earn money to provide for one's children, some villagers said, can make urban opportunities for prostitution even more attractive for married women that it sometimes can be for single women.

Although the migration of married women represents one significant departure from the past among the Diola, their migration as well as the migration of single Diola females does maintain an important continuity with past Diola traditions. This cultural carry-over is primarily related to Diola women's comparatively greater mobility in the precolonial era. In another study of 1973, Klaus de Jonge
pointed out that subregional differences in female migration were partially explained by cultural variations between different people in Lower Casamance.\(^75\) This explains, at least in part, why female migration among the Bainouck and the Manding was lower than it was among Diola women when the study was conducted. Even when compared to most other Senegalese women, with the exception of the Serer, the migration of Diola women is unparalleled in Senegal. Among the Tukulor, for example, whose migration to Dakar has been substantial, it is primarily the men who have migrated.\(^76\) Thus the comparatively greater mobility that Diola women seem to have enjoyed in the past may serve as the basis for their contemporary migratory patterns.

An additional meaningful perspective is gained on the migration of Diola females when it is compared to broader patterns of female migration in West Africa. On the whole the migration of females in the region is anomalous; most migrants in West Africa are male.\(^77\) The comparatively fewer number of women who do migrate are usually traders, contributing significantly to a commercial migration found throughout the region. Moreover not only the predominance of Diola women in domestic work but their marital status as well differs significantly from other regional patterns. Most female migrants in West Africa are married, which contrasts sharply with the predominance of single women among Diola migrants.\(^78\) It is also significant that whereas most Diola women who work as domestics are employed by
people who are neither kin nor even Diola, most female migrants who do work as domestics in West Africa are usually employed by someone who is a member of their extended family. Thus the relationship that Diola females domestics have with the families for which they work is less social and more economic in nature.

Drawing a balance sheet of the impact of migration on women's lives in Thionk Essil essentially amounts to weighing the pros and cons of the continuities and discontinuities that migration either introduced or keeps ongoing. Several considerations are social in nature. Among single girls unwed pregnancy has been an ever-increasing problem. In a report of 1974 it was found that 30% of the single girls of age 15 or more had children. The fact that as recently as the 1940s and the 1950s there were reported cases of infanticide in Thionk Essil among the children of unwed mothers because of its social unacceptability, dramatizes the departure from the past that illegitimacy represents While this is no longer as negatively regarded by villagers as it once was, it is still viewed as an unwelcome outcome of rural-urban migration. From this point of view it cannot be interpreted as a positive phenomenon. Seen from another perspective, however, female migration may be regarded as an unprecedented form of fertility regulation among the Diola, insofar as it has resulted in later ages at marriage. This suggests that despite increasing illegitimacy single migrant
females have fewer pregnancies, something which means fewer morbidity risks and greater personal freedom for the females concerned.81

Another social concern is related to villagers' charges of the cultural emasculation of migrants. On the one hand this viewpoint is lent weight by one unusual characteristic of the urban lifestyles of Diola women. Most domestics are employed by other Senegalese groups, frequently those that perceive themselves as social and cultural superiors to the Diola. Working long hours for these types of employers must result in domestics' aculturation of other lifestyles, whether consciously or unconsciously. Villagers' criticisms are specifically raised about the habit that many migrants have adopted of speaking a language foreign to their culture, usually Wolof, often immediately upon their return to Thionk Essil during the rainy season. Another complaint is of women wearing urban fashions for the first few days of their return home during the rainy season which are characteristically non-Diola.82 But these traditional attitudes overlook the positive implication of some changes sparked by this migration, such as practicing better hygiene and learning to prepare more nutritious meals. Furthermore, non-migrants often do not see several countervailing forces to cultural emasculation that exist in urban centers, phenomena that aid in maintaining cultural retentions. One is the predominance of residence with extended family members who keep certain values and traditional ways of life
alive. Another is the active participation of many migrants in one of Thionk's urban associations which serve the same function. While cultural emasculation may be too extreme a term to describe the impact of urban socialization on Thionk's migrant populations, there is evidence that migration has been partly sustained by some disaffection with rural lifestyles. One of the implications of permanent migration, which constitutes better than half of all Thionk's migration, is that individuals who leave find urban life more attractive to rural lifestyles. Again, in 1978 some 18% of Thionk Essil's total population were permanent migrants as opposed to 15% who were seasonal migrants.

While urban economic opportunities undoubtedly serve as a principal lure to urban centers, certain aspects of rural lifestyle also play a role in the complex of motivational factors. One rural phenomenon in this regards that is commented upon frequently by Essilians is an increasing dislike of rural labor. Similarly, a comparatively lesser degree of individual freedom, youth-oriented social activities, and access to modern services and facilities also contribute to "push" factors that lead to out-migration. This rural exodus of village youths has presently reached proportions where it is more than simply an option for young people, but also an expectation of youths' peers among males and females alike.

These "push" factors are deceptive in the sense that
they allude to a more attractive lifestyle in cities than usually exists. Sex differences in permanent and seasonal migration suggest that urban conditions are most difficult for female migrants in particular. While 57% of all male migrants migrate permanently in Thionk Essil, 29% of all female migrants do so. Undoubtedly this reflects the fact that urban centers afford men income opportunities superior to those available to women. Yet it is not poor remuneration alone to which women's urban difficulties are often attributable; it is also often the nature of the domestic work itself. Domestic work frequently requires that one work from literally sun up to sun down when low income does little to build motivation. Moreover, the fact that women usually work for people who are not their own kin means that they are less, perhaps even seldom, protected by the normal considerations that characterize village kinship relationships. Reports of abuse by employers is not uncommon. Furthermore girls frequently live in cramped and unsanitary quarters where the risks of exposure to disease are increased. Judging from these circumstances, the interplay of dynamics that motivate women to migrate appear all the more compelling. Because economic motives are overriding, these phenomena can only heighten one's sensitivity to the "economic barrenness" of the countryside for women.

No firm conclusions about the impact of migration can be drawn without an analysis of its economic implications.
There are at least two noteworthy interpretations in this regards which shed some light on the economic dimensions of migration. One interpretation is that given by Elliot Berg, who argues that seasonal migration has been an "efficient" way to put money into rural areas, thereby providing more rapid economic growth.\(^8^6\) An opposing interpretation, expressed by Samir Amin, is that income earned in the cities cannot compensate for the population loss and production decline he believes are subsequent to rural-urban migration.\(^8^7\) Empirical data serve to clarify the debate. In Amin's defense it is noteworthy that there has been an inverse relationship between population growth and migration in Thionk Essil. Because of migration, between 1960 and 1976 Thionk's population grew by only 1.25% annually, which was proportionately less than Senegal's total population growth.\(^8^8\) Evidence in support of the adverse effects of the seasonal migration of Diola females in particular on their points of origin is also clearcut. In 1972 the tardy return of female seasonal migration in Lower Casamance as a whole resulted in a decline in rice yields. In that year girls averaged eight months away as seasonal migrants, which cut into planting time. Moreover, about 70% of these girls in Lower Casamance left again before the month of December when the harvest begins.\(^8^9\) Exploring the quantitative impact of varied female returns in the rainy season, Klauss de Jonge found that in one village in Lower Casamance from which only 23% of the girls between 10 and 19 migrated, their tardiness...
caused a decrease of cultivatable surface by more than 10%. Moreover, Lower Casamance has been increasingly affected by the increase in the number of girls who do not return at all during the rainy season. In 1972, for example, only 15% of all the villages in Lower Casamance were fortunate enough to have all the female migrants return.

Whether or not the economic amenities compensate for these deficiencies is crucial to the debate. It is more difficult to gather conclusive data on economic returns. Respondents are usually unwilling to divulge all the economic benefits which accrue to them. For example, my own data gathered on the economic amenities secured by the households sampled in Thionk Essil were not always credible. Even though several economists would agree with Berg that households do benefit financially from rural-urban migration others like Samir Amin would argue that the money is not used "efficiently" to generate economic development. Rather than invest in ventures that might increase agricultural output, villagers often spend their excess capital on luxury items. However, most of their money is probably spend on items of necessity, which raises one final compelling and nagging question. No matter how little or how negatively the rural-urban migration of females contributes to rural development, one must ask whether or not Diola women's lives have been positively or negatively affected by it? Perhaps the most sobering point to be made is that without rural-
urban migration females would hardly have been able to provide whatever economic contribution they have to their rural households and for themselves, no matter how meager their earnings have been. From this standpoint women's migration to urban centers offers immediate and pragmatic alternatives for survival.

Modern migrations in Thionk Essil, in which women have actively participated, represent unprecedented departures from the village's former way of life. While these contemporary population movements drew on several traditions, they were even more pioneering in the establishment and reestablishment of their own distinctive patterns that developed throughout the century. In this respect as well as in one other crucial regard modern migrations bear a significant resemblance to the other kinds of changes previously discussed. First, the impact of migration was not monolithic, but had diverse effects and implications for women. Second, migration is one additional means by which Diola women have creatively met with the dynamics of continuity and change in the twentieth century.
Footnotes to Chapter 6


4 Olga Linares, "Shell Middens of Lower Casamance and Problems of Diola Protohistory," West African Journal and Archaeology, 1 (1971), p. 46. The Diola villages of Brin and Séleky were the first to be established by the Diola in Lower Casamance. Additional Diola villages fissioned from Séleky as a result of disputes over rice fields. Essil, Thionk Essil's parent village, was one of them; Louis Vincent Thomas, Les Diolas (Dakar: IFAN, 1959), p. 316.

5 This list appears in Appendix B. I am grateful to Djibril Badji, the chief of Boutame Niaganane, for kindly providing me with this list; TEHT, B-79.


8 ANS 1G 23, "Voyage au Pays de Kion," rapport de M. Bertrand-Bocandé.


10 "Voyage de Kion", op. cit.; TEHT, A-44.

11 ANS 13G 361 1.
12 Odile Journet, "Rôles et statut des femmes dans la société Djola (Basse Casamance)," These du 3e cycle, Université de Lyon II, Juin 1978, p. 126.


15 ANS 13G 496 3.


17 Ibid., p. 92.

18 Hopkins, op. cit., p. 129.

19 Charlotte A. Quinn, Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), pp. 53-4. Quinn speculates that Islam was introduced to the Mandingo in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries by the Dyula and other long-distance traders from Mali.

20 The system of sponsorship between the Diola and Mandinka in the Gambia was typical of migrant-host relations in West Africa as a whole. This relationship was governed most by the subordination of strangers to the control of local political authorities in the communities where they resided. It is typical in rural areas for migrants to give periodic gifts or tribute to their hosts to eliminate any potential friction as well as in recognition of their dependence on the host community; Akin L. Mabogunje, Regional Mobility and Resource Development in West Africa (London: McGill-Queens University Press, 1972), pp. 74-76.

21 TEHT, A-78.

22 TEHT, A-79.


24 This argument is predicated on the notion that taxation spurred an increase in Diola participation in rubber extraction. Rubber was not only the preferred, but principal means by which the Diola paid taxes; ANS 13G 372
53. Rubber was favored by the Diola over rice and millet, which were accepted for taxes, because it commanded a better market price.

25 ANS 2G 18 44; ANS 2G 20 36.


27 ANS 1F 13.


29 ANS 2G 29 43; Mark, op. cit., p. 133.

30 TEHT, A-60.

31 TEHT, A-60.

32 TEHT, A-95.


34 TEHT, A-140.

35 TEHT, A-123.

36 TEHT, A-110.

37 TEHT, A-143.

38 The villages to which the people of Thionk Essil have migrated to in the Gambia include: Gunjur, Siffo, Kiti, Sukutu, Tujering, Sanyang, Lamin, Brufut, Dar Silame, Marakissa, Diaban, Tendie, Diambourou, and Kassacounda, Kartung, Boussoura; TEHT, C-42.

39 Journet, op. cit., p. 196.

40 Ibid., Journet, who estimates the total number of women engaged in such activities to be 1500-2000, reports that they were from the following villages south of the Casamance Riare: Point Saint Georges, Diembering, Brin Séléky, Oussoye Edioungou, Batinère, Essaout, Oukoute Niadiou, Oukoute-Etelya, Diantele, Effoc, and Yotou. Female laborers, who received the same pay as men, earned 150 cfa for carrying sacks weighing 25-40 kilgrams ten hours per day.

41 Ibid.

42 TEHT, A-105.
In Senegal the term navetané is used to describe migrant farmers, especially those who migrate seasonally to cultivate peanuts. For an amplification of the migration of navetanes, see Donald Cruise O'Brien, The Mourides of Senegal: The Political and Economic Organization of an Islamic Brotherhood (London: Oxford University Press), pp. 213-220.


Annie Lo Quay, "Thionck-Essyl en Basse Casamance: évolution récente de la gestion des ressources renouvelables," Thèse du 3e cycle, Université de Bordeaux III, 1979, p. 99. According to Lo Quay there were only 75 fishermen in the entire village.

My data set consists of a random sample of 1127 individuals from 150 households in Thionk Essil. Data on the age, sex and educational level of each household member were collected. Information on the migrants of each household was also gathered regarding their destination, occupation, date of departure, residence during the rainy season, and economic contributions to their rural household of origin.

I collected data on urban lifestyles from 30 migrants in the cities of Dakar, Banjul and Serrekunda in May 1978. Information concerning the work performed by domestics was obtained in several interviews; for example, this was related in an interview with Aissatou Sagna from the subward of Kamanar Yeumeuk in Dakar, May 26, 1978.

This is an oversimplification in the sense that it suggests that there is a certain level of homogeneity in the social status of people indigenous to Senegal in particular. In fact their social status varies considerably. The Wolof, the most populous and urban ethnic group of Senegal, are at the apex of the indigenous social hierarchy. The Diola are located towards the lower end of the indigenous social scale.

Interview with Khady Diatta, from the subward of Daga Gandong, in Dakar on May 24, 1978.

van Loo and Star, op. cit., p. 195.

Ibid., p. 254.

In a survey concerning villagers' perceptions of the impact of female migration on rural life, approximately 30 percent of all females and 75 percent of the men
interviewed expressed concern. While the migration of both married and single women was believed to reduce agricultural production, the migration of married women was believed to have a particularly negative social impact. Many villagers stated that it caused marital instability because of the increased economic autonomy that it gives women; Alice Hamer, "Diola Women and Migration: A Case Study," In "The Uprooted of the Western Sahel, Lucie Colvin et al (New York: Praeger, 1981), p. 197.


76 Abdoulaye Bara Diop's classic study of Tukolor migration is the most thorough account on the subject; Societe Toucouleur et migration. Dakar: IFAN, 1965.

77 Mabogunje, op. cit., p. 56. In a study of migrants in Ghana and the Ivory Coast, which were the two major poles of attraction after 1960, he found that 92% of the migrants were men.

78 Niara Sudarkasa, "Women and Migration in Contemporary Africa," Signs, Vol 3, No. 1 (August 1977), p. 186. She maintains that married women who migrate have previously been the head of a household, are widowed or divorced, and approximately 50 years of age. All of these factors suggest that female migrants usually have weaker social or economic positions in their respective societies. This may also have been the case with the first rural-urban Diola female migrants. Most of them, who were from villages south of the Casamance River, were reportedly divorced women looking for an "honorable means of living"; Odile Journet, op. cit., p. 189.

79 de Jonge et. al., op. cit., p. 16.

80 This was not a widespread occurrence. Its occasional incidence usually involved one of a set of twins. Twins were thought to bring misfortune to their parents.

81 The parental exigencies of single migrant women are mitigated by the fact that they often leave their children in the rural households from which they have departed while they continue to work in urban centers.

82 TEHT, A-77.
Thionk Essil has two urban associations in Dakar, the major point of migrants' destination. They reinforce traditional values insofar as they allow an opportunity to use the language, promote self-help through kinship and friendship networks, offer opportunities for traditional activities such as dancing, and discuss village issues.

Two of the most frequently cited abuses are sexual harassment and irregular or nonexistent remuneration.


Lo Quay, op. cit., p. 138.

de Jonge, op. cit., p. 15.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 212.

The fact that rural people in Lower Casamance have little "excess income" is reflected in the distribution of rural expenditures as reported by van Loo and Star, op. cit., p. 169.
Throughout the twentieth century the population of Thionk Essil, of which women were an integral part, witnessed a series of social and economic changes. One significant phenomenon in this regard was the integration of Thionk Essil into the nexus of international trade relations. Prior to the end of the nineteenth century economic exchange between Thionk and other Diola and Mandinka neighbors was limited by the insecurity of travel in the region. The village's precocious rural economy was characterized by a small scale of trade relations and subsistence agricultural production. Women figured prominently not only in the labor associated with rice production, the principal crop cultivated by the Diola, but in other non-agricultural tasks as well. The merging of Thionk Essil's traditional economic structures with world trade began in the fifteenth century with a trade in beeswax and later switched to slaves and palm oil. Following the emergence of peanuts as the principal cash crop and export item in Boulouf in the 1930s several changes significant to women's lives took place. Rural household economies became increasingly dependent on the modern currency, something
which had a differential impact on men and women. Generally women assumed the responsibility of providing the daily provisions of soap, kerosene, and sugar as well as costs associated with the education of their children. In contrast, men in Thionk Essil generally came to assume the economic responsibility for more intermittent but nonetheless costly things such as bride price and construction. Of greater significance was not the sexual distribution of the responsibilities per se, but the unequal distribution of economic opportunities to men and women. The fact that it is primarily men who profit from peanut cultivation, the principal source of rural income, means that since the 1930s it has been more difficult for women to satisfy their economic needs.

Some similar dynamics were at work in the contact between Diola society with Western and Mandinka cultures in regards to women. The sexual division of labor in Diola society suggests that women were the ideal agents for certain kinds of change in Thionk Essil. For example, women's role of seed selection in rice production means that they were the "natural" agents by which various seed varieties and planting techniques in particular likely made inroads into Diola society. Moreover women's role in the early childhood socialization and education of children means that their exposure to formal education and important implications for Thionk Essil. Nevertheless, women's potential as human resources was not fully developed.
Cultural contact with the Mandinka resulted in changes in techniques of production that were actually adverse to women in some villages in Boulouf, although not in Thionk, in terms of their work load and rice yields. These changes were followed by the failure of modern development schemes to equitably integrate women in programs concerning agricultural innovations, particularly those associated with substantial economic profit. In spite of their underutilization in regards to agricultural projects, their participation in health programs suggests that women can be responsive and effective agents of change. Nevertheless, the development of formal educational institutions follows the trend of general female exclusion. Women have been disproportionately underrepresented in both Western and Islamic schools throughout the twentieth century.

Women's participation in religious conversion has resulted in another kind of exclusion, which can only be understood by contrasting their integration into their traditional and alternative religions. In the precolonial era the women of Thionk Essil participated in religious observance on a scale comparable to that of men. Moreover, they exercised considerable social and even political influence by serving as priestesses of numerous shrines and by performing certain rituals believed to be crucial to the welfare of the community. These conditions changed significantly with religious conversion to both Islam and Catholicism. Islam, the religion to which most Essilians
converted, was more accommodating to many aspects of Diola
traditional faith. Nevertheless in neither faith did women
continue to exercise a degree of leadership or participant
worship commensurate with that which typified their
traditional religion.

While the syncretism that characterizes Islamic worship
in Thionk Essil reflects a significant number of cultural
retentions, female fertility associations are even more
demonstrative of the resiliency of traditional cultural
practice. On the one hand Gaenaelene changed substantially
in the twentieth century. It expanded its economic
functions significantly by means of initiating and
increasing monetary expenditures for the festivities of the
return home of Anelenas as well as the assistance given to
them during their three years of service. Its social
functions also changed to accommodate the diminution of
social activities in which women were engaged in precolonial
Thionk Essil, such as dancing. On the other hand many
aspects of Gaenaelene remained unaltered. There are
significant continuities with the past in regards to beliefs
concerning the causes of infant mortality, the healing
functions of Gaenaelene, the residential change of Anelenas,
the obligations of Anelenas to the community for a fixed
period of time, and the use of traditional healing
practices. Because these continuities are essential to the
survival and operations of Gaenaelene, they constitute a
firmly rooted skeletal structure on which many twentieth
century social and economic changes in the association are built.

While Gaenaelene is most representative of institutional continuities with traditions, the contemporary patterns of female migration exemplifies the most extensive departures from the past. In certain crucial respects, shifts in migratory patterns in the twentieth century have had both positive and negative implications for female Essilians. Modern migrations differ significantly in character from premodern migrations which were usually the total resettlement of a people due to adverse ecological conditions. Modern migrations, which began in the late nineteenth century have primarily been movements of labor. The fundamental character of female migrations, which was largely shaped by the type of labor activities in which individuals were engaged changed over time. When itinerant workers participated in palm oil production, which relied on the interdependent labor of both males and females, migration was primarily rural-rural in nature. However, when peanuts became the principal source of rural income in the 1930s, its attendant limitation of economic opportunities for females forced them to migrate increasingly to urban centers where they have most often worked as domestics. Contrary to many popular notions, urban life has not been particularly glamorous; rather its economic profitability is questionable and work and living conditions are often stressful. Nevertheless it provides
female migrants from Thionk Essil, as elsewhere in Lower Casamance, with certain life opportunities that are scant in rural areas.

A synthesis of the impact of these changes on the lives of the women of Thionk Essil make two generalizations possible. One is that the overall thrust of socio-economic change in the twentieth century has adversely affected women in Thionk Essil. This is not to say that there were no positive dimensions whatsoever to changes that took place during this period. These include, for example, women's access to modern health care afforded by both rural and urban health facilities, formal educational institutions, and their exposure to modern agricultural innovations through structured development programs. The negative dimensions of twentieth century change must be seen against the backdrop of economic and social imbalances in the integration of women in the modern rural sector. The extent to which women participated in the modern rural economy, formal educational institutions, and alternative religious worship compares unfavorably with their full integration in these activities in the precolonial period. Even men's involvement in these spheres, which has been significantly greater than that of women, has sometimes been marginal. This has clearly been the case with Western education.

A second generalization that may be made concerns women's response to twentieth-century change. It is clear that women were not inert backdrops in the march of their
own history as conventional images connote. Rather they acted actively throughout the century to create new meaning out of the various changes which emerged. Thus no matter how difficult it may be to see clitoridectomy in any positive light, one must concede that in the twentieth century it serves as an important means of religious expression of the women under study, one which they have fought to preserve. Similarly, migration must be seen as a creative alternative to change. Without rural-urban migration as an option, women would be more victims of, as opposed to participants in, the new economic order.

Yet to mention these generalizations alone does not adequately tap the dynamic interplay between tradition and change that is apparent in these women's experiences. Indeed the greatest contribution of an exploration of women's lives in twentieth-century Thionk Essil lies in understanding the interaction of tradition and change as it relates to them in particular and to rural women more generally. One of the first conclusions that one may draw from the experiences of the women of the village under study is that several popular notions of the dynamics at work when traditional societies are confronted with change belie the complexity of this type of interchange. Discussions of the impact of change on communities such as that of Thionk Essil often assume that the results of this relationship are uniform for all peoples affected. Because this dissertation focuses on the experiences of one segment of the population,
it may seem redundant to mention this. However the very fact that the interplay of tradition and change affected different groups of women in various ways makes the point concerning the heterogeneity of its impact on subgroups within the population worth emphasizing. The organization of Gaenaelene was such that twentieth-century changes in the organization principally affected married as opposed to single women. In contrast, changes in migratory patterns that took place during this same period primarily affected the unmarried female population. The lack of uniformity in women's own experiences in this regards illustrates only one aspect of the complexity in the interplay between tradition and change.

Another dimension of the richness in the dynamics between these two phenomena concerns the mesh between them. Conventional interpretations of such interchange suggests that when innovation is introduced to societies such as that of the Diola, it completely replaces the traditional way of life. However, the experience of women in Thionk Essil in regards to virtually every social and economic institution counters this idea; their history demonstrates that the relationship between tradition and change was one of coexistence. Thus both the traditional and modern economies exist side by side, as do traditional and modern educational institutions. Even religious conversion, which caused the diminution of certain traditional religious practices, did not result in the total relinquishment of Diola traditional
religion. The contemporary existence of Islamic worship that is syncretic in nature attests to this fact. Similarly, Gaenaelene incorporated several changes of a social and economic nature while at the same time preserving much of its traditional structure. Even rural-urban migration, which had no precolonial precedent in Thionk Essil, was not devoid of certain continuities with the past. Thus both the residential patterns of migrants as well as the labor in which they were engaged drew upon their traditional counterparts. The experience of women in Thionk Essil demonstrates the fact that the twentieth-century change has been more additive than substitutive.

Although it is clear that the pattern of interaction between tradition and change is one of coexistence, there are some dimensions to this which raise certain unanswered questions. There are various levels of change that fall under the umbrella of coexistence; some traditional structures are altered more by change than others. Almost instinctively one perceives that women's utilization of factory-manufactured soap which they now buy as opposed to village-fabricated soap is less fundamental a change than the dependence of villagers on modern currency for rice and even bride price. Determining the way in which we measure the extent and degree of change that exists within this relationship of coexistence is a complex issue in and of itself. Certainly the number of people touched by change should figure into this type of analysis. The fact that a
modest portion of Essilians attended Western schools suggests that they had only a superficial impact on the village. Yet the fact that education in Senegal as a whole today is so inextricably linked with certain kinds of lifestyles means that the introduction of Western education per se in Thionk Essil was of more than minimal significance. Establishing criteria to measure levels of change is crucial to our complete understanding of an important dimension of the dynamics between tradition and change.

One further aspect of the multi-faceted dimensions of change is related to the rate at which it takes place. The very notion of twentieth-century change connotes some uniformity in its timing. However not all change permeates the society at the same time. Thus religious conversion was preceded by and indeed was even contingent upon some economic change. To some extent the timing in the diffusion of change is linked with the occurrence of relevant historic events. Thus it is understandable that the integration of the Diola hinterland into the world nexus of trade awaited not only contact with Europeans but also the security of travel in the region. However historical events per se do not totally explain the dynamics at work. Thus although colonial school was first established in Thionk Essil in 1933, it was at least fifteen years before it enjoyed widespread participation.

Clearly part of the rate at which different changes
pervaded the village was related to the nature of resistance when it existed. Some insight into resistance may be gained from clitoridectomy. One plausible interpretation of the staunch resistance of men to it is that in some ways it threatened the traditional relationship of power in which men were ultimately dominant. In a sense the exclusive existence of circumcision rites for men in the precolonial era was the hallmark of their preeminence in community influence and prestige, particularly as it related to the political sphere. Thus clitoridectomy may have posed a threat to precolonial political relations not so much because it introduced a significant variable to decision-making processes collectively affecting villages as a whole; rather clitoridectomy's challenge may lie in the fact that it symbolized a kind of rupture with traditional structures, a chasm that has the potential of widening. Clitoridectomy may also provide another insight into the rate at which change pervades traditional societies. Women's early resistance to the practice was probably associated with their failure to perceive its meaning and significance to the type of Islam they adopted. The introduction of Western education serves as another example of ambiguity in regards to new cultural symbols. Undoubtedly the failure of colonial schools to produce any but meager advantages in the first fifteen years of their existence accounts for villagers' delayed responsiveness to and understanding of modern education. Clarity in the meaning of new cultural
practices are evidently essential to peoples' acceptance of them.

The differential rates in the penetration of change may also be explained by the fact that there is a corresponding differential accommodation of tradition to it. Contrary to notions that depict precolonial society as inflexible and antithetical to change, some traditions may sustain and even promote it. This is evidenced by the fact that the Diola of Boulouf adapted to failing ecological conditions by means of a premodern migration. In the twentieth century this may be seen in women's rapid utilization of Western health services for their children. Its ability to improve children's health status was exceedingly compatible with the social significance of children. Rural health facilities also demonstrated one other important point regarding the "fit" between tradition and innovation. Nkhor Mbengue, who was largely instrumental in securing women's acceptance of Western health care for their maternity needs, exemplifies the fact that charisma can facilitate compatible encounters between tradition and change.

Another perspective on this differential penetration of change is that it constitutes a process of selection made by the relevant communities. While the range of choice varies in regards to different cultural features, it is quite clear that under some circumstances the people of Thionk Essil were discriminating in their accommodation of change. While villagers had no control over the aggression waged against
them by the Mandinka-initiated Soninke-maraboutic wars of the late nineteenth century, they clearly exercised control over their religious conversion. Perhaps their conversion to Islam as opposed to Christianity best exemplifies the selectivity inherent in some of the dynamics of change.

In the experiences particular to the women under study, selectivity was linked with not only their survival, as evidenced by their migratory patterns; it was also linked with group cohesion. Changes in Gaenaelene, which serves as a microcosm of broader changes, strengthened group participation and solidarity. This was also the case with female circumcision. It is important to note that continuities with the past influence these processes of selection. It is no accident that women were most creative in their adaptation of traditional social institutions; these are the spheres of their lives over which women had most control in the precolonial era. The very fact that women exercised some degree of discrimination in cultural adaptation suggests that Western notions of feminist consciousness as it relates to women in developing countries needs to be rethought. Selection implies some level of awareness, whether it is conscious or unconscious. While feminine consciousness in Thionk Essil may have spurred women to refashion and revitalize their traditional social institutions, it never resulted in their questioning or challenging traditional family structures. In this sense one of the underpinnings of feminine consciousness of Diola
women was their attempts to be in greater harmony with existing social and economic institutions.

The dynamic interplay between tradition and change in Thionk Essil has some implications for policy formulation concerning rural women in Africa and in the developing world as a whole. Most important, as is substantiated elsewhere, is that women should be equally integrated into development planning. Not only is their development as human resources capable of generating more widespread and positive changes in their communities as a whole; when given the proper incentive they are responsive to innovation. This point is an important one. Programs that are poorly planned can do immense harm in stifling motivation. Those projects that are sensitive to women's needs, that draw on tradition where possible, and that are staffed by committed individuals have an enormous potential to affect change. The importance of instituting such programs is explained by the crucial roles of women in communities such as Thionk Essil. So interwoven are they into the social and economic fabric of rural life that neither the well-being of their families nor the rural sector as a whole can be improved independent of them.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

WARDS AND SUBWARDS OF THIONK ESSIL

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>SUBWARD</th>
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<td>Boutame</td>
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## APPENDIX B

### MALE CIRCUMCISIONS OF THIONK ESSIL

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</tr>
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<td>1640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1660</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabangure</td>
<td>1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eriregaléedge</td>
<td>1780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawal</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibero</td>
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<td>Sonébac</td>
<td>1840</td>
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<tr>
<td>Djéghélé</td>
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<td>Eforsé</td>
<td>1920</td>
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<td>Bagnobane</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elandou</td>
<td>1962</td>
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APPENDIX C

VILLAGES OF BOULOUF

Affiniam
Bagaya
Balingor
Bessire
Dianki
Diatok
Diagoune
Djigudj
Djimonde
Elana
Kartiak
Kaniobon
Mandegane
Mangagoulak
Mlomp
Tendouk
Thionk Essil
Tiobon
### APPENDIX D

#### ORAL INTERVIEWS

#### Migration

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<td>10</td>
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<td>50+</td>
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#### Other Topics

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<tr>
<td>15-25</td>
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<td>26-35</td>
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<td>36-50</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>50+</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
<td><strong>45 = 250</strong>*</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Several informants were interviewed more than once.*
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Cahier Ecole Niaganane. This is a log kept in the school in Kaffanta Niaganane. Theoretically each headmaster was to record all important school events of the year in it. These records are fairly complete up until the 1950s. After that the entries are fairly intermittent and irregular.

Thionk Essil Historical Texts. These are a series of three notebooks in which I recorded all my field interviews and notes over a period of 15 months. In the text each interview is abbreviated by both the acronym TEHT and one of the first three letters of the alphabet, depending on the notebook in which it appears. The page numbers of the texts were also cited. The distribution of persons interviewed appears in Appendix D.
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