

Religion, Ethnicity and Transnational Migration
between West Africa and Europe

Muslim Minorities

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Religion, Ethnicity and Transnational Migration between West Africa and Europe

Edited by

Stanisław Grodź
Gina Gertrud Smith



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Preface

Religion, Ethnicity and Transnational Migration between West Africa and Europe originates in a wish to encourage research on the socio-political impact of migration, specifically from West Africa into Europe and its effects back in the region. The idea was developed in discussions at the Centre for European Islamic Thought, University of Copenhagen, Denmark in 2009. This was a part of a project associated with the Danish National Research Foundation professorship (2007–2012) held by Jørgen S. Nielsen. In the course of this project the topic was discussed further with colleagues from the Centre of African Studies, University of Copenhagen, the Centre for Intercultural Theology, Interreligious Dialogue, Missiology and Ecumenism (Centre IIMO), Utrecht University, the Netherlands, and the Department of the History and Ethnology of Religion, the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland. The discussions led to holding a workshop at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin in June 2011 with the title 'Religion and ethnicity between West Africa and Europe: A transnational feedback loop?'. The chapters in this volume have been developed out of the discussions which took place there.

The editors are very grateful to the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin for hosting the conference, to the Centre IIMO, Utrecht University for assistance, and to the Centre for European Islamic Thought, University of Copenhagen for the major sponsoring of the workshop, and to the authors for their enthusiasm for the project.

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Some recent publications are: "Statements by religious organizations on HIV and AIDS. Intersecting the public realm", in B. Haddad (ed.), *Religion and HIV and AIDS: charting the terrain* (Durban, University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2011), 108–129; co-authored with N. Pruiksma, "Journeying towards Multiculturalism: the relationship between immigrant Christians and Dutch Indigenous Churches", *Journal of Religion in Europe*, 3/1 (2010), 125–154; "Let us understand our differences: current trends in Christian-Muslim Relations in sub-Saharan Africa", *Transformation*, 27/4 (2010), 261–274.

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207–221; “Christian-Muslim Experiences in Poland”, *Exchange* 39/3 (2010), 270–284.

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Gina Gertrud Smith

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teaching on Islam, *Islamisk mystik i Senegal. En indre jihad*, Munksgaard, Copenhagen 1991. Since 2003 her research has centred on Islamic education in Senegal and on the Gounassianke branch of Tijaniyya in Senegal and in France. Her latest publication is *Medina Gounass: Challenges to Village Sufism in Senegal*. BOD, Copenhagen 2008.

Introduction

Stanisław Grodź and Gina Gertrud Smith

Religion, Ethnicity and Transnational Migration between West Africa and Europe focuses on the West African migrants' presence in Europe and the way they negotiate such issues as religion and ethnicity in a new context. Special attention is given to the diversity of religious background of the migrants and to exploration of interreligious relations. Thus, the contributors explore a dimension of transnational migration that has not been widely researched, yet.

In this volume, 'West Africa' is conceived as the region in the western part of the continent south of the Sahara stretching to Cameroon, but excluding Nigeria.¹ Cameroon is included on account of its Fulbe population that forms a part of an ethnic group spread across the whole region, while the exclusion of Nigeria from the scope of the contributors' attention was intended to avoid the often observed 'overshadowing' of the perspective on the region by the intensity of the Nigerian issues and treating them unjustifiably as paradigmatic.

The West African population consists of Muslims, Christians and believers in local ethnic religions. Only a few are registered as not belonging to any of these. In most of the countries the Muslims form the majority, though the majority of the population in Ghana is Christian (*The World Factbook*, CIA, 2012).

Migration is an old phenomenon in West Africa, as people moved within the region for centuries. Focusing on the second half of the 20th century the existence of three sub-regions attracting (mainly labour) migration can be pointed out – Senegal (trade and groundnuts plantations), Ghana/Ivory Coast (cocoa and coffee plantations), and Nigeria (oil industry) (*Atlas on Regional Integration in West Africa*, 2006, 11). Migratory contacts between West Africa and Europe also have their history, though until relatively recent times, it was mainly a history of European migration to West Africa. The migrations of people from the former *Afrique Occidentale Française* to France took place already in the first

1 The term West Africa is not self-explicatory. Understood in its geographical sense, it comprises the whole western part of the continent, excluding the Mediterranean belt. More often, the term is understood in political and economic categories that tend to exclude Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea and the northern parts of Niger, Mali and Mauretania. See e.g. the entry in 'Encyclopaedia Britannica' (2005, vol.29, p.790), or the website of The Economic Organisation of West African States, ECOWAS at: <http://www.ecowas.int>, accessed on 11 October 2013.

half of the 20th century, while the inhabitants of the former British-controlled territories migrated within the region almost till the last quarter of the century, before going further afield to Europe and the U.S. (Schoumaker et al., 2013; see also e.g. Riccio, 2008, 218–219).

The West African migrations can also be placed within the general pattern of periodisation of the recent migration into Europe with its changing characteristics from temporary labour migration lasting till the 1970s, to settlement decisions and family reunions, and the later phase of the increasing arrival of refugees (Césari, 2004, 15).

The presence of African migrants in Europe has been taken into account by the researchers and the transnational links maintained by them have received increasing attention. Still, it is important to highlight the cultural-religious context of the West African migrants and the wider implications it brings for their life in Europe. This is especially pertinent in the current situation when the contemporary media commentators give so much attention to the conflictual aspects of migration.

West Africa has been inhabited by indigenous Muslims and Christians for several centuries and generally interreligious relations in the region stretching between Senegal and Cameroon have been rather peaceful, with the exception of Nigeria, but the conflicts there have their own complicated background and history. Both West African Christians and Muslims have migrated to Europe and they have not come as *tabula rasa*, i.e. they brought with them their notions and experiences of religious relations formed in their countries of origin, which included a strong, though not always explicit reference to the cultural-religious traditional background.

The contributors to this volume research and analyse these notions and experiences of religious relations, what changes (if any) they undergo in the European context, and the way they are put into practice in the new circumstances. Examining the situation of the Muslim migrants from the Maghreb Jocelyn Césari pointed out that the transcultural space between the European and the Muslim world still had to be researched. This requires the examination of the social and historical contexts within which they construe their Islam (Césari, 2004, 5). This need is even more evident when it comes to researching the West African migrants.

One of the intentions behind the Lublin workshop, mentioned in the Preface, was to encourage an exploration of how the migrants' experiences influence the situation in their countries of origin, i.e. what the migrants communicate and transport back in terms of ideas and attitudes. This dimension of the research proved very difficult to pursue to its full extent at the present stage and it calls for further investigations. Here not only the need for

multilocal research becomes apparent but also the burning requirement of interdisciplinary approaches. Recent examination of transnational connections and movements revealed that, for example, between 1975 and 2008 53,5% of the Senegalese in Europe have visited Senegal within their first five years as migrants, whereas the Ghanaians in the U.K. and the Netherlands only reached the same level between 1999 and 2008. Moreover, the Senegalese in France, Italy or Spain have transnational families and invest in Senegal, partaking more in transnational activities than for instance the Ghanaians (Schoumaker et al., 2013 with references to previous research).

Economic, social and political aspects of migration have attracted scholarly attention and have been analysed in their multi-faceted dimensions including the benefits they bring but also challenges and threats that they pose.

Meanwhile, some scholars, like Jehu Hanciles, argue that the migratory movement from the South to the North 'is essentially a religious movement' because of the 'pervasive religiosity of non-Western societies'. The impact of the immigrants and their ideas is equally felt on the economic, cultural and religious levels (Hanciles, 2008).² Therefore the religious aspect of the migratory process needs to be included together with the other ones in order to ensure comprehensiveness of analyses. Although the religious aspect of migration has not been totally absent from the research conducted among the migrants in Europe, it has been usually confined to the boundaries of one major religious tradition, either Christian or Muslim. The impact of the West African Christian immigrants has been clearly shown within the sphere of Christianity in such European countries as the Netherlands, United Kingdom, or Germany (e.g. Haar, 1998a; Kunter and Schjørring, 2008; Adogame, Gerloff and Hock, 2008). Migrant Muslims from West Africa have been greatly overlooked. That fact was signalled by Gerrie ter Haar already in the 1990s and it seems that not much has been done in developing the research since (Haar, 1998b, 37, 44). France presents a different case due to its former links with those parts of West Africa that have a stronger Muslim presence. However, even in France the West African Muslim migrants seem to remain almost invisible forming a minority among the Muslims there.

The growing interest in the notion of 'diaspora' seen among the members of ethnic minorities and also among academics, especially during the last decade

2 'Due to the pervasive religiosity of non-Western societies, the South-to-North migration movement is essentially a religious movement. This is to say that in addition to the economic and cultural benefits which the new immigrants bring, they are also impacting Western societies in fundamental ways related to religious life. In other words, contemporary global migrations implicate the West as a site of new religious interactions'

of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century, hardly included the religious dimension. The concept became increasingly obscured by ‘conflation with “migration”, “minority” and “transnationalism”’ (Vertovec, 2004, 275). Though this is arguable whether the concept of ‘diaspora’ helps or complicates the research into the links between migration, ethnicity and religion, these links become increasingly obvious.

Migration causes changes in the religious landscape not only of the host countries but also in the countries of migrants’ origin due to the transnational contacts maintained by the migrants and their kin. The religious perspective of the migrants undergoes changes as a result of the widened contacts. These changes seem to be more complicated than either moving towards becoming more ‘traditional’ (fundamentalist) or more ‘secular’. Researchers and analysts have shown that migrants refer to their religious convictions and structures in order to overcome the difficulties they face in their new life situations (see e.g. Vertovec, 2004; Schreiter, 2009).

In the so-called ‘ethnic religions’ the link between one’s own ethnicity and religion forms an important element of the indigenous cultural heritage. This stands in clear contrast to a feature that characterises ‘universal religions’ in which the ethnic component was supposed to be submerged in the universal community of believers. Individualisation of religious belonging was considered a strength and an asset of universal religions bringing wider perspectives to people bound by concerns of ethnic religions.³ Even if joining a new religious group did not put the person(s) into a multi-ethnic community at once, an openness to external contacts and getting in active touch with people from outside one’s own ethnic group was envisaged and considered as something desirable. Examples can be seen in the dynamics of the early spread of Islam in West Africa. People were becoming Muslims, even if only nominally, because it gave them new visions and another understanding of the world, opened to them new, more effective possibilities of managing their lives, and also presented new economic prospects. That was also later the case with Christianity where it was introduced as the sole universal religion in the indigenous context of ethnic religions.

In cases where only one universal religion was present, its presence did contribute to disentangling ethnicity from religion, though the effects were not always impressive. Where universal religion came with the support of a political power it was resisted often with the help of stressing ethnic identity and its

3 Though it should also be taken into account that in the 20th century the African ‘ethnic religions’ (or African Traditional Religions, as they are more commonly known) have been undergoing a process of ‘universalisation’. (Haar, 2009, 88; Hackett, 1991).

connections with ethnic religion, or resorting to the other universal religion. This 'liberating' force, i.e. disentangling ethnicity from religion, seemed to be lost where two universal religions were present in the same indigenous context. Rivalry between them led to reinforcing the link between ethnicity and religion. Other factors – political and social – also contributed to this reinforcement. Take for instance Ghana.

For Muslims and Christians in Ghana the ethnic identity still seems to form a more obvious reference frame than their religious affiliation, though the latter one is not disregarded. In places where Muslims and Christians from various ethnic groups intermingle in unfamiliar surroundings, they tend to stick to their own kin. In the case of Muslims, researchers contrasted the attitude and practice of the early Dyula migrant Muslims, for whom their ethnicity seemed to be more important than belonging to the *umma*, with those of the Fulbe and the Hausa migrants, who seemed to be more interested in spreading Islam among those with whom they got in touch (Wilks, 1966; 1968; 2000). But even if so, the recent and current tensions between the local Muslims, i.e. long-term settlers like the Dagomba or the Fante, and the Hausa-Fulbe Muslim religious establishment show that ethnic element is not to be disregarded within the *umma* (Samwini, 2006, 202–203). In the Christian milieu in multiethnic parishes in big cities there are also groups that function on the basis of ethnic belonging (e.g. choirs). The ethnic factor still plays a role within both universal religious traditions, as they only slightly managed to affect the link between ethnicity and religion.

Findings of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life on Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa published in 2010 show that '[t]he degree of concern about religious conflict varies from country to country but tracks closely with the degree of concern about ethnic conflict in many countries, suggesting that they are often related'. Both ethnicity and religion reinforce each other and can be destabilising forces, but most Africans do not see it as a pressing problem comparing with issues such as poverty or unemployment (Pew Forum, 2010, 2). In view of these findings it seems pertinent to ask about the importance of West African migrants' religion and ethnicity for their life in Europe, for the stability of their European host societies and their land of origin.

The interreligious aspect of migration also raises some questions. Does the fact that religiously diverse migrants live in the same area pose a threat to social cohesion and stability? Or perhaps even a more fundamental question for the European context should be asked: does the fact that consciously religious migrants come to settle in Europe pose a threat to social stability? Threat has more meanings than just a risk of experiencing a violent attack. If we

accept that secularism, understood as the separation of the 'religious' from the public sphere of life – the politics, economy and social relations – is a distinctive feature of the 'European way of life', then the West African immigrants (but also others from the global South) with their inclination to hold a 'religious' worldview are challenged and challenge the mentality and practice of the majority cultures in today's Europe (c.f. Obi, 2010).

The following eight chapters look at the situation of West African migrants in Europe – touching on the U.S. context in one case – from various perspectives. All of them consider issues proposed in the original call for papers such as the role of ethnicity and religion and how these identities are used in negotiating empowerment and citizenship.

In the first chapter Afe Adogame outlines the historical concepts of 'Africa' and the dialectic relationships between European concepts and African self-consciousness as regards African, ethnic and religious identities. He asks whether 'African' identity is 'in itself a self-construction, self-identification variable, an imposition by the host societies or a combination of both?' Although African immigrants differ as regards language, nationality and cultures, 'Africa and immigrants are often dumped' into ethnic boxes, as it has been done by the U.K. Office for National Statistics, when it invited the respondents in the 2001 census to select an ethnic group to which they thought they belonged. The 'Ethnic Group/Origin category' had 'Africa' as a box that the respondents could mark. This is one example of how the African and migrant pluriformity is undermined. Adogame points to economic, social and psychological survival as a context in which immigrants negotiate their Christian and various other identities. Their actions must be understood first in terms of survival and only later as geared towards the adaptation to the milieu around them. This leads him to the question of citizenship and to the discourses in which policy makers seek new definitions, stressing responsibilities rather than citizen rights. Immigrants within African-led churches in Great Britain respond by developing models of citizenship that are global, and do not focus on a British citizenship. They negotiate their identity as citizens also using religious empowerment rhetoric which may serve as 'tools of social-economic empowerment and mobility'.

The following three chapters explore, with overlaps, the negotiations of African, religious, ethnic and national identities and citizenship undertaken by the Senegalese in Senegal, France and Spain.

Gina Gertrud Smith explores the awareness of the Senegalese that their constitution guarantees equal cultural and religious rights, and that the people living in Senegal are tolerant. In order to test the well-established image of a tolerant Senegal she uses Gerd Baumann's grammars of selfing and othering on

the relations between ethnic and religious groups while focusing on regions peopled by the Muslim Fulbe, who are Tijani Sufis and – to a smaller extent – on Fulbe migrants in France. Their selfing and othering is marked by the few possibilities they have to meet and share religious events especially along the Senegal River, where the population is 99% Muslim and Fulbe – though migration to some extent created opportunities for experiences on a personal level. Christians constitute a minute minority and they tend to use the orientalist grammar referring to the constitution and its guarantees of the rights of various linguistic/ethnic and religious segments of the society. The Muslims use an encompassing grammar and refer to the Senegalese selfing as tolerant. Whenever there was an occasion for it, religious and ethnic boundaries were crossed in daily life, only contracting marriage caused problems. In Upper Casamance south of the Gambia this occurs more often, in particular in towns where Serer and Jola Muslims and Christians live.

Etienne Smith's ethnographic study examines transnational Serer and Jola families in France and their views on religious pluralism and secularism. He points to the Senegalese model of religious pluralism and passive secularism as a strong political legacy even if French contexts may polarise some of the second generation as 'Islamists' or 'atheists', both seen as departures from the 'good path', i.e. the normative model imported from Senegal. This legacy enables the Senegalese in France to question the French style of *laïcité*. They 'adapt creatively to external perceptions on their identities and practices', such as their invisibility as Black and Muslim. This is a burden, but they can choose to disappear into 'sub-Saharan Africanity' or to claim their blackness to position themselves as 'good Muslims'. Whereas the persistence of discrimination against the Blacks may cause the Catholics to feel that they are not fully enjoying the benefit of their new majority position as Christians, the 'alternately invisible or celebrated Muslimness enables the Muslims in their new minority position to reproduce the Senegalese style Islam and its enduring accommodation patterns with Christianity and secularism far from its original home'.

Tilmann Heil scrutinises the diversity of practices and discourses in public space including some connected with religious events in communities in both Senegal and Spain. He goes into the backdrop of diversity in Lower Casamance and Catalonia. He then compares the everyday use of public spaces and their use in connection with religious and ethnic celebrations in the two contexts. The ease with which they negotiate public space as equals is the legacy from Senegal. In Catalonia it is challenged by the Catalan minimal consensus on 'living with difference'. Consensus in Catalonia is often fragile, especially concerning Muslim practices. There they had no experiences with *convivencia* nor

was there an institutional frame such as the constitution and practice inherited from the first president in Senegal, the Christian Léopold Senghor.

The next two chapters explore activities by which migrants – first Senegalese Muslims, then Black Christians and Muslims – position themselves in urban incorporation processes.

The chapter by Monika Salzbrunn demonstrates the ability of the Senegalese Murid Muslims to occupy the public space and thereby create ‘an arena for political and religious claims-making in a metropolitan city (New York) and in a middle range city (Lausanne)’. In Switzerland the Murids set up an institute in Geneva to promote religious thinking and they are involved in the ‘Festiv’Arènes’ in Lausanne. In New York, the Murids perform a Murid parade and fund the ‘House of Islam’ in Harlem to lodge the shaykh when in New York, and welcome all visitors – Murids and non-Murids. They negotiate their Senegalese religious and cultural practices in ways fit to different political opportunity structures and although it is not to ‘be assumed that people who share the same nationality’ also ‘constitute a homogeneous group in a transnational context’ the ability to ‘take advantage of political opportunity structures’ resembles conclusions in some of the previous articles.

Miriam Schader centres her interest on the importance of migrant religion for ‘participation in the democratic decision-making process’. The issue was also analysed in the previous chapters but she focused on the situation in Berlin. Instead of the often voiced stance that religion is an obstacle for migrant political participation, she raises the issue whether religion can be a resource for highly vulnerable migrants. She focuses on sub-Saharan Africans who face even more difficulties than other migrant and minority groups and who have good reason to ‘address political problems like racism and global inequality’. Schader focuses on religion as an organisational resource. Muslim as well as Christian individuals from sub-Saharan Africa try to use their religion as a resource for social and political participation and projects. African Muslims can only try to connect with a Muslim community still struggling to find its place in European societies and there is a lack of overarching structures, and the need to overcome theological and interpersonal differences. For the Christians it is far easier to get organised and they can draw on an established network of institutions. They have the possibility to complain about a lack of support, while Muslims have to prove that they pose no threat. Neither can draw on their religious resources unless their religious institutions reach a certain organisational level.

Two following chapters focus on the Netherlands and migrants from Ghana and Cameroon. The contributors analyse how West African experiences and the discourse in the Netherlands are negotiated by the Cameroonian Fulbe

and the Ghanaian migrants. On the backdrop of the history of Christianity and Islam in Ghana that feeds the attitudes of the Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands, Martha Frederiks and Stanisław Grodz explore how the migrants' experiences of generally speaking harmonious interreligious relations in Ghana impact the way they negotiate their Ghanaian self-consciousness in Europe and in a context of European concepts. Which tools do they use to empower themselves? In spite of conflicts between some religious groups, their Ghanaian legacy consists of an Islam linked with commercial interests and adherence to various Sufi movements and Christianity with an abundance of African indigenous and Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. They are thus used to a situation of religious plurality and to looking for their religions to provide them with a higher degree of efficacy. Most Ghanaians in the Netherlands are Christian and the majority of them have established new Pentecostal or Charismatic churches there, whereas there are no mosques established by sub-Saharan Muslims. The Muslims have joined Pakistani mosques, also frequented by the Surinamese Hindustani Muslims. Ghanaian Muslim organisations arrange Qur'anic classes for children, adult education programmes and coordinate radio programmes; they also rent space for special Ghanaian occasions. The Damba festival which is celebrated in Amsterdam since 2010 has become a 'cultural' affair and lost its Muslim components. A tentative conclusion is that the Ghanaian Muslims experience Islam as a part of a range of identities: ethnic, Ghanaian, Dutch etc. The Ghanaian Muslims and Christians cooperate and seem willing to cross boundaries and interact with other communities.

José C.M. Van Santen explores Islamic Fulbe ethnic and religious identity, the Fulbe migration and the way the Cameroonian Fulbe have dealt with these identities in the Netherlands and in an international context. Mobility is a political resource used to 'flee political and socio-economic disruption by the Fulbe'. They have arrived as mainly legal immigrants to the Netherlands with their West African legacy and with a self-identity as literate and belonging to an elite. Van Santen points out that in Europe the Fulbe, like other migrants, do not have any symbolic capital or a position of power. They pray in their homes and connect with non-Muslim Cameroonians and fellow Africans rather than with other Muslim groups. Their Fulbe way of life, *pulaaku*, does not make for an explicit public profile in the Netherlands since it stresses withdrawal and reserve along with an austere lifestyle. Thus, they abstain from negotiating their stances publicly. These tend to contrast the prevailing capitalist ideology. 'The differences between the immigrants' worldview compared to that of the "national citizens" are politically rather than religiously based'. It is all the other issues that are invested in the anti-Islam discourse, linking terrorism,

violence and cultural backwardness, which triggers their outlook on a range of international problems and their views on the Western society as opportunist and imperialist. Thus, their discourse is ‘poles apart from the outlook of their European neighbours’. It has also affected their awareness of being Muslim and thus, when they return to West Africa, they sometimes stress their Muslimness which earlier was just something self-evident.

The epilogue by Martha Frederiks falls in two parts: ‘Migration, ethnicity and religion’ and ‘The impact of migration on patterns of interreligious relating’. In both, she summarises the arguments presented in the previous chapters.

In Europe the West African migrants encounter a very different approach to migration from the positive one they know from their West African context. Regardless whether they are Christians or Muslims, they experience racism. West African Muslims also suffer from the prevalent negative imagery about Muslims in Europe. They carry a double burden, being black and Muslim. Thus, in the public domain they seem to highlight their ethnic and cultural identities rather than their religious affiliation, whereas the Christian West Africans ‘consider themselves legitimate actors in the public domain’, tapping into their own and the European Christian networks and resources. However, West African Muslims may access powerful and well-structured transnational Islamic networks, *turuq*.

Martha Frederiks finally draws attention to a lacuna in current research in transnational religious networks and practices. The research does not raise the question of the circulation of actual people as agents of change and only one of the contributors to this volume touched the West African side of the circle of connectedness, though other contributors have commented on part of this loop. Thus, there is still a need for a multi-locational approach that investigates the full circle of connectedness of religion and migration and conceives migrants as potential agents of change.

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Reinventing Africa? The Negotiation of Ethnic Identities in the New African Religious Diaspora

Afe Adogame

Introduction

The subject of African identities is as vast as the continent itself. The challenges of defining 'Africa' affect how we identify and analyze African identities, ethnicities, religious cultures; but also the new African religious diaspora. As Africans and their religious communities in diaspora constitute a diverse community, the process of diasporic identity construction and negotiation is complex, sometimes resulting in the ethnicisation of the new African diaspora. Although African immigrants are different in terms of ethnicity, nationality, language and cultures, Africa and immigrants are often surreptitiously dumped into 'ethnic/tribal' boxes in ways that easily undermine continental, national, cultural and other identities. First, this chapter sets out to explore how and in what way(s) ethnic identities are constructed and negotiated within the new African religious diaspora. Within the context of the (West) African diaspora in Europe, religion and ethnicity evince ambivalent characteristics as tools for constructing and deconstructing identities; integration and fragmentation; fostering peace or conflict; as tools for social mobility or stagnation; and for empowerment or disempowerment. Associational life in the diaspora, in the form of churches and religious-ethnic associations, provides an important social environment for survival and nurture of immigrants abroad. Second, I explore processes of ethnic identity construction and negotiation as integral to citizenship and nationality discourses in Europe. I demonstrate how current public discourses of citizenship and nationality shape the ways the notion of citizenship is often perceived, constructed and reconstructed by immigrants within the new African religious diaspora.

Making Identity and Identity in the Making

The discourse on identity, its scope, structure and modes of construction and negotiation remain contentious. Is identity a given out there or is it a figment of construction? Is it used as a descriptive or analytical term? How helpful is it to talk of identity in the singular without pluralising the concept?

As a highly contested concept, the identity discourse has even assumed new dimensions especially in post-modernist thinking and epistemology, to the extent that it poses a challenge on whether and to what extent our appropriation of the concept may enrich or blur our object of scholarly investigation and analysis. I do not undertake to fully problematise identity as a concept in this chapter. However, I suggest that it remains, in some sense, a useful analytical category in comprehending the complex demographics of African Christian communities in diaspora. This is against the backdrop that religion is largely at the pivot of African immigrants' sense of individual and collective identities.

Identity formation(s) rarely exist in a social vacuum. The fluid nature of identities makes them susceptible to construction, contestation and (re)negotiation. Identities can be invoked, used, interpreted with, displayed, performed in particular social scenes. Identities are actively constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed. New identities can emerge and dissolve; old identities can re-emerge and be re-invented in space-time. The invention, formation and reconstruction of identity may be understood as ascribed or self-imposed at individual, collective and societal levels. Every individual, such as an immigrant, can lay claim to multiple identities as opposed to one. Thus, we can talk of village, town, ethnic, national, religious, Muslim, Islamic, Christian, Pentecostal, orthodox, evangelical, gendered, sex, race, colour, class, age, inter-generational, and linguistic identities. Stryker (1980) suggests that one identity is of greater importance in the hierarchy of identities that make up the self. When an individual becomes more committed to a given role it will assume higher identity salience. Thus, the most salient identity is the one most likely to be enacted in a given situation or social relationship. In a sense, an individual might talk of one main identity in juxtaposition with other sub-identities. But even this is in itself problematic when subjected to further analysis. Every modicum of identity may be understood in terms of whether it is largely a self-ascribed, self-defined representation or a public-ascribed, reified identity representation of the 'Other'; what political, social, cultural and other factors galvanise such a construction and for what ends. It is also pertinent to probe into the contextual factors, such as the politics of inclusion and exclusion, necessitating such an identity formation. This leaves us with a resounding note whether there is indeed a fixed identity. Are there any fixed identities? Why do people strive to create one kind of identity while at the same time rejecting another form of identification? In what sense can identity formation be likened to shopping at a supermarket where one can 'pick and choose' identities as items on a scale of preference and exigency? How helpful is it when an

individual or a group of people are stamped with a kind of representation that may sometimes illuminate but in other respects obscure the complex identity of an individual or group?

What readily came to mind during my several years of religious ethnography in Germany are the somewhat basic, structured questions that most African immigrants claim to confront within the German public space. An African immigrant teases out: 'As an *auslander* (foreigner) you are often slammed with the questions: "Where do you come from? What are you doing here? How long are you staying here? When are you going back?"' Underlying these barrage of questions are discourses of nationality and citizenship (to which I shall return later), uncomfortable accommodation, public reception, intolerance, nostalgia, exile and return, racial differentiation. Perhaps a more vexing question hinted by another African immigrant is when he was asked by a rather inquisitive German, 'Do you also come from Wilhelm-Busch Strasse?' Wilhelm-Busch Strasse happens to be the street name on which the *Asylheim* (asylum centre) was located in Bayreuth, the Bavarian town in southern Germany where my informant resided and worked as a natural scientist at the local University. Ostensibly, the question had been posed out of mere presumption and arrant ignorance that the respondent was one of the several asylum seekers or refugees often found parading the streets. As he bemoans,

I was totally put off by the arrogance exhibited by that guy. I had expected that he would confront me with the usual question of where I come from and what I am doing here, rather than slapping me literally with an identity of a refugee or asylum seeker. I replied him angrily 'Look here you racist, do I look like one (*asylum seeker or refugee*)?' Well! I do not blame him so much, it is a mirror reflection of German public mental image about us Africans living here in Deutschland...

While his latter response may well be an overstatement, it however shed some light on how a reified identity discourse is being negotiated and acted out through the bipolar conversation. This rhetoric may act as a further lead to investigating why, how and to what extent African immigrants engage in constructing, sustaining and (re)negotiating singular and multiple identities in the diaspora. In actual fact, is 'African' identity in itself a self-construction, self-identification variable, an imposition by the host societies or a combination of both? More specifically, how are African immigrants negotiating their Christian, national, ethnic and other identities in Europe and the U.S.A? Before attempting to engage the latter question, it is expedient to historicise Africa as a (re-)invented concept briefly.

Historicising the (re-)Invention of Africa

An inherent artificiality and complexity of the term makes it sometimes ineffective as an identifying construct. The challenge of defining 'Africa' affects how we identify and analyze African identities, ethnicities, cultures and religions. The term 'invention' has become rather ubiquitous in African studies ever since Mudimbe published *The Invention of Africa* (1988). The idea of Africa is indeed a complex one with multiple genealogies and meanings. There are at least seven origins of the term Africa, all of foreign derivation. The appropriation of Africa is thus originally not as a self-defining identity. Nonetheless, Africa is as much a reality as it is a construct (Zezeza, 2006). Since the subject of African identities is as broad as the continent itself, the reconfiguring of maps and meanings of 'Africa' and 'Africaness' is no simple task. In actual fact, the conflation of Africa with 'sub-Saharan Africa', 'Africa South of the Sahara', or 'Black Africa' offers a racialised view of Africa.

Among scholars who have attempted to historicise Africa's (re-)invention, three are worthy of mention here. Edward Said (*Orientalism*) and Valentin Mudimbe (*Alterity*) stand out as whistleblowers against ideologies of Otherness. Both were bulwarks against the exotic 'Orientalisation of Africa' and sought to contain the forces of Otherisation in North-South relations (Mazrui, 2005). While Said (1979; 1993) traces 'the invention of the Orient' back to the Western quest for 'the Other', Mudimbe (1988) on the other hand traces 'the invention of Africa' back to similar Western explorations. Ali Mazrui (2005, 69–70) contends that 'How Africa is defined has been a product of its interaction with other civilisations. It began with the very name *Africa*. Some have traced the name to Berber origins; others have traced it to a Greco-Roman ancestry'. As he continued:

One of the paradoxes of history is that it took Africa's contact with the Arab world to make the Black people of Africa realize that they were *black* in description, but not necessarily in status... It took European conceptualization and cartography to turn Africa into a continent. To Europeans 'black' was not merely descriptive; it was also judgmental. Arabs alerted the people of sub-Saharan Africa that they were *black*. Europe tried to convince Black people that they were *inferior*. But, on the positive side, it was Europe that continentalized the African identity.

Mazrui (2005) posits five phases in the history of the external conceptualization of Africa that underscores its invention and re-invention. First, the portrayal of North Africa as part of the classical Mediterranean world (an extension

of Europe); and the rest of Africa as an empire of 'barbarism' and 'darkness'. Second, Africa's interaction with Semitic peoples, and with classical Greece and Rome. Third, stimulated by the birth of Islam on the Arabian Peninsula and its expansion both north and south of the Sahara. This phase witnessed the *continentalisation* of Africa. The Islamic phase of identity-formation (the *Sudanisation* of sub-Saharan Africa) awakened Black consciousness. Fourth, the impact of European capitalist penetration and subsequent colonisation shaped Africa as a product of a dialogue of three civilisations. Lastly, the continent poses as the ancestry of the human species in which the final paradigm globalises Africa itself.

A great irony of modern African history is that it took European colonialism to inform Africans that they were Africans – a perhaps positive version of 'the invention of Africa'. As Mazrui (2005, 75) argues 'Europeans may not have invented the name "Africa", but they did play a decisive role in applying it to the continental landmass that we recognise today'. The scramble and partition of Africa was a backlash of European imperialism and colonialism. The colonial rule and the attendant racial domination provoked and sustained the crises of identity. The colonial order implanted, encouraged or even invented whole new identities. The colonial order also led to the creation of new ethnic groups, dubbed 'tribes', in terms of linguistic groupings.

Conceptualising Ethnicity, Religion and Identity

Ethnicity does not act or exist in isolation. Ethnicity and religion are among the primordial forces operating in Africa. Ethnicity defines the basic social order while religion defines the basic sacred order. Ethnicity supplants the old hegemonic concept *tribe* as a sub-national identity. One should pay attention to the dialectic relationship between European conceptions of African (black) identity and African self-consciousness. To a large extent, colonialism engendered 'a sentiment of oneness' in Africa and among Africans. Ter Haar (1999) aptly remarks that Western scholars focus on ethnicity as the most salient identity for individuals and communities in the new African diaspora. She argues that the discourse surrounding ethnic identity serves European rather than African interests. Ter Haar sees it as a conscious or unconscious act on the part of the host nation to segregate human societies; an attempt to exclude the 'Other' from economic resources.

Stuart Hall (1996) describes the cultural identity of ethnic minorities as something which is constructed and negotiated. Religion serves as an important resource in the construction of identity. There is no 'essence' of identity to

be found since cultural identity is continually being produced and modified within the framework of similarity and difference. This renders cultural identity as a constantly shifting position and with points of difference providing the multiple focus of reference. Lori Peek (2005) provides three stages of religious identity development: religion as *ascribed* identity; religion as a *chosen* identity; and religion as a *declared* identity. Peek claims that religious identities are developed as a way to reconcile conflicting identities. She challenges research that takes ethnicity as the most salient identity and questions conventional views of religion as stagnant tradition. In short, Peek breaks with the conception of ethnicity which proposes a 'natural' or unconscious identity.

Religious identity should be seen as a dynamic, ongoing process and not a fixed, static phenomenon. People communicate their identities in varying intensities – scope, salience and intensity. Religion can be a basis of ethnic identity, cast either as an ethnic marker or as something that supports the primary category of ethnicity. This unidirectional relationship in which religion feeds into ethnicity should also probe into how ethnicity feeds into religion. We should explore the religious content of ethnic identities vis-à-vis the ethnic content of religious identities. Religious affiliation is not the same as religious identity. Religion is not just a marker of identity, but rather its symbols, rituals and organisations are used to boost ethnic identity. Religion often constitutes the fabric of ethnicity. Thus, substantive religious content infuses ethnic or communal identities thus evoking a two-way causal relationship between religion and ethnicity. The complex two-way relationship is such where each can inform and provoke changes in the other.

Ethnicising the African Diaspora in the United Kingdom

Ethnicity constitutes an important element of the social cosmos in which everyone is assumed to have an ethnic identity. Ethnicity is a social construct specific to a social and historical moment. Thus, definitions of what constitutes an ethnic group or ethnic minority are subject to much debate. As a multi-faceted concept, ethnicity has been employed to cover different aspects of identity, including racial grouping, skin colour, country of birth, language spoken, religion and nationality. These complicate the matter of defining a person's ethnic group. Also, however defined, ethnic groups change over time, reflecting social, cultural and political developments. The seminal work of Stuart Hall stimulated considerable analytical interest and empirical research. He employed the term 'new ethnicities' in the 1980s to describe the expression of new hybrid identities by the emerging cohorts of second and third

generation Black British (Hall, 1988). Some of his ideas could be applied generally to African immigrants in the United Kingdom (U.K.) in particular but also Europe in general. As a result of space constraints I will only focus on the U.K. in this section.

Owing to the rather subjective nature of ethnic identity, the U.K. Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces a self-identification measure of ethnic group. In censuses and surveys, respondents are invited to select the ethnic group that they consider they belong to, from a list of categories. Thus, the ethnic group that each person chooses is adjudged to reflect his/her self-identity, rather than being defined by anyone else (ONS 2001). The colour and racial categorisation of individuals in the U.K. Census generates a trajectory in which the gigantic, culturally and historically diverse continent of Africa, but also its diaspora becomes surreptitiously dumped into an 'ethnic/tribal' box. The ONS, through population census, invented the 'Ethnic Group/Origin category' and boxes 'Africa' as an ethnic group. Ostensibly, this tendency undermines continental, national, cultural identities, and is indicative of how public ignorance often village-ises and country-ises the continent as a homogenous whole.

The African population is one of the most diverse in terms of geographic origins and rather than introduce a new tick box, ONS considered the possibility of instructing people to write-in a more detailed African identity either with an additional write-in space or by sharing the 'Other Black/African/Caribbean background' space. There was no compelling case for adding a tick-box for any single sub-African group ahead of all others and space constraints meant that it would not be possible to sub-divide the 'African' category into smaller geographical areas, like North African or East African (ONS 2009, 17). Although this is considered a much reasonable way of delineating the U.K. population with African origin, it seemingly perpetuates the ethnicisation of the African diaspora, in which the African diaspora becomes an 'ethnic unit' but also of the entire continent.

Africans have a long history of small-scale settlement in Great Britain with communities established from the late 1940s onwards in the seaports of Liverpool, Cardiff and London. Since the 1970s, political instability across the African continent has contributed to increased migration. The 1991 U.K. Census provided the first opportunity to measure the size and characteristics of ethnic minority populations in Great Britain (ONS 2001). Prior to the 1991 Census, estimates of the size of ethnic groups relied upon survey data or upon using country of birth as a proxy for ethnic group. The 1991 Census in England and Wales, and in Scotland (with the exception of Northern Ireland) included an ethnic group question for the first time in a British census. In 2001, all four U.K. countries included an ethnic group question in their Censuses (ONS 2003). The

majority of the U.K. population in 2001 were White (92 per cent). The remaining 4.6 million (or 7.9 per cent) people belonged to a variety of other ethnic groups of 'Mixed', 'Asian', 'Black' and 'Chinese and other' backgrounds. Indians were the largest of these groups, followed by Pakistanis, those of mixed ethnic backgrounds, Black Caribbeans, Black Africans and Bangladeshis. Around half of the non-White population were Asians of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or other Asian origin. A further quarter of the population were Black Caribbean, Black African or Other Black.

In the 2001 Census, African population included people from Nigeria, Ghana, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Kenya, as well as their British-born descendants. This range of countries of origin has contributed to the formation of distinct and mixed populations, with different characteristics including religious affiliation and socio-economic background. Seven in ten (69 per cent) were Christian in 2001 and two in ten (20 per cent) were Muslim. The African population in 2001, 485,000 people, was of a similar size to the Black Caribbean population, though the proportion born in the U.K., 34 per cent, was much smaller than the Black Caribbean ethnic groups (Connolly and White, 2006).

The introduction of four new mixed ethnic group categories on the 2001 Census in England and Wales illustrates the changing nature of ethnicity. The new ethnic group categories of 'Mixed White' and 'Black Caribbean'; 'Mixed White' and 'Black African'; 'Mixed White' and 'Asian'; and 'Other Mixed' were developed in response to evidence from the 1991 Census that many people of mixed heritage did not feel that their ethnicity was captured by any of the unmixed ethnic groups. The new mixed categories allowed many people who had identified as White, Black Caribbean, Black African or Other ethnic group in the 1991 Census to identify with the new mixed groups that are perceived to reflect their ethnicity better. The inclusion of the new mixed categories in 2001 also had implications for the residual categories: 'Other Black', 'Other Asian' and 'Other' ethnic groups. Nonetheless, the ethnicity question in the U.K. Censuses reflect the complexity and problem of definition in its juxtaposition of categories of colour (e.g. White, Black), nationality (e.g. British, African), combinations of the two (White British, Black African), identities legally recognised as racial identities and the introduction of new mixed categories such as the case in 2001. More generally, the language used to describe ethnic minority populations varies and changes over time. For example, terms such as 'Black', 'ethnic minority' and 'ethnic groups' are used somewhat interchangeably.

Inventing the Religious Equation in U.K. Census

Similar to the ethnicity variable, religion is also a self-identification measure in U.K. censuses and surveys, reflecting the subjective nature of religious identity.

The 2001 Census also included a question on religion for the first time in a British Census, although not in Northern Ireland. The ONS harmonised ethnic group classification in England and Wales distinguishes 16 categories of ethnic group and 8 categories of religious group. These groups by no means capture all of the ethnic and religious diversity within the U.K., but the 2001 Census revealed that the U.K. today is more culturally and religiously diverse than ever before (ONS 2003). The measurement of religion is complicated by the distinction between religious background, belief and practice. The approach adopted for the 2001 Census was a deliberate decision to use a measure based on identity rather than practice. This presented an opportunity to clarify whether the differences between ethnic groups also existed between religious groups, and to examine the relationship between these two important aspects of identity.

The ONS describes the ethnic and religious diversity within the population as a whole, identifying the main ethnic, religious and ethno-religious groups. Because ethnic identity is often associated with religious identity the majority of people in a given ethnic group are seen to often identify with one particular religion and, conversely, the majority of people in a given religious group often belong to one ethnic group. For example, in 2001 the majority of White British people identified as Christian and the majority of Hindus were Indian. While awareness of the ethnoreligious composition of groups contributes to increased understanding of each of the ethnic and religious populations, it could also easily undermine the complexity in terms of their ethnic-religious homogeneity and heterogeneity.

I shall now turn to map the new African Christian diaspora to illuminate the complexities around figuring 'African' and 'religious' identities within African Christian communities in Europe. I contend that the villagisation of the continent – i.e. Africa – in western public consciousness also mirror how the complex multinational and multiethnic pluriformity of African religious diaspora in Europe is often undermined.

Negotiating Fluid Identities within the African Religious Diaspora

Demographic variables indicate that the Africans, who make up the majority membership of African Christian communities in Europe and the U.S.A., often come from different social, ethnic, national backgrounds, and from varied religious affiliations. Within the new cultural milieu and religious geographies, they operate on new levels of organisation where doctrinal differences and ethnic exigencies do not seem to serve as the most vital reference point. Rather, what is important for the Africans in this case is simply a place to share similar

sentiments, 'a place to feel at home' or 'a home away from home', thereby establishing a frame of reference for the preservation, transformation and transmission of their specific local religious traditions and identities. The idea of 'home' in a diaspora context takes on a wider symbolic connotation representing either the original homeland in Africa that the immigrant left behind, and to which s/he hopes to return in the unforeseeable future. The new religious space may also represent a 'new' home as the immigrant straddle the intricate complexities of integration and adaptation, inclusion and exclusion, belonging and withdrawal, sameness and difference, and perceptions of 'we' versus the 'Other'. In that vein, the church vicinity as a sacred space does serve as a 'home' against the backdrop of its social, civic and extra-religious relevance for its members particularly from the immigrant constituency. It serves as a space for socialisation for members and non-members alike, an alternative social security mechanism, a place of security and a bastion of ethnic, cultural and religious identities.

As religious and ethnic/national/continental identities are intricately intertwined, they may sometimes defy any clear-cut demarcation. The complex cultural diversities and historical specificities of the African continent render the notions of 'African identity' and 'religious identity' too simplistic to be taken unilaterally. A collective identity 'African' is undoubtedly not a fundamental issue among most Africans within continental shores. While residing within the continent, it is doubted whether the question: Who are you? – would invariably provoke the response 'I am an African'. However, beyond the continent, the urge for collective representation comes to assume immense meaning and relevance thus coalescing the several, multiple identities (ethnic, national, religious, class, gender, intergenerational) into what may seem a complex whole, African identity. Similar to the issue of African identity is the corollary of religious identity. The demographic structures of most African Christian communities in Europe and North America evince an interpretation of varied levels of religious identities. Members emerge from wide-ranging religious backgrounds and orientations to form a new religious diasporic identity.

The processes of diasporic identity construction are complex and often fraught with tension. We can discern a complex West African religious demography that is not bounded. It is easier to talk about religious communities emanating from West Africa, immigrants from West Africa or a group founded by a West African immigrant than solely West African churches in diaspora. Although there are instances of churches that are still essentially ethnic or nation-oriented in composition, yet majority of these communities have now become multiethnic and multinational in outlook and character. Although they often detest any description as such, these immigrant churches have been publicly ascribed with

the collective identity of being 'African' and 'from Africa'. In some respects the salience of their African identity may take precedence against the backdrop in which religious communities, such as African Indigenous Churches (AICs) and African-led Pentecostal and Charismatic churches associated with African ethnic minorities within the European landscape, pose as a faith relevant to their needs in dealing with socio-economic deprivation and marginalisation. Nonetheless, caution needs to be exercised in light of the tendency to overgeneralise and not recognise the extremely complex levels in which ethnic, cross/inter-national, and religious identities are formed, contested and negotiated.

The new African Christian diaspora exhibits global, inter-national, cross-national, continental, national, ethnic formations but also exemplifies fuzzy edges. The membership coterie of an African-led church in diaspora, on the basis of these boundary considerations, is fluid depending on a number of factors. It could be due to the ethnic background of the founder, the cultural background within which the church originated, and the majority membership in both home and host contexts. It may also depend on the migration history and colonial connections of that country with the countries of the immigrants; the specific political and economic realities of the local context; the contexts of reception vis-à-vis the matrix of perception; and the promise for immigrant's socioeconomic mobility. For instance, the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) founded by a Yoruba in western Nigeria is currently dominated by Yoruba people in Nigeria and the Yoruba diaspora, although the membership is now rapidly multiethnic and multinational.

One level of interpretation is that while not undermining the factor of individual choices and preferences, the specific religious, political, socio-cultural circumstances and contextual factors in the host contexts are quintessential elements which dictate and impact on the nature of identity – single or multiple – forged and desired by African immigrants. Religious identities are not necessarily static and fixed, but susceptible to change and transformation depending on a legion of factors. People often engage in switching religious affiliation or renegotiating religious identities in time and space.

At least three interlocking levels of African diaspora Christians can be distinguished. My research findings reveal a first level of Africans who only became Christians for the first time while residing in Europe. Such Africans either come from the traditional, Islamic or other religious backgrounds, while others lay claim to what we may call 'a state of religious indifference', religious agnosticism or atheism. One respondent (an RCCG member) retorts:

Back home in Nigeria, I never really gave a thumb up for religion. It was totally out of the question, not in my scheme of things... I was actually rocking life (*enjoying the niceties of life*). Among my particular peer group

that we see then as a modern group, you become a laughing stock when you are seen to identify strongly with any religious group. You may be nicknamed pope, pastor, imam or guru, and this has a lot of social implications and stigma for the person concerned... (personal interview, 10/05/2005).

Another level that can be clearly identified is members who switch or swap religious denominational affiliations. These are people who have been members in at least one church either back home (Africa) or in the diaspora before finally opting out with their present church or religious community. The third closely related tendency is that where dual, multiple religious affiliations and identities are consciously maintained and negotiated. In the last category for instance, a member remains a *bona fide* Catholic in the home context, but takes up membership of a Pentecostal church while residing temporarily/ indefinitely in the diaspora. Such a member sees no contradiction whatsoever in juxtaposing these two traditions, although occurring in different socio-cultural contexts. These various levels of religious action are largely occasioned by a multiplicity of factors ranging from specific spiritual/visionary experiences, unavailability of their home church in the new context, and the spiritual quest for panacea to existential problems. Other explanations include exigent factors, insensitivity of host historical churches, xenophobia and other prevailing socio-economic, cultural and political circumstances.

Ter Haar (1999) draws attention to the ensuing politicisation of identity by addressing how relevant the issue of African identity is to African Christians in Europe. Her very observation that African Christians emphasise their religious identity over and above their ethnic identity was critiqued by Gerloff (2001) who took rather the other extreme, prioritising their African identity as more important than their Christian identity. As Ter Haar argues,

The discussion regarding the need for African Christians in Europe to develop their 'own' identity as African Christians is being led by their European counterparts and serves European rather than African interests. African Christians in the Netherlands identify themselves first and foremost as Christians and only secondly as Africans or African Christians. In their own view, their adherence to Christianity constitutes the most important element of their public identity. Yet, there is a general tendency in the Netherlands to separate African Christians from their Dutch counterparts by insisting on their perceived African identity, while ignoring their shared Christian identity. In effect, this tendency leads to the segregation of Africans in Dutch society and as such is in striking contrast to the general outcry for the integration of foreigners.

She maintained further that ‘the insistence by non-Africans on the existence of a specific African identity, whether inspired by religious orthodoxy or by intellectual liberalism, is in effect a continuation of the old colonial and early missionary discourse and praxis regarding the perceived “otherness” of Africans’. Although both scholars aptly underscore religion, in this case Christianity, as a significant identity marker in Europe, the issue of which comes first (African or Christian) may not really arise if scholars do not ask leading questions themselves. The immigrants in question are both Africans and Christians, and which identity is privileged may often depend on the given circumstances; who is being talked to and for what purposes.

The immigrant, whether African and/or Christian, is not concerned at first hand with adaptation but with survival: economic, social and psychological. In this context religion can be either a significant part of a ‘survival-security’ strategy followed by an ‘adaptation’ strategy, or it can reflect the suffering and the problems of the immigrants, offering them an escape route. In any case, religion is interacting with social and psychological forces. Religious beliefs become altered by the social and psychological settings but religion also affects them. Immigrants’ actions are to be understood in terms of their own goals established first in order to survive, and after that, to adapt to the new social milieu.

Although various European governments often tease out a mastery of language as the panacea to immigrants’ successful integration into the host society, some immigrants pose a *widerspruch* or counter-critique to this argument and explain it off as only an excuse and a defensive mechanism for formal exclusion in paid employment and from certain fringe benefits within the society. As one informant puts it:

I have lived in Germany since 1985 and have a mastery of *Deutsch* (German language) to a reasonable extent. I schooled and worked here for some time, but I have been without job for almost three years now. I am still heavily discriminated against when it comes to employment... Although language is one recipe for integration, it is certainly not the only ingredient. The most important question, particularly in this context, is whether the German public is really willing to receive people like us on grounds of our colour. My answer is that they are not. The society is so hostile particularly towards blacks and *ausländer* (foreigners). I own a German *Pass* (German National Identity Card) for several years now but each time I am indiscriminately accosted and interrogated by the *Polizei* (German Police) on the streets, I become disgusted with their show of arrogance and ignorance. They would ask where I come from originally even though my *Pass* clearly indicates my nationality and citizenship status.

The remarks above raise the politics of citizenship and nationality. How and why do people undergo naturalisation processes to switch their national allegiance and identity? To what extent does this process make one a national? How does the public deal with such identity swapping especially in the case of African immigrants in Europe? Is attainment of new citizenship a matter of convenience or a genuine decision to switch national allegiance? Many African immigrants who have taken up European citizenship would assert that they were driven to taking up new citizenship or dual citizenship statuses out of necessity and convenience, either in order to circumvent untoward bureaucracies or as a tool for benefiting from the 'national cake'. Such questions befit further pondering and I shall revisit it in the last section. I shall also examine some of the ways in which African-led churches are engaged in the discourse of citizenship, and in fact how African Christians are reconstructing citizenship as an empowerment discourse within the new diaspora.

'I am an African with a British Passport': Reconstructing Citizenship

The rising tide in international migration, adoption of restrictive immigration strategies and the EU harmonisation policies has partially led to renewed discourses around the enigma of citizenship, nationality, ethnicity, territoriality, race and identity. The increasing shift from autonomous nation-states to a 'world' of blurred boundaries has helped to change the traditional notion of citizenship. Change of citizenship, the negotiation of naturalisation engenders identity crisis. Citizenship has become more and more contested in Europe, with new talks of 'dual citizenship' and 'dual nationality'. Individual African immigrants, their religious communities as well as governments negotiate flexible notions of citizenship and sovereignty as strategies for capital and power accumulation, but also as a bridge towards seeking socio-religious, economic, political empowerment and legitimacy. Before I explore how African immigrant Christian communities contribute to such public debates, what impact such discourses have on their religious communities, and how it shapes their individual and collective identities, I shall attempt a brief historicisation of the concept and the politics of citizenship in the U.K.

Historicising a Concept and Process

The resurgence of public interest in the debate on citizenship and nationality, particularly in the last decades, points both to its complexity and to its shifting, fluid meanings and understandings, ranging from a legal status denoting

formal membership of a political entity to an ideal of inclusion/exclusion and participation/non-participation applicable, in principle, to citizens of the world or global citizenship. Thus, contemporary notions of citizenship are continually laced with an uncertain enigma and fluidity. Brubaker (1989, 4) aptly underscores how the traditional notions of citizenship themselves are 'vestigial' and 'riddled' with contradictions. The utility of citizenship as a concept representing a sacred and mutually exclusive membership in a democratic nation state that has social and political consequences is becoming moribund. This effaces the urgency for a broader, more inclusive understanding of citizenship. In this section I cast a critical glance at the bi-directionality of citizenship and immigration. Important in this consideration is how immigration challenges received notions of citizenship, how citizenship shapes migration and vice versa. How and to what extent does anti-immigrant public discourse and restrictive legislation by U.K. (EU) politicians translate and transform into effective restrictionist policy outcomes and the cosmetisation of citizenship?

Public discourses on 'integration' are rife in the U.K. and but also across the EU against the assumption that integration is the only way or process through which immigrants and their descendants can become full members of host societies, participating in a range of political, economic and social activities. This assumption has led to the invention of varied paradigms of integration such as multiculturalism, assimilation and emancipation at the expense of their real modus operandi or signification in concrete terms. Critics have pointed to the superficiality of such paradigms as evasive mechanisms to legitimise the politics of exclusion and neglect of the 'imagined other' (immigrant, non-citizen). There is a need to critically interrogate what is often canvassed as ingredients of integration, such as language, epistemologies of host culture, in order to unpack them from their political abstraction and superficialities. To what extent does a grasp of language represent a yardstick of integration in real or imagined terms? Does an immigrant demonstration of fluent English or German language make him/her a real English or German?

Stasiulis and Bakan (1997, 115) aptly posit a re-conceptualisation of citizenship as a 'negotiated relationship' as opposed to the ideal typical, static categories. As they highlighted:

Citizenship is commonly perceived as an ideal type, either in the form of a static relationship of an abstract individual to an abstract state or as a thing-like legal status, granted to 'deserving' individuals on the basis of achievement, natural attributes or accident of birth. The assumption is that the state is, or should be, a neutral and fair arbiter of rights based on

objective criteria; consistent with modern liberal ideology, the individual is perceived abstractly, subject to fair and equal conditions of access to citizenship rights.

They argue that the idea of 'citizenship' itself is a politically and socially constructed expression of the development of the advanced capitalist nation state. The idea of citizenship is increasingly being revealed to be what it is – more ideal than real – an ideological construct at best, rather than a lived reality (Stasiulis and Bakan, 1997, 116–117). Thus,

the view of citizenship as an ideal type associated with one type of state tends to limit our understanding of forms of inequality and modes of contestation of rights by groups which lack rights-bearing forms of membership in the territorial nation-state where they are working and residing, often for considerable lengths of time (*ibidem*, 117).

Furthermore, they maintained that

citizenship is negotiated, and is therefore unstable, constructed and re-constructed historically across as well as within geo-political borders. States attempt to regulate access of different individuals and groups to various forms of rights and obligations and to impose various forms of responsibilities and hardships upon individuals and groups' (*ibidem*, 119).

Drawing from above, it is pertinent to recognise that the re-construction of citizenship rarely operates in a vacuum but is contingent upon local, contextual and global historical, social, political, economic and other strategic factors.

Against this backdrop therefore, I contend that the public discourse and politics of citizenship and nationality in contemporary British society can be better grasped with a historical unpacking. Although British public discourses on past migration policies, patterns and legislation were somewhat topical; the enactment of the 1948 British Nationality Act (BNA), however, marked a critical watershed event in the socio-political history of Britain and the erstwhile Empire. Hansen argues persuasively that the BNA must be understood in terms of local and global dynamics and constraints rather than as a historical accident. He queried, poignantly, why the Conservative and Labour parties cooperated in constructing a liberal system of nationality law from which they so quickly distanced. As Hansen enthuses:

...this apparent contradiction can only be understood by examining the legislation in the context of past migration patterns and Britain's international position in 1948. The legislation was only marginally related to migration; it was rather an attempt to maintain a uniform definition of subjecthood in the face of Canada's unilateral introduction of its own citizenship, and it was an affirmation of Britain's place as head of a Commonwealth structure founded on the relationship between the U.K. and the Old Dominions. (Hansen, 1999, 69)

Hansen maintained that the impetus for the BNA originated in Canada. Although such legislation hardly appears to be the basis of a constitutional revolution, it marked the end of a centuries-old definition of British subjecthood (*ibidem*). The controversial legislation which received ambivalent responses from a cross-section of British political entrepreneurs and unenthusiastic public, created a legal status, namely 'Citizenship of the U.K. and Colonies', that embraced Britons and 'colonial' subjects under a single definition of British citizenship, while at the same time entrenching their right to enter the U.K.. One highpoint of this legislation was that 'British subjects', 'Commonwealth immigrants' (such as immigrants of colour) could swim under a certain euphoria as 'citizens'. They could enter the U.K. relatively unrestrained, without visas, and somewhat enjoy the social, political and economic benefits of full citizenship. Consequently, the next decade and half following the legislation (1948–1962) witnessed the entry of about half a million non-white 'British subjects' into the U.K.. The first postwar new Commonwealth immigrants (500 Jamaicans) arrived in London on 22 June 1948. Their arrival was unexpected (*ibidem*, 90).

The Labour government viewed these relocations and subsequent arrivals with great unease, concern and trepidation. The government was in fact poised to discourage indiscriminate influxes. The Colonial Office partly responded by instructing colonial governments to use informal methods to discourage immigration. Ironically, this involved warning prospective immigrants of difficulties they would face finding accommodation and employment in the U.K. and withholding passports from those who lacked the funds for the passage or were deemed unsuitable for regular employment (*ibidem*, 92). As Hansen indicated, 'the implications of the 1948 decision did not manifest themselves until the 1950s. The most obvious of these was the fact that those arriving from the colonies and independent Commonwealth countries landed in the U.K. as citizens' (*ibidem*, 94).

Irrespective of the hostility, elite's suspicion and circumspection that visited the legislation and ensuing developments from the Labour and Conservative

governments, politicians, social critics and public commentators, the 1948 Act assumed a legal wellspring and constitutional revolution that transformed Britain into a visible multi-ethnic society. As Hansen aptly concluded,

the first wave of primary immigration (immigrants with no familial connections to the U.K.) led quasi-automatically to successive waves of secondary immigration (spouses and dependants joining their family in the U.K.). The BNA was the formal mechanism that legitimated the transformation of the United Kingdom into a multi-racial society, a development that has had inestimable impact on British society and politics (*ibidem*, 95).

The Nottingham and Notting Hill riots in 1958 tilted national opinion considerably and decisively against immigration from the Commonwealth countries, particularly non-white Commonwealth immigrants. When the Conservative government took concrete steps legislating to control migration influx in 1962, approximately 500,000 new Commonwealth immigrants had entered the United Kingdom, the majority from India and Pakistan. These individuals, and their spouses and dependants who joined them in the 1960s and 1970s, constitute the bulk of the U.K.'s approximately 2.6 million members of ethnic minorities (Jones, 1993, 12).

In actual fact, the uniqueness of Britain's post-war migration experience, when compared with other EU countries, was one marked by the vast majority of U.K.'s immigrants becoming citizens following the 1948 legislation. The British stance on citizenship could be contrasted with the French universalistic and the German descent-centred notions of citizenship – citizenship linked to *jus soli* (citizenship based on soil of birth) or to *jus sanguinis* (citizenship connected to the descent of the parents) (cf. Brubaker, 1989). Nevertheless, each of these perspectives was never static; the language and meaning of citizenship have been constantly changing and undergoing transformation in the face of local and global realities. Thus, while the politics of citizenship in the 1940s could be considered unprecedented, it nevertheless represents the spark that ignited the politicisation of immigration, the criminalisation of immigrants, and the subsequent vexing debates that have continued to shape the fluid nature, meaning and language of citizenship and nationality in contemporary British society.

The brief historical scenario above provides a lens through which we can understand how current public discourses of citizenship and nationality shape the ways the notion of citizenship is often perceived, constructed and reconstructed by immigrants within the new African religious diaspora. Perhaps, a

glimpse of most recent government policies and political debates will help situate this negotiation process lucidly. I argue that the planned introduction of British citizenship tests and citizenship ceremony in the U.K. represents a 'fire-brigade' approach to solving the enigma of swelling immigration. The introduction of citizenship tests undoubtedly affirms the systematic harmonisation or Europeanisation of migration policies and the growing fortressisation of the EU geo-political space. Under new unfolding plans, immigrants who want to become British and settle permanently in the U.K. will need to pass more tests to 'prove their worth' to the country. 'Some migrants may also have to pay into a fund towards public services and have a period of "probationary citizenship"' (BBC News, 15 September 2008). Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown said the U.K. should expect a 'demonstration of commitment' and the process of becoming a citizen should be 'more exacting'.

The 'earned' citizenship would supplant the current system which allows people to apply for naturalisation on the basis of how long they have lived in the U.K.. The existing citizenship requirement that a person must have lived in Britain for five years, pass a test in English and demonstrate knowledge of life in Britain would be expanded to include points awarded for civic and voluntary work. Migrants from outside the European Economic Area would be encouraged to 'move on' through a system that leads to citizenship – or choose ultimately to leave the country. The cosmetic package of measures include: raising visa fees for a special 'transitional impact' fund; more English language testing ahead of nationality; requirements to prove integration into communities; increasing how long it takes to become British. It is envisaged that earned citizenship would include

clear rights but also stronger obligations at each stage (...) migrants would find their route to citizenship and full access to benefits, such as higher education, accelerated if they can prove they are 'active' citizens – charity work, involvement in the local community and letters from referees... (BBC News, 15 September 2008).

A cursory look at these yardsticks evokes a number of critical questions revolving around their rationale, validity and workability. Earned citizenship is indeed a cosmetic citizenship package that makes mockery of concrete integration dynamics. The progressive hierarchisation of immigrants in terms of active/non-active, real/imagined, first-class/second-class, good/bad, and skilled/unskilled citizens indeed have dire implications for race relations in multicultural Britain. The pre-requisite for being an 'active' citizen gives away a false impression that 'all original, non-migrant citizens are active citizens in

the sense outlined above. This, in fact, runs contrary to the situation in which several thousands of British citizens are totally and partially dependent on social welfare mechanisms for survival.

In 2008, the first ceremony for immigrants (19 people, including 3 children from 10 countries) granted British citizenship took place at Brent Town Hall in London. The citizenship rituals included 'swearing allegiance to the Queen, singing the national anthem, pledging to respect the U.K.'s rights and freedoms, and promising to uphold the country's democratic values'. This new rite of passage was a sharp departure from earlier practice in which people becoming British citizens swear an oath of allegiance in front of a solicitor, before receiving their certificate in the post. In my view, David Blunkett's, the then Home Secretary, justification of the citizenship ceremony is very ironical. He said:

I think the new ceremonies across the country will be the answer to those who fear difference, who fear the diversity which comes with migration of people coming across the world to live in our community and sends a very clear message that those who choose to be part of the family are committing themselves (BBC News, 15 September 2008).

In his welcome message during the ceremony, Prince Charles remarked:

Being British is something of a blessing and a privilege for us all... I very much hope that this ceremony has added something to the significance of acquiring British citizenship and that it's reinforced your belief, if indeed any reinforcement is required, that you belong here and are very welcome'.

It is however unclear how and to what extent such a choreographed citizenship ceremony really makes one a citizen. Is earning citizenship coterminous with allegiance?

Citizenship is not only about privileges, but also allegiances; it is not only about rights but also responsibilities of new citizens. The dichotomisation of citizenship prerequisites in terms of privileges/allegiances or rights/responsibilities is hardly any bone of contention, what is rather problematic is the politicisation of citizenship in which one aspect is over-emphasised against the other. The discourse is more and more skewed with policy makers across the EU political spectrum awash in their quest for new definitions of state and citizens/non-citizen relations, emphasising responsibilities rather than rights of citizens. Perceptibly, U.K. governments often reify the discourse of

immigrants' responsibilities and allegiances over and against rights and privileges which accrue with their new status. The imbalance in representation has a direct connection with public visualisation and dual binaries of explanation of the ideal type of liberal citizenship on the one hand, and the invention of its opposite, the derogatory ideal of the dangerous, criminal, economically burdensome non-citizen. Stasiulis and Bakan were quite apt in remarking that 'New immigrants, particularly those from Third World origins, are compelled to struggle to obtain even minimal citizenship rights from reluctant host states and among populations encouraged to scapegoat those seeking permanent status and full equality' (1997, 118). Now we turn to how some African Christians in the U.K. are responding to discourses of citizenship against the backdrop of its increasing politicisation.

We are Citizens of Heaven! Discourses of Citizenship

The extent to which the essence and rhetoric of 'citizenship' was meaningful, for particularly African immigrants in the U.K. is partly brought out by how they engage in discourses of it, but also expressive of how they feel about themselves and their status within the British society. Generally, citizenship is perceived as describing individuals' reciprocal relationship with society. While I do not suggest that all African immigrants understand, engage and navigate the politics of citizenship and nationality in the same way, the following analysis based on religious ethnography among African-led churches in the U.K. is indicative of the complex diversity of understanding and approaches to the discourse. Some basic models of citizenship can be observed.

First, one emerging trend by which African-led churches interrogate citizenship is by whipping the rhetoric of citizenship as a 'universal status'. This takes a variety of ways. On the one hand, everyone is a citizen, by virtue of being a member of a community or nation, or because 'citizen' means 'person'. Here, the idea of a 'global citizen' comes into focus. This is sometimes meant as a critique of the social-contractual dimension where citizenship is understood in terms of formal rights and responsibilities. Other models of citizenship are couched in terms of constructive social and political participation, economic independence, social visibility and the right to a voice. Each of these models posit a great deal of ambivalence about the import of their nationality and in fact the meanings of 'Britishness'. The extent to which immigrants within the U.K.-based African churches understand and identify themselves as citizens, potential citizens or non-citizens often vary in relation to other factors, including access to waged employment and tax involvement, participation in voluntary work, voting rights, and the cultivation of a general sense of belonging. In fact, negotiating citizenship operates on a parallel level with the negotiation of

cultural/national identities and integration/adaptation. African Christians in the U.K. who identify themselves as British, often also refer to their African, national and ethnic identities as Ghanaians (Akan, Ewe, Ga); Nigerians (Yoruba, Igbo, Edo); as Kenyans (Luo, Masai, Kikuyu); as Zimbabweans (Shona, Tsonga, Ndebele).

The oft appropriation by African Christians of such phrases as 'We are in the United Kingdom of God', 'We are heavenly citizens or citizens of heaven', 'Global citizens' represent individual and corporate critiques of the politicisation of citizenship and nationality in the U.K. A further twist to the citizenship metaphor that resonates well with members is the biblical assertion that all humans are 'pilgrims', 'exiles' and 'foreigners' in this mundane world (The Holy Bible Book of Jeremiah 29, 1 Peter 1 and Hebrews 11). Two plains of religious interpretation are canvassed. On one level, members mirror themselves as 'foreigners', 'sojourners' or 'strangers' in both mundane and spiritual terms. They are foreigners or exiles in the physical space of Europe. Jeremiah's discourse (Jeremiah 29) is often read and interpreted as an attractive ethic of negotiating competing citizenships; Peter's description of the church as a 'holy people' is personalised as a religio-ethnic group; and Hebrews narrative of Christians as citizens of a better country, a 'heavenly homeland' with different codes of conduct. The allegiance to 'King Jesus' as opposed to any Prime Minister or Mayor is fully epitomised. The cosmos is therefore a marketplace and they are only temporary sojourners in the journey through life. Heaven is indeed home (Adogame, 2002).

In this wider theological sense, they would assert that all humans, whether Africans, British or Europeans, are foreigners or strangers in this world. This is one way they critique the stringent immigration policies of the EU and the construction of a fortress Europe meant to ward off the influx of immigrants. Besides, an RCCG in Edinburgh member even critiques the rationale behind the idea of the Commonwealth of Nations in this way: 'What is common about the Commonwealth after all? In my view, Commonwealth as we are made to believe is not common... It is simply an economic, strategic gimmick which Britain has used over the years to hide their colonial shame and trickery...'. This postcolonial critique does point to ways in which immigrants or former British colonial subjects voice out what they perceive to be contradictions and visible injustices within a political-economic system.

In the prioritisation of citizenship, the preference for the eschatological connotation of citizenship can be better understood against the backdrop of citizenship as a tool of inclusion and exclusion. Their common bond is their belief that their citizenship in the heavenly kingdom was far more important than their mundane citizenship in any earthly polity. The 'heavenly' citizenship

is pictured as one in which there are no quotas limiting citizenship in the Kingdom. In such a scenario, citizens are not hierarchised in terms of active/non-active, real/imagined, first-class/second-class, good/bad, and skilled/unskilled. It is one in which all are invited to enter freely by faith in the merits of Christ alone. Immigrants would not need to pass 'tests in order to prove their worth' to the Kingdom. However, as many African immigrants perceive their aspirations toward attaining citizenship to be increasingly gloomy and dampened by governments' consciously imposed roadblocks, stark requirements, the rhetoric of 'heavenly citizenship', whether real or imagined, becomes consolatory and in the least, inspirational.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, I do not suggest that the negotiation of ethnicity and nationality, and the discourse on citizenship within African Christian communities follow the same trend. To do that will undermine the complex, varied notions and understandings of citizenship and nationality within these contexts. There is a sense in which such debates about citizenship becomes a tool of social, economic and spiritual empowerment. It also helps to facilitate the negotiation between resilience and maintenance of ethnic, cultural, religious and national identities on the one hand; and the integrative and adaptive processes of immigrants into the host society. Religion and ethnicity could both serve as fragmenting and transitional or supra-national forces. Associational life in the diaspora provides the social environment for survival and nurture of immigrants. One African church leader admonished his congregation rhetorically:

Do you think your living in the U.K. was by any accident? Far from it! God brought you here for a purpose. So long as you live here, you are a citizen of this country. You work and pay tax, so you are not a visitor any longer you are part of the system. If you exclude yourself, then you do this to your own peril. Think of yourself as one who has a purpose to serve and accomplish here... I do not care whether you have papers (*valid immigration documentation or residence permits*) or not, whether you are a refugee or asylum seeker. The government and the public call you those names and see you in those terms of a second-class citizen. Brother, Sister! You are perfectly and beautifully made! God created you in his own self-image as a first-class citizen, as a citizen of heaven. It is up to you to

decide whose verdict is supreme... [Pastor Paul Dominic (pseudonym)
on 13/10/10]

There are certainly controversial dimensions to these statements, nevertheless it shows doses of empowerment rhetoric that lends credence to how the negative sides of the politics of citizenship could be re-branded and repackaged to serve as veritable tools of social-economic empowerment and mobility.

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Self-Identification and Othering Among the Senegalese Fulfulde Speaking People and Others

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Introduction and Theory

Un peuple – un but – une foi has been the official motto of the Senegalese State since its independence. It hammers out a monolithic national community, but the reality hiding behind this motto is rather like a mosaic. The constitution declares that the Senegalese State is secular, guarantees equality without distinction as to origin, race, sex or religion, specifies the national languages, which include Jola, Fulfulde or Pulaar, Serer and Wolof, pronounces ethnic and religious discrimination punishable and guarantees religious and cultural liberties.¹ Thus to itself and to others Senegal presents itself as a land of tolerance with equal rights to different social segments.

Une foi (one faith) expresses the belief in the new nation built on the French political ideals and on *Négritude* which was a central ideal around 1960. *Une foi* covers not only beliefs but also religious faiths. The official statistics give the following information: 1% belong to local religions, in the statistics named *animisme*, 5% are Christians and 94% Muslims.² If you consult the homepage of the Catholic Church in Senegal these numbers vary significantly: around 5% adhere to local religions, 15% are Christians and 80% are Muslims.³ The differences are due to the way censuses are constructed. This gives room for interpretations of who is a Muslim, a Christian or an adherent of a local religion, depending on the interests of the ‘interpreters’. Never mind how they play the numbers’ game, Muslims are the dominant majority and Christians a (very?) small minority in Senegal.⁴

As in many other former colonies the monolithic *un peuple* (one people) is a recent historical construct and ‘the Senegalese people’ consists of several

1 <http://www.gouv.sn/spip.php?article792>, accessed 17 May 2012.

2 http://www.ansd.sn/publications/rapports_enquetes_etudes/enquetes/Rapport_RGPH_88.pdf p.27–28, accessed 17 May 2012.

3 The numbers come from a webpage that ceased to exist but can be calculated from: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/dioocese/ddaka.html#info>, accessed 22 February 2014.

4 Most of the Muslims adhere to shaykhs that follow a Sufi movement, *tariqa*. The dominant *turuq* (pl.) are the Muridiyya and the Tijaniyya. Most Christians are Catholics, but there are also a variety of Protestant churches.



FIGURE 1 *Map of Senegal.* Design: Birgitte Smith.

peoples or ethnicities. The Wolof are by far the largest ethnic group (43%) and historically they dominated the hinterland of the present capital Dakar and the former capital Saint-Louis. Along the coast south of Dakar and further inland there is the base of the Serer (15%). The Jola (4%) live around the lower Casamance River south of the Gambia from the Atlantic and further inland. The Fulbe (24%), speaking the Fulfulde language, live along the middle stretch of the Senegal River, in the thinly populated area south of this river basin and again south of the Gambia in the fertile lands watered by the upper Casamance River. The last 14% of the population is split between several even smaller ethnic groups. The number of Christians is significantly higher among the Jola and the Serer, and almost zero among the Fulbe. The idea of 'the Senegalese people' is not clear-cut since the underlying ethnicities spill over into the neighbouring states. Within Senegal, the borders of these ethnicities are also perforated due to the new patterns of urbanisation and the growth of

economic centres along new corridors of transport, which have changed from the rivers to roads.

Within the last decade, the self-identification of Senegal as a land of tolerance has been tested at two significant events of different character.

On 27 September 2002 'Joola', the ferry between Casamance and Dakar, sank in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of the Gambia, due to one of the last thunderstorms of the rainy season and scandalous overloading of the old ship. 64 persons were saved, while 1,953 died. Two thirds of them were young Jola on their way for the reopening of a new school year in Dakar. The bodies recovered from the sea were buried together in three national burial sites. On the quay in Dakar, where the bodies were brought in to be identified by family and friends, Christians and Muslims together had a religious ceremony where the Catholic archbishop and the Muslim caliph of the leading Tijani branch were conducting the prayers. The local Jola religion is still alive and though it was not represented in the same way as the other two, its presence was implied in a ceremony where flowers were spread on the sea from small boats.⁵

Six years later a prestigious project of President Abdoulaye Wade, a giant statue called 'The African Renaissance', showing a man and a child leading a woman, was widely criticised. Under the heavy criticism from various groups, Wade tried to save himself by attacking the Christians and saying that Catholics prayed to someone who is not God. They pray to Jesus Christ, a human being. These remarks were made towards the end of the year 2009. The Catholic Church and Christians in general reacted with unprecedented force both in writing and in demonstrations.⁶ A few days later the president backtracked after intensive consultations with an informal network that included high ranking Muslims and Christians.⁷

These two events signalise the uncertainty in the actions of politicians, Muslims and Christians, majority and minority. The depiction of Senegal as harmonious and religiously tolerant is rooted not only in the constitution but also in a colonialist view of the Senegalese Islam. In 1917, Paul Marty constructed the concept of *l'islam noir* as a peaceful Sufi Islam, which posed no danger to the European rule. Talal Asad describes this kind of colonialist classification as parallel to orientalist's way of stressing the Arab Muslim systems as inherently violent. Both ways of othering serve Western interests (Asad, 1973, 114–118).

To quite a large extent, the remnants of the colonial approach are still a basis not only for external classification, but also for self-identification as

5 Personal observations. I arrived in Senegal two days after the ship sank.

6 http://senkto.org/rubriques.php?rub=11&id_article=2711, accessed 1 July 2012.

7 Interview with Abbé Léon, Dakar 14.12.2010.

peaceful and tolerant by Senegalese Muslims.⁸ Stimulated by the historical experience of the importance played by religions in ethnocides committed in countries considered as harmonious in Europe as well as in Africa I will try out this Senegalese self-identification using analytical tools presented by Benjamin F. Soares, Gerd Baumann and Richard Jenkins. Following Benjamin F. Soares my analysis takes into consideration themes such as self-identification, characterisation of the 'other' and the making and transgression of boundaries. Soares also stresses the importance of using a common analytical frame for dealing with Muslim-Christian encounters (Soares, 2006, 5, 13, 16). I have used an analytic approach in which identity and alterity are mutually constitutive, which is a weak conception, instead of an essentialised and strong conception of these (Baumann, 2004, 192). Gerd Baumann's three grammars for 'othering' and his anti-grammar present an analytical frame. They imply power and domination and thus the issue of the selfing and othering done by a minority and a majority. Even if they focus on ethnic or national selfing and othering they are useful as tools in order to analyse the ambiguity in words and actions of Muslims and Christians looking for what Richard Jenkins calls 'the celebratory communality' and for that which may lead to annihilation of the other (Jenkins, 1994, 219).

The first grammar of Gerd Baumann is the *orientalist* grammar: This is the grammar most commonly used when classifications are produced "in the name of" one or another hierarchy or conviction that calls itself "religious" (Baumann, 2004, 29). In this grammar the classification of the other is not only binary, creating an other and a self as mutually exclusive poles but it is also 'an operation of reverse mirror-imaging: selfing and othering condition each other in that both positive and negative characteristics are made to mirror each other in reverse' (Baumann, 2004, 21). A Catholic priest had the best time of his life when living among Muslims and experiencing the warmth and care taken by these and the crossing of boundaries at the Muslim ceremonies and festivals, something which contrasted the behavior of the Catholics in his parish.

8 The development in Mali since March 2012 has resulted in an increased political awareness of small Islamist groups as dangerous even if so far marginal. See interview with M. Kébé, director of the Arabic Departement Ucad (University of Dakar) http://www.sudonline.sn/ce-qui-se-passe-a-tombouctou-pourrait-arriver-au-senegal_a_9859.html, accessed 9 October 2012 together with the following articles <http://www.walf-groupe.com/actualites/politique/7209-terrorisme-dans-le-sahel--pourquoi-le-senegal-est-en-danger-.html>, <http://www.lequotidien.sn/index.php/component/k2/item/12280-implantation-de-reseaux-islamistes-au-senegal-des-salafistes-prennent-base-a-pikine>, <http://www.lequotidien.sn/index.php/component/k2/item/12587-connexions-senegalaises-avec-une-cellule-salafiste-gambienne--troublante-coïncidence>.

At the same time he clearly expressed that a dialogue is impossible on the level of doctrinal questions and mentioned as a fact that there are serious obstacles to the peaceful coexistence such as the broadcasting done by the radios Walf FM and Dunyaa FM.⁹

In this grammar, the simple binary structure becomes ternary when the other is split in such a way that some are more acceptable than others in the process of selfing and othering. Christians as the other can be more acceptable to a Muslim than Buddhists since Christians belong to the 'peoples of the book'. A similar line of distinction in France concerns immigrants from former colonies versus immigrants with whom there are no historic bonds.

The *segmentary* grammar 'determines identities and alterities according to context (...) Interpreted for present purposes, the social grammar of a segmentary system is a logic of fission or enmity at a lower level of segmentation, overcome by a logic of fusion or neutralization of conflict at a higher level of segmentation' (Baumann, 2004, 21, 22).

Fans of the local football team fight the fans of the neighbouring local football team in a football match. One of these wins and then they all cheer the winner in the next contest when competition has moved one step up to a regional level and the opponent on that level is then defined as the other, and so on. The context defines the classification of friend and enemy.

'The crucial question, however, is (...) who is to have the power to define the ultimate apex of the pyramid, and who defines which intervening classificatory levels?' (Baumann, 2004, 24). At the independence of Senegal in 1960, its first president Léopold Sédar Senghor and the new constitution defined this apex: The third parties in this grammar are the ones who fall outside this grammar such as unrecognized minute ethnic groups in Senegal.

The *encompassment* grammar 'means an act of selfing by appropriating, perhaps one should say adopting or co-opting, selected kinds of otherness' (Baumann, 2004, 25). The third parties in this grammar are those who cannot be included in the talk: 'the encompassing notion of "Black" as a political colour excludes whites' (Baumann, 2004, 28).

The *anti-grammar* is the situation when all grammars are defeated: 'genocide, ethnocide, political, racial or religious extermination or annihilation. Each of these spells a breakdown of all three grammars and a return to the anti-grammar of: "we are good, so they are bad" with the genocidal conclusion: "we must live, so they must die"' (Baumann, 2004, 42).

All three grammars, though apparently binary in their 'othering' and 'selfing', imply the possibility of a third party. Baumann refers to the anthropological

9 Interview with Abbé Sylvestre 6.11.2010.

concept of *rite de passage*, in which two situations, a before and an after, are mediated through a ritual transitional phase. Sometimes the mediating phase assumes an equal status and it becomes a tripartition and not a binary structure. This is also seen by linguists such as Emile Benveniste, who shows that the apparently binary discourse between two persons shows up to be ternary since the question ‘Can we talk?’ necessarily excludes a third person (Baumann, 2004, 35–37).

The grammars may actually compete and be used as they fit best. They possess a range of structures, which can be used to argue a certain selfing or othering. All grammars are always at the disposal of all social actors. In the dialogues a ‘player’ may switch from any grammar to one of the others if he or she finds it more useful (Baumann, 2004, 30–31). The analysed data are a series of qualitative interviews made in 2009 and 2010 in France and during my seven weeks stay in Senegal in November and December 2010 when I interviewed 55 persons.¹⁰ There was no time for field observation in 2010 apart from the interview settings.¹¹ However, my many experiences in Senegal, since I first visited the country in 1987, have met this demand to some degree.

I have focused on areas far from Dakar and its hinterland. Fulfulde speaking people dominate these parts of the country and I could use my Muslim contacts from France and from my earlier studies in Upper Casamance south of the Gambia. As a contrast, I interviewed people in Mbour at the Atlantic Coast. the hinterland is Serer and the town itself hosts many different ethnic groups: Serer, Wolof, Fulbe, Jola and others, some of whom are just working and living there for a short period, while others are settling down for good.

Senegal is the focus of this article but special attention is paid to experiences of those interlocutors who have sojourned for a longer period in other African countries or in Europe, especially France.

The article first concentrates on Futa Toro, the part of Senegal from which the Haalpulaar (Pulaar speaking) workers in France come. Then, it continues with the Fulbe area in Upper Casamance south of the Gambia. The

10 These were people with friends or family who have emigrated or spent a long period away from Senegal; returnees to Senegal, either visiting or back for good; converts; people whose family consisted of both Muslims and Christians, and people with special functions – economic, administrative, political and religious. The last would also fit into one or more of the just mentioned categories.

11 The interviews were semi-structured and normally followed an interview-guide. Most of the interviews were in French. The rest were interpreted with the implied problems. However, all interlocutors understood some French. In the following, their names are made anonymous according to their culture.

voice of the migrants will be included in these presentations and in the conclusion.

Along the Senegal River: Futa Toro

The Geographical Context

This is the land of the people who speak Fulfulde, the Haalpulaar, also known as the Toucouleur. It covers the eastern part of the Saint-Louis region and the region of Matam. It is an agro-pastoral area and the population is concentrated along the Senegal River. The Ferlo, a savannah undergoing desertification, is situated south of Futa Toro. It is very thinly populated by cattle herding Fulbe who maintain their local religion to some extent.

Today the population of the river basin is some 99% Muslim, adhering to the Tijaniyya, a Sufi *tariqa*.¹² The Christians in Futa Toro have short-term jobs or have been posted there for a longer period in ecclesiastical, military, administrative or educational positions. Some are foreigners, others Serer, Jola etc. The only two churches are in Podor and Matam. The significance of the river with its old commercial, military and administrative centres, Podor and Matam, has diminished since the 1980s when the construction of dams started, and the traffic has moved to the highway running along the river's south bank. For this reason, the villages along the highway, such as Ndioum near Podor and Kanel near Matam have grown into towns (Diop, 2007).¹³ A very low-key Lutheran mission exists in Ndioum, a town of 19,125 inhabitants, whereas the population of the administrative centre Podor is stated as 14,601 inhabitants. Kanel is the administrative centre of a *departement*, even if like other new towns it resembles a village. Its population is 13,609 whereas the regional capital Matam has 20,228 inhabitants (2012 estimates).¹⁴

The people of the river basin and along the highway have a long tradition for migrating as a way of coping with the perpetual periods of drought. In the 1970s and 1980s these were long and devastating, and the Haalpulaar migrated to the south and the west of Senegal as well as to other countries in Africa and

12 http://www.ansd.sn/publications/rapports_enquetes_etudes/enquetes/Rapport_RGFH_88.pdf p.27f, accessed 17 May 2012. *Tariqa*, pl. *turuq* or *tariqaat*, is Arabic for 'way' or 'method'. It is often translated 'brotherhood' or 'order', but since these words do not cover the reality, I prefer the established Arabic word.

13 http://www.cerium.ca/IMG/pdf/Matam_urbanisation.pdf, accessed 17 May 2012.

14 <http://www.finances.gouv.sn/UserFiles/Estimation%20de%20la%20population%20du%20Senegal%20de%202005%20a%202015.pdf> p.15, accessed 17 May 2012.

Europe. Some of them have returned and settled in their villages or in the towns, and this contributes to the urban conditions and ways of life becoming more and more manifest in the region.

Experiences of Religious Encounters in Migration Settings and in Futa Toro

The Fulfulde speakers from Futa Toro are known for being very mobile, while maintaining links with their homeland and sometimes returning there after some time.

Since the mid-1990s, a group of migrants have been meeting with their religious leader near Paris for a five-day long religious retreat that now draws around 5,000 men to Mantes-la-Jolie every year in June.

The language spoken there is Fulfulde; the religious leader is a Senegalese Sufi shaykh and one of the leading figures in the Medina Gounass branch of Tijaniyya.¹⁵ The reunion is a result of the shaykh's prolonged efforts to visit his migrant adherents in France since the early 1970s and of the migrants settling down with families, identifying themselves as Muslims with a Haalpulaar or Fulbe Islamic heritage. Most of the Muslim immigrants from south of the Sahara came later and in smaller numbers to France than did those from North Africa. In France they faced again the idea that Black Africans are not true Muslims and cannot possibly have a leading position in mosque (Schmitz, 2006, 110). Their living and working conditions in France generally did not promote a sharing of religious events with Christians, except in the few cases where Christian immigrants from other countries south of the Sahara lived in the vicinity.

Their selfing process in France evolved within the French structures othering both the French culture and the North African Arab and Islamic culture. On special occasions, the Haalpulaar pray with the Muslim other in large purpose-built mosques in their neighbourhood, but for the daily prayers, they gather with other Haalpulaar in a local prayer room, if possible. They have created associations that organise the necessary financial and practical arrangements needed for the shaykh to meet them in France every year. They have also created associations taking care of their villages back in Futa and providing them with funds for a better water supply and classrooms for primary and secondary education. The strong links to their families and villages back at home have reinforced their selfing as Haalpulaar, as part of a self-assured ethnic segment in Senegal. In France, they bolstered their selfing as Haalpulaar Muslims

¹⁵ Medina Gounass is a mainly Haalpulaar Sufi village in Upper Casamance. The shaykh mentioned here is based in Mbour by the Atlantic.

by creating their own prayer rooms and by establishing and organising the yearly reunion with the shaykh and joint prayers. Their negotiations with municipal authorities have enabled them to have the same good location for the reunion in the *Parc des Expositions* every year. This event may be defined as a *lieu de mémoire*, a memory site, since it concentrates the cultural memory of the Haalpulaar Muslim community by vitalising their rituals and customs (Smith, 2014b). The young generation braves the hegemonic French politics by referring to the element of egalitarianism in the French political thinking. 'The Haalpulaar culture is part of the French culture' just like other segments such as Algerian, Comorian or Breton culture.¹⁶

In Futa Toro, back in Senegal, the Haalpulaar had little chance of meeting Christians before leaving to work as unskilled labour in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. The emigrants are now retired and some of them keep going back to their villages for a long period every year or stay there for good. Those who have studied in Dakar or who worked for years in other African countries brought back other experiences. Even today, the Muslim population in Futa Toro has little opportunity to meet Christians maybe except a few who teach at the local school or live in Podor or Matam, where there are Catholic parishes. They do not know anything about Christianity and it hardly plays a role in their selfing and othering except when asked.

Ndioum, on the main road south of the river, is an exception to this situation, since it has a Lutheran Mission, though its Serer pastor was posted elsewhere when I interviewed him.¹⁷ His work there was based on an orientalist selfing and othering. He did not convert anybody to Christianity, but he was able to permeate the borderline between Christianity and Islam thanks to two factors he could use as mediators. The joking relationships, the *cousinage*, between the two ethnic groups, the Serer and the Fulbe was one of them (E. Smith, 2006). This *cousinage*, this question of ethnicity, can be seen as the third party in the orientalist grammar. It made it possible to have a copy of the Bible in Fulfulde in the library of the mission house and also to talk about religion. People generally do not talk much about this subject. 'It may result in serious disagreement since everyone thinks his religion is the best' said one of my interlocutors.¹⁸ The idea among both Christians and Muslims that certain people can perform intercessory prayers and thus help the supplicant was the other factor. Some of the Muslims in the village crossed the borderline when they asked the pastor to perform his successful religious rite for them.

16 Interview with Aïssa, Paris, 19.10.2011.

17 Interview with Ndongo 16.11.2010.

18 Interview with Marie 8.11.2010.

The other new town mentioned, Kanel, lies further east along the main road. In Kanel everybody has one or more migrants in the family, if they have not worked as migrants themselves. Not all boys are enrolled in the public school, because the boys are expected to look after the family's herds of sheep and cattle and to follow the family traditions for being a learned Muslim. There are many Qur'anic schools in this town. The 43-year-old shaykh whom I interviewed had taken over his father's 'hearth', the Qur'anic school. He identified himself as a shaykh with good relations with Christians, black and white, whom he has come to know in Saint-Louis and in Dakar. Like the pastor in Ndioum he transgresses the borderline between the two religions since the Christians ask him to say prayers (*du'a*) for them. When he talked about Christians, he was both orientalisising and encompassing. Like most of my Muslim interlocutors, he said the Christians were different, but they were good-hearted and knew how to help people – qualities that could be lacking among Muslims.¹⁹

The deputy mayor was another interlocutor. The day I visited him was the day of his son's *baptême*.²⁰ He is also a head teacher and this ceremony was an occasion for a Christian colleague to pay a visit. At ceremonial occasions such as this or at yearly festivals such as Easter or Tabaski (*'id al-Adha*) they cross the religious boundary when the colleagues join the celebrations. When he talked as a mayor, his grammar was encompassing in line with the state motto 'One state – one goal – one faith' and with the egalitarianism built into the constitution safeguarding equal rights of all citizens. Public projects were for everybody whether Muslim or Christian. Asked about President Wade's accusations against the Christians he said the president did wrong, since Senegal is a land of tolerance.²¹ He referred to the national selfing used more easily by the Muslim majority than by the Christians.

A younger brother of one of the workers that I know from France is a teacher of the Qur'an and knows it by heart. He never managed to enter France but worked as a migrant in Congo and the Ivory Coast in communities with Christian majorities. During the years there, he visited several churches and apart from the boundary crossing in a mixed neighbourhood, he also went a step further when he took part in burial ceremonies of friends and neighbours in communities with a Christian majority.²²

Another interlocutor was a leading figure in the French association of migrants from Kanel. He is now retired and splits the year between Paris and Senegal. The

19 Interview with Ibrahima 10.11.2010.

20 This French word is used for the Muslim naming ceremony.

21 Interview with Bokar 10.11.2010.

22 Interview with Mamadou 10.11.2010.

interview took place in Kanel where he has a wife and children. In Paris he has a wife and older children who are French citizens, have degrees and jobs.

They are Muslims, I am a Muslim, I have taught my children Islam, I have given them the instructions of Islam, I have shown them what Islam is and that we have been Muslims for centuries, many centuries back in bygone days. This way I have explained it all to them. They pray regularly – up to now without failing.

Though he feels that it is good to be back where he originated, where he ‘can do whatever he feels is right without anyone telling him that he is an immigrant’, he is also deeply satisfied with his life in France.

He himself – like most of the emigrants of his age – has done hard physical, unqualified labour, and he has toured both France and Saudi-Arabia. Moreover, he has been involved in communist, later socialist labour organisations and in associations working with the municipality. He is a leading person in *L'Association des ressortissants de Kanel en France* (ARKF), which has supported projects in Kanel such as schools and the latest but not least, a functioning water supply. On top of that, he was one of the persons on the committee backing the claim of Haalpulaar migrants and of their religious leader, Cerno Mansour Barro, to have facilities in Mantes-la-Jolie for the yearly religious gathering in which he always participates.

When talking about Islam and what he has experienced in France and in Saudi Arabia he says:

Well, the religion Islam is the same. It is just that inside it, there can be racism, but still the Muslim religion is the Muslim religion. That is it. It is not only for a certain group, it is for everybody... As for the North Africans, only a few are Muslims... OK, I know that they are Muslims but they drink alcohol... As far as I know the Saudis are the proper Muslims.

This man identifies himself through the positions he has held as a migrant in France, as a *Kanellois* and as a Muslim with believing and successful children. His comments on Islam are quite surprising, considering that he presents himself as a Tijani and a staunch follower of the Sufi shaykh Cerno Mansour Barro. Still all this depends on how he positions himself – or how he is positioned by his surroundings.

At the level of the Tijaniyya everybody guards his dignity, the values of his family and house. It is important not to let this go. The leaders of the

tariqa are part of the family... The Saudis do not like the *tariqaat*. They are against them. They do not like that you bring your differences to the two grand mosques. Mecca and Medina is there, and they guard these, and that is why they are not fond of the *tariqa*.

He has Christian friends in France, but they never talk about religion. Nevertheless, he knows that

the Christians know very well who God is. There are many religions in France – there are Catholics, Buddhists and more. The Christians know that God exists. In the same way as in Islam, they know well to make benedictions. I think that the difference lies in the prayer; that is all. They pray but in a different manner. And I must tell you that I know very well that the Christians are fantastic – they are very pious, they have a good heart – more than the Muslims.²³

He uses an orientalisising grammar with a positive mirroring at the same time as his othering of the Christians is encompassing. It resembles the orientalisation and encompassment done by the shaykh though it is more varied due to his experiences in France. He is also othering other Muslims, orientalisising the North Africans in an excluding way. His reflections on the Haalpulaar Islamic culture and the Islamic culture of the Saudis show new aspects of his self-identity as a Muslim, including the importance of the Saudi way.

The extremely small minority of Christians in Futa Toro consists of only 'outsiders' from other parts of Senegal or from abroad. It is a very isolated position to be a parish priest there and the parish life is much more fulfilling in other parts of Senegal, not to mention Congo where one of the priests grew up in a mixed neighbourhood. There had been no marriages and no baptisms in the church in Podor during the last decade. Many of the Christians are teachers and quite a few of them stayed in Futa for several years.

We are three Christian teachers at my school. Only three, a Jola, a Manjak and a Serer (...) Even if we are only a few, when we are standing in front of the great many of people who are all Muslims, and we are there, upright (...) it is like a grand oeuvre for us, a prestige.²⁴

In other parts of the interview, the same person takes a very strong position on her vocation as a Christian in a minority position. No one can make her 'part

23 Interview with Souleymane 11.11.2010.

24 Interview with Marie 8.11.2010.

with her religion', and she had been in danger of just this when about to marry a Muslim who would like her to convert to Islam.

When she is put under pressure, she identifies herself very strongly as a Christian. She also feels the pressure of belonging to a minute group of Christians in an all-Muslim area. This accentuates the normal minority attention to how politicians such as President Wade act and whether they respect the constitutional rights of religious and ethnic minorities. My interlocutors stressed the constitutional egalitarian grammar. This segmentary logic is accepted in working relations where different religious affiliations are voiced. A Christian working in a local administrative institution may have a photo of the Pope visiting Senegal or a painting of Jesus decorate his office just as his Muslim colleagues have a large photo of their Sufi shaykh on the wall.²⁵ A teacher tells about the practice among colleagues at meetings:

Sometimes when there are meetings of the colleagues, the teachers, the headmaster and even the administration they pray their way. And when they pray, they take us into consideration and ask us to pray, too, in our way. Before they start the meeting and before the finishing, they again ask us to pray in our way. And we pray in our way in front of them and they, too, pray in front of us.²⁶

A third kind of pressure is the encompassing grammar of the majority which Christians meet whether in state politics or in the rare everyday debates.

When we say that God is unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit this is the mystery of the Trinity. (...) Therefore, they do not comprehend the difference between our use of the word 'God' and their own use of the word 'God'. (...) Moreover, it is considered a scandal when you tell a Muslim that Jesus is the son of God. To a Muslim this is a scandal.²⁷

The othering done here is clearly orientalist. Another interlocutor, a priest, argued differently. He finds a theological dialogue possible and his discourse switches between different grammars. He interprets the sacrifice at Tabaski and at Easter in a way that the two religious festivals form a point of convergence, a third party, whereby the binary orientalist grammar becomes ternary. He also points to the figures which Muslims and Christians have in common: Moses, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the grammar becomes universalising and almost

²⁵ Interview with Martin 7.11.2010.

²⁶ Interview with Marie 8.11.2010.

²⁷ Interview with Martin 7.11.2010.

encompassing when he says that the values shared by Christians and Muslims are practically the same and found in all religions.²⁸

Summing Up

The overwhelming majority of Haalpulaar Muslims in Futa Toro and the minute number of Christians coming from other parts of Senegal determine the selfing and othering there. Even among migrant workers in France very few have had the chance to transgress the boundary between Christians and Muslims, and the othering done by the Muslims rarely involves Christians. When asked about this, they use an orientalist grammar with a positive mirroring or an encompassment grammar. The latter has a strong attraction partly because of the doctrinal openness in Islam towards Christians as one of ‘the people of the Book’ and partly because of the majority position in Senegal and more so in Futa Toro. In France, it seems that the encompassment has more facets than in Senegal and people in Futa Toro who have lived in countries in Africa with many Christians have experienced boundary crossing in neighbourhoods and jobs.

Apart from migration, such structures as the joking relationship between the Serer and the Fulbe, and the intercessory prayers done by a Christian pastor and a Muslim shaykh turned a binary orientalist grammar into a ternary.

In France, the immigrants did their selfing and othering in interplay with the North African Muslims where an orientalist grammar was used. The religious and ethnic selfing was strengthened through the organisation of prayer rooms and a yearly religious reunion. The younger generation uses the segmentary grammar when they argue for equal rights as citizens and the right to be French and Haalpulaar at the same time. It is the same grammar used by the Christians as a minority in Senegal. As a minute group of non-Muslims and non-Fulbe in Futa Toro they use the orientalist grammar and a negative othering when they feel under pressure.

South of the Gambia

The Geographical Context

The entire region of Kolda is very fertile and the economy is based on a type of agro-pastoralism, where cattle are still enormously important. Though Fulbe make up 75% of the population, more in the rural areas and less in the towns,

28 Interview with Paul 8.11.2010.

many other ethnicities are represented, some of them by very small groups like the Manjak, living on both sides of the Senegalese-Guinean border.²⁹ The region covers Fuladu, a Fulbe kingdom at the time of the French colonisation. The history of the Fulbe population, its Islamisation and the French in this area is quite different from the situation along the Senegal River. In spite of links with Futa Toro in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the Islamisation has historically been linked to religious and political entities further south and east (N'Gaïde, 1999, 141–164).

The urbanisation there has a different character than in Futa Toro and so has the pattern of Christianisation. In the north, the Christian mission was restricted to Saint-Louis and to serving the army along the Senegal River until the independence. South of the Gambia, Christianisation focused on the Jola. It had Ziguinchor in Lower Casamance as its starting point, but only really set off further inland in 1940 and again in the early fifties. According to official statistics from 1993, based on the 1988 census, 93,4% in the Kolda region are Muslims, 5% are Christians most of whom live in the towns or, together with adherents of local religions, in some of the villages inhabited by people from one of the small ethnic groups like the Manjak.³⁰

Emigration from the Kolda region came rather late compared with Lower Casamance and the regions along the Senegal River. Some of the earliest migrants could still go to France, but when migration really started in the 1980s, it was easier to find work in Spain. Though the Fulbe abroad help their families in Senegal, my interlocutors insisted that the Fulbe in Fuladu did not have a tradition for village associations such as the ones found in Futa Toro and among the workers in France.

There are two major towns: the regional centre Kolda with around 71,000 inhabitants, and Velingara with around 27,500 inhabitants (estimates for 2012), the centre of the *département de Vélingara* in the eastern part of the region where Medina Gounass is situated.³¹ The latter is officially a village, but its number of inhabitants is the same as Velingara. It is the centre of the administrative district, the *communauté rurale*, a religious centre and a trade centre.³² These towns are bigger than the towns in Futa Toro and many aspects of

29 http://www.ansd.sn/publications/annuelles/SES_Region/SES_Kolda_2009.pdf p.9–10, accessed 17 May 2012.

30 http://www.ansd.sn/publications/rapports_enquetes_etudes/enquetes/Rapport_RGPH_88.pdf p.27–28, accessed 17 May 2012.

31 <http://www.finances.gouv.sn/UserFiles/Estimation%20de%20la%20population%20du%20Senegal%20de%202005%20a%202015.pdf> p. 10–12, accessed 17 May 2012.

32 <http://www.pepam.gouv.sn/acces.php?idcr=10313>, accessed 17 May 2012.

Muslim-Christian encounters in the towns resemble developments in other Senegalese towns such as Mbour. In the following, they will be seen in the context of rural Fulbe communities.

Two Villages and a Returned Migrant

In 1936 a Haalpulaar shaykh from Futa Toro,³³ together with some other Haalpulaar and Fulbe from a Sufi village near Kolda further west, founded Medina Gounass, his paradigmatic Islamic Tijani village, east of Velingara. Nobody could have the right to acquire land and to settle in the village without being a *talib*, a disciple of the shaykh, and following his conservative religious line. This town and its yearly religious retreat in the bush nearby attract pilgrims not only from Futa Toro, but also from abroad. From Medina Gounass they established similar Islamic villages during the first years after World War II (Smith 2008, 18–26, 49–59). Darou Hidjratou (Darou) is one of these. It has around 1,100 inhabitants and is by far the largest village in the district.³⁴ A sharifian shaykh is its religious leader.³⁵

Darou is interesting due to its close links to Medina Gounass and to the yearly reunion in France, as the shaykh's family of the village is intermarried with the shaykh's in Medina Gounass and the shaykh's in Mbour, who is the leading figure of the reunion in France that was mentioned earlier. Since Darou has a similar status to Medina Gounass only the shaykh's disciples can live there. Christians visit the place and are well received when they occasionally stay to work or study. As a sharifian village, of course, the village is special, but on an issue such as the pattern of migration, it resembles other villages in the area.

The villagers' selfing and othering involve their ethnicity and its geographic and social subdivisions and their adherence as *tulab*, disciples of the sharifian shaykh. There have been strong disagreements on the choice of educational strategies, whether to send their children to the Qur'anic school of the shaykh or to the Franco-Arabic public elementary school, recently established in the village (Smith, 2014a).

The shaykh identifies himself as a Sufi and as a teacher and also as an agriculturalist who wants to develop the Islamic training of the children in his care and to implement new farming projects. His younger brothers worked in Paris, some of them as businessmen, still shuttling between the French Antilles, France and Senegal. The migration and residence in Paris brought the most

33 Cerno Mouhamadou Saïdou Ba.

34 <http://www.pepam.gouv.sn/acces.php?idcr=10311>, accessed 17 May 2012.

35 The shaykh in the village is a sharif, a descendant of the Prophet.

well-known of them into wider Muslim circles. He became a Shi'ite, attracted followers and after his return to Senegal, he built up a position for himself as one of several Senegalese Shi'ite converts, reinterpreting Tijani prayers and his own position as a sharif according to Shi'ism as well as establishing a school and a rural community, led by him. His nephew, the oldest son of the shaykh, became a Shi'ite when he was in his twenties and in the beginning of his thirties, in 2009, he left to study Islam in Iran. During his early twenties, he stayed for four years in Belgium, where he was an unskilled worker, learned to speak French and became a *républicain*, adhering to French political ideals. Before leaving for Europe and after his return to Darou Hidjratou, he involved himself in many activities in the village such as creating a football-team, encouraging a women's group (*groupement féminin*), and in 2005 getting a francophone public school established by the state in the village. The impact of these two Shi'ite 'modernisers' on the villagers and maybe also beyond the village community, is far more serious than the encounters between Christians and Muslims, says a Serer politician in Velingara who worked as an accountant in the practice of a Senegalese shaykh and astrologist in Paris.³⁶

Christianity does not play a role in all this self-identifying and othering. The fact that two Jola Christian masons worked in Darou Hidjratou some years ago seemed to be of interest only because they chose to stay and marry and thus converted to Islam. Otherwise, people in Darou, like in other rural areas, get their information about Christians and about the possibility to transgress the religious boundaries from friends and relatives who live in Velingara, Dakar or in Europe.³⁷

A few from the village have managed to get upper secondary education in Dakar, studied in France and now work in France. They are not likely to return to the village, but still they invest in the education of the children in the family, in cattle and in the family house. The selfing and othering done by my young interlocutor in Paris was quite open, including both his childhood in an environment where people were born, grew up and died as Muslims, and his studies, job and friends in Paris. He identified himself as a Muslim living in a way where it was not possible for him to practise his religion the same way as in Darou. He did not think that it was necessary to be religious in order to be a good person and never had a chance to discuss religion with his non-believing friends and since he had not come to know anything about Christians this way, he only knew about Christianity through its public manifestations. Discussing

36 Interview with Abdou 26.11.2010.

37 Interviews with Mouhammadou 23.11.2010, Alpha 24.11.2010, Mamadou 25.11.2010.

politics and *laïcité*, he supported the idea, but found that the French were hypocrites because of the way they practised it.³⁸

Another interlocutor, one of the early migrants who left in 1993, had learned the Qur'an in the school of the shaykh for 15 years. At the time he emigrated without knowing any French, he was teaching the children there himself. He is 55. In many ways, he resembles the early Haalpulaar workers mentioned above, but he has no family in France. The interview took place during his yearly visit back to his family in Senegal: the parents, one wife in Darou, and another wife in Velingara. In France, he works nights and sleeps during the day. According to him, Christians and Muslims in France do not partake in the religious festivals of the other. As for the Muslims they have difficulty in celebrating the *Tabaski* since they cannot sacrifice the sheep themselves but have to buy the meat in shops.³⁹

When he first came to Europe, he thought that all Muslims were Tijanis. Then he heard that Muslims differ about Islam, which he ascribes to their human condition prone to making errors. For him religion is one. 'This was not the religion. The religion is always simple; it is always open to the world'. He came to know Christians through his work, and he uses an encompassing grammar and the positive mirroring of orientalisating at the same time, as he is open to a debate as to which religion is better.

True Muslims and true Christians all believe in the same, only today the Christian religion is a little more tolerant than the Muslim one, and it is only God who knows which is better. The humans all think that they are better than the other.⁴⁰

He is actually more liberal than the migrant interlocutor in Kanel and closer to another Fulbe migrant quoted below.

As the crow flies, Darou is 20 km away from the second village, Pakour, but there is no connecting road to this local administrative centre, some five km from the Guinea-Bissau border. Only dirt roads connect it to Velingara. Pakour is interesting because about 10% of its Fulbe population is Christian due to a Catholic mission that started the first school in the area in the late 1950s. The actual parish priest is a Serer and he characterises the parish as a Fulbe enlarged family, which is different from the parishes in Futa Toro and from towns like

38 Interview with Adnane, Paris and correspondance exchanged in May 2011.

39 On this, testimonies varied according to whether the interlocutors were married and had families in France (and Spain) or they were single.

40 Interview with Moustapha 25.11.2010.

Velingara where the parishioners belong to different ethnicities. The othering done by the Muslim majority is open towards the Christians. A clear sign of this is the fact that the community recently re-elected a Christian as its political leader, as the *président du conseil rural*.⁴¹ Muslims as well as Christians attend events of a ceremonial nature, inaugurations of ceremonial buildings and religious rites of passage. This was demonstrated recently when Muslim as well as Christian relatives of the young man to be ordained in the church took part in the service, and everybody in the village contributed to the event.

Since the Fulbe habitually marry cousins, there are many mixed marriages, even if Christian parents seek to prevent their daughters from marrying a Muslim, because of the very strong risk in this patriarchal system that her children will become Muslim. According to an interpretation commonly found in Senegal as every child is born a Muslim, it equals to a conversion if any of these children becomes a Christian. Still, things may change, because non-Fulbe Muslim and Christian teachers come to work in the area. Changes may also be due to the influence from migrants in Spain and from the NGOs.

Another way of transgressing borders appeared in an interview with a pastoralist, who had returned to the vicinity of Kolda after 20 years as an unskilled worker in Bordeaux. He is in his mid-sixties and adheres to a less conservative Tijani branch than people from Darou. In Kolda, he monitors a modern business, which processes and sells milk. At the same time, he keeps an eye on his cattle herd (500 cows) in a wooded land nearby. His family were cattle owners and at one time, he learned a bit of the Qur'an and Hadith in Dakar. Together with seven others, he migrated in 1967 and the families considered them spoiled 'good for nothings', going off and leaving their cattle in the hands of others after having sold some of it to finance the travel. He is the only one out of this group in Bordeaux who has chosen to return to settle in Senegal. He did it around 1985, when he got tired of not being able to find a job.

The fact that he spent part of his holidays in France in a village where they appreciated his knack of dealing with cattle meant that he was in close contact with the people there and could talk with them about Christianity. He also tried to read the Bible. Though he attended evening literacy classes, he found them difficult and never became a good reader. He visited cathedrals and marvelled at the birds flying there, at the enormous windows and at the statues that look as if they were alive and 'all this hundreds of years old. It is still there.

41 I was introduced to him by the widow of the first *subpréfet* based in Pakour with whom I was travelling. She worked in the civil service in Velingara (1978–83) and later on in Kolda and we discussed what I had observed in the village. Most of the information comes from interviews with the president of the *communauté rurale* and the parish priest 24.11.2010.

It is really a work of believing'. As these experiences made a lasting effect on him, he moved towards universalism further than my interlocutor in Darou. 'All religions are the same: You must not do evil', he said.

Once, an old woman of a neighbouring village had died. People from another neighbouring Manjak Christian village came to the village of the dead and prayed at the funeral. Yet, a shaykh from another village arrived and told them to go away, saying that their attendance was contravening the rules of Islam. However, my informant told him to be quiet on the authority of his own superior knowledge of the Hadith and the religion. Ever since, this shaykh has not been a friend of his, but he does not care, since 'there are certain things that it is not all right to say. It is going to poison the world if you do not stop it'.⁴²

The Towns and Politics

In Velingara and Kolda, the Fulbe are the largest group of inhabitants. Both towns have a Catholic church with private Catholic schools attached, and there are a few Franco-Arabic schools linked to mosques.

Employees in the public sector come from different parts of the country, belong to different ethnic groups and to different religions. As in Futa Toro, these workspaces have a special ethos referring to the constitution, to ethnic and religious liberty and to egalitarianism. The interlocutors who were administrators identified themselves as working within this ethos in the administration, and not taking ethnicity or religious affiliation into consideration. When representing Senegal to visiting French administrators one interlocutor used a grammar encompassing the minority of Christians, which is in accordance with the national Muslim self-identification as tolerant, and implicitly excludes non-Senegalese Muslims and those who were not tolerant.

In his reflections on the role of the emigrants from the region he recognised that they had ameliorated the living conditions of the population and that they had opened the villages to the world. However, he also pointed to the problems in this process: that the migrants bring in new things and 'create a split between generations because there are still some old values, certain values that keep up the community'.⁴³

Many administrators had attended private Catholic schools when they were young. These schools have a special significance mediating the Christian-Muslim dichotomy since the majority of the pupils are Muslims while the schools teach both Christian religion (optional for non-Christians) and the subjects of the francophone state school. As long as the private Franco-Arabic

42 Interview with Wari 1.12.2010.

43 Interview with Aliou 26.11.2010.

schools do not have any Christian pupils, they do not create a ternary space in which the Christian-Muslim binary couple may be mediated.

Since the towns have Christian parishes, chances are that people live in mixed neighbourhoods or have Christian colleagues. Therefore, they cross the borderline between Christians and Muslims on several occasions in a way that is impossible in Futa Toro. More Muslims experience the sharing of days of religious festivity. The parish priest visited Muslim religious leaders at the time of their religious festivals and people celebrating Tabaski at home. In Velingara this way of including the other in some families went as far as to the Muslim husband in a mixed marriage attending Easter and Christmas services, though not partaking in the rites. Leading imams visit the church at Easter and Christmas as do members of the municipal council and civil servants, representing the town hall.⁴⁴

Social structures such as mixed marriages mediate between ethnic groups and religions, though here, as well as elsewhere in Senegal, many Muslims would not allow that any of their children were brought up as Christians or that a daughter married a Christian. As in Futa Toro or the Fuladu Fulbe rural areas, conversion is a boundary not easily transgressed. 'The religion does not allow it' the argument goes.⁴⁵

No rules are without exceptions, though. The politician who had worked in the office of the shaykh's 'spiritist' consultation in Paris is married to a Christian and there are posters of different shaykhs and Christians in his house. His children are Tijanis, Murids and Christians.⁴⁶ Some of my Muslim interlocutors had Fulbe names, but when we talked about their relations, it became clear that they had grandparents who were Jola and Christian and that some of their relations were still Christian.

Since no Christians have been elected to the municipal council, a Muslim Serer has taken up the challenge to defend the interests of the church if needed.⁴⁷ A Christian interlocutor, retired from the army, looked further than Fuladu when he said

even if there are no problems in Velingara, there are problems on the level of the state. President Abdoulaye Wade favours one branch of Islam to the detriment of the other branches and to the detriment of the Christians, who in Senegal are easy-going.⁴⁸

44 Interviews with Aliou, Jean, Abdou, Valérie 26.11.2010.

45 Interview with Abdou, Aliou 26.11.2010.

46 Interview with Abdou 26.11.2010.

47 Interview with Abdou 26.11.2010.

48 Interview with Christian 26.11.2010.

Summing Up

These anecdotal glimpses give an insight into the selfing and othering in rural areas and towns.

The density of the population in Fuladu and the importance of the departmental and regional cities of Velingara and Kolda have an effect on the relations between the Fulbe, the Jola and the Wolof and between the Muslims and the Christians. So do the migrants who tend towards universalism and an orientalist grammar with a positive mirroring.

In one village, the role of the shaykh's family is important and the effects of their members' stays in Europe are different from that of the other villagers. It has resulted in the othering of part of the shaykh's family as Shi'ite and some of the villagers are sharing some of their Shi'ite ideas. Another Muslim Fulbe village has a group of Christians, and in this village the orientalist grammar used in selfing and othering has the Fulbe ethnicity as a third party. This changes the binary grammar into a ternary. In the vicinity of the Fulbe villages there are also a few non-Fulbe villages with Christians. On one occasion, this mix resulted in a disagreement between a Muslim shaykh with his excluding orientalist grammar and a returnee, who defended the rights of Christians because of his Muslim learning and his universalist ethics. In general, the population in the rural areas is Muslim and Fulbe. In this way the Christians do not exist as 'the other', though some of the villages have people working in Europe coming for regular visits or have family in the towns. In Medina Gounass, and the linked villages, such as Darou Hidjratou, the othering also involves the Senegalese state and the constitutional ethos of civic liberties and egalitarianism. The grammar used is orientalist since the shaykhs only respect this ethos to a limited degree.

The selfing and othering is different in towns that are administrative centres, since more Christians and more people from other ethnic groups live there. Some of the returned migrants choose to settle in the towns. The constitutional ethos binds the employees in public workspaces even if a national self-identification as tolerant is part of Muslim administrators' selfing and entails an encompassing grammar towards the 'other'.

People in Fuladu transgress the boundaries between Muslims and Christians. Muslim children join the private Catholic schools and find friends there. Some of them later become administrators. Like in Futa Toro colleagues and those living in mixed neighbourhoods, pay visits to each other at Christmas or Tabaski and initiatory events such as birth rites and marriage. The grammar used by Christians in Fuladu was not as confrontational as in Futa Toro and in many cases the orientalist grammar had become ternary not only through the work or neighbourhood relations but also through mixed marriages. These

marriages involved both different ethnicities and different religions and some of the families had a long history of marriages involving conversions. The mixed marriages also played a part in providing future official representatives who would attend religious festivals. Similarly, the heads of the religious communities were attending civic ceremonies or sending somebody to represent them. In this way, the religious acceptance went qualitatively further than in Futa, since not only neighbourly relations witnessed it.

Conclusion

Let me return to the beginning of the article, to the constitution and the ambiguity in politics. It has been my intention to analyse this in such a way that the article presents structures as well as the discourse and the actions of individuals. My anecdotal glimpses should give an impression of the variety involved, though the article concentrates on Fulfulde speaking areas surrounding the more well-known central and western parts of the country. The grammars presented by Gerd Baumann have been a tool that has helped to argue my case without restricting myself to generalities. He characterises the grammars as weak since they see identity and alterity as mutually constitutive.

These grammars are not about to collapse into an annihilating anti-grammar concerning ethnicities or religions. A few and faint Fulbe voices talk about the Fulbe taking up arms against the government that, in their view, promotes the Wolof at the expense of the Fulbe. More alarming are the voices proclaiming Senegal a country only for Muslims, but these remarks stand isolated. They are not 'normal' and do not represent a slide towards annihilation, though the violent Islamisation in northern Mali since summer 2012 has made the existence and presumed growth of such groups in Senegal disturbing.⁴⁹ Actions of the former president, Abdoulaye Wade, have been seen as problematic, openly displaying the president's adherence to the Murid *tariqa* and disregarding the constitution in other ways, such as making Christians and Christianity the scapegoat when defending himself against the heavy critique of the African Renaissance Monument. His grammar was orientalist and his mirroring of the Christians negative. Leading Christian and Muslim personalities persuaded him to withdraw from this position. Under pressure, the President behaved in accordance with Baumann's classification of the orientalist grammar as the one most commonly used by a hierarchy 'that calls itself

49 See footnote 8.

religious', while the mediators who defended the egalitarian constitution were no part of the political system, but rather belonged to two major religious systems in Senegal.

My interlocutors used the grammars when selfing and othering, and most of them used at least two, sometimes changing from one to another within one sentence. They were tools of arguing. Even if the orientalist grammar and its mirroring implied a dialogue more than the encompassment, the orientalist grammar with a negative mirroring or without the mirroring could become a monologue, too.

The grammar of encompassment, which as a grammar can be characterised as monological, was used by the Muslims most often. Islam is younger than Christianity and doctrinally encompasses Christians as a 'people of the Book', excluding religions defined as local or animist. This seems to be less important in Senegal, since very few adhere to these and they are included in the egalitarianism of the constitution. The fact that Islam is the religion of the dominant majority of the Senegalese, the few Christians and the lack of knowledge about Christianity makes it easier to use this grammar since few will be able to query the encompassment. Many of my Muslim interlocutors also slipped easily into the positive mirroring of Christians using the orientalist grammar, though the former president used a negative mirroring when under attack.

Christians used the segmentary grammar as well as the orientalist grammar with a negative mirroring of the Muslims. They slipped easily into this grammar in Futa Toro when they were under pressure from an encompassment grammar or simply from the fact that they were such a minute group facing the dominant majority of Muslims. They could not appeal to the hegemonic system of ethnicities, since their ethnic groups were also minorities along the Senegal River. Thus, they referred to the egalitarianism of the constitution, which guaranteed equal rights in their public workspaces or in a wider context such as that of the Senegalese state.

That Christians and Muslims are able to mediate, to use these grammars in critical situations, is not only a matter of personalities but also of structures that give room for a third party and thus change the binary grammar into a ternary. In Futa Toro, two such structures emerged. One is the joking relationship between the Fulbe and the Serer. The other is the intercessory prayer, made by both a Christian and a Muslim, thereby transgressing the boundaries of their religions.

In Fuladu, urbanisation and the greater number of Christians have helped to provide structures in which a third party plays a role and the binary grammars become ternary.

One such structure is the mixed marriage in which the common ethnicity works as a third party bridging the span between a Muslim and a Christian. That both are Serer is more important to make a mixed marriage succeed than it is to have the religion in common. This also goes for the Fulbe village of Pakour and its Christians. Not that they did not prefer to marry a Christian. However, given the number of Christians, they had the choice to marry into another ethnic group or to marry a Fulbe Muslim. The problem in some of these mixed marriages arose, when it came down to the religion of the children. Sometimes, the patriarchal structure was so dominant that there was no chance for a child to follow the religion of the mother.

On another level, urbanisation creates structures such as excellent private Catholic schools, where the majority of the pupils are Muslim, many of whom have later become administrators. In Fuladu (and in western Senegal) it also creates a number of public workspaces and a neighbourhood structure, where it is possible to enact solidarity at the *rites de passage* and the celebration of religious festivals. Christians and Muslims in the neighbourhood crossed the religious borderline on these occasions. So did some of the people with religious and political functions. In Futa Toro, only those who had lived and worked elsewhere had the chance to experience this.

Among the migrants, those who lived in other African countries often took part in this kind of mediating, whereas migrants rarely seemed to experience it in Europe.

In France, it challenged some migrants that the Islam of their childhood was othered by some Muslims, by the French *laïcité* and Christianity. Whether I talked with Fulbe migrants in Paris or in Futa Toro and Fuladu, visiting their families, this was always an issue. One way of dealing with it was to establish a memory site for the Haalpulaar Islamic culture with the help of prayer rooms and the yearly reunion. This was also a way of identifying themselves, when they faced the North African Muslims who were not always recognising the Haalpulaar Islam. It also helped to use a segmentary grammar: the Islam of the family, the Islam that was not proper Islam (of the North Africans) and the true Islam (of the Saudis). As regards the experiences with the French *laïcité* and with other religions in France, most often only known from events in the public sphere, they seem to change the grammars of migrants going back to Senegal at regular intervals. Some changed the grammar of encompassment into the grammar of universalism, whereby they could encompass all religions within a universal religion, and one encompassed all religions into ethics. Even if they did not meet Christians on a personal level in Europe, their experiences there challenged the encompassment of the Muslim migrants and made it more differentiated.

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Religious Pluralism and Secularism between Senegal and France: A View from Senegalese Families in France

Etienne Smith

Introduction

Senegal's model of religious pluralism and passive secularism (Kuru, 2007) has been extensively studied (Villalón, 1995; Ndiaye, 2002; Cruise O'Brien, 2003; Loimeier, 2009; Diouf, 2013; Smith, 2013) and increasingly so in a comparative perspective (Bayart, 2010; Villalón, 2010; Stepan, 2011). Religious transnationalism of Senegalese migrants has also attracted a lot of attention (Diouf, 2000; Riccio, 2004; Kane, 2011). At the same time, France's secularism has been recently revisited, especially with respect to the accommodation of Islam, now France's second largest religion (Bowen, 2009) and the expanding literature on Muslims in Europe (Moodood et al., 2006). However, the comparative study of the Senegalese and the French models where they intersect in concrete ways, i.e. in the lives of Senegalese migrants in France, has not been systematically carried out for the contemporary period. Moreover, migrants are in fact probably the best comparative thinkers (Riccio, 2004). Studying their comparative views on both the homeland's and the host country's secularism can help us rethink each in the light of the other. Senegal is an overwhelmingly Muslim country (95%) with a Christian minority (5%), while France, with a historically Christian majority (45%), has a large non-religious population (45%), and an important Muslim minority (8%).¹

This essay focuses on the views that members of a sample of transnational Senegalese families hold about religious pluralism and secularism. It is based on an ethnographic study and semi-formal interviews carried out in 2008–2009 among around 20 families near Paris, Lyon, Nantes and Rouen.² Its goal was to assess the resilience or alteration across generations of practices and views on secularism and religious pluralism. Since most studies of Senegalese migrants

¹ For estimations for France, see Beauchemin, Hamel and Simon (eds) 2010, p. 124. Orthodoxs, Jews, Buddhists and others were 0,5% each.

² I am grateful to David Laitin, director of the 'Muslims Integration into EU Societies' project (funded by his U.S. based National Science Foundation Grant SES-0819635), within which this study took place, for making this fieldwork possible, and to Jørgen Nielsen, Martha Fredericks,

in France have focused on the overwhelmingly Muslim Soninke, Haalpulaaren, or Wolof, or on the overwhelmingly Christian Manjak, I have focused mainly on families from Serer and Jola backgrounds, often left out of the picture because of their relative small numbers in France. This was all the more interesting as these two milieus are the most religiously mixed, including the internal sphere of the families. Inter-religious accommodations, transformations or tensions could thus be analyzed within intimate spaces like families and not only as external interactions with the host society and its institutions.

First, presenting some family configurations I encountered, I argue that the Senegalese legacy of religious pluralism and secularism has proven to be enduring among the Senegalese families in France, both in terms of beliefs and practices. Second, I highlight some of the transformations nonetheless taking place in the French contexts and the growing gaps these create between the second generation and newer migrants. Finally, I discuss the shifts in the respective status of the Senegalese Catholics and Muslims in the French context, and the complex interplay of this majority/minority inversion with racialisation. In particular, I try to interpret the complex situation of Senegalese Muslims in France, as they negotiate their identities between a double invisibility and a double burden as Blacks and Muslims, and practice their 'agency in tight corners' (Lonsdale, 2000).

Pluralist Families and Comparative Thinkers

For the purpose of this study, I decided to focus on two aspects of Senegal's manifold configuration of religious pluralism. First, pluralism 'from below', that is religious pluralism at the grassroots, within families and in daily lives. Religiously mixed-families are not uncommon in Senegal.³ Whether a cause or a consequence of religious tolerance, inter-religious accommodation starts within intimate institutions like the family. Have Senegalese families been able

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3 Despite the absence of reliable data on this issue, inter-faith marriages and personal choices of faith inside the family – though sometimes fiercely opposed by the families – are commonly seen in Senegal and are thus not a result of the new French context. A small survey (n = 338) I carried out in 2006 in the Dakar region, shows that, even beyond the specificities of the religiously mixed Jola or Serer areas, kin networks and circles of sociability are religiously diverse: 68% of Catholics respondents had Muslim kin, and 100% had Muslim friends,

to maintain religious pluralism? Have views on cross-religion marriage remained unchanged or have they evolved after people started living in France? Secondly, I will focus on the state narrative ‘from above’, that is Senegal’s national republican political culture and the ways people use these official narratives on secularism and religious pluralism to frame and assess their own experience. Did this framing change in France? How does this Senegalese national narrative fit or confront the new national narrative experienced in France?

I argue that the set of practices and normative justifications inherited from Senegal do seem to have some enduring effects despite new socialization contexts and state narrative in France. First, parents very consciously strive to transmit to their children what they see as some key features of the Senegalese inter-religious tolerance they have inherited from their own parents. This was particularly the case in religiously plural nuclear families, but was also true for more homogeneous families where the diversity of the extended family or previous experiences in Senegal made religious diversity very familiar. Second, although a variety of views were expressed on the respective secularization levels of the Senegalese and the French society, most of my interlocutors preferred Senegalese rather than French style *laïcité*, even though some expressed concerns about breaches in religious balance in Senegal under president Wade (2000–2012). There was no major criticism of secularization as such. It was seen as primarily the role of the parents to sustain religious belief or practice among their children, but also taken for granted that the state should not be hostile to religion and show equal respect to religions.

Angélique and her Family

Angélique, an auxiliary nurse by profession, lives in a suburb of Paris.⁴ She arrived in France when she was 20 in the early 1980s. After staying a few years, she went back to Senegal before settling for good in France in 1993. She is a fervent Catholic, Jola, born and raised in Casamance, just like her two brothers Raoul and Marcel, who went to the same Catholic schools in Senegal and who later joined her in France. Raoul, a cook by profession, is single. He almost got married a few years ago, but because his future spouse was a Muslim and her family asked him to convert, he finally called off the marriage, unwilling to

which is not surprising given the small percentage of Catholics in the population. More importantly, 16% of Muslims of the sample also had Catholic kin, and 72% had Catholic friends.

4 The first names of all my interlocutors have been anonymized, but carefully keeping track of their religious and cultural connotations. Names of the suburbs have been anonymized (but not big cities like Paris, Nantes, Lyon and Rouen).

convert. He lived with Angélique from 1996 to 2001 and now lives in another suburb. Marcel, a security guard, moved into his sister's apartment in 2001 for a few years, then left for another suburb after getting married to a Catholic woman from the Central African Republic.

Angélique goes to church every week and is a member of a prayer group. During her first stay in France, Angélique married a Cameroonian Catholic, with whom she had two children, Albert born in 1982 and Augustine born in 1985. She then divorced and received custody of both Albert and Augustine who she raised living between France and Senegal.

Albert was raised Catholic. He was baptized and took his First Communion. But at the end of adolescence he converted to Islam, became a Murid⁵ and changed his name to Saliou. He left school at the age of 15 and has had no real job since. Augustine was also raised Catholic, but she married a Senegalese Muslim, Haalpulaar (Toucouleur), and accepted to convert to Islam and change her name. Angélique did not oppose this marriage and Augustine actually does not practice her new official faith. For her friends and her identity papers she is still Augustine. She's an auxiliary nurse like her mother.

Angélique later married a Senegalese from Casamance, a Muslim, with whom she had two more children, Bakary in 1991, and Khady in 1993. She herself did not convert to Islam, as her husband did not ask for it. They are now separated.

Bakary and Khady have Muslim names chosen by their father but they are only nominally Muslims because they live with their mother and hardly see their father. Bakary does read the Koran sometimes and calls himself a Muslim, but he never goes to the mosque nor does he pray. Khady refuses to identify as Muslim. She does not pray and eats 'like everyone else' (i.e. she eats pork). According to her uncle Raoul 'she does everything the Catholics do, except that she doesn't go to church'.

Angélique said she was sad that her oldest son Albert became Muslim and that her second son Bakary would not embrace Catholicism. Yet, she argued that she could not compel them, 'especially when they become adults, it's their choice, I have to respect that'.⁶ Her brother Raoul is a 'fervent Catholic'. The screen display on his mobile phone shows an image of Jesus. He is quite critical of recent trends affecting Senegal's religious balance: 'Islam dominates in Senegal, clearly, but it's excessive! The murids, they took over Senegal!' He also told me that he did not watch the Senegalese TV as often as before, because, according to him, increasingly too much airtime had been devoted to Muslim religious programmes.

⁵ An adherent to the Muridiyya Sufi order.

⁶ Separate interviews with Angélique S. and her brother Raoul S., Paris, 17.12.2008.

Angélique and her two husbands (divorced since)	Angélique (Joola)	Catholic husband from Cameroon		Muslim husband from Senegal (Mandinka)	
Children		Albert (Saliou)	Augustine	Bakary	Khady
Age in 2008		26	23	17	15
Religion during childhood	Catholic	Catholic	Catholic	Muslim	Muslim
Religion as young adult or late adolescent	Catholic	Muslim (Murid)	Muslim	Muslim	Catholic
Reason for conversion		Senegalese friends in France and USA are Murids. Many travels to Senegal.	Mariage with a Muslim Senegalese (Haalpulaar)		Living with her mother and not the father
Regular practice of current religion	YES Fervent Christian	YES Fervent Muslim	NO Nominal Muslim	NO Nominal Muslim	NO Nominal Christian

FIGURE 1 *Angélique's religiously mixed family.*

Adèle and her Family

Adèle and her family live in a five room apartment in a suburb of Nantes, composed of small apartment buildings. The neighbourhood is predominantly white and middle-class. Adèle arrived in France in 1979, just after her *baccalauréat*, to join her husband Pierre who had arrived a year before. Pierre was a professional basketball player, then became an accountant. Adèle worked for ten years as an employee of the city council. She is well-educated and comes from a family of *citoyens* of the Four Communes in Senegal. She grew up speaking French in her family in Dakar. She attended both private Catholic schools (primary and high school) and public schools (*collège*). Shelves full of books in the living room reveal her passion for reading. On the coffee table there is the latest issue of the weekly *Le Point*, the biography of Barack Obama, the Bible, novels by Ferdinand Oyono and Khaled Hosseïni, as well as the three books of the Senegalese novelist Fatou Diome. Adèle is a devout Catholic and is a niece of the Archbishop of Dakar. Her husband is also Serer and Catholic. They go to church every Sunday.

Their eldest son, Alassane, born in 1984 in Senegal, is in fact Adèle's nephew, but Adèle and Pierre raised him as their son. He was made a Muslim by his father (Adèle's brother, himself a Muslim) but lived with them since he was one year old.⁷ He was raised like all the members of the family, receiving the

7 My interlocutors would often use the French expression *baptême musulman* (Muslim 'baptism') to refer to the Muslim name giving ceremony, rendered here as 'made a Muslim', 'received in the Muslim community' or 'given a Muslim name'.

same Catholic education, learning catechism and attending church with them as a child. In 2004 however, he started to claim his Muslim identity, overtly practicing his religion. His many friends, very few of which are Senegalese, are mostly Muslim, but also atheists and Christians. He studied languages and economics, speaks Chinese fluently and was at the time of this study doing an internship in China.

The second son, Frédéric, born in 1986 in France, and studying at a business school, described himself as a *de facto* non-believer. Frédéric made his Profession of Faith and First Communion but he does not go to church anymore and never prays. He is currently 'in doubt'. Frédéric's best friend is a very practicing Muslim, from Djibouti, and they often discuss religion together. The younger son, Matthieu, born in 1991, is also only nominally Catholic.

Adèle had to make minor changes in the house routine after Alassane's conversion to Islam. She does not cook pork when he is at home. During Ramadan, she does not change meal time for the others but she prepares a meal separately for Alassane in the morning and for the evening when it is time to break the fast. Adèle said she is used to religious diversity within the family, since her own family back in Senegal is religiously diverse. On her mother's side, they are Catholic Serer from the region of Thiès, on the paternal side they are Wolof, some Catholics from Gorée, some Muslims from Dakar. She recalls historical precedents of conversions in the family tree. Her maternal grandfather was a Catholic but his brother also born a Catholic became a Muslim when he married. Adèle argued that more and more young Muslims in Senegal, and even in France, marry young Catholics for their good moral education, their reputation of seriousness, and good schooling. But contrary to what used to happen, more and more of these women keep their religion. Two of her own sisters married Muslims but remained Catholics. Adèle said with amusement: 'You know, we Catholics, since we are a minority, if we do not marry Muslims, there would be a lot of singles!'

Adèle insisted that it would not be a problem if Frédéric or Matthieu chose a Muslim wife. She was adamant that neither Frédéric nor Matthieu would convert to Islam given the little importance they ascribe to religion. Adèle's best friend is a very devout Muslim from Senegal, too. According to Adèle, their common faith in God brings them closer together despite the difference of religion. She was fine with the current state of secularism both in Senegal and France, yet found that in Senegal secularism is sometimes overshadowed by religious activism, since 'murids are too noisy'.⁸

8 Separate interviews with Adèle F. and her son Frédéric F., near Nantes, 20.2.2009.

		Adèle and Pierre (Catholics)		
Children		Alassane	Frédéric	Matthieu
Age in 2008		24	22	17
Religion at birth		Muslim	Catholic	Catholic
Education during childhood		Catholic	Catholic	Catholic
Religion as young adult		Muslim	"in doubt"	Catholic
Regular practice of current religion	YES	YES	NO	NO

FIGURE 2 *Adèle's religiously mixed family.*

Frédéric, on another hand, said that he did not know Senegal well enough to voice an opinion, but then argued that 'in France, we look too much for differences between religions, it doesn't facilitate cohabitation, whereas we should be looking for the common ground, that's what is needed! Some people and the media create problems that shouldn't even exist!'

Mathilde and her Family

Mathilde and her family live in a small apartment in a suburb of Nantes. The neighbourhood of small apartment buildings is working-class and very diverse, inhabited by families originally from the Maghreb, Portugal, and sub-Saharan Africa. Mathilde's apartment is decorated with Qur'anic writings in frames. Many DVDs of Senegalese soap operas and music video clips pack the shelves.

Mathilde was born in 1976 in Dakar. Her parents were modest Catholic Serer parents from the countryside. She received only primary school education because her parents could not afford to pay for secondary education. She arrived in France in 1995, with her first husband, Bernard, a Frenchman whom she had met and married in Senegal. After a few years, they separated but did not divorce. After Bernard's accidental death in 2003, she became a widow for a few years before marrying Malick, a Senegalese Wolof Muslim, whom she met in France.

Mathilde has seven children, who currently all live in her apartment. She had Kevin (13) and Adrien (11) with Bernard, and Babacar (3) and quadruplets Hassan, Husseïn, Amadou and Abdoulaye (1) with Malick. After the birth of the quadruplets she had to give up work. She used to own a small boutique of Senegalese fashion clothing after having tried many other jobs before (fruit picking, cleaning, working in a printing shop). She also used to return to Senegal once a year, but has not been back since 2005 for financial reasons. Malick has a very tiring job as security guard.

Mathilde had a full Catholic education. Her parents were devout Catholics and, when they lived in the village, they used to take her every morning to a

small church, in addition to Sunday mass. In France she would like to go everyday but the service is only on Sundays. As a young girl she wanted to become a nun. Her two eldest sons, Kevin and Adrien are Catholics and go with her to church. They were baptized in France and they took their First Communion in Senegal in 2005. Their French father Bernard was an atheist and it was Mathilde who insisted on giving them a religious education. The five other children were made Muslims. She describes them as 'more on the Muslim side' than the two elder ones, who are Catholic. Her wording was interesting, implying in her view a kind of religious continuum between her children rather than a clear distinction of categories. As if, in other words, being a Catholic and being a Muslim was more like oscillating between two poles on a spectrum, rather than a fixed position. Or, as if she perhaps still saw her younger kids as potential Catholics. 'Their father insisted on giving them Muslim names, and actually we had an argument about that!' Malick is a practicing Muslim and he goes to the mosque from times to times. Mathilde does not cook pork at home, but she eats it when she eats out or with her friends.

Mathilde said she will not impose any religious orientation regarding the marriage of her children

as long as they are happy with that person. You should not impose that on your kids, it's their choice. (...). My role is to give them a good education and morals, so that they don't do bad things, that's how I was educated, that's why I'm not in the street doing some things..., it's thanks to the education my parents gave me, so for my kids it's the same, I must raise them well. Then, their choice of religion or spouse, it's their life!

Mathilde has two best female friends. One is French and atheist. Mathilde took her to Senegal for vacation once and later on this French friend married a Senegalese Muslim but she did not convert. They now live together in Nantes. Her other best friend is a Senegalese Haalpulaar and a practicing Muslim, married to a cousin 'as Toucouleur often do'. Mathilde added jokingly that she is 'ready to go and "kick his ass" if he marries a second-wife'. Regarding the controversies on *laïcité* and the veil in France, Mathilde hesitated:

This debate about the headscarf... I think in any case that everyone is free to do what he wants, it's a country of freedom. So everybody is free to wear the veil or not. Senegal is a secular [*laïc*] country, too. But there is more attention given to Muslims than to Christians. Sometimes with my Muslim friends, in our discussions, you can feel

Mathilde and her husbands	Mathilde (Serer, Catholic)	Bernard (French, atheist)		Malick (Senegalese, Wolof, Muslim)				
Children		Kevin	Adrien	Babacar	Hassan	Husseïn	Amadou	Abdoulaye
Age in 2008		13	11	3	1	1	1	1
Religion at birth or during childhood	Catholic	Catholic	Catholic	Mulism	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim
Regular practice	YES	YES	YES					

FIGURE 3 *Mathilde’s religiously mixed family.*

the imbalance, but it’s also because we, Catholics, are not very numerous in Senegal.⁹

Nouha’s Family

Nouha was born in Ziguinchor, and is of mixed Jola-Mandinka origins. He was a policeman but was fired in 1988 because of the political events at the time. Left with no income at home, he came to France in 1989. After overstaying his visa, he became an illegal immigrant for a few years in Paris, working in catering. He recalls bitter experiences of racism. He then moved to Lyon where he found a community of fellow Casamançais. He finally obtained a residency permit and now lives in a housing project in a suburb of Lyon. This was made possible thanks to his only French friend in 2004. He then decided to bring his family over to France. His son Mamadou Lamine, a student with a Master’s degree in economics arrived in 2006, followed by Nouha’s wife Maïmouna in 2007. One of his daughters is married to a Senegalese and lives in Spain. Nouha has not returned to Senegal since 1989, and plans to go there only once he retires. He feels a bit nervous about it, because he knows that the country has dramatically changed in 20 years.

Nouha’s family is entirely Muslim. His father was a Tijani, but did not show it.¹⁰ ‘You know, before, people didn’t proclaim out loud what they were, who was who, you could only notice the difference by looking at the rosary. But young people nowadays, they choose and then they scream it loud!’ Nouha prays regularly but does not go to the mosque very often.

Regarding cross-religious marriages, Nouha does not see religion as a problem: ‘It’s up to my children to decide, it’s not my problem! You take what you want! Well, for my daughter, if the guy is violent, or if he drinks too much, then I’m going to talk, I’ll say something, but the last word will be hers’. Then he

9 Interview with Mathilde B., near Nantes, 20.2.2009.

10 An adherent of the Tijaniyya Sufi order.

added, in what seems to be more a cultural than a religious categorisation: 'But not Arabs! Arabs they don't fit into the mould, they always want to be on top! What they say has to be right, you cannot say anything. But Chinese, why not, they only work and don't draw the attention. Chinese and us, we live the same way, we are the same...'

His son, Mamadou Lamine, born in 1977 in Senegal, identifies as a Tijani too. '*Laïcité*, I know it well, I've always lived with *laïcité* because I'm Senegalese, so I don't have any problems with that. But here [France] *laïcité* is not the same. When the state participates in some cultural or religious events, I don't like it. Here, it is so clear that the state is not neutral. Mamadou Lamine then criticized the 'double standard' of the state towards religion, which he sees as treating Muslims differently from Jews for instance. He suggested that the French state is biased towards the Jewish community, for instance anti-Semitic assaults are widely mediatised 'but this is not the case when Muslims are targeted'. He also criticized the 'law against the veil'. 'When women want to wear the veil, they are not allowed, but why forbid them from doing it if they think it's good for them?' Mamadou Lamine's friends are mostly Senegalese, or fellow sub-Saharan Africans. He has few Arab friends and speaks very harshly against the 'Arab youths' in his neighbourhood who 'create all the problems and disorders here. Young people from Africa, we're not like that, we don't do anything like them, but then this negative image of the neighbourhood reflects on us'.¹¹

The latter comment seemed to echo his father's negative views on 'Arabs' but at a different generational level, as if Mamadou Lamine, a recent migrant, wanted to dissociate himself from the stigmas ascribed to the *jeunes de banlieues* of his neighbourhood.

Gustave's Family

Gustave lives with his wife Julie and their three daughters. Gustave, a Jola, born in a medium-sized village in Casamance in the 1970s, arrived in France in 2000 and settled in a suburb of Rouen, a block away from Luc and Juliette, the grandparents of his wife Julie, born in 1978. Luc, a Manjak, and a docker by profession, born in 1923, arrived in 1959. Back in Senegal he was an animist but converted to Catholicism because his wife Juliette made it a condition for their marriage at the end of the 1940s in Senegal. Gustave is the director of the local cultural centre. Julie, who used to work in a bakery, is the president of a local

11 Joint and then separate interviews with Nouha B., Mamadou Lamine B, and Maïmouna C., near Lyon, 7.3.2009.

association of African women who organize informal micro finance projects and intercultural events for the community.

Gustave and Julie go to church with their three daughters, born and baptized in France. The family went together to Lourdes, Chartres, Lisieux and Notre-Dame de Paris, typical sites of Catholic pilgrimages in France. Gustave volunteers at a Catholic community association organizing summer camps for the youth from the suburbs. The association is Christian but open to interreligious contacts. 'When we do prayers, we organize common prayers, Christians with Muslims. Then everyone does his own prayers on his or her own. Of the roughly 40 adolescents I supervise, around 30 are Muslims, the rest are Christians or "neutral".'

In Gustave's family, back in Senegal, everyone was Muslim, except for his father who was a *tirailleur* (colonial conscript) and attended a Catholic school for a while. He thus became Catholic and transmitted this education to his son. Gustave is really proud of this education, and feels it is his mission to pass it on. He hopes his descendants will continue to be Catholics.

Despite this family's religious mixed background in Senegal and everyday religious diversity in this suburb of Rouen, Gustave is not willing to see any of his children become Muslim:

I don't see myself becoming a Muslim, no chance of this happening, no chance! Conversions, when they occur, it's because of the group, if your friends follow Ramadan for instance, or when parents have disavowed their responsibility. I'll do *anything* I can to avoid that. As long as I am alive, this will never happen! Never! My daughters, I gave them a Christian education, my wish is that they find Christian husbands. Marriages with Muslims, I've witnessed drama! And, on top of that, there is polygamy, there is pressure from the family, even if the husband is a very decent guy. I'm very open-minded but my role is to protect my daughters. It's true that it is their choice, but I will speak to them seriously, and to their future husbands, too. The most important thing is that they are happy, but if the fiancé is a Christian at least we share some values. So, I don't totally close the door, but we don't have the same values; a marriage with a Muslim always creates a lot of problems for the education of the children, baptism, catechism... I tell you, I would prefer she marries a Christian white French guy than a Senegalese Muslim, by far!¹²

12 Interview with Gustave and Julie D., and Luc and Juliette G., near Rouen, 15.2.2009.

Sira

Sira arrived in France in 1992. She had been born in Sindian in Casamance. She is Jola and Muslim, a single mother raising two daughters and working as a salesperson in a suburb of Paris. In Sira's family, everyone is Muslim. Her father was a cousin of Sheikh Sountou Badji, a cleric from Casamance, who accompanied him in his travels to Morocco and West Africa. However two of her sisters are married to Christians. 'At the time, people talked a lot about it in the family, but finally it was accepted'.

Sira describes herself as a strong believer: 'Frankly, God helps me a lot. Sometimes I suffer setbacks in my life, and he assists me. When I succeed, it's the same, I tend to think that it is the result of my work, but maybe, in fact, it is linked'. Sira is a Tijani, 'the only Tijani in the family. My father is a Niassene (a sub-branch of Tijaniyya), my mother decided to be a Murid, like her five sons, my half-brothers, and my sister is "Muslim only"'.¹³

For her two daughters, Sira would prefer Muslim husbands:

I wish they marry Muslims, because that's what I am. It's what I know the most, so if there are any problems, I'll know how to help them. But the most important is for them to be happy. If one day they fall in love with a Christian, who is good, respectful, and responsible, I will encourage them to marry him.

Sira mentioned the double difficulty of raising her children as Muslims in a country such as France while keeping the liberal and diversity-friendly Islamic traditions she inherited from her father. In a bipolarized context like France both radical secularism and radical Islam are new to her:

I'm raising them as Muslims, it's not easy but I try! But also, for instance, my first daughter, she's called Judith. I was told it is not a Muslim name, but me, I don't care! I like this name that's all! And my second daughter, she's called Amy Collé Estelle. Estelle it's a Christian name, I named her after my aunt, the wife of my uncle, to honour her, because she helped me a lot when I was pregnant. Estelle, she's Catholic, she's married to my uncle, and my uncle is a Muslim.¹⁴

When I asked Sira if she drinks alcohol, she did not reply directly but insisted that: 'Alcohol is not forbidden by the Qur'an, it is only drunkenness. And you

¹³ In French: *musulmane tout court!*

¹⁴ Interview with Sira B., Paris, 25.2.2009.

know, in Mecca, you find the worse drunkards... Saudis, they are the worse drunkards. And in Senegal, it's the same, when you see people drinking and you ask who is Christian, who is Muslim, it's even!

Abou

Abou was born in 1972, in the village of D. in Casamance. He grew up in a poor family, his father only went to Qur'anic school and was 'a typical peasant'. Abou was lucky to receive education and even started university, but then dropped out because he had no money left. He decided to go to France instead, where he arrived in 2001. He is single and works as a cook. He is a 'practicing Muslim', not affiliated to any Sufi order.¹⁵

Regarding alcohol, Abou says that he has no problem with that 'given that I come from Senegal. You know, there, in Rufisque, the S. family, they are my good friends, when they come over to my place they can drink. In France too, if I have guests, they can drink some alcohol even if I don't'.

Abou is surprised by religious problems in France. 'Cohabitation, we in Senegal, we are used to it! Here apparently people experience it differently, but some debates I hear here, we solved them a long time ago in our country! We had a Catholic president for twenty years! You see what I mean?' Abou also prefers Senegalese's *laïcité* 'which is more tolerant'. 'In France, it's not really *laïcité*! *Laïcité* should not mean banning religions, it's allowing everyone to practice.'¹⁶

From the various collected life stories, it seems clear that, despite the diversity of backgrounds back in Senegal and diverging trajectories and experiences once in France, some common normative statements and attitudes can be identified, even when opinions on specific issues might differ. Consider for instance Abou's argument on why alcohol is not an issue: 'given that I come from Senegal'. This is given as a self-sufficient explanation for his views on the matter, views that are not necessarily shared by fellow Senegalese Muslims, as if socialization in a Senegalese context intrinsically produced ideas of *convivencia* and tolerance. Likewise, for both Frédéric, born in France and raised as a Catholic, or Mamadou Lamine born in Senegal and raised as a Muslim in Senegal, France has a problem with religion. The

15 *Musulman tout court*. Although most Senegalese Muslims are adherents of a Sufi order (*tariqa*) like the Tijaniyya, Muridiyya or Qadiriyya, more and more refuse to identify to either of the *tariqa* (pl. *туруq*). This is especially the case in Casamance.

16 Interview with Abou C., Paris, 21.1. 2009.

former criticizes the emphasis on differences, the latter the unfairness towards Islam. Both make an unfavourable comparison for France in contrast to Senegal, even Frédéric who does not know Senegal very well and relies on his parents for his information. Abou, Mamadou Lamine, Sira and Adèle argue that the issue of religious cohabitation has been solved in Senegal, and that France should learn from religious pluralism in Senegal rather than the other way round. Raoul, Adèle and Mathilde mention the imbalance of Senegal's overwhelmingly Muslim religious make-up, yet also criticize growing French intolerance towards Islam, as well as the law banning religious signs in public schools.¹⁷ Arguably, Senegalese in France undergo the most dramatic change not in their practice or their beliefs, but in the public and media discourse. The anti-religion discourses present in the French public and media sphere are new to them, because in Senegal strong discourses against religion are non-existent, at least publicly.¹⁸

It seems therefore that the national arena of socialization (and its long term effects through the migrants' remembering of their experience in Senegal) is critical. Senegalese Catholics in France, on the whole, look positively on Islam thanks to their experience in Senegal. Senegalese Muslims in France share a good image of Catholics for the same reasons.¹⁹ Both groups appreciate the Senegalese model of secularism, taking this positive experience with them abroad, and using it as a yardstick to make judgments on the French model of secularism or to position themselves in recent debates affecting the French public space.

Despite the resilience of the Senegalese religious ideals of *convivencia*, transformations undoubtedly take place in the French context. I focus here on two processes, re-emphasis or de-emphasis of religion, and the gaps these processes sometimes create between generations and individuals within families, especially between those raised in Senegal and those who grew up in France. In order to understand these transformations, one needs to disaggregate the Senegalese and the French context into many sub-contexts and examine their complex interplay.

17 In Senegal, there was no controversy on the issue of veil in schools (allowed both in public and Catholic schools), until the *Direction de l'Enseignement Catholique du Sénégal* decided in September 2011 to forbid the veil in its schools. See 'Collège Hyacinthe Thiandoum: Une vingtaine d'élèves exclues pour port de voile', *Walfadjri*, 13 September 2011.

18 But strong critics of the brotherhoods or specific clerics are common in Senegal, coming from both reformist Islamist and secularist quarters.

19 Stereotypes abound though, as between any two groups, but the sociology of interreligious stereotypes in Senegal is beyond the scope of this study.

Transformations in the French Context?

Increased Religiosity or Conversion

We can trace two examples of trajectories of increasing religiosity among the families mentioned earlier. For both Saliou (formerly Albert) and Alassane re-emphasis of religion occurred in France during their late adolescence. Yet the processes were quite different. For Saliou, his mixing with the Senegalese Murids from France was the social context of conversion. His uncle Raoul recalled:

It's because he was hanging out with Murid friends in Paris and later even with their friends in the USA, whom he met in Senegal. He spent all his time with these 'Baol-Baol', they were Murids, and that's how he became Muslim. He keeps talking about it now, he never misses his prayers, he recorded the time for prayers on his computer so as to never miss one.²⁰

Saliou learnt Wolof with them and often goes to Senegal, especially for Murid religious festivals like *magal*, where he meets his Murid Senegalese-American friends.

In Alassane's case, the discovery of Islam was not in a Senegalese Muslim milieu but through his friends in France who were Muslims from the Comoros and the Maghreb. He belongs to neither of the Senegalese brotherhoods. His mother Adèle described the process of change:

Alassane did everything like us in the family, he was taught catechism after school with his brother Frédéric, he came with us to church when they were kids. He didn't receive any Muslim education, so when he decided to 'become a Muslim again', he didn't even know how to pray. He started in 2004, gradually. He started with the prayers, rehearsing them, and occasionally attending the mosque.²¹

His brother Frédéric added that:

Only last year [2008] did he try fasting [Ramadan], and he realized it was quite hard. But he didn't give up, he told me he wanted to have a true relation with God. He told me he had found a real purpose for his life at last, and that he feels good this way.²²

20 Raoul, 17.12.2008.

21 Adèle, 20.2.2009.

22 Frédéric, 20.2.2009.

Alassane does his five prayers daily, and sometimes goes to the mosque, but irregularly because of his studies. Contrary to Saliou whose conversion coincided with his failure in studies, for Alassane it occurred while he undertook very demanding studies, which he completed with success.

The reactions of the families were different, too. In Alassane's case, his mother Adèle was glad that her son Alassane rediscovered the importance of religion and has found faith, even if this was Islam, in contrast to her other son, Frédéric, nominally Catholic, who does not really believe in God. 'Alassane found his inner equilibrium in it, it appeased him. I'm in favour of that. Frédéric, he doesn't see the importance of religion, but I can't force him, I'm waiting, I believe one day maybe he'll return to God'.²³ Adèle also rejoiced that Alassane studied so much, reading the press and novels, contrary to Frédéric who 'spends his time playing video games with his friends'. Adèle thus seemed to congratulate Alassane over Frédéric, both in terms of his spiritual quest and success in studies. According to Frédéric, his mother and Alassane are in fact closer to each other than with him because of their faith, although it is a different religion: 'My mum and my brother Alassane, belief in God helps them feel good, so in that sense I believe it exists and helps them, but myself, I'm not like them, I never felt that way so I can't base my life on religion'.²⁴

In Saliou's family, the reactions were less enthusiastic about his conversion to Islam and his affiliation to Muridism. Augustine's nominal conversion to Islam was also commented upon. As we saw, their mother Angélique herself married a Muslim in her second marriage, but did not convert. In recent years she has not spoken with Albert (Saliou) or Augustine very much. This was not because of their conversion to Islam though, but rather because of the issues surrounding the divorce with their father. She seemed nonetheless slightly disappointed that her two elder children did not retain the Catholic education she gave them. Their uncle Raoul, a fervent Catholic who arrived in France much later, was much more critical. As mentioned earlier, his own marriage was cancelled because of the condition of converting to Islam imposed on him by the family of his wife-to-be. But it also seems that his status as first generation migrant clashed with that of Saliou who was 'second generation'. Raoul's argument suggests the idea that he, as a Senegalese, albeit Catholic, knows Islam better than Saliou (Albert), who was born, raised, and converted in France:

Albert, I don't even remember his new Muslim name.., well, he talks about his religion all the time, he tries to influence me too, you know

23 Adèle, 20.2.2009.

24 Frédéric, 20.2.2009.

what Murids are like! He keeps telling me: “you have to become Muslim, when you’re Muslim, you succeed in all you do!” I reply to him: “But I know Islam better than you do! You, what do you know about Islam? I lived with Muslims in Senegal. In Dakar, in my neighbourhood [Medina], I was the only Christian in the group. I myself know the holy texts better than you do, I can recite the *khassäid*! Can you?”²⁵

His remarks also show that the issue at hand is not so much, or not only, conversion to Islam as such, but affiliation to the Muridiyya, which Raoul does not like. In this underlying tension between Saliou, the new Murid, and his uncle Raoul, it is as if Raoul interchangeably criticized the Murids through his nephew or his nephew through the criticism of the Murids.²⁶

Reactions to conversions or increased religiosity, depend on the conditions of conversion, on which type of Islamic practice or affiliation it leads, on the educational achievements of the converted, on pre-existing experiences with conversion or failed cross-religion interaction, as well as with generational tensions. The shifts in religiosity are also contingent. If the ‘second generation’ status and the composition of the neighbourhood or network of friends are critical factors of conversion, increased religiosity is not a necessary outcome nor is it necessarily irreversible. Opposite trends also exist, to which I now turn.

Decreasing Religiosity: Privatization of Practice and Faith

Sira, who described herself as a ‘strong believer’, argued that she could not practice Islam in France exactly the way she did in Senegal. She gave the following explanations for the adaptations she had to make:

In Dakar I would practice every day. Here, in France, it’s the same God for sure, but I have become a bit lazy... I speak to him and he hears me... Often when I come back in the evening after work, some days I’m so exhausted I tell him “You’ll forgive me but tonight I am really too tired, I’ll make for it tomorrow, I’ll pay my debt by doing the prayers I didn’t do today”.²⁷

Sira fasts during Ramadan but never completely. She manages to fast only about twenty days before stopping which is easier to do in France. Sira joined

25 Raoul, 17.12.2008.

26 See Raoul’s negative comments on the Murids in Senegal above.

27 Sira, 25.2.2009.

a Tijani *dahira*²⁸ in France even though she did not belong to one in Senegal. This choice could be interpreted as an indication of her increased religiosity. Yet the motivations are more mundane:

I belong to it, but I don't attend very often. It's ironic because in Dakar, I'm not even a member of a *dahira* you know. Here [in France] I decided to join because my colleague in the workplace is the president of the *dahira*. He organizes meetings at the back of the shop. I joined because I wanted to see how they function, I'm interested in that.

While discussing Muslim practice in France, Sira kept criticizing those she portrayed as 'not knowing religion well enough':

Two weeks ago, during the school trip, a mother demanded *halal* sandwiches. All in all, three or four mothers complained about the absence of such sandwiches. But I told her "you don't know anything you, do you think everything you have eaten in France since you are here is *halal*?". You know, how do you say that..., well, people ask for things whose definitions they don't even know. It's like prayers... I have colleagues who pray. They ask me: "Sira, you're not praying?" I tell them that what the Qur'an says is that it is your work which allows you to make a living, work is integral to devotion to God, so I dedicate myself to work first, religion comes second. In the Qur'an it's also mentioned that when you go somewhere you must abide by the laws of the land. So, if you are at someone's place and that person gives you pork, you should eat it. Pork, yes! I must eat it, it's written in the Qur'an, if you have only that and you offer it to me, I must eat it, otherwise I will sin! I was lucky to have a very liberal father, he was open-minded, I inherited that from him. Each time I try to imagine as if it was me, I tell myself, if someone did that to me, would it harm me? If so, then, I won't do it. You have to reckon with how others see this situation.

Likewise, Abou, who calls himself a practicing Muslim, hardly goes to the mosque. Not because of lack of time but because he does not 'feel the need for it', and even more because 'it's not necessary to attend the mosque regularly to be a good believer and a good Muslim'.²⁹

28 A *dahira* is a group of followers from the same *tariqa* or disciples of a specific religious leader who pray together and often help each other.

29 Abou, 21.1.2009.

Just like Sira, Abou put forward a discourse legitimizing his own version of practice as being essentially private. Neither Sira nor Abou referred to French *laïcité* or universal secular discourses for their argumentation, but rather tapped into Islamic traditions and religious education received in their family. If changes in their actual practice are in a way related to their living in France (fewer mosques, schedule constraints, etc.), their Senegalese upbringing is what ultimately provides ready-made justifications, idioms or repertoires, to legitimize the changes in practice and ensure a smooth transition. Never did Sira nor Abou think of themselves as less Senegalese or less Muslim in this process, as a theory of assimilation would have it. Bluntly summarized, if most Senegalese Muslims in France from our sample are liberal and republican Muslims, it does not have much to do with the length of their stay in France, as paternalist assimilation ideologies would like to have it, but has more to do with the fact that their Islam, as lived in Senegal, was liberal and republican in the first place. If the transition is a relatively smooth process, it is because the continuum between the Senegalese and the French contexts is much deeper than a simplistic yet increasingly pervasive Huntingtonian conception of antagonistic religious blocks would suggest.

In the case of Nouha, who sees Islam as a religion mainly for the private sphere, the changes were minimal, too. When asked about the way he lived his religion in France, he replied:

Me, I'm a Muslim, it stops there! I'm not going to say it loud, to yell about it! If you ask me about it, if you want to know if I am a Muslim, I'll tell you. If you bring wine and put it on the table, I'm going to tell you, tell you that I don't drink wine. Otherwise I'm not going to shout everywhere that I am a Muslim, that I am this or that. It's like in the workplace, I'm seldom asked what is my religion. As long as they don't ask, I don't tell them my religion. (...) We are like the French, religion, it's in the family only, not outside. That's why my French colleagues do not know my religion, it's only if they invite me sometimes, for a birthday party for instance, and they offer you champagne, then they will ask why I don't drink and they will know.

Clearly France is a country where public religiosity is much more constrained than in Senegal. Yet, many Muslim residents of Senegalese origin only need to make some slight accommodations to this new context, and often even none at all. Nouha's son, Mamadou Lamine, claimed at the beginning of our discussion that Muslim religious practice in France is not so easy because 'there are not enough mosques. We're in the Western culture, so it's not easy. But for Ramadan

it's OK, there is no problem'. Later on, he was more precise on the issue of mosque accessibility: 'In Dakar, I go to mosque more often than here, but here it's a matter of being lazy, you know. The mosque is not even very far, but I didn't even try to find out where it is, I swear! Also I tell myself that religion here is not like in Africa... But still, I do pray every day'. He also said that he attributes more importance to religion than his parents 'because I just arrived here. In France Muslim religious festivals are not official holidays, that is new for me, you see?'³⁰

Mamadou Lamine, as seen earlier, also harbours harsh feelings concerning the unfairness of *laïcité* in France towards Islam and Islamophobia in the French media and politics. Yet, these are comments at the levels of representations and public or media discourse, which are clearly important in one's experience of the host country, but which do not encompass the whole experience of my interlocutors. Despite dramatic changes encountered in the public and media discourse on Islam in France, arriving in France was not such a radical transition for Mamadou Lamine, Sira, Abou or Nouha in terms of their own practiced and lived religion.

What about Catholics' experiences? In my interviews, Adèle, Raoul, Angélique and Gustave bemoaned the lack of concrete engagement of the young Catholics of Senegalese origin in France. Frédéric is a case in point: 'I don't really believe in God, I'm... how do you say, I'm in doubt! But I wouldn't say I'm atheist because I received this Catholic education, so I'm in the middle'. Frédéric describes his trajectory as the exact opposite of his brother Alassane and rationalized it as such: since Alassane was never forced to practice his Muslim faith he has a positive image of religion, whereas Frédéric himself was forced to practice by their parents even though he did not feel the need. That is what led him to distance himself from religion. One day he challenged his mother: 'Mum, prove me that God exists' and because he never received an answer to his question:

Since that day, I stopped attending the mass and all the rest, because it was just to please my parents that I went, it made no sense. Given that I'm in doubt and I don't know if I am on the believer's or the non-believer's side, it was better to put it in standby. Since then I didn't feel the need for religion.

30 Mamadou Lamine is all the more surprised as in Senegal all the religious holidays of the Catholic minority are official holidays (and were until recently even more numerous than Muslim ones). For a comparison of religious holidays in France, Senegal and other democracies see Stepan 2011, p. 128 table 5.3.

*Growing Gaps? Muslims and Christians, Recent Migrants and
The 'Second Generation'*

If we look closely at the processes described above, the pattern seems clearly one-sided: the trajectories of increasing religiosity relate to Islam or conversion toward Islam. Except for Angélique's youngest daughter, Khady, born and raised Muslim but who now identifies as Catholic, I did not encounter cases of Catholics becoming increasingly religious or Muslims becoming Catholics in the French context.³¹ Even Khady, who indeed can be described as a case of a *de facto* conversion, is not really practicing. She is mainly following her mother's practice.

This could, at first glance, seem to confirm the documented dynamism of the *islam des banlieues* (Kepel, 1991; Bouzar, 2001; Kakpo, 2007) and the steadily decreasing Catholic practice in France (Lambert, 2002). In the case of Frédéric and Mathieu, nominally belonging to the historically majority religion in France did not help sustain their beliefs and practice. One could argue that Catholicism in France has undergone so much secularization that this trajectory was to be expected. Both Frédéric and Mathieu epitomize the secularization trajectory of many of their Catholic generational counterparts in France. In this respect, the key factor would be the contrasting intensity of Islam and Catholicism in France. In other words, this could be interpreted in terms of the dialectics of majority and minority: as it is often the case, high intensity religious practice is to be expected in a minority, while practice among the majority tends to decrease from generation to generation. The explanation of the cases of Frédéric and Matthieu would not only be that their Catholic milieu is secularized and loosely defined, but also the very fact that Catholicism is the majority and that it is loosely defined because it was historically a majority, whereas Islam 'benefits' from its minority status. What adds complexity is that it is not only a dialectic of minority and majority in France, but an inversion of this dialectic between Senegal and France. That is where these processes need to be situated generationally, i.e. understood at

31 However, historical examples of Senegalese Muslims becoming Catholics in France abound. The case of Alioune Diop (1910–1980) is probably the most famous one. A few cases of Senegalese Muslims becoming Protestants can also be found, a sign of the dynamism of the evangelical movements in France. The Senegalese magazine *Weekend* devoted an article to the case of 77 years old Titi Sophie Sambou, a Catholic until the age of 46, then a Muslim, who finally recently became a Protestant during a short trip to France: "Extraordinaire: Sophie Sambou, catholique, musulmane puis protestante", *Weekend*, n°182, 10–16 December 2011, 50–51. One of Raoul's friend, Sophie, formerly a Catholic, became a Jehovah's Witness in France. Her husband and her son are Muslim.

the intersection of the dialectics of majority and minority and the dialectics of generations.

Indeed, the first generation, whether they are the parents of the 'second generation' who have lived in France for long (Adèle, Angélique, Nouha, Sira, Gustave) or more recent migrants (Abou, Raoul, Mamadou Lamine) has been the subject of this inversion of status from majority to minority for Muslims and minority to majority for Christians. And in fact, most Catholics born in Senegal, whom I interviewed, maintained high levels of religious practice and proclaimed belief, whereas those of the younger generation born in France de-emphasized religion, often in reaction to their parents.

For Muslims, the generational dialectic was the same but with an inverted result. Those born and raised in Senegal were not really affected by the dynamism of *islam des banlieues*. It is precisely among them, whether they arrived in France a long time ago, or as relatively recent migrants, that I found most cases of privatization of faith and practice, unlike their younger kin born in France who arguably also inscribed themselves in a strategy of differentiation *vis à vis* their elder kin, exactly like their Catholic counterparts, but in an inverted manner, through increased public religiosity – while their parents embodied this invisible, privatized Islam.

As a result, beyond religious difference, there seems to be a common cultural gap between those raised in Senegal and those raised in France. This religious divergence thus reflects social, linguistic, educational and generational issues.³² If one was to try and generalize the argument beyond the life stories collected here, it could be summarized as such: individuals born in France from Senegalese parents (whether Catholic, Muslim or mixed) did experience a shift, either turning to a more militant religiosity (often as a part of a group socialization process with non-Senegalese Muslim youth from Maghreb, Middle-East or Comorian origins, with proselytizing Murids from Senegal, or with non-Senegalese Christians from the Caribbean or Central Africa) *or* to an increased indifference towards religion. Either way, their parents born in Senegal lamented this. These shifts did seem to set the new generation apart from their own parents but also from more recent migrant kin from Senegal who were critical of both militant 'Arab Islam' and French 'excessive secularism'. They would lament about their kin born in France as being either would-be 'Islamists' or astray 'atheists', both positions being seen as radicalization

32 The rift within families between the second generation and new migrants was especially clear between male kin, an almost structural cleavage (pertaining to professional achievement, perception of discrimination, appreciation of the host country, language) detailed analysis of which is beyond the scope of this study.

processes, departures from the 'good path', i.e. the norms and practices from Senegal. Conversely, those like Sira, Abou, Nouha or Raoul who spent most of their life in Senegal were able to maintain most of their normative views and set of practices relatively unchanged despite minor adaptations. This contrast seems to confirm that a 'second generation' French context produces greater polarizing effects than social contexts in Senegal in which earlier or later migrants were socialized. The latter arrived in France as adults whose sets of beliefs and practices were already well entrenched and hence less likely to evolve, than those of the second generation children born in France crafting their own beliefs and practices in a highly bifurcated French context.³³

On the whole, despite some cases of increased religiosity it can be argued that both Muslim and Catholic individuals from my sample living in France rather de-emphasize religion, and that this process was made possible by pre-existing norms and practices from the country of origin. Of course, one needs to disaggregate the 'pre-existing norms and practices from the country of origin', since the milieu of origin and the type of Islam within Senegal can be very different. It might come as no surprise that trajectories of individuals from the Serer and Jola families did not lead to any radicalization of Islamic practice since, as we know, these milieux of origin are precisely historically characterized by relatively recent Islamisation and a rather pluralist religious make-up. The French context, then, would not be a major break for a Jola or a Serer raised in Senegal, whose *terroirs* of origin also have among the highest schooling rates in Senegal and who have very consciously tried to identify with the secular state. But for individuals from Wolof, Haalpulaar or Soninke backgrounds, whose *terroirs* offer some strong alternative socialization networks to that of the French-speaking Senegalese state, whether through Sufi orders or more militant trends of Islam, or less religious pluralism since they are overwhelmingly Muslim, the argument could be made that the break is greater and thus one could expect potential processes of radicalization. However, such an argument, while usefully and accurately disaggregating Senegal or Senegalese Islam in a variety of different contexts, conversely homogenises and essentialises sub-national backgrounds. If one could agree that Soninke or Haalpulaar backgrounds may be in many cases, and for historical reasons,

33 Tellingly, one of the most extreme cases of religious radicalism on the part of a Senegalese cleric is that of imam Mamour Fall (aka Shaykh Abdul Qadir) but in the context of Italy and not Senegal. After being expelled from Italy in 2003 for links with Al Qaeda, he tried (and failed) to develop a following in Senegal (through the creation of a *Parti Islamique Sénégalais* and a blog calling for *djihad*). He seemed more successful in attracting a small group of Chadian followers.

conducive to more militant forms of Islamic practice and self-awareness, this in itself is not a sufficient explanation for radicalization.³⁴ Within these specific cultural milieux, situational and generational factors come into play in producing the outcome.

As a side-study to my main study of families from the Serer and Jola backgrounds, I followed life stories of a network of friends of the same generation from adjacent villages in Futa Toro, from similar Haalpulaar and Tijani Muslim backgrounds: Daouda, Moustapha and Almamy. Daouda, who was born in Futa but whose family moved to a French suburb in the late 1970s, grew-up mostly in France. Moustapha and Almamy's families moved to Dakar. Later on both of them moved to France as adults in 2003 and 2005. Both are married to French atheist women. Moustapha and Almamy drink alcohol, but they keep it secret so that the elders do not see it. Moustapha never prays but attends religious ceremonies when it is a part of family gatherings. Almamy does pray sometimes, and attends the Grande Mosquée de Paris with his uncle during Ramadan. Moving to France did not change anything for them, as already in Dakar they had drunk on some occasions and practiced only occasionally.

Both of them stand in a sharp contrast to Daouda who has turned to a more militant Islam. He grew up in the same suburb where Moustapha and his wife now also live. He never drinks and does not tolerate drinking by his friends when he is present. He also does not like to speak Wolof (only French and Pulaar) while Moustapha and Almamy have no problem with speaking Wolof. He is single and does not shake hands with women any more. Most of his friends were born in France from parents from Mali or the Maghreb. He is very politically engaged (partaking in pro-Palestinian demonstrations and marches against the law banning religious signs in schools). Daouda does not clash with Moustapha and Almamy but they all recognize, and sometimes joke about, the increasing distance between them. For instance, for the 2005 New Year's Eve gathering at Moustapha's, both Moustapha and Almamy resented the fact that Daouda imposed a non-alcoholic evening.³⁵

34 For cases of religious radicalization among the Soninke in France, see Timera (2003). More recent cases appeared in the French or Senegalese press. On Omar Diaby ('Omsen'), a Senegalese salafi arrested in Nice in December 2011, see *Enquête*, N°242, 27 March 2012, p. 2. On Almamy Baradji, a Soninke (Malian) preacher in Seine-St-Denis, expelled from France in April 2012, see "Première vague d'expulsions d'islamistes", *Le Figaro*, 2 April 2012.

35 Interviews and informal conversations with Moustapha, Daouda and Almamy, between 2004 and 2008 in Dakar and Paris.

Daouda's trajectory seems to vindicate the 'growing up in France' polarization or radicalization effect. Moustapha and Almamy's trajectories, conversely, confirm that arriving later in life as adults whose beliefs and practices were firmly established growing up in Senegal, seems to neutralize any 'French context' effect. Their belief and practice remained unchanged in this new context, even though they now live in similar conditions as Daouda (and even the same neighbourhood for Moustapha who has become friends with most of Daouda's militant Muslim friends). In light of these life stories, these Haalpulaar migrants do not appear to be very different from their generational equivalents from the Serer or Jola backgrounds whose liberal views cannot be attributed merely to the legacy of the specific Serer or Jola local *convivencias* but also to a national context of socialization and political culture – in other words, to what seems to be a distinctively 'national' Senegalese legacy.³⁶

Multiple Invisibilities: Between Religious Invisibility and Racialisation in France

External Identifications and Discriminations: When Race Eclipses Religion

When investigating perceptions about possible divergence between the Catholics and Muslims of Senegalese origin in France, some of my interlocutors would argue, and provide examples, that the Catholics fare better than the Muslims. When asked about possible explanations, the issue of the good Catholic education resurfaced. Comparing life trajectories within my limited sample, it appears indeed that academic capital is the key factor. However, in this respect, the parents' religion is only partially relevant. Strategies of education for the children instead depend on economic capital, which explains why Muslims and Catholics alike attend the best schools in Senegal, even if for historical reasons the likelihood of academic capital is perhaps slightly higher for the Catholic minority. All in all, whenever I was looking for religion, I would encounter class. As a result, trajectories of the Muslims and the Catholics within my study were not divergent enough to make even limited claims about religion as a factor explaining social mobility in a French context.

Furthermore, all my interlocutors without exception insisted that colour rather than religion was the key element of discrimination in France, and this

36 It is clear, for instance, that those who have got radicalized did so in contact with non-Senegalese Muslims and usually criticize Senegalese brotherhoods or Senegalese popular Islam as 'distortions' in a typically reformist language.

affects both Catholic and Muslim Senegalese migrants.³⁷ Because race remains the ‘master status’ (Waters, 1999, 5–6), the black ‘condition’ (Ndiaye, 2007) comes to the fore, trumping any other type of categorisation. Minor differences were nonetheless mentioned, such as the religious connotations of first names. Muslims and Catholics alike agreed that Catholic names were better received than Muslim ones when applying for jobs, for instance.³⁸ This observation would lead to a variety of strategies. Mamadou Lamine, for example, who witnessed the successful Francisation of his first name by a Moroccan neighbour, cut his name in half in his curriculum vitae so as to erase its religious and geographical connotations.³⁹ Abou mentioned the fact that in some Muslim families he knew, Muslim first names were sometimes deliberately discarded to avoid possible future discrimination:

One sees more and more families who give Christian names to their children or names that don’t have religious connotations. You know, for instance, we, among the Jola, we have traditional names which are neither Christian nor Muslim, which are typically Jola. They are becoming fashionable again, like Djignabo, Nanika, Assoua, Kaïraba... It helps to reconnect with the roots, but it’s also a kind of protection.⁴⁰

In many instances of mixed-couples, the names were cautiously chosen to avoid ‘overly obvious Muslim names’.⁴¹ These slight onomastic advantages for

37 This point is confirmed in quantitative studies. See Beauchemin, Hamel, Lesné, and Simon (2010). Among migrants from the Sahel (a category in which our Senegalese sample would fit), 81% mentioned race and 3% religion as the cause of perceived discrimination. Among the second generation, 81% race and 6% religion (Beauchemin, Hamel and Simon, 2010, 132). Among my interlocutors, the most salient issue was that of a colour bias in identity checks by the police (also determined by age, gender and look), ranging from at least once a month for Frédéric and Alassane, regularly for Mathilde and once in a decade for Adèle, Roger or Nouha. On racial profiling by the Parisian police see Jobard and Lévy (2011).

38 The ‘foreignness’ of the name also counts, beyond its religious connotations. Moreover, Senegalese family names which have French equivalent, either in script or sound (for instance Faye, Paye, Sene) were described as an asset.

39 The name cannot be reproduced here to keep in line with anonymization but the erasure of the second part of his first name clearly removed the foreignness and Muslimness of the name for a French audience.

40 Jola names are also back in fashion in Jola families in Senegal (Moreau, 2001).

41 Interviews with Fanny and Moustapha, Sophie and Almamy, 2008. Since a lot of Senegalese first names, although clearly Muslim, often do not carry such connotations for French audiences, it allows some flexibility for choices.

Christians do not imply that the Senegalese Catholics are benefiting much from their new position in France. First, as mentioned earlier, my Catholic interlocutors felt that they were affected by discrimination as much as Muslims since colour was the criterion. Even when trying to explain a better-off situation in a given example, the given explanation was never that of being a part of a 'cultural majority' but of good educational standards in the family thanks to the Catholic schools in Senegal. In fact, many of my Catholic interlocutors mentioned their isolation. Not only as a result of the middle-class status achieved by some, but more so because of their small number and dispersion in France: 'We don't live together or near to each other' said Raoul, as he explained that he only met *Antillais* at the church, never fellow Senegalese Catholics. The same argument was made by Gustave and Adèle whose Catholic friends are not Senegalese but French, Caribbeans or from Central Africa. Gustave mentioned that the church was key for his 'integration' allowing him to meet people when he arrived in Normandy. Yet, he also alluded to the lack of representation of Blacks in church institutions. He was the only Black in the layperson pastoral council. Senegalese Catholics, as a matter of fact, are not really visible in Catholic France, or at least much less than Caribbeans, or migrants from Central Africa or coastal Western Africa.

However, if the Senegalese Catholics are invisible because of small numbers, the Senegalese Muslims are also invisible despite a larger numerical presence.

Black Muslims: Double Burden or Double Invisibility?

Contrary to the Catholics, the Senegalese Muslims experience a shift from an overwhelming majority position in their own country to that of a double minority or alterity (as Blacks and Muslims) in France. One could expect that they would be victims of a 'double burden', that is, a combined effect of discrimination against Blacks and Muslims, being more discriminated against than other Blacks and than non-black Muslims, as shown in a recent study (Adida, Laitin and Valfort, 2010).

For mutually reinforcing discrimination to happen, the 'Muslimness' of the victim needs to be recognized or constructed by the perpetrator of discrimination. However, in the discussions with my Senegalese Muslim interlocutors, it was clear that even for them it was not so obvious that the discriminating person saw them as Muslims. As discussed earlier, for my interlocutors, blackness in itself was a trigger for discrimination. This meant that they were somehow invisible as Muslims, both in the conceptual and physical sense.⁴² The conceptual

42 See Diop (1988) and Timera (2006).

invisibility of the Senegalese as Muslims for an average French audience can be ascribed to the mental map inherited from decades of the 'colonial library' constructing a 'mysterious' or 'animist' black Africa and equating Islam with the Arab world. If *Islam noir* was popular in colonial circles, it never really reached the wider French public who has no category available for this gray area at the intersection of the Orientalist and Africanist imaginaries.⁴³ As a result, until recently, the Senegalese as a whole were rather seen as ontologically animist or Christian.⁴⁴ Their physical invisibility as Muslims is a mixture of the priority of colour over religious markers as diacritical signs in the gaze of the French, as well as the absence of obvious Muslim markers in their own way of dressing.⁴⁵

This invisibility as Muslims or 'real' Muslims in the eyes of the outsiders (both the French and the Maghrebis) stands in total contradiction to their own self-perception. Exactly opposite to mainstream media representations questioning their Muslim credentials, their self-perception in my study is that they are 'more' Muslim or even 'better' Muslims than Maghrebis. When discussing North Africans' practice of Islam, my Muslim interlocutors, especially the Tijani – although, or perhaps because, they share this Tijani tradition with North Africa⁴⁶ – insisted on their superior knowledge of the Qur'an. It would be a matter of pride, recalling a discussion with a North-African friend or colleague in which they would quote the Qur'an and comment on it more eloquently than their interlocutor, leaving him astonished.⁴⁷ The North-Africans

43 Beyond the invisibility of the black West African Muslims in Islam in France because of the dominance of the North-Africans, numerically and institutionally, Jean Schmitz identifies a second invisibility – their 'impossible negritude' at the level of representations, i.e. their invisibility in the debates about the legacy of slavery, which were critical in the problematization of blackness in the public debate, and in which the *Antillais* took the lead (Schmitz, 2006). As a result, the only way to emerge in the public debate was through the category of the *sans-papiers* in the 1990s (Siméant, 1998), as successors to *tirailleurs* (Mann, 2006), which carries no clear religious connotations, although it did help popularize the image of the Muslim 'Sahelian' in France. For my interlocutors, however, 'invisible negritude' was not an option, because in daily life and in the discriminatory external gaze, the legacy of slavery makes no difference.

44 Among my interlocutors, Julie was the only one to argue that for most *Français de souche* (she used the expression herself), the Senegalese were seen as being 'primarily Muslims' (Julie, 15.2.2009).

45 Except for migrants wearing the 'boubou', especially the Soninke and Haalpulaar from rural backgrounds, who are more easily identified as Muslims.

46 The Tijani order has strong links with North Africa (Morocco and Algeria) where the brotherhood was founded.

47 There were differences, though, between Tijani interlocutors who would like to show themselves competing with an Arab Muslim interlocutor in the knowledge of the Qur'an,

would be criticized either for being too Salafi or Wahhabi, or on the contrary for being hypocritical, i.e. claiming superior Muslim legitimacy as Arabs, or being uncompromising on pork, while drinking alcohol and doing 'plenty of *haram* things'.⁴⁸ In many discussions, as hinted earlier with Nouha or Sira, I witnessed a recurrent contrasting of 'we' (a flexible 'we' encompassing either all Senegalese, or sometimes all sub-Saharan Africans) opposed to another group which turned out to be the 'Maghrebis'. In the following discussion about relationships in the workplace, Nouha went even further:

When we work together, Blacks will go down well, better than Arabs. Employers say they are not racist, but still, there is a small choice to make. If you can have peace, it's good. If tomorrow the guy is going to create problems, it's not worth it. We, we don't show our religion, it's the Arabs who do it. We can work with anyone, the Jews, the Catholic and so on. But the Arabs, they will ask, when they have to work with someone: 'this guy, is he not Jewish?'. We, we never do that.

Obviously, this remark needs to be contextualized. The boundary-making discursive strategy of Nouha, between 'good Muslims' (the sub-Saharan Africans) and 'bad Muslims' (the Arabs), reflects ordinary essentialisms and stereotypes, but also an ambivalent attitude towards 'the Arabs', both criticizing what he sees as their obsession with religion, and a kind of envy of their status as 'the first comers', migrants who came to France earlier (in his case) and know how to navigate the French system better than the West Africans who do not see their condition improved despite more 'docile' attitudes.⁴⁹ Nouha displayed both a feeling of fitting better in French society than Arabs, yet realizing that

and some Murid interlocutors who would rather consciously take on the role of 'exoticism' or pride themselves of a 'Senegalese specificity' in comparison with 'Arab Islam'.

48 Such criticism sometimes extended to various Senegalese religious leaders: 'And marabouts, you know, they are so hypocritical. This year during *tabaski*, one of the grandsons of Serigne X. was courting me. He asked me whether I had French papers, if I had a place to live. When I replied positively he asked me to marry him... The children of marabouts, when they come here they do plenty of *haram* stuff, they drink, they go to the brothel... I tell you!' (Sira, 25.2.2009).

49 Nouha indeed argued later that 'the Arabs' were able to defend their interests better than the sub-Saharan Africans, himself included, who remain quiet even to their own detriment: 'Myself for instance, I have like a blockade in front of me. The Arabs, they push more than we do, they protest more than we do. We, we try to do it slowly, but it doesn't pay off. That's what shocks me, if you don't shout you don't get anything'. (Nouha, 7.3.2009).

the Arabs are ahead of the sub-Saharan migrants in claim-making, rights, and socio-economic situation. As if superior entitlement was frustratingly met with lower recognition and reward.

It is clear, therefore, that this claim of being 'better Muslims' is not only directed towards North-Africans but also to the wider French public. It goes hand in hand with the claim of being more compatible with French culture and society than North Africans. In fact, the self-perception of my interlocutors that they are better 'integrated' than the Maghrebis, seems to be in contradiction with the recent evolution of outsiders' comparative perception of 'integration' of the Maghrebis and West-Africans, especially since the 2005 riots (Mayer, Michelat and Tiberj 2012; Simon, 2012), the emergence of a *bourgeoisie* (Wihtol de Wenden and Leveau, 2007) versus increasing stigmatization of 'the Sahelians' (as a shortcut for 'the sub-Saharan Muslims') as the least integrated, embodying the maximal difference with the mainstream society in terms of family structure, fertility rate or youth violence (Lagrange, 2010). However this gap in perceptions does not prevent the Senegalese Muslims from using strategies aiming at reaffirmation of superior Muslim credentials and distinguishing themselves from Arab Islam, which remains so negatively portrayed in the French public sphere.

For my interlocutors, their superior compatibility with the French society does not stem from being less Muslims than the Arabs but precisely from being better or truer Muslims. In this triangulation of political cultures and religious practices, putting forward their Muslim credentials and their credentials as secularists is not seen as contradictory, but as logically intertwined. This logical connection, obvious for my Senegalese interlocutors, is usually missed by their French audience. In this respect they are in a similar position as probably the majority of Muslims in France, including the Maghrebis, from whom they strive to distinguish themselves, who are also invisible as Muslims for not corresponding to the stereotype the average French audience has of 'a Muslim'. Given the way the issue of Islam and 'the French values' has been framed by political actors, the public seems unable to disaggregate Islam in its many styles, traditions, levels of practice and multivocality. As a result, a tolerant and liberal Islam is not visible as 'Islam' any more. It is a well-known paradox of the strategy of 'assimilation' that differences are not visible anymore because of the very nature of the process (Macé, 2007). In our sample though, and as is the case in many other migrant communities, this invisibility was not necessarily the product of a conscious strategy of assimilation, of stripping of one's core values or practices, but rather business as usual. This explains for instance Binta's amazement about the astonishment of her French colleagues:

I come from a country where we don't have these religious problems. But here it is different, I discovered that the French people are afraid of Islam, really they don't know it, they believe only what they see on TV. Some people, when they have known you well for quite some time, when they appreciate you, and then one day they discover that you, Binta, you are Muslim, it's a shock! For them, it's difficult to imagine, how can you be a Muslim and it's not visible, how come you don't wear the veil. They think like the religious extremists who think that the Muslim woman stays at home, cannot do anything without the authorization of her husband and so on. So they say, "Ok, you're Muslim, but you, you are an exception". You see?⁵⁰

The gap between external perception and self-perception is a double edged-sword. On the one hand, it creates some frustration at the inexistence of Senegalese Muslims in the discursive public space of French institutions and politics as well as in Muslim institutions in France. On the other hand, this invisibility as Muslims can be used as a tactical resource, in which case their status is finally broadly similar to that of the Senegalese Catholics as Blacks in France. This 'agency in tight corners' allows them to try and invert the balance of legitimacy of Muslimness in France. Given the negative image of North African Islam in the French media focusing mainly on issues of terrorism or burka, the Senegalese Muslims can occupy the niche of spiritual and peaceful Sufi Islam, allowing them in some instances to convert their Senegalese heritage of *convivencia* into political and symbolic capital in France.⁵¹ They are well aware that an updated distinction between an 'Arab Islam' and a 'Black Islam' plays in their favour.⁵² The whole idea of *Islam noir* can thus find a new public in France and be a card the Senegalese in France are willing to play whenever discussions on the supposed incompatibility of Islam with republican or democratic norms occupy the centre stage of French public debates.

50 Interview with Binta B., Paris, 26.11.2008.

51 For similar arguments about the historical, political, physical and cultural invisibility of the Senegalese Muslims as Muslims in the United States and how this can be turned into an asset, see Diouf (1997); Diouf (2004, 268–269); Beck (2008); Zain (2009); Zain (2010, 47–80); Kane (2011, 227–250). Senegalese Muslims in the United States are able to transform their 'dual foreignness' (Beck, 2008) into a dual asset as 'good Muslims' (distinguishing themselves from Arab or South Asian Islam) and 'good Blacks' (distinguishing themselves from African-Americans and disaggregating the Black label imposed on them) in their negotiations with local and federal authorities, see Kane (2001, 233).

52 This strategy in the host country can also have wider geopolitical extensions, as when this distinction was used to frame the conflict in Darfur, or more recently in Mali. For the latter case, see Ousman Blondin-Diop, "Menace sur l'islam noir", *Le Monde*, 29 May 2012.

The life stories of the Senegalese migrants collected for this study show the resilience of a strong Senegalese legacy which provides a repertoire of normative ideas and resources for migrants to maintain Senegalese style pluralism, judge the French *laïcité*, make sense of the shifts in France, and adapt creatively to external perceptions on their identities and practices. Consequently, they confirm the importance of the national context of socialization in the homeland in explaining some aspects of the trajectories in the host country.

But if one wants to trace a ‘cultural legacy’ of the homeland, it is a legacy of political culture – not just of ‘culture’ reduced to family structure or patriarchal norms (as in Lagrange, 2010). This fact does not imply reifying or artificially trying to identify a single unified national habitus in the domain of religion, nor a static and homogeneous political or ‘civic culture’ à la Almond and Verba. It entails a rather more trivial observation: that we must take into account some patterns of accommodation constituting the Senegalese model of secularism if we want to make sense of some enduring similarities in the experiences of Senegalese migrants beyond the inevitable diversity of trajectories.⁵³ Focusing the analysis on families stemming from Serer and Jola cultural milieux supplements rather than contradicts this argument by showing how religiously pluralistic and secular-friendly configurations inherited from the wider Senegalese context and mediated through the family tend to endure in France despite the polarizing effects of some French contexts, especially on the ‘second generation’.

However, this polarization is tempered by another phenomenon: the relatively weak dissociation of the black Catholics and black Muslims in the eyes of the host country. For the Catholics it means that some of them can feel that they are somehow not fully enjoying the benefit of their now majority religion status because of the persistence of discriminations against Blacks. For Muslims, it means that they can choose to try and make one of the two dimensions more or less salient depending on the context: ‘disappear’ in undifferentiated sub-Saharan Africanity and be forgotten as Muslims when salafism or in the name of religion terrorism monopolizes media attention, or claim this

53 This Senegalese legacy should not be overemphasized, since the same observations could probably be made, in varying degrees, for many Tunisian, Algerian, Moroccan, Turkish, Albanian, Malian, Guinean or Burkinabe families in France (see Brouard and Tiberj, 2005). Comparing these cases would rather confirm the banality of liberal Islam and go against paternalistic assumptions that migrants change (read: ‘become more tolerant and liberal’) when and because of living in France.

blackness in Islam as an asset to occupy the 'good Muslims' space available. As a result, the Senegalese Muslims and Catholics are not really drifting apart in France. Whichever way, the alternately invisible or celebrated and claimed Muslimness of the Senegalese Muslim enables the reproduction far from its original home of the Senegalese-style Islam and its enduring accommodation with Christianity and secularism.

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Dealing with Diversity and Difference in Public: Traces of Casamançais Cohabitation in Catalonia?

Tilmann Heil

Introduction

In Carrer Rosselló, a pedestrian street of a neighbourhood in Mataró, Catalonia, a couple of large seats half-heartedly invited people to rest, chat, or daydream. It was one of the few permanent installations inviting social gatherings on Carrer Rosselló. Most of the time when I passed by, a couple of people would be sitting there or a smaller group would stand around and chat. On a visit in 2011 however, one of the chairs was gone. As often before, I nevertheless found Souleymane Touré, a Balanta from the Casamance, sitting on the remaining chair. It was early in the morning and the alley was still quite empty. As the sun was rising quickly, at the far end of Carrer Rosselló a *hermandad*¹ prepared the march for the *Matinal de Saetas*, a performance of devotional flamenco songs which commonly inaugurate Holy Week. Souleymane explained that the chair had been taken away by the town authorities since a woman living in the house next to it had frequently complained about people gathering there and being noisy. When his flatmate came, they then squeezed together into the remaining chair. They continued to inhabit this space although it had caused tension. Public spaces like Carrer Rosselló were used in many ways and local residents held different opinions concerning their use. This needed to be negotiated, which in the case of Carrer Rosselló had seemingly resulted in a new consensus around maintaining the street as convivial space. Spontaneous gatherings continued to happen involving different constellations of local residents. For Souleymane this was part of the everyday and nothing spectacular.

Casamançais streets, in turn, placed hardly any limits on people gathering. *Jo, lako!*² – ‘Come, sit down!’ Leaving the yard of *Samboukunda*, the home of my first host Damé Sambou in Ziguinchor, I was often invited by acquaintances

1 Spanish: fraternity. Here the *Hermandad Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza*.

2 Jola; alternatively, people would address me in Mandinka (*naa naa, sí!*) or French. For Jola spelling I refer to Sapir’s dictionary (1993), for Mandinka to Drame’s grammar and dictionary (2003).

and friends to join one of the groups chatting and preparing tea along the street, or at a street corner during my stay in 2009/2010. Turning left from my home, the Mandinka neighbours had pulled out small benches and chairs gathering around a tiny charcoal stove on which they prepared *attaaya*, a strong green tea with plenty of sugar. A lot of time was spent drinking tea since three rounds were usually served.³ Yet people did come and go in the meantime, sharing only one or two of the rounds, and senior members or guests were included in the serving of tea even if they were not sitting with the group preparing it. This was a regular scene in the neighbourhood after lunch or dinner, and in the afternoons, often occurring in front of shops or workshops.

To the right of *Samboukunda* at the corner shop of a Fula (Pullo) was another regular meeting point for young men as well as young women selling fruit and vegetables. Sometimes the men prepared tea, at other times they joked with the women or chatted, commenting on the traffic on Boulevard de Lindiane, or their lives. While in front of the shop along the boulevard the men were in their twenties or thirties, further into the tiny streets of the neighbourhood a younger cohort of youths met at a shop after school to spend time, discuss, and frequently watch football on the shopkeeper's tv. Many of these groups were mixed mirroring the diversity of the neighbourhood. In front of my house a varied group congregated. There were Fula, Mandinka and Jola, some of them Guineans, Muslims of different brotherhoods and Christians of varying denominations.

In this chapter I focus on the practices of inhabiting and temporarily appropriating public spaces and how this is negotiated. Public spaces 'tell us a great deal about [the] most diffuse forms of social organization' (Goffman, 1966, 4). Indeed, this is particularly salient in both Casamance and Catalonia since a wide variety of people have access to them.⁴ However, I conceptualise a space of encounter as convivial space, which is socially constructed in a process of interacting, negotiating, and translating between changing practices and norms. It does not exist *a priori* as a given physical space, but can be understood as a capacity, 'an instrument and dimension of people's sociality' (Corsín Jiménez, 2003, 140). Convivial space emerges from the fragile process of conviviality, living with difference involving both harmonious and conflictual encounters. Furthermore, in this chapter, I focus on how convivial space

3 On a detailed analysis of preparing *attaaya* among male youth in Dakar as a way of coping with unemployment and creating solidarity, see Ralph (2008, esp. 15).

4 I am aware that there are transit spaces like Dakar, other West African capitals and West African, North African and European transit spaces that have an impact on interethnic and interreligious encounters. This however is beyond the scope of this chapter.

emerges in open spaces, which in principle are equally accessible to all. Public spaces such as a pedestrian zone in Catalonia, as well as a walled house yard in Casamance can be considered as open spaces.⁵

The French emic notion of *cohabitation*, often used by the Casamançais, was central in describing everyday encounters and coexistence with neighbours whether they were culturally or religiously different or not. It defined the interaction with both members of the household and people living in the same neighbourhood (hereafter referred to as neighbours or local residents). *Cohabitation* thus complemented experiences of intermarriage, joking relationships, cultural adaptation, and conversion which all cross ethnic and religious boundaries in Casamance.⁶

Casamançais migrants also face cultural and religious diversity in Catalonia. In this chapter I ask, how the use, sharing, and appropriation of public spaces feature in a Casamançais way of living with difference in both Casamance and Catalonia. Different dimensions of *cohabitation* emerge to varying degrees and are negotiated depending on the local context. In the following I deal with instances of convivial space as it emerges from both everyday life encounters and celebrations held in public. They support an understanding of *cohabitation* on the level of practice rather than discourse. I conclude by showing that the successful negotiation of inhabiting and temporarily appropriating open spaces for various and differing practices forms convivial space. It relies on the emergent minimal consensus that is crucial to understanding living with difference in a locality.

Throughout the chapter I will mainly present a male perspective, since most of the 18 months of anthropological fieldwork in both Casamance and Catalonia was with men.⁷ In Catalonia my informants were mostly Muslim migrants from the middle and lower Casamance region. In the Casamance I spent time in their neighbourhoods and villages of origin with their families and friends. Depending on age and education, my informants conceptualised the notion of *cohabitation* to varying extents. They also reflected on the existence of diversity and interaction quite differently. However, socio-economic background did not systemically change Casamançais practices or the general norms they adhered to. Therefore the main comparative perspective of this

5 The observation that open spaces cannot simply be equated with the public complements Lofland's (1998) analysis that in the public realm practices on the continuum between private, communal, and public take place.

6 See, for example Jong (2005, 2007), Dramé (2006), Linares (1992), and Smith (2006, 2010).

7 I am aware of the bias inherent to this limitation. To add a gendered perspective remains a future task.

chapter remains between the two sites, Catalonia and Casamance, concerning the use, sharing, and inhabiting of public spaces.

In Catalonia, this analysis focuses mainly on Cerdanyola, a peripheral neighbourhood of Mataró and its only pedestrian street Carrer Rosselló. Further Catalan sites are Sabadell and Granollers, two towns similar to Mataró, each at about 30 kilometres from Barcelona. In Casamance, most ethnographic examples stem from Ziguinchor, the regional capital of lower Casamance. In Ziguinchor, I primarily refer to the situation of the peripheral neighbourhood of Lindiane and its main thoroughfare Boulevard de Lindiane. Examples from Sédhiou, the regional capital of the middle Casamance, complement the Ziguinchor material.

Next, I will set the scene giving the backdrop of diversity in both Catalonia and Casamance. Subsequently I engage with everyday uses and ways of dwelling in public spaces. I first present everyday street scenes in Casamance and Catalonia. Secondly, I compare religious and ethnic celebrations in both locations. These events foster a better understanding of how convivial space emerges from sharing and negotiating the use of open spaces. In the conclusion I trace both the ways in which convivial space is part of Casamançais *cohabitation* and the impact of the different Catalan context on the minimal consensus of living *with* difference.

Diversity in Catalonia and Casamance

Increased immigration from West Africa to Europe links Casamance and Catalonia. In general, Spain has been an immigration country for the last three decades, with the numbers of immigrants rising sharply since the early years of the new millennium and comprising over 14 per cent of the population in 2010.⁸ Within Spain, Catalonia is a primary destination for immigrants with over 1.3 million foreigners living there (17.5 per cent of the population) of whom every third immigrant is a Muslim (Moreras, 2008, 18) – nearly six per cent of the total population. Although the majority of migrants tend to come from North Africa and South America, the number of migrants from Senegal is also growing. Casamançais migrants are concentrated in certain areas of Catalonia, such as the Maresme and Mataró.⁹

8 Instituto Nacional de Estadística: Revisión del Padrón municipal 2010, www.ine.es, accessed 11 May 2011.

9 Studies mostly subsume the Casamançais under the Senegambian category (Kaplan Marcusán, 1998, 2003, 2007; Sow, 2004, 2005). I suggest that many of the approximately 18,500

West African migration is not a recent phenomenon. Taking the Casamance region as an example, migration is at the heart of a variety of different forms of diversity: ethnic, linguistic, religious, and national.¹⁰ Accounts go back to the 13th century when immigrants from the Mali Empire settled in the lands of the Casamance river, which was previously mainly inhabited by the Bainouk ethnic group (Roche, 1985, 53–56; Quinn, 1972, 482). Equally, the Jola of the lower Casamance were immigrants as well as the Fula of the upper Casamance (Roche, 1985, 28–32; Linares, 1992, 84–90; Quinn, 1971; Bâ, 1986, 60–65).¹¹ Later, Muslim marabouts came with their Mandinka followers to convert people to Islam (Leary, 1970, 1971). The independence movement of the Fula, previously under Mandinka domination, also sparked significant migrations (Bâ, 1986; N'Gaide, 1999; Quinn, 1971). This spatial mobility never really stopped. Traders always circulated, slaves were sold and shipped, migrant labourers went to harvest rubber and palm oil, and to cultivate the groundnut fields in both Senegal and the Gambia to earn their living (Foucher, 2002, 64; Mark, 1976, 1977; David, 1980). Later, migration to the urban centres of Bathurst (today's Banjul) and Dakar complemented all other migration movements (Hamer, 1981; Linares, 2003; Lambert, 2002; Foucher, 2002; Reboussin, 1995). After labour migrants started to move to other West African countries, migration to Europe was just another step in a long migration history (St. Jacques, 2009).¹²

Today, Casamance is very internally diverse. Over one in five inhabitants is neither Jola, Mandinka, or Fula (the main three ethnic groups) but in the national census ascribes to another group (ANSD, s.a.). In the Ziguinchor and Sédhiou regions, Muslims account for around 90 per cent of all inhabitants north of the Casamance river, whereas south of the river in the departments

of the 60,000 Senegalese in Catalonia are Casamançais (cf. Instituto Nacional de Estadística: Revisión del Padrón municipal 2010, www.ine.es, accessed 11 May 2011).

- 10 A focus on everyday practices of residents in Casamance, as put forward in this chapter, offers an alternative perspective on this region, which is otherwise known for the longest, although low level violent conflict between the separatist movement MFDC and the army (cf. Marut, 1994, 1996, 2010; Foucher, 2002, 2009; Jong and Gasser, 2005; Evans, 2005; Faye, 1994; Benoist, 1991).
- 11 Since 2008, the natural region of Casamance is divided into three administrative regions: Ziguinchor, Sédhiou, and Kolda. They respond in common parlance to the lower, the middle and the upper Casamance respectively. In my study I only deal with people from the lower and the middle Casamance.
- 12 Publications dealing with Casamançais migrants in Spain refer more to the Gambian places of origin (cf. Kaplan Marcusán, 1993, 1998). But there are other accounts of the global reach of Casamançais migration, e.g. to Argentina (Traoré, 2009; Zubrzycki and Agnelli, 2009).

next to Ziguinchor, Christians and so-called traditional believers account for between a quarter and two thirds of the population (ANSD, s.a.). In Sédhiou, Mandinka is the first language for nearly every other person and spoken by nearly everybody else as a second one, while in Ziguinchor first languages vary a lot and Wolof is the second language for around half of the population.

The cultural and religious diversity of Catalonia has also multiple dimensions. In the 1950s and 1960s, Castilian labour migrants came from the south of Spain to Catalonia (Bover and Velilla, 2005; Silvestre Rodríguez, 2002). Entire new neighbourhoods, such as Cerdanyola, were built to accommodate them. The binary coexistence of Castilian and Catalan inhabitants more recently was complemented by the diversity of origins of international immigrants. In Cerdanyola, local statistics show that one in four inhabitants is born outside Spain, and every other person outside Catalonia. Of those born outside Spain, the majority are from Morocco (44.5%), and more than one in five is from Senegal or the Gambia. Chinese and Latin Americans also constitute large groups. At least every eighth person is Muslim in Cerdanyola (Ajuntament de Mataró, 2010).¹³ These are the regional and local configurations in which the everyday lives of people are embedded. Next I explore how people inhabited, negotiated, and thus shared spaces.

Casamançais Street Gatherings

Sitting in front of the Fula shop along Boulevard de Lindiane enjoying the company of changing constellations of various people while drinking *attaaya*, we were at one of the many invisible crossroads of Ziguinchor's cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. Both Jola and Mandinka were strongly represented in the neighbourhood, but there were also members of many other ethnic groups resident in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, there was internal variation among members broadly sharing the same ethnicity having come from different areas including the neighbouring countries (Guineas, the Gambia). Lindiane was also a *cartier catholique* (a Catholic neighbourhood) since many Christians lived there sharing the same spaces with Muslims and followers of traditional religions. Residents of the neighbourhood also followed various occupations, had different sources of economic income and support, and lived in quite dissimilar housing within walking distance from one another. Every encounter combined a particular set of diverse people.

13 I take the share of the Moroccan population as the best, although conservative proxy for Muslims.

This was most obvious in their language practices. Left to my house they would mainly speak Mandinka, while at the shop Jola and Wolof prevailed, sometimes interspersed with Fula.

Courtyards also classified as open spaces since during daytime people from different places congregated there attending to their various businesses. The day I arrived at *Samboukunda* I discarded any illusion of homogeneity or clear segregation. Damé's family were Jola Muslims, but only one actively claimed to belong to a brotherhood; he was Ibadou.¹⁴ A teacher renting two rooms in the back of the courtyard was a Jola Catholic from Guinea Bissau who had fled during the independence wars at home. His cousin, staying with him, had not converted to Christianity. The corner shop of a Muslim Fula also belonged to the same courtyard, and thus his family and apprentice shared the same space. This internal diversity reflected the overall configuration of the neighbourhood and was multiplied outside in the streets, along footpaths, and other open spaces.

Most of the infrastructure everyone relied on was temporary, both at the shop and at the Mandinka neighbours. The benches and chairs were temporarily taken out, accommodating whoever joined in. Another neighbour, however, had brick benches along the wall of his yard leaving no doubt that gatherings were very much part of everyday life. Tree trunks randomly lying around could also be a site for recurrent gatherings. Yet, during the rest of the day they were meaningless. At other times, a carpet taken to the shade of a mango tree was enough to prepare tea, eat peanuts or mangos, or just spend time together.

Attaaya was only one, although widely observed form of gatherings among neighbours. According to Michael Ralph's informants, preparing tea had gained popularity among urban unemployed youths from the beginning of the economic crisis in Senegal (Ralph, 2008). However, the groups along Boulevard de Lindiane contained a mixture of people. Indeed, some of the regulars in the tea ceremonies were waiting for their economic opportunity, thus having plenty of spare time to spend at home, or rather outside of homes. Yet, nearly everywhere teachers, workers, or fishermen joined the gatherings at the end of their work day and shop keepers or local craftsmen could take a break to have tea with others. Furthermore, tea was shared with neighbours currently

14 A follower of a Senegalese reformist movement seeking to practise orthodox Islam. They derive their name from the Qur'anic term *Ibadu ar-Rahman* (Slaves of the Merciful) and are organised in the *Jamaatou Ibadou Rahmane* movement (Cantone, 2011; Loimeier, 2000; Villalón, 2004). While there are four large Muslim brotherhoods in Senegal, this hardly ever came up as a topic in Ziguinchor. The general idiom was that of unity: 'we are all Muslim' (no matter which brotherhood we belong to), or 'we are Muslims, *tout court*'.

working at a workshop or at home. Both the mechanic and the women doing the chores were regularly offered tea. Indeed, apart from being a way to kill time (Ralph, 2008), having tea among neighbours, family, and friends was a moment in which *cohabitation* could be appreciated. Spending time together was enjoyable and sharing tea, peanuts, or fruit often was a sign of respect when a guest, senior, or members of the adjacent households were served.¹⁵

Gatherings seemingly without another purpose than to be sociable were common in Ziguinchor. In villages they tended to be more formalised and the *bentang*,¹⁶ the palaver platform, often marked their space in the physical environment. In Sakar and Koussi, families and friends gathered on the *bentang* of their courtyard or along the street during midday and in the evening. Men also met on a platform at the *banta-báa*, the public place opposite to the mosque, in the evening and after Friday prayers in particular. While at the *banta-báa*, men would discuss village affairs, the gatherings elsewhere had various qualities often bringing family or groups of friends together. The co-presence of women and men was mainly confined to the *bentang* in the yards, which during daytime and in evening qualified as open spaces accessible to everyone. Women would nevertheless fade in and out of other encounters, for example at a bus stop or a corner shop, exchanging news, greeting in passing, or being served a glass of tea.

In Sakar where all but two families were Mandinka, everybody was at least acquainted and going somewhere villagers frequently slowed down to catch up with individuals and groups of people along the way and in courtyards. The gatherings were thus reference points attracting flows of people. They hereby linked the otherwise seemingly static clusters of groups. Koussi, a very heterogeneous village, was little different in this respect. While there were disputes in the village between Mandinka and Fula about leadership, greeting and meeting in open spaces remained an essential part of the everyday.

The presented spontaneous meetings and regular gatherings were integral part of everyday village life and certainly also of the routine of large segments of the population of regional towns like Ziguinchor and Sédhiou. The spaces were shared and inhabited by various local residents. In towns, more often

15 Ralph agrees that tea ceremonies were a form to live Senegalese *teranga*, an encompassing form of hospitality (Sylla, 1980, 89–91). He suggests that ‘when folks have idle time, a family member or neighbour might make tea for all to enjoy. The custom is to serve guests first’ (Ralph, 2008, 3), and he states that ‘informal tea ceremonies provide the occasion to discern moral values’ (Ralph, 2008, 17).

16 There are many versions of the same word that all have to do with *banta-báa* or *bantango*, the palaver tree (Drame, 2003, 103–104; Quinn, 1972, xvi, note 4).

than not, the groups of people inhabiting open spaces did so more spontaneously, taking out as many benches and chairs as there were people. To spend time outside and to live differences as part of the everyday was widely taken for granted.

Although preparing tea or just being outside often happened in fixed constellations and remained gender and age differentiated, they were also very inclusive. At times it could involve people of various religious and ethnic groups, at others women and men, or people of different age, although less frequently, would sit together. Serving tea to someone working close by, or someone joining in for one round of tea were only looser forms of weaving the social fabric of *cohabitation*. People dealt with many differences in switching languages, offering stools to sit on to elders and guests, and adhering to diverse origins and religions. During gatherings, the social practices of local residents resulted in the emergence of convivial space. It could often be transient as people joined and left social situations frequently, at times only greeting in passing. Most situations conveyed a seamless fluidity evident in both communication and movement. While internally diverse gatherings were a site of living *with* difference and at times developed a specific taste of locality,¹⁷ differences between gatherings added to the diversity in the neighbourhood. The co-presence of several gatherings in relative proximity to one another and to other activities also hinted at the wider consensus of conviviality which granted everyone the right to temporarily dwell in open neighbourhood spaces.

Carrer Rosselló – A Casamançais Street Scene in Catalonia

In Catalonia, open spaces were scarcer than in the Casamance and confined to squares, parks, an odd pedestrian zone, or a pavement during certain times of the day. One afternoon in October I set off with Famara Badio, a Mandinka from a mixed Casamançais village and a friend from Sakar who lived with Sierra-Leoneans. Turning into Carrer Rosselló, the latter met a white Rastafarian acquaintance and decided to stay and chat. On the short stretch to the next intersection, passing the two seats, we continuously met people. After greeting someone from Sakar, we met a Gambian Mandinka woman with Gambian and Senegalese, Mandinka and Jola friends. Afterwards we greeted someone else from Sakar and when we returned twenty minutes to half an hour later, we

17 I see locality 'as a dimension of value' rather than the 'actually existing social form', a difference that Appadurai establishes between locality and neighbourhood (2005 [1995], 178–179).

found the same and more people chatting on the spot. Souleymane Touré was among them as were other Casamançais approximately his age.

Carrer Rosselló was a busy social space for Casamançais immigrants and bore some similarities to the everyday situations I encountered in the Casamance. On workdays people started gathering on the alley after the siesta. News was being exchanged, along with colloquial joking and pleasantries. Not far from the two chairs people, among whom there were many Casamançais, met in front of the *locutorí* (a place offering cheap international phone calls). It was close to their homes, central, and spacious enough since it was the start of the only pedestrian street of the neighbourhood. Typically, Casamançais passed through Carrer Rosselló to run errands or call home. Little shops covering the daily needs of all inhabitants of the neighbourhood lined Carrer Rosselló. Apart from the *locutorí* and the launderette, there was a South-Asian-run supermarket *Hadja Supermercat – Casa d’Africa* selling vegetables, a Moroccan bakery, a brand new pharmacy advertising homeopathy, a couple of places selling specialities from Extremadura like *jamón* (cured ham), clothing stores, *tabacs* (kiosks), a Chinese hairdresser and supermarket, and many more Catalan, Castilian and immigrant businesses. All needs could be satisfied around Carrer Rosselló and people were constantly in flux. Temporary gatherings regularly resulted from this continuous flow.

In comparison with Casamance, gatherings in Catalonia to a large extent were equally repetitive, spontaneous, and diverse. Although in Carrer Rosselló the situation was dominated by black migrants, people of different immigration statuses, education backgrounds, rural and urban origins, and ethnic and religious backgrounds at times were part of the gatherings. Various languages prevailed in interaction of both men and women from various origins and religions. Not all the Casamançais involved in the scene knew each other. Some definitely knew their fellow Mandinka or Jola better than people speaking other mother tongues. Recreating a scene that resembled gatherings in urban spaces in the Casamance Casamançais and other local residents temporarily produced locality, which at the same time emerged as a convivial space incorporating a great number of different people. While many of the practices of living with difference seemed to have migrated with them and were maintained, the biggest difference was that neither tea was prepared nor chairs and benches brought out. While a trunk of a tree or a bench incorporated in the wall permanently marked the physical space of gatherings in Ziguinchor, they were not engrained in the physical landscape of Cerdanyola. Nevertheless social gatherings were sustained and happened regularly.

Furthermore, on Carrer Rosselló the Casamançais lived their internal differentiation and conviviality embedded in the surrounding diversity of

contemporary Catalonia, which the variety of shops displayed. Casamançais knew the Moroccan owner of the *locutori* as well as some other local residents and employees in the shops. Similar to Casamance, all kinds of people passed the Casamançais early evening gatherings greeting those they were acquainted to. Yet, when the groups had grown large, it was harder for non-Casamançais to fade in and out.

As the example of the seat that had disappeared given in the introduction exemplified, gatherings in Carrer Rosselló had seen moments of conflict arising from differing interests in open spaces. Several Casamançais recalled that the constant meeting, standing and talking loudly had caused some local tension. The woman complaining and thereby causing the removal of the seat by the town authorities was only the most recent sign of the necessary negotiation of convivial space.

While Souleymane Touré and his flatmate continued to come together in Carrer Rosselló, others had changed their attitude trying to pass through open spaces quickly, not wanting to dwell outside on the street, neither alone nor with friends. Famara Badio was one of them and after passing through Carrer Rosselló recalled that in the past flyers were distributed on several occasions on the lower stretches of Carrer Rosselló, which accused the black population of polluting the neighbourhood and demanded their rights to public spaces to be restricted.¹⁸ Though it was an act of open racism, Famara in part agreed with the points raised in the flyers and reasoned that they – the immigrants like him – indeed were already too numerous in the neighbourhood and that people dwelling outside wasted too much of their time gossiping and backbiting. Others joined his perspective stating *c'est saturé*¹⁹ about the presence of the sub-Saharan in Cerdanyola. Many argued that what was possible in Casamance was not a part of the consensus of living together in Europe.

Spontaneous but sustained gatherings in Carrer Rosselló nevertheless expressed a continuity of Casamançais practices in Catalonia that to an extent matched the practices of other local residents. However they were constantly negotiated and contested both among Casamançais and within the given local context. Both in Catalonia and Casamance, the fact that social everyday life happened in part outdoors remained unquestioned. More than anything else, *how* open spaces could be inhabited or even appropriated was at stake. Casamançais took it for granted that perspectives on the use of open spaces

18 The expert of the 'new citizen department' of Mataró recalled the flyers as a difficult, yet singular incident. She stated that when they became aware of these unlawful actions, the town authorities quickly traced the troublemaker and put a stop to his activities.

19 French: 'It is saturated'.

differed between various local residents and thus needed to be negotiated. Many showed a willingness to translate their own practices to a newly emerging local consensus. It was part of their understanding of *cohabitation*. Living together necessarily was an ongoing process dependent on the changing social configurations of the neighbourhood at large. The remaining chair symbolically reinforced this interpretation. Gatherings in open spaces were possible in Catalonia also, although in a somewhat altered form which depended on the locally achieved consensus of conviviality. To what extent negotiation was a major factor in it became even more apparent during large manifestations of the kind that took place on Boulevard de Lindiane in Ziguinchor.

Negotiated Equality: Tabaski and Holy Friday in Casamance

Leaving Carrer Rosselló behind and returning to Boulevard de Lindiane in Ziguinchor, religious celebrations were one of the many ways of appropriating open spaces. On the occasion of such events, it became apparent what the consensus of *cohabitation* was based upon. Having equal access to public spaces was officially manifested and visible as a lived experience of local residents.

The day of *Tabaski* (Id al-Adha) believers gathered in the open air on Boulevard de Lindiane next to a small mosque. The Tabaski prayer took place in full length, an occasion for which the whole street was barred by praying Muslims. Taxis, mini buses, and cars had to find their way around the huge crowd through the dirt. The appropriating of the space was taken for granted by everybody. Few months later, during Holy Week and the Holy Friday procession, the boulevard was again claimed by believers. Starting at a remote point along the boulevard, the Catholic procession slowly but steadily approached the neighbourhood church with several stops, prayers, and songs on the way. Due to the heat, the procession did not stay neatly together. Instead believers tried to profit from the little patches of shade offered by houses and trees. Nevertheless, the procession continued relentlessly. Some neighbours stopped and watched the Catholics proceed. Others neither showed incomprehension, nor particular interest.

A common explanation for letting everyone proceed was the perceived equality between Catholicism and Islam, and the importance of religious practice. People in Lindiane referred to examples during which the political and religious leadership of both communities and the Senegalese state embodied this equal respect (cf. Smith, 2013). Common references were made to Senghor who as a Catholic was the first president of Senegal, a majority Muslim state,

and to the mutual delegations of religious leaders on the occasion of religious festivities to both Muslim and Christian pilgrimage cities. On the occasion of festivities as well as in everyday life Casamançais stressed the equality or even the commonalities of Christians and Muslims which resonated with survey findings from Dakar in which the common religiosity of all was foregrounded (cf. Smith, 2013).²⁰ Local residents took it for granted that everyone should be allowed to practise their religion, including the appropriation of open spaces.

During the religious ceremonies the everyday life of those not involved continued regardless, and was seemingly unaffected. Different to the shorter Tabaski prayer, the Holy Friday procession stayed confined to one side of the street and on the other side everyday traffic passed with the usual noise of screaming men and old engines. Similarly, the workshops and shops continued their sometimes quite noisy business. Both traffic and general neglect of the religious procession annoyed some participants yet without immediate consequences. Discussing the difference between Tabaski and the Holy Friday procession in retrospect, the length of the procession was negotiated against the shorter duration of the Tabaski prayer. Restricting the procession to one side of the street was the then practised consensus. This left the impression that everybody had access to open spaces to practise their religion, but not exclusively.

The sharing of food affirmed the sharing of public spaces. After the Tabaski prayer Muslims prepared extended lunches and engaged in a day long feasting to which neighbours, friends and family were invited. At Damé Sambou's house, the meat of the mutton was shared between the Muslims and Christians alike. At the house of Mamadou Bodian, the sub delegate of the neighbourhood, at times more Christians came to celebrate than Muslims. Celebrating Tabaski together was actively equated with Christians distributing *ngalax* at Easter, a sweet dish which they prepared to share with their neighbours, family, and friends to break the fasting together. Apart from a few Muslims who rejected anything prepared by Christians, everybody else accepted this Christian gift. The sharing of food was taken for granted both during Easter and the Tabaski religious celebrations. Once more the majority of people I encountered stressed the communality of practice rather than pointing out the differences.

The large religious celebrations in open spaces clarified a general attitude towards *cohabitation* that I also observed in everyday life. A notion of convivial

20 For some, the sameness of Christians and Muslims additionally relied upon having relatives adhering to both religions (cf. Smith, 2013). However, even Mandinka in Lindiane, who hardly had Christian family members, had appropriated the justifications outlined here.

space emerged that relied on the negotiated and lived experience of equal access resulting in an openness to share, use, and appropriate open spaces. Although there were differences in detail between Christian and Muslim celebrations, the equality was more strongly perceived and thus influenced everyday practices more than that the differences in power relations hampered them.²¹ The same principles applied not only to religious diversity, but also to ethnic and linguistic ones. Groups of people temporarily appropriated open spaces and dwelled therein speaking different languages, practising different religions, or celebrating private events. Convivial space relied on shared experiences, mutual respect, and flexibility, which importantly resulted from ongoing negotiation.

Discrepancies: Holy Week and Tabaski in Catalonia

The experience of the Tabaski celebrations in Catalonia was very different to the public prayer in Lindiane. Many Muslims in Cerdanyola dressed formally, often in West African *boubous*, a flowing long or half-length damask gown and matching trousers. Yet, in public spaces in the Cerdanyola neighbourhood all that could be noted were the numerous immigrants who left early in the morning for the industrial park, and returned after a while briefly continuing their conversations before going indoors. The southernmost part of Carrer Rosselló was one of the gateways through which a constant flow of Africans left the neighbourhood in the morning of Tabaski and every Friday around 2 PM. Two mosques, one with a Moroccan and the other with a Mandinka and Jola imam, housed the Tabaski prayers.²² They were former plants converted into places of worship. The Tabaski prayer happened at the urban periphery, all in contrast to the central space it had appropriated along Boulevard de Lindiane.

It provoked discussions that mosques were absent from the lived neighbourhood spaces. Fakeba Badji, a well-informed Casamançais, alluded to the strong resistance to mosques to explain why Muslims in Mataró had established themselves at the urban periphery. A Soninké association had a venue

21 In this respect, everyday experience of Smith's observation of *de jure* equality between religions and ethnic groups has a larger impact than the Senegalese state practice of proportional equidistance (Smith, 2013). This is plausible since we had seen that in Casamance the shares are more balanced than on the national level.

22 While many chose the mosque in which an Imam of their origin prayed, there was quite substantial mixing on the day of Tabaski as well as the other days. The Casamançais explained that this was for practical reasons of proximity.

some ten meters from the *locutori* in Carrer Rosselló which they had sometimes used as a place of worship. But other residents objected and even feared the large gatherings of sub-Saharanans. As a result, it was closed down by the town authorities and re-opened with its initial purpose of only teaching Muslim girls the Qur'an. Still worse, a Moroccan place used as a mosque in Cerdanyola found its entrance barred with dung of farm animals a number of times. The Moroccans finally gave up and retreated to the industrial park. While there was a Catalan movement supporting a central location for a mosque, the Casamançais preferred to avoid conflict and to negotiate equal access to public spaces slowly.

Contrary to the experience of relative equality in Lindiane, in Catalonia the treatment of Christians and Muslims was very unequal. The Holy Week celebrations exemplified this very bluntly. Apart from the large manifestations in the city centre, Cerdanyola as a hub of Castilian immigration hosted a *Matinal de Saetas* in the central neighbourhood park at the beginning of Holy Week. The morning performance of devotional flamenco songs was audible far beyond the park. Two further processions followed on Wednesday and Thursday criss-crossing parts of the neighbourhood. Despite a popular move towards secularism in Spain, Holy Week was ostentatiously celebrated while the Tabaski celebration in Mataró was kept at the periphery.

In the town of Sabadell, however, the Tabaski prayer of the same year took a different shape both in comparison to previous years and to the events in Mataró. While years earlier it was already held open air on a large field at the periphery of Sabadell, in 2010 the town authorities had agreed to move it to a more central open space in town. In retrospect Ousmane Diédhiou told the story of a success: they received the relatively central location from the town hall which facilitated the communal praying of 500–600 Muslims, as in Casamance. To be fully satisfied, he saw the last remaining obstacle in people having to work. He assumed that on a weekend or public holiday at a later hour there would have been even more Muslims present to celebrate together. Some Muslim Casamançais however were less moderate, complaining that Tabaski could not be celebrated in Europe like at home. Only the public Tabaski prayer in Sabadell and having large mosques albeit at the periphery appeared in a different, more positive light. For a majority, the religious *cohabitation* in Catalonia was only possible in the form of a relative retreat of the Casamançais from shared open spaces to the periphery.

To my surprise, this did not result in rejecting the Christian Holy Week celebrations. While a few sub-Saharanans watched the events throughout the week, they more often just went on with their own activities, for example sitting pensively in the morning sun in parts of the park not taken over by the *Matinal*.

Casamançais just let it happen the way the Holy Friday procession also just happened in Ziguinchor. Furthermore, neither food at Tabaski nor *ngalax* during Easter were shared with people other than those already familiar with the practice. No Casamançais I knew, however, saw a problem in limiting these practices central to religious celebrations in Casamance to the sub-Saharan neighbours and friends in Catalonia.

For most Casamançais relating to religious practices in Catalonia was difficult. Noticing the decline of Catholicism in Catalonia and the stigmatisation of Islam, it was a common reaction, at least temporarily, to accept a marginal position and stay out of trouble investing in a stepwise process of gaining recognition. At the outset, Casamançais went a long way to accommodate local norms. Their Casamançais experience of having equal access to local open spaces had been reduced to passively sharing the space with Christians celebrating while their own religious practice mostly remained confined to the periphery. This was a fragile consensus, but one that Casamançais perceived to be in flux. Apart from dealing with the unequal power relations between the Christian and Muslim faith as best they could, Casamançais nevertheless upheld their own notion that all religious practices should be given equal opportunity and space to being practised. Thus as Muslims they did not object to Christian celebrations and aspired to further negotiate their own position towards equal access to open spaces.

Staging Culture

The defensive position in religious terms in Mataró was in stark contrast to the vivid presence of Casamançais at the second *Mostra d'Entitats de Cerdanyola*, the presentation of neighbourhood associations registered in Cerdanyola, held on a sunny Sunday in late October 2010. 37 different associations presented themselves and their work at the *Plaça de l'Onze de Setembre*. Catalan, Andalusian, North African, sub-Saharan African, and other associations portrayed their activities in two rows of white pavilions placed on the square. At least five associations had Casamançais members, some were ethnic associations, one was Senegalese, and one Senegambian.

The turnout of the Casamançais was high, including nearly everyone I knew – a diverse sample of people. The majority of African men who were not responsible for any association in particular mostly kept to themselves and gathered in the background to the left. In contrast, the dressed-up African women mingled more with the crowd. Children of diverse origins brought movement into the rather static scene of adults standing and chatting. In

contrast to the experience of Casamançais Muslims leaving the neighbourhood to pray, at the *Mostra* they were present and confidently appropriated a space in the event. Similarly to the gatherings on Carrer Rosselló they created locality, this time in the cultural landscape of Cerdanyola. The day of the *Mostra* Casamançais had reacted to an invitation by the town hall and neighbourhood association to partake.²³ On this occasion cultural diversity was marketed as an asset. At the same time the programme staged communicated various forms of hybridisation.

The programme of the day involved many performances on the stage, and there were rumours of a prize for the best performance. Both Fula and Jola were on the programme to present something specific to them. The preparations of the Fula were going on weeks before, while the recently established Jola dance group performed yet again. Including performances of the different cultural groups resident in the neighbourhood was an expression of the official Catalan policy of maintaining cultural diversity (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009). While religious diversity was pushed to the periphery, manifesting distinct cultures offered an opportunity to live differences openly. Both the Fula and Jola used the full scope to which this was possible.

While development projects in Senegal were the Fula association's stated focus, they performed the 'play' of a 'traditional Senegalese wedding' – actually a Muslim arranged marriage. Under the label of a cultural performance, a daughter was married off to a relative of the family. Even more astonishing was the fact that a Spanish woman performed this role, which was barely mitigated by the fact that she was married to a Fula active in the association. Her make-up and dress were identical to all others, which as Casamançais bystanders remarked clearly marked them as Fula. Their whole presentation was a complete product of mixing: speaking in Castilian, their dress marking their ethnic identity, and claiming a Muslim wedding to be traditionally Senegalese. Although the performance was cut short by the organisers, the Fula had clearly been the focus of attention of the spectators, not least given the large number of people put on stage. Quite literally, they had translated (cf. Hall, 1992, 310) between the various identities that were at their disposal. They presented a Muslim marriage locally as a 'play' which cohered with the common consensus of presenting religious questions in a cultural idiom. In consequence, this allowed them to temporarily claim a central location in the shared open spaces of the neighbourhood.

More than the Fula, the Jola performance also achieved an embodied living of difference and wider appropriation of the space. The men were dressed in

23 On the relationship between the town hall and migrant associations for both co-development and local incorporation cf. Østergaard-Nielsen (2009).

colourful West African print batik; the women wore a *pagne*, a piece of cloth wrapped around the hips, and t-shirts of the *Oudiodial* association. The group approached the stage from behind circling parts of the square already singing and dancing. They sang in Jola, women accompanying them rhythmically with wooden clappers. The climax was the dance of the *Kumpo*, a mask the Jola association had brought directly from Casamance.²⁴ The performance of the three-meter-tall *Kumpo* extended beyond the stage into the square itself. The spectacle was noisy, colourful, and self-confident. It was not like the performances that de Jong (2007, 155–171) describes in Casamance made either for tourists or a disengaged audience at a cultural festival. Instead, mainly West Africans in the audience were involved in dancing, joking, photographing, and filming. West African women not belonging to the dance group came to dance with the *Kumpo*, children were all over the place, something only possible with a tamed *Kumpo* which in Casamance villages had authority to scare and admonish children and youth. Engaging actively with the performance and the action extending into the square created a space in which difference was embodied (cf. Erickson, 2008). A Mandinka next to me acknowledged this as an achievement stating that the Jola are *forts* – they are strong at doing such performances.²⁵

Openly staging and dealing with difference was the aim of the overarching *Associació de Veïns de Cerdanyola* (Association of Neighbours of Cerdanyola) which included members of all other associations based in the neighbourhood. Some of my informants interpreted this event as an effort to integrate the new residents of the neighbourhood. They felt their turnout and participation satisfied a demand put forward by the first-comers, i.e. the Catalans and Spanish. Casamançais felt to have achieved in this respect. The active involvement and confident presence of Casamançais facilitated the reinterpretation of the *Plaça* as a convivial space. However, in retrospect many of my informants inquired why there had been few Europeans present. Indeed, the presence of sub-Saharanans had been quite overwhelming and they at times had largely appropriated the space. Nevertheless a number of Catalan groups also performed, and the *Diables Atabalats* performing fireworks temporarily appropriated the square not unlike the *Kumpo*.

Being present and actively engaging with the invitation to participate in the performances, both the Jola and Fula groups had temporarily appropriated a

24 Concerning the role and history of the *Kumpo* in the sub-region cf. e.g. Jong (2007) and Girard (1965).

25 Mandinka staged the *Kankurang* mask on a similar occasion in Granollers. It was part of the performance of the initiation ritual in the pedestrian zone of downtown Granollers.

shared space. Phrased in terms of a diversity of cultures, everyone contributed to living with difference. Yet, the performances communicated on different levels. On the one hand contextualising the performances as cultures and including Spanish/Catalan explications of both the wedding and the dance of the *Kumpo*, the Jola and Fula groups spoke to the wider audience, translating their performances to the local contexts thus building towards a local consensus on living with difference. Often due to the bad quality of the microphones this was more of a gesture, which however was sufficient. On the other hand, the *Kumpo* in particular also created a space in which Casamançais practised something specific to them, hereby appropriating open space. Thus, while adhering to a local consensus by accepting the frame of the organisers, difference was maintained, and openly enjoyed. The *Mostra* exemplified a consensus of living with difference which facilitated the emergence of a convivial space.

Conclusions

In both Casamance and Catalonia practices of local residents to varying degrees resulted in convivial space depending on a locally negotiated consensus of living *with* difference. Cultural and religious diversity in both locations had resulted from historic and more recent migration movements. The international migration of Casamançais was also the link between Casamance and Catalonia which inspired this comparison.

Tracing aspects of Casamançais *cohabitation*, I focused on practices of using, inhabiting, and appropriating open spaces which manifested negotiation processes of a local consensus of living *with* difference. In the ethnography I compared Casamançais practices in both Casamance and Catalonia trying to understand how these practices contribute to an understanding of Casamançais *cohabitation* and how far practices of accessing and appropriating spaces are negotiated anew in Catalonia. Various examples from everyday life and public celebrations led me to a number of conclusions concerning the living *with* difference in convivial space, the negotiation of locally specific consensuses, and the impact of the local Catalan context.

The ethnography presented here showed that in everyday life public spaces were similarly used and appropriated by Casamançais in both locations. Spontaneous and regular gatherings of people transformed them into convivial space embracing diversity and difference in various ways. First, the groups that got together were internally diverse, particularly in urban spaces. Secondly, various mobile practices led to a blurring of boundaries of seemingly separate social

situations: people faded in and out of get-togethers, they were included in a round of tea or briefly stopped to exchange greetings. Finally, various gatherings happened simultaneously, next to each other within the same open space relying on a shared consensus of conviviality. All of this showed how gatherings and their negotiation embody convivial space in which differences are accommodated and which remains fragile and continuously in the making.

While some physical objects marked spaces of encounter, such as the missing seat or the trunk of a tree, the socially constructed convivial space always remained in the making which was characterised by temporariness, re-definitions, and contradictions. Both everyday encounters and festive occasions clearly showed this dynamic process by way of the multiple practices which took place simultaneously. Gatherings developed their own dynamic as the religious celebrations, the *Kumpo* performance, and partially the Casamançais street scene in Carrer Rosselló demonstrated. Such temporary manifestations of locality in open spaces relied on the consensus which entailed that other practices could exist alongside them in the same open spaces. This was part of the lived local consensus of *cohabitation* in both Catalonia and Casamance. Everyday life continuing alongside the Holy Friday procession in Casamance or the unaffected dwelling in the park during the *Matinal de Saetas* in Catalonia showed this clearly.

This consensus often was minimal and fragile. The use and appropriation of spaces was continuously negotiated as the example of Carrer Rosselló showed most clearly. Many Casamançais reassessed their presence in public spaces in Catalonia sometimes reckoning that to socialise outdoors was not an option or had changed. To be ready to negotiate the use and appropriation of neighbourhood spaces was largely part of the Casamançais understanding of *cohabitation*. This clearly showed in the discussions comparing the Tabaski prayer with the Holy Friday procession and multilingual practices. Souleymane Touré's ease in dealing with the contestations of public spaces also clearly indicated such an attitude. He felt himself to be on an equal footing with others, as one local resident among many.

This equality was challenged by the example of Muslim practices being confined to the urban periphery in Catalonia. While under the label of culture the *Mostra d'Entitats* constituted convivial space, Muslim practices in Cerdanyola met a high level of resistance. In this respect, there was no common lived experience of convivial space, nor was there an institutional framework like the one dating to the Senghorian legacy in Senegal supporting equal respect and thus equal access to open spaces. Instead of being overwhelmed by their structural marginalisation, most Casamançais in Catalonia, even under such circumstances, believed in a slow process of increasingly negotiating equal recognition.

The Catalan context provoked a number of changes in the way open spaces were shared as convivial space. This was visible on the many occasions on which negotiations became salient – particularly in the (temporary self-) marginalisation of Muslims. The comparison between both contexts thus shifted the focus from static descriptions of a notion of *cohabitation* to understanding living *with* difference as a process involving the negotiation of practices with the aim of consensus. The ethnography of this process of conviviality has shown that the successful negotiation of inhabiting and temporarily appropriating open spaces for various practices was part of a minimal consensus that was crucial to understanding living *with* difference in a locality from a Casamançais point of view.

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Senegalese Networks in Switzerland and USA – How Festive Events Reflect Urban Incorporation Processes

Monika Salzbrunn

Introduction¹

For a long time after the Second World War, politicians as well as researchers have perceived immigrants from West and North Africa as being part of the working class and, in the French case, as inhabitants of the former colonies. Only after 9/11, these people began to be perceived as Muslims. How does this changing image affect their own positioning in the European and North-American societies? As I will show in this chapter, current migration processes from West Africa, in particular from Senegal to Europe and the United States are characterized by a high degree of diversity concerning social class, religious practices and political participation. The migrants' trajectories and urban incorporation strategies are also various. The average level of education of the Senegalese in the United States is e. g. higher than the average level of education of the U.S.-American citizens, which is a general fact concerning recent immigrants from African countries.² Consequently, the recent phenomena are far more complex than in the 1960s, when mainly working class migrants from Senegal and Mali – who were not perceived as Muslims either by politicians or by researchers – came into France.

Building on a long-term empirical research on religious networks of the Senegalese abroad (underlining the will for political change that had unified the followers of different Sufi and Christian groups), the present chapter focuses on festive events that reflect urban incorporation processes. Following Glick Schiller and Çağlar, I consider “incorporation” as a process of building or maintaining ongoing social, economic, political, and religious relations so that an individual or organized group becomes a participant in multiple and diverse social fields of uneven power composed of networks of networks (Epstein,

¹ Some aspects of this research have been published in M. Salzbrunn (2013).

² 67% of the African immigrants had a high school grade or a higher diploma in 2000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000), cited by Sylviane A. Diouf, *The New African Diaspora*, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, cf. http://www.inmotionaame.org/texts/viewer.cfm?id=13_000T&page=1, paragraph 20, accessed 25 October 2012.

1967). Although beginning on the level of observable interaction, this approach to incorporation traces the linkages between individuals and institutions that are situated within multiple scales, configurations, and layers of governance (Esser, 2004; Portes, 1995; Schmitter Heisler, 1998)' (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2011, 190).

In order to contribute to developing such a new methodology that reaches beyond methodological nationalism, I bring together elements of network analysis and event analysis, while paying attention to the positioning and restructuring of locality. As Nina Glick Schiller and Andreas Wimmer (2002) have written, it should not be assumed that people who share the same nationality constitute a homogeneous group in a transnational context. Once we trace migrants beyond their ethnic connections to other networks present in the locality, we are able to see how networks enable migrants to become rooted in an urban context. The Manchester school pioneered event and network analysis and still faces methodological problems related to this research focus. Mitchell (1982/2006, 26) reflects on these methodological problems, going back to van Velsen (1967, 145). The latter points out that the question of typicality of an event can be solved 'by arguing that the object of the analysis is not in fact 'culture' or 'society' of which the events studied might be considered samples but rather social processes which may be abstracted from the course of events analysed'. Mitchell related the reflections on event studies to the general issue of case studies, concluding that the 'rich detail which emerges from the intimate knowledge the analyst must acquire in a case study if it is well conducted provides the optimum conditions for the acquisition of those illuminating insights which make formerly opaque connections suddenly pellucid' (1982/2006, 40). Social sciences have produced a huge amount of studies focusing on festive events like carnivals (Cohen, 1991; Bakhtin, 1986; Bausinger, 1983; Davis, 1965/1975; Ozouf, 1976/1988) and on rites of passage and rituals of transgression (van Gennep, 1909; Turner, 1982; Evens and Handelman, 2006; Köpping and Rao, 2000, etc.). The specific locality and its political, social, economic context determine the evolution of the networks linked to this locality. It is particularly useful to trace members of these networks as they negotiate their participation in festive events.

From the 'Blue March' of Abdoulaye Wade during his electoral campaigns in New York and Dakar to the 'Murid Parade' in Harlem and the 'Festiv'arènes' wrestling festival in Lausanne, I will show how the occupation of public space creates an arena for political and religious claims-making in a metropolitan city (New York) and in a middle range city (Lausanne). Referring to situational analysis, I will show how migrants put forward ethnic, national, religious or cultural belonging according to the political, historical and economic context

in which the events take place. In comparison, I refer to the recently created Al Azhar Institute for Research and Study of Muridism in Geneva which activities show how a Senegalese Sufi *tariqa* positions itself in a context of globalisation.

The Murids are followers of shaykh Ahmadou Bamba (1853–1927).³ The term ‘murid’ is derived from the Arab term for a disciple within a Sufi *tariqa* (way, method, pl. *turuq*). The Murids – both men and women – follow Ahmadou Bamba’s way and are part of his *tariqa*, called the Muridiyya. Nowadays Paris, New York and several Italian cities like Brescia and Livorno are important nodes in the translocal network of the Murids. These Murid networks contribute to the outcome of competitive rescaling projects based in many cities. The Tijaniyya, founded by shaykh Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Mukhtar Ibn Salim at-Tidjâni (1727–1815) is the other important *tariqa* in Senegal. As he is buried in Fes, Morocco, an important number of his followers frequently travel to his grave. Therefore, this location has become a meeting place for the Senegalese who are in transit via Morocco (or sometimes finish their journey there) on their way to Europe. Their religious practice has contributed to the visibility of the Tijaniyya within the public space in Morocco. However, in general, the Murids are better visible within public space and they organise more often public events like the Murid parade.

The social and political environment influences strongly the positioning of the Senegalese migrants in the public space. As the United States provide a large platform for the expression of religious belonging and belief, the Murid *tariqa* is following these opportunity structures, being particularly visible within public space. The most dynamic religious meeting place is located in the United States, where the Murid *tariqa* expanded exponentially during the last twenty years (Salzbrunn, 2004, 2011).

During the election campaigns of Abdoulaye Wade, the president of Senegal from 2000 until 2012, the political battle was also transnationalised to Harlem/ New York, Paris, Brescia/Italy etc. and followed local incorporation processes. I will compare the political and religious strategies of the Senegalese residing in the United States of America with those in Europe in order to demonstrate the important impact of the societal, economic and political environment on the migrants’ activities.

3 According to Abu-Nasr (2007, 230-231), Amadu Bamba’s son organised his father’s followers into a distinctive *tariqa*, but today, the Murids consider themselves as followers of shaykh Ahmadou Bamba without necessarily considering his son’s role in the development of Muridism.

I will first show how the Senegalese in Switzerland position themselves in different contexts. In some situations, they put forward their religious belief, in others, they make sure not to appear as Muslims, but rather put their cultural attributes forward.

Senegalese in Switzerland: A Heterogeneous Puzzle Rather than a *Communitas*

Sub-Saharan immigration to Switzerland is rather recent. In 2004, 65,092 immigrants from 49 African countries lived in Switzerland, which is less than one per cent of the total population (7,529,564). In 1990, only 24,768 African immigrants were registered. Around 6,000 were born in Switzerland and approx. 8,000 were married to Swiss spouses. Although their number is very low in comparison to immigrants from Italy (the largest group), Portugal, Kosovo, Bosnia and other parts of former Yugoslavia, they are sometimes the target of xenophobic attacks. Extreme-right activists try to disseminate the stereotype of drug-dealers, black men who rape white women, etc.⁴ However, in Switzerland, the target of extreme right groups changes frequently. During the voting on the issue of the construction of minarets in 2009, Muslims were the targets, but during the voting on the quicker deportation of undocumented people in 2010, the East-Europeans were the targets, and during the municipal election campaign in Geneva in 2011, the French people who work in Switzerland but reside in France were the target. The Senegalese in Switzerland cope with this situation when they position themselves within the civil society.

Following Glick Schiller and Wimmer's above cited argument against the dangers of methodological nationalism, I will show that the Senegalese, on whom my work focuses, are a part of different political arenas and alliances that can change according to the goal they want to attain. As one of my informants, who resides in Switzerland for more than 30 years, confirms:

The Senegalese in Switzerland do not always gather together. There are rather three separate groups: 1. The diplomats, working for example for the United Nations in Geneva, socialise with diplomats from other countries. 2. The students mingle with students. 3. The expatriates, highly qualified professionals who work for international firms, get together

⁴ See for example: <http://www.fragemich.com/warum-haben-wir-so-viele-schwarzafrikaner-in-der-schweiz/>, accessed 25 October 2012.

with other expatriates, be they Senegalese or not. They do not socialise with students, for example. Since my arrival, a fourth group emerged, the undocumented immigrants and/or asylum seekers. They are not in touch with people from any of the three other groups.⁵

Concerning religious activities, according to Mouamar, the Senegalese do not practice Islam at a particular mosque. They rather go to pray at the mosque next to their place of residence or work, or they practice at home, or they do not practice religion at all. My observations at different mosques and cultural centres in Geneva (*La grande Mosquée, la Mosquée aux Eaux-Vives, etc.*) and Lausanne (*Complexe culturel des musulmans de Lausanne*, different cultural centres founded by people from Turkey, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia) confirmed the tendency that the Senegalese do not gather as a group in one of these places. The Murids gather together in apartments of one of their own, and/or go to Paris or to Italy in order to meet marabouts from Senegal who come to visit their followers abroad.

The Al-Azhar Institute for Research and Study of Muridism: A Transnational Think Tank in the Making

As the sons of shaykh Ahmadou Bamba are all dead, the grandsons currently carry on the *tariqa's* activities. In 1978, *l'Institut Al Azhar de Recherches et d'Etudes sur le Mouridisme* (IAREM; Al Azhar Institute for Research and Study of Muridism) was created in Touba and one of the grandsons, who already founded the Al Azhar Institute in Paris, intends to create an Al Azhar Institute in Geneva, with a strong link to the Al Azhar Institute in Touba. Several events are part of the preparatory work. On 30 June 2012, a grandson of shaykh Bamba and the Al-Azhar Institute for the Study of Muridism, took the initiative of organising a colloquium in Geneva on the following topic: *Face à la mondialisation et à la crise des valeurs, quels comportements pour les mourides de la diaspora?* (Facing globalization and the crisis of values, how should the Murids of the Diaspora behave?). He spread the call and tried to invite several scholars, but finally had to postpone the event to 2013 or 2014. The detailed analysis of the call allows us however to understand the way the Murids position themselves in Switzerland in a global context.

5 Interview with Mouamar in Geneva, 21.10.2010. The names of all the informants were changed, except those who speak on the DVD produced by the ARESS after the wrestling festival.

The call for this conference deals mainly with the impact of globalisation processes on the economic, cultural, communicational, social and political sphere. The authors presume that globalisation leads to a homogenisation of practices, of the perception of emotions, and the way of thinking. According to the authors, an interdependency of events and options taken with regard to globalisation are the causes for these homogenisation processes. However, they assume that the expressions of social practice differ from one place in the world to another and that certain practices can be rejected here and accepted there:

Some people assume with force that eating is a physiological need, but the way of eating is cultural... And the fact is that there is no distinction between what fits our values as well as our culture and what has contributed to what we call the value crisis.

Facing that value crisis in a globalization context, what kind of behaviour should the Murids have, in particular those living in the Diaspora, in order to cope with that?⁶

In this first paragraph of the conference announcement, the importance of moral considerations for the organizers is clearly pointed out. Globalisation processes are understood as potentially disturbing moral values, as are migration experiences. It should also be noticed that the authors of this call essentialise Murid values and culture. The question about the behaviour points out the normative character of the conference. Not only the dissemination of knowledge is put forward, but also moral education. According to the call, living in the Diaspora leads to a value crisis which the Murids have to cope with.

Furthermore, the authors ask themselves whether the globalisation processes increases migration of the Murids, and what is the impact of globalization on Muridism. Finally, the question is posed whether the current value crisis is related to globalisation. These questions show that the Murids are aware of the fact that the important ongoing migration processes have changed religious as well as cultural practices.

6 Conference announcement circulated in personal e-mails by the *Institut Al Azhar de Recherches et d'Etudes sur le Mouridisme*, Geneva 2012, translated by M.S. Original text: *C'est ce qui poussent certains à affirmer avec force que : si manger est un besoin physiologique c'est tout individu, la manière de manger est culturelle. ...Et le fait de ne pas distinguer ce qui est convenable à nos valeurs et culture a engendré ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui la crise des valeurs. Face à cette crise des valeurs dans un contexte de la mondialisation, quel doit être le comportement des mourides, particulièrement ceux de la diaspora pour y faire face ?*

The organizers have the intention to invite specialists, academics, sociologists and theologians to discuss these topics. This is part of the general strategy of the Murids to gain credibility by inviting renowned specialists to their events. The main subjects to be discussed during the conference are the following:

1. The Muridism: past, present and future of an expanding 'brotherhood'.⁷
2. Migration and globalization: how to construct a religious identity in this context?
3. Causes and consequences of the current value crisis, which suggestions come from Muridism?
4. The dimension and the exploitability of the teachings of Muridism; which market gaps can confirm its universalism?
5. The philosophical and economic doctrine of Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba or the triptych (work, adoration and allegiance) as a response to the current economic and value crisis.⁸

The choice of these subjects shows to what extent the Murids are aware of their power position. Although concerning the estimated number of followers they are only the second *tariqa* in Senegal after the Tijaniyya, they are by far the most visible and the most powerful *tariqa*. The presidency of the Murid Abdoulaye Wade has increased this visibility by the numerous visits of members of his government in Touba, the centre of the Murids. However, many Senegalese have criticised the lack of neutrality of Wade towards the Murids. The former presidents Abdou Diouf and Leopold Sedar Senghor have shown a higher degree of distance towards religious leaders, even though they participated in religious ceremonies and services, too, and gained support from religious leaders through *ndigals* (recommendations for voting). The way the questions for the conference are posed is rather normative and shows that the religious leaders try to frame the behaviour of the Murid followers in the

7 Although I use the term *tariqa* in the whole chapter, I translated here the French word *confrérie*, used by the actors themselves in this case, into brotherhood.

8 Translated by M.S., original text:

Thème 1 : Le Mouridisme : passé, présent et future d'une 'confrérie' en pleine expansion. Thème 2 : Migration et Mondialisation : comment construire une identité religieuse dans ce contexte ?

Thème 3 : Causes et conséquences de la crise actuelle des valeurs, quelles propositions de la part du mouridisme ? Thème 4 : La dimension et l'exploitabilité des enseignements du Mouridisme, quels créneaux pour acter son universalité ? Thème 5 : La doctrine philosophico-économique de Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba ou le triptyque (travail, adoration et allégeance) comme double réponse à la crise économique et des valeurs actuelles.

Diaspora. The latter might also have expressed their need for orientation concerning values, identity politics, ethical choices etc.

The second proposed subject shows that the Murids are conscious of the changing identification processes due to globalization. They feel the need to construct a religious identity *sui generis* in a new environment, because the notion of belonging differs from their initial experiences. In the United States, religious practice is linked to an affiliation, which is exclusive in general. On the contrary, in Senegal, like in Cameroon or the other West African countries, there is hardly an indigenous concept of exclusive belonging to one religion, and the participation in different religious rituals, feasts and ceremonies is rather common (see Adogame, E. Smith, G. Smith and van Santen in this volume).

The third subject is closely linked to the second: Murids feel the need to promote their values in a new dynamic environment, where a certain competition is going on between value and belief systems.

The fourth subject refers to the continuing efforts of dissemination of religious activities. The Murids are very active on the Internet (Mbacke, 2010) and are constantly reinventing their modes of action. As I have shown elsewhere (Salzbrunn, 2004; 2011), they have a remarkable capacity of adaptation to a new political, social and cultural environment and are able to gain converts everywhere in the world.

The fifth subject can be analysed in a historical context. Work, adoration and allegiance have been the key concepts of Muridism from the beginning, as shaykh Ahmadou Bamba has underlined their importance in his writings. Nevertheless, the live-long allegiance to the personal shaykh can be called into question through the migration experience, as the geographic distance could detach the followers from their community and the related duties. In Senegal, the followers of a shaykh gather together in a *daara* (from the Arabic word *dar* – ‘house’ or ‘land’) or in a *dahira*. Dahira is a Wolof term derived from the Arabic word *da'ira* that means ‘circle’. In Senegal and in Senegalese residence places abroad, initially, a dahira is a group of followers of the same *tariqa* who help each other and pray together. Therefore, the frequent visits of Murid dahiras all over the world by marabouts like shaykh Mourtada Mbacké, until his death in 2004, were crucial in maintaining these links. Be it in Marseille, Brescia, Bremen, Atlanta or New York, regular prayer and fundraising events are organised by the local dahiras in order to maintain the links and to encourage frequent religious practice, a certain moral behaviour and important financial contributions. It is not only important for the Murids to maintain their transnational ties (Salzbrunn, 2002a; Lacroix, Salzbrunn and Sall, 2008), but also to create new alliances and to enlist new followers through different events.

The conference is linked to the transnational activities of the Al Azhar Institutes created mainly by the Murids who have been trained at Al-Azhar University of Cairo, and/or who have strong links with shaykh Ahmadou Bamba's descendants. On 8th September 2011, the creation of the *Association pour la Creation et le Developpement de l'IAREM* (ACDI; Association for the creation and the development of IAREM) was declared officially.⁹ Its goals are to

unite researchers, academics, people at university and all persons of good will who want to participate in the work and the development of the Al Azhar Institute for Research and Study of Muridism (IAREM); facilitate the establishment, the functioning of the IAREM and accompany its development, following the laws and rules applicable in France.¹⁰

In France as well as in Italy, Germany or the United States, Murids organise public events, conferences, marches etc. in order to spread Muridism all over the world. Sometimes, researchers and academics that have done research on the Murid *tariqa* are invited to these events. On the one hand, this is an opportunity for researchers to give feedback to the people who are concerned. On the other hand, the search for support from the established academics is a part of the incorporation strategy of the religious leaders who want to build a serious image of their *tariqa*. It can also be interpreted as a way of reinforcing and building Islamic knowledge which is less dependent on Arabic thinkers, because the Senegalese scholars who have studied in Saudi Arabia or in Egypt have often experienced a patronising approach and have not been taken seriously by Muslims from an Arabic background. The creation of independent research institutes is a way of giving confidence and significance to the followers of the Sufi *turuq* from the sub-Saharan Africa.

However, as these activities are relatively recent, it is difficult to evaluate their impact. Despite the recent formalisation of the new Institute framework, its representatives follow very old structures and strategies of the Murid *tariqa*. As I have shown elsewhere (Salzbrunn, 2004), shaykh Mourtada Mbacké, one of shaykh Ahmadou Bamba's youngest sons, had followed the Murids all over the world during his annual visits. The United States, France and Italy were its

9 Published 17 September 2011 in *Le Journal Officiel des Associations*.

10 *Ibidem*, translated by M.S. Original text: *réunir des chercheurs, scientifiques, universitaires et toutes personnes de bonnes volontés désireuses de participer à l'oeuvre de création et de développement de l'Institut Al Azhar de Recherches et d'études sur le Mouridisme (IAREM ; faciliter la mise sur pied, rendre fonctionnel et accompagner le développement de l'IAREM conformément aux lois et règlements en vigueur en France*.

most important destinations, as these countries are the main residence places of the Senegalese abroad. I will come back later to the Senegalese's religious and political activities in the United States, but first I will show an example of a rather cultural, if not folkloric presence of the Senegalese in Switzerland, which is a part of another form of political claims-making.

Festiv'arènes: Senegalese-Suisse Encounters on a Wrestling Ground

During the 1980s, a group of Senegalese residents in Switzerland decided to found the *Association des Ressortissants et Sympathisants du Sénégal (en Suisse)* (ARSS, Association of Residents and Friends of Senegal in Switzerland). As the majority of the Senegalese living in Switzerland resides in the French-speaking part (called 'Romandie'), the association, founded in 1991, took its headquarters in Geneva and Lausanne. In these two biggest cities of Western Switzerland, most of the association's events, parties and gatherings take place.

The ARSS's goals are

to awake, reinforce and develop solidarity and mutual assistance among its members, to ensure the defence of the material and moral interests of its members, to organise cultural, artistic, recreational activities, colloquia and seminars and to promote cultural exchanges and cooperation with other associations or similar groups.¹¹

After internal debates, the ARSS decided to open its activities to a wider public, including Swiss people who might not be familiar with Africa, in order to share common cultural projects. The ARSS has around 2,000 members, which covers an important part of the Senegalese population and its friends in Switzerland.

During that period, the Lausanne municipal government developed an active multicultural policy, aiming at valorising the diversity of its inhabitants. In fact, more than one inhabitant out of three is of foreign origin in Lausanne (39.45% at 31 December 2009).¹² Whereas the federal Swiss policy was influenced by

11 Translated by M.S., original text : 'L'ARSS a pour but d'éveiller, de renforcer et de développer l'esprit de solidarité et d'entraide entre ses membres, de veiller à la défense des intérêts matériels et moraux de ses membres, d'organiser des activités culturelles, artistiques, récréatives, des conférences et séminaires, de promouvoir des échanges culturels et de coopération avec d'autres associations ou regroupements similaires' (Bureau cantonal pour l'intégration des étrangers et la prévention du racisme (BCI) 2011, 24).

12 <http://www.lausanne.ch/view.asp?docId=30843&domId=61972&language=F> (accessed 4 July 2012).

xenophobic positions expressed by the populist UDC party and the extreme right,¹³ the canton of Vaud (which is the regional district with Lausanne as the capital city) and the municipality of Lausanne deliberately developed an alternative policy. In Vaud region (as well as in the neighbouring Neuchâtel region), foreign residents have automatically active and passive regional voting rights after a certain period of documented residency.¹⁴ Lausanne municipality adopted the same system, but ten years of residency are required. The municipality promoted the richness and diversity of the various cultures present in the city, even though the interim period is extremely long. As fourth city of Switzerland after Zurich, Geneva and Basel, Lausanne (127,821 inhabitants on 31 December 2010) is an important platform for political claims and messages. The city hosts a certain number of multinational firms who have attracted highly skilled immigrants from all over the world. In order to be an attractive economic spot, the city and the regional government have developed a favourable tax policy and developed their image as an open-minded region. As Richard Florida (2005) states, the three 't' (talent, technology, tolerance) are the condition for attracting highly skilled immigrants. In order to promote its tolerant and cosmopolitan image, Lausanne celebrated its diversity during 2012 week against racism.

In 2006, a platform for the self-presentation of the city as well as the self-presentation of the civil society was invented as 'Festiv'Arènes', which stands for an arena festival. It took place in the middle of the city centre of Lausanne, in the Montbenon park, situated between one of the 5 star hotels Lausanne Palace & Spa and the former Casino de Montbenon, which today hosts the Cinemathèque, a fairly good restaurant as well as a large party room which can be rented for festive events. The ARSS rents this room for its parties – one of the latest took place there in November 2010. The municipality also uses this place for the biannual welcome receptions for new inhabitants (be they of Swiss nationality or not).

13 The initiative aiming at 'facilitating the expulsion of criminal foreigners' lead by the populist right party UDC was approved by 52.9 % of the Swiss voters on 28 November 2010.

14 In Neuchâtel region, foreigners with a permanent residence card (*permis C*) can vote on a municipal level after one year of documented residency and on a regional level after 5 years. They can be elected at the municipal level after one year of residency. <http://www.ne.ch/neat/site/jsp/rubrique/rubrique.jsp?StyleType=bleu&CatId=4288>, accessed 26 October 2012.

In the Vaud region (including Lausanne), foreigners can only vote if they can prove ten years of continuous residency in Switzerland (of which three years in the Vaud region are required), and if they hold a 5 years residence permit (*permis B*) or a permanent residence card (*permis C*). <http://www.vd.ch/themes/etat-droit-finances/votations-et-elections/vote-des-etrangerserses/>, accessed 26 October 2012.

During Festiv'Arènes, the ARSS organized a wrestling contest between Senegalese wrestlers and invited the Senegalese wrestling champion Tapha Gueye to come in order to fight against the Swiss wrestling champion. In both countries, wrestling is a sport of highest local, regional and national importance. Both the Senegalese and the Swiss accompany the bout by particular rituals including music, songs and psychological preparation for the candidates. The Senegalese use *djembe* or *tamtam* and songs in order to heat up the public. The Swiss use Alp horn and yodel. The Senegalese shows a piece of rope to his opponent and steps in a threatening way in order to show his force. The Swiss participates in a yodel ritual, where a man wearing costume from the mountains holds a bronze bowl with a bullet that makes noise while rolling around within the bowl. Next to them, another man in a local costume turns and throws the Swiss flag around.

For both wrestlers, a *culotte* is the most important accessory. The Senegalese wears briefs with a *pagne* (piece of tissue) wrapped around it. The Swiss wears a shirt and a sort of long johns with leather pants on top. Both have the right to pull the other's outfit in order to knock him down to the sand.

The Swiss and the Senegalese started wrestling with each other, according to the rules of each national wrestling system. A Senegalese referee judged the wrestling match. At the end of the bout, both parties exchanged gifts. The Senegalese champion offered the Swiss two T-Shirts of ARSS as well as a mask, saying that this had magic power. The Swiss wrestler and the head of the Wrestling Federation offered a *culotte* to his Senegalese contestant.

The ARSS produced a DVD on the event, which is shown and sold during the Senegalese events in Switzerland. The comments and interviews show how each group appropriates the festive event in order to express its political claims.¹⁵

The interview with Malick Kane, president of the ARSS, illustrates how the Senegalese position themselves in the Swiss environment:

When I came to Switzerland, I entered the academic milieu. (...) One major difficulty was that I could not understand Swiss culture. (...) One should go towards the others, represent the Senegalese culture, but taking into consideration the differences from the others. (One should) respect the others and see how one can benefit from their culture as well. (...) I ask people to come with their ideas and to be able to celebrate communities as we do today. (...) The goal of this event is, that we will

15 On the CD there are also interviews from Swiss and Brazilian *capoeira* dancers, as a *capoeira* group performed during the festival, too.

integrate the communities like the Brazilian community, the Swiss community, the Senegalese community and even the Cameroonian one has participated in fact. So this is a way of doing, of participating together in a cultural project that unites all of us.

In this interview, Kane clearly positions himself as a representative of the Senegalese culture. This is of course due to the context in which the festival is organised. But he never mentions religion as being a part of the Senegalese culture. A common sport, accompanied by music performances, is clearly the meeting point with the Swiss (and in parallel, between the Swiss and the Brazilians). Kane is also convinced that integration concerns all communities, including the Swiss, although the question he was asked was 'What kind of message would you like to give to all the people who came today in order to support your efforts of integrating foreigners?' Therefore, integration is considered as being a mutual process. This conviction is similar to the official position of the Swiss Council on Migration, but the current interpretation that the media and populist political parties make of this position differs slightly and places the responsibility of integration back on those who immigrate.

Massamba Dia, the responsible of the Festiv'Arènes project, argues in the way similar to his compatriot:

I think the idea was born during a conversation that we had one day at my place. And we were asking ourselves how we could participate in the intensification of dialogues between different cultures. This is also because promoting integration between different cultures is one of our goals, a mission in our association. (...) And naturally, one of our aims is to provide help and support for the Senegalese living in Switzerland. And in this context, we have built mechanisms in order to be able to help compatriots who have difficulties financially or morally. It is an association of the Senegalese in Switzerland that comprises all the Senegalese wherever they live in Switzerland. And we try anyway to do the maximum so that the Senegalese citizens can at the same time benefit from the help of our association and from a space for cultural or artistic expression.¹⁶

16 Original text, translation by M.S.: *Je pense cette idée est partie au détour d'une conversation qu'on a eu un jour chez moi. Et puis on se posait la question de savoir comment avions-nous participé au raffermissement des dialogues entre des différentes cultures. C'est aussi parce que c'est une de nos missions, de nos objectifs au sein de notre association que de promouvoir l'intégration entre différentes cultures. (...) Et naturellement une de nos missions également*

In fact, the Festival was initiated by the Senegalese association ARSS but sponsored by the Federal Commission for Foreigners and the Lausanne Office for Integration.

It is interesting to see that in this case, religion is not put on stage in order to express political claims. The President of the ARSS never mentions religion as an important issue. He rather builds his argument on cultural differences that should be represented by each other in order to facilitate respectful encounters. Furthermore, the Senegalese who are active here prefer not to be perceived as Muslims, especially because of the anti-minaret vote in 2009 and other xenophobic popular votes in the recent past. This attitude leads to a kind of double invisibility in some cases. In France for example, most of the political claims expressed by the Senegalese within public space concern either residence permits (put forward by the *sans papiers* movement – the undocumented or ‘without papers’ migrants movement) or workers’ rights (which are often linked to problems of undocumented people who have worked and paid taxes for many years by borrowing a foreign identity and passport, or without having access to any – even borrowed – kind of residence permit or papers). However, in Switzerland, the percentage of highly qualified and/or documented people is higher than in France, so that there is no coherent political or religious movement that could be defined as being representative. The average Senegalese in Switzerland belongs rather to the middle class like Mamadou from Geneva does. The group of workers is rather small and invisible in public space or in political movements. As I mentioned before, there are roughly four or five main groups of the Senegalese that can be distinguished in Switzerland: expatriates, students, business people and/or middle class people, a marginal group of workers and a very small group of undocumented people. Here we can clearly see that the political framing and situation influences the way and the place people express their claims.

However, there are networks defined by religious belonging that maintain their transnational ties through media and visits. The tours of shaykh Mourtada’s follower Mame Mor Mbacké, who participated in the huge Murid Parade in New York on 28 July 2012 celebrating 19 years of Murid activities in

est d'apporter aide et soutien aux Sénégalais vivant en Suisse. Et dans ce cadre là nous avons mis des mécanismes en place pour pouvoir en tout cas aider que ce soit financièrement, que ce soit moralement des compatriotes en difficulté. Cette association est une association de Sénégalais de Suisse qui regroupe tous les Sénégalais où qu'ils vivent en Suisse. Et nous essayons en tout cas de faire le maximum pour que les citoyens sénégalais qui vivent en Suisse puissent bénéficier à la fois de l'aide... de notre association puissent bénéficier à la fois d'un espace d'expression que ce soit culturel ou artistique.

the United States, are one example that will be analysed in detail below. These activities are organised by the Murid Islamic Community in America that regularly organises fundraising events. In the second case study, I will analyse the way the Murids managed to incorporate their religious and political practices in Harlem, New York.

The Murid Parade in New York: Religion as a Means of Incorporation

In a case study on the Murid parade in New York (Salzbrunn, 2004, 2011) I have shown how the followers of a Sufi group have developed and sought multifaceted relations with local urban institutions and actors.

New York is one of different important venues of migrant incorporation. They are part of particular trajectories of a translocal set of networks constituted by the Murids, a Sufi *tariqa* of Senegalese origin referred to above. Some of the activities of contemporary Murid networks are central to incorporative events and activities that link migrants to broader social fields within centres of power in Senegal, New York City, Paris, Geneva and elsewhere in Europe. I focus on local expressions of a world-wide network because the Sufi *turuq* pay a great deal of attention to places, especially holy places of birth or death of important spiritual leaders. In some cases, the name of a place becomes part of the name of a person, like Mbacké, the village next to which Touba was founded, and from which the shaykh's family – whose name is Mbacké – comes.

In particular, the section traces the development of a parade celebrating the visits that one of the religious leaders of the Murids, shaykh Mourtada Mbacké, made to maintain ties to his pupils in New York City. Initially, the pupils frequently visited their shaykh. But as the links become fragile over such a huge distance as between Senegal and the USA or Europe, shaykh Mourtada gave his pupils the idea of inviting him. Although based in Senegal, for fifteen years until his death in 2004, shaykh Mourtada Mbacké visited religious communities overseas. However, certain public events were possible in New York City earlier than in Paris, where the first Murid parade has taken place only in 2009. Shaykh Mourtada Mbacké's group embraced particular strategies in their quest to influence policy decisions, like the invention of an official Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba Day in different US cities (Wilson/Rodriguez Cordero, 2006, 326; Salzbrunn, 2004, 468). Because religious Sufi trans-border networks have developed very local strategies of settlement and incorporation, they are best understood as constituting a transnational field that is shaped by and shapes political processes in multiple cities and even states. A strong alliance of these

transnational networks contributed to the victory of Abdoulaye Wade, a Murid, during the Senegalese presidential elections in 2000 (Salzbrunn, 2002a; 2004).

In the last twenty years, Senegalese migration including Murid networks have shifted from the West African cities to France, from France to its neighbouring countries and finally towards the United States of America. From New York City, New York State, Connecticut and New Jersey, migrants spread over the whole country, building several regional centres like that in Atlanta, Georgia. In New York City, a group of several hundred Murids set up their first dahira in 1986 (see above for the meaning of dahira). The solidarity can lead to the emergence of commercial networks, especially within the Murids. During this period, the Murids met regularly in Brooklyn, at a house named *Keur Serigne Touba*. After beginning to make annual visits to New York and becoming aware of the growing number of Senegalese and African-American talibes¹⁷ there, shaykh Mourtada set up a non-profit organization whose aim was to create a permanent centre for the Murids in that city. The Murid Islamic Community of America INC. (MICA) was founded as a 501 (c) 3 type association, which allows donors to deduct tax from the amount of their contribution. Shaykh Balozi, known as 'the first American talibe', became the President of MICA.

In 1991, three years after his first visit in New York, shaykh Mourtada asked MICA to buy a house in New York in order to create a 'House of Islam'. While it proved difficult to find the space to expand in Brooklyn, it was possible for the organization to find sufficient space in Manhattan, the heart of New York City by buying property in Harlem. Because of racialisation and segregation, Harlem at the time remained the sole place of abandoned or undervalued property in Manhattan. That has changed over the last twenty years, and many Senegalese regret now that they had not been able to buy property in Harlem for themselves during that period since Harlem has now become a hot spot, even for tourists in search for an 'authentic' African American or West African environment. In the beginning of the Murids' activities, shaykh Mourtada gave US\$ 55,000 to support the construction project. In eight years, the Murids managed to raise \$500,000 through gatherings and assemblies in order to renovate the building. A mosque and a school 'for the teaching of Muslim religion' were the first installations located on the first floor. On the second floor, the shaykh's residence was arranged in order to avoid having to pay hotel costs during his visits. According to the official sources, the rest of the space is reserved for welcoming other Murid dignitaries who visit the city. Our informants reproduce the discourse of the Murid hospitality, declaring that 'anybody who

17 *Talibe* is a Wolof term derived from the Arabic word *talib* (pl. *tulab*), which means 'pupil' or 'follower'.

arrives and who is looking for an apartment can go to the House of Islam and reside a couple of days there'. In the talibes' discourse, the House of Islam is a symbol of the Murids' hospitality and openness.

Shaykh Bassirou Lô, head of the House, estimates that the Murid community in New York has 1,000 to 2,000 members.¹⁸ The monthly membership fee mentioned in the procedures of Murid dahiras is between 30 and 50 dollars, but the members make frequently additional financial efforts during fundraising events, notably during the creation and the renovation of the House of Islam. A significant part of the Senegalese Embassy staff in Washington is present there for the main religious celebrations, i.e. Eid, Magal¹⁹ and the prayers at the end of Ramadan. The Senegalese Consul of New York regularly attends Friday prayers there. The attendance at the House of Islam is not restricted to the Murids. According to shaykh Bassirou Lô, members of the Tijâniyya *tariqa* also attend prayers. He wants the House of Islam to be an open space for anybody who is interested in Islam.

In New York City, West African Muslim groups have successfully promoted their specific Islamic practices by connecting them to common American discourses on minorities. Making use of the available religious discursive resources in the US and their prominence within the identity politics of New York City, the Murid organisations and movements developed in a particularly successful way in New York. In contrast, in Paris the Murid houses are far from the city centre, e.g. *Keur Serigne Touba*, named after the founder of the Murids,²⁰ is located in a northern suburb; another important place with a large Senegalese population is located in Mantes-La-Jolie, at the border between the Parisian region and Normandy. Both French places are invisible in the public space, and no event is celebrated within the public space. Nevertheless, the yearly *daaka* of the Haalpulaar takes place in the Parc des Expositions in Mantes-la-Jolie (see G. Smith in this volume), and in 2009, a small Murid parade was organised in the centre of Paris.

Although the migrants, notably the political and religious activists, follow strategies across their translocal spaces, they also take into consideration the cultural and political differences between their various places of residence.

18 Interview with shaykh Lô in New York, 5.11.2002.

19 Magal is the most important Murid celebration. The main event takes place in Touba, but it has become a translocal event since celebrations have been organised in the main residence places of Murids outside Senegal. Those who cannot afford to travel to Mekka can travel to Touba for the Magal.

20 *Keur* means 'house' in Wolof, so that *Keur Serigne Touba* means 'the House of Shaykh Touba', i.e. Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba.

These strategies are not limited to the Murids, but are common to other *turuq*, like the Naqshbandiyya. In New York City, the Murids pay attention to the different inhabitants of Harlem and its local geographical setting, to the representatives of the state and their politics of immigration, as well as to the Mayor and his political program. During the 2012 parade, the speakers welcomed by Balozy Harvey, the President of MICA, included Ted Jacobsen, the secretary of the New York City Central Labor Council; representatives of the New York branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) and of the Manhattan councilwoman's office; John Stone, the president of the Church of Latter Day Saints and father Tom Fenlon of the Afro American St. Augustine's Church in Harlem. These actors are part of specific opportunity structures that interest groups can exploit when pursuing their goals in New York (Wilson/Rodriguez Cordero, 2006; Furlong et al., 1996). The Senegalese *turuq* need the connections to the key persons in the religious communities in New York and to the local administration in order to build up their commercial, social, political and religious structures. Their local strategies are shaped in relation to the existing structures and opportunities (Salzbrunn, 2004). The implementation of religious and political structures by migrants in New York requires a profound local knowledge of law, customs, and administration. The available structures, resources and institutional and discursive opportunities have influenced and modified the experiences and the strategies of the Murids, and led to new hybrid practices, which take into consideration the very specific local situation in Harlem.

The positive response by the political authorities to the opening of the House of Islam at Edgecombe Avenue in Harlem, founded by the members of the Murid Sufi order in Harlem, was one indication of how deeply the Murids are rooted in that New York City neighbourhood. In Harlem, prayers are generally organised within public space, often using microphones on the street in front of churches or assembly halls. The flourishing Pentecostal or Neo-Protestant movements in particular excel in it and put a strong emphasis on missionary street work but mostly try to attract members from other Christian groups to their temples. The Senegalese migrants, who have become familiar with the religious patchwork of Harlem and the strategies of the Christian missionary groups have adopted the use of loudspeakers to announce daily prayers in a mosque in the urban centre of the West African migration, near the Malcolm Shabbaz mosque.

Iconographic symbols of religious affiliation are also omnipresent in the names and decors of Harlem boutiques, as well as in the cars of the Senegalese cab drivers. Stickers and paintings reproducing the only existing image of the founder of the Murid *tariqa*, shaykh Ahmadou Bamba, and photos of the

Murid Khalifs who resided at Touba, are displayed in Senegalese restaurants or video shops. The use of these iconographic documents is much more common than that of Arabic writings and calligraphy – which can be explained by the limited knowledge of the Arabic amongst the West African Muslims, in comparison to the other Muslim migrants residing in the United States. The symbolic presence of the Senegalese religious leaders within the public space provides a feeling of recognition and intimacy among the *tariqa* members. As Kane (2010) has shown, not only the Murids, but the Senegalese communities in New York in general are extremely well organised and very smart in understanding the local opportunity structures.

Conclusion

I have shown that the ideas and experiences that migrants of different ethnic and religious belonging bring with them to Europe from West Africa are extremely diverse and differ from the place, the space and the situation in which they express themselves originally. In the Swiss case, a group of Murid leaders has set up an Al Azhar Institute for Research and Study of Muridism in Geneva in order to promote Murid thinking and to develop religious studies. Here, the religious factor creates a link between the Senegalese migrants and their transnational networks. There are direct contacts to France, Senegal, Italy, New York and other important nodes of the Murid network. One of the founders of the Al Azhar Institute is also directly attached to the American network and the Murid Islamic Community of America since his family members are part of the shaykh's delegation that visits the Murids all over the world.

In the second Swiss case, I have shown that the immigrants' sense of their own role and their identification processes in the European context can vary a lot according to the type of population that resides in the environment, as well as from the political context in which public events are organised. The Association of Residents and Friends of Senegal in Switzerland interacts a lot with urban actors who follow policies that tend to valorise the diversity of the immigrants. Therefore, the Senegalese involved in events like 'Festiv'Arènes' are very successful at working on mutual incorporation processes within urban spaces. Here, cultural practices rather than religious belonging is put on stage.

In both cases, various types of networks co-exist, overlap and operate across Europe, West Africa and the United States. Each of these networks clearly impacts on the local situations. In the United States as well as in Switzerland, the Murids have managed to understand quickly how political discourses are driven. Therefore, they have succeeded in taking advantage of the political

opportunity structures, be it in New York, Lausanne, Brescia or Marseille.²¹ As the valorisation of diversity is a worldwide trend in cities, in particular in the federal states like the USA and Switzerland, and as difference in general and religious belonging in particular is encouraged, the Senegalese could put forward their religious practice. However, in a post 9/11 context, they do it by creating in certain situations a boundary by distancing themselves from the Muslims of Arab origin, and they put forward the non-violent messages of the Murid founder shaykh Ahmadou Bamba, as well as his plea for hard work and an ascetic lifestyle.

In sum, these locally rooted practices have the effect on the 'European' and 'American' experience and interact with the religious, political and cultural relationships in the countries of residence and the regions of origin, locating migration by incorporation processes in urban spaces (Glick Schiller, Çağlar, 2011) and locating religion through transnational practices and networks (Salzbrunn, 2011).

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21 I have also done fieldwork on the dahira of Livorno and the petty trade activities in Tuscany in 2011 but cannot go into details here due to the article length restrictions. The visits of Mame Mor Mbacké in Brescia in June 2011, the fundraising event of 15 June 2010 organised by MICA New York or the Magal Mam Diara Bousso 21 May 2011 in Marseille were the other important events that were organised by the worldwide Murid network.

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Religion as a Resource for the Political Involvement of Migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa in Berlin

Miriam Schader

Introduction

‘Do you sometimes discuss political issues, too?’ I asked a representative of the – more or less – only sub-Saharan African Muslim association in Berlin. ‘Discrimination’, he answered. If they sometimes discussed politics, they mostly spoke about discrimination and racism, so he said, because they all experienced it rather often. And, he added after a short pause, they sometimes also criticised the fact that the problems of the African continent did not get enough attention in their Muslim environment, ‘in Islam’:

Most of the time, the members, when we sometimes discuss [political issues], we see ourselves as Africans first. Well, we profess ourselves being Muslims in the first place, naturally, but also human beings from Africa.¹

In a different, but similar way, several pastors of small African churches in Berlin told me about the difficulties African migrants face when trying to become part of German society, about racism and exploitation. They also criticised the way Germany faces its colonial past, the fact that Europe upholds unfair trade regimes and the exploitation of African natural resources by Europeans.

In order to address political problems like racism and global inequality, individuals and groups need resources. Migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, however, are a particularly precarious and vulnerable part of German society. Not only are they a small minority within the migrant population. They also face even more difficulties than other migrant and minority groups in terms of labour market integration, due to individual attributes such as a lower level of formally recognized education, but also to structural barriers like legal labour market restrictions for certain migrant groups, racist discrimination, and the non-existence of an African ethnic labour market (Baraulina, Borchers and Schmid, 2008, 12; Benndorf, 2008, 345–46). Their material resources thus are likely to be particularly limited. Like other minority groups in Germany, they

¹ Translation from German by the author.

also have to bear with xenophobic and racist attitudes, and in recent years, Africans and persons of African descent² have been the victims of xenophobic or racist violent attacks disproportionately often (Benndorf, 2008, 350).

In this context, the incentives to become politically involved should be more or less the same for most members of the African community in Germany, regardless of their national, ethnic, or religious background. At the same time, the barriers for participation and mobilisation are likely to be equally high. The question this article raises is whether *religion* can be a resource to overcome these barriers and to define and voice political issues that concern them as migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, i.e. both as Black people in a society dominated by Whites and as migrants from and often experts for a continent still marked by colonialism and neo-colonial terms of trade.

For the U.S. context, it has been shown several times that religion can be a help for the integration of newly arrived migrants (*pars pro toto*: Foner and Alba, 2008) as well as for political participation (Brady et al., 1995) and collective mobilisation (Morris, 1984; Wood, 2002). Some of the same authors see religion mainly as a barrier to migrant integration in Europe (Foner and Alba, 2008; see also Zolberg and Woon, 1999). At the same time, there are a number of studies that demonstrate that especially young Muslims claim public recognition and visibility of their faith and religious practices within West European societies and thus get involved in political struggles in the name of their religion there (cf. Amir-Moazami, 2007; Koopmans and Statham, 1999; Koopmans et al., 2005; Eggert and Giugni, 2011). The question thus remains: can migrants draw on their religion in order to get involved politically, Muslims as well as the others?

In the following I will try to tackle only some aspects of this question by concentrating on religion as a resource for the political involvement of highly vulnerable migrants in the context of a German city. As migrants often do not have the right to vote, political participation will be defined here rather broadly as participation in the process of deliberation and decision-making on political and/or public affairs (cf. Schmidt, 2004, 546). This definition does not only include conventional individual participation, but also involvement in collective action. The theoretical arguments respectively will also draw on social movement theories in addition to models explaining individual participation. These theoretical arguments will be outlined very briefly in a first step, while the second step will consist of a description of the organisational structures and the political involvement of sub-Saharan Muslims and Christians in Berlin. A short conclusion will sum up the findings and relate back to and partly modify the theoretical considerations.

2 Here: both from North and sub-Saharan Africa.

Theoretical Arguments: Religion and the Political Involvement of Migrants

The political participation of migrants has been a recurrent concern both in academic and public debates – with varying political and normative connotations. There is also a long-standing literature both in political science and the sociology of migration, which scrutinises how different factors shape the political participation and mobilisation of individuals and groups. Yet, as in most research on migration, the religious factor has not been sufficiently accounted for in the study of migrant and minority political participation. Alejandro Portes and Josh DeWind point out this lack of attention:

Until recently, the theoretical literature on immigration imitated, unwittingly, the French emphasis on *laïcité* [sic] by focusing on the economic, linguistic, and identificational parameters of immigrant incorporation, while ignoring the presence and effects of religion (Portes and DeWind, 2007, 17).

Especially in Europe, and in Germany more specifically, studies of migrant political participation and public mobilisation which focus explicitly on religion are still rare.

To be sure, there is an ever-growing literature on political Islam as well as on the compatibility of Islam and Western democracy and the integration of Muslim migrants and post-migration minorities into European political systems. Also, much research has focused on state policies concerning the governance of increasing religious pluralism.³ Yet, so far, an important aspect of migrant and minority religion has often been ignored in European research: religion as a resource for taking part in the democratic decision-making process.

At the same time, the decisive role of resources for the political participation of individuals and groups has been put forward many times.⁴ Until today, the socioeconomic status (SES) model proposed by Sydney Verba and his colleagues in the 1970s (Verba and Nie, 1972; Verba et al., 1978) is still among the most influential explanatory models of political participation, and it has been confirmed empirically both for conventional and unconventional political

3 See, among many others, Minkenberg, 2007; Soper and Fetzer, 2007; Koenig, 2005; Kastoryano, 2004; Leveau, 2003; Zolberg and Woon, 1999; for prominent work on political Islam in Germany, see e.g. Schiffauer, 2000; Heitmeyer et al., 1997.

4 For influential, and nowadays 'classical' work on the role of resources for political participation, see for example Dahl, 1961 [2005], Verba and Nie, 1972, Verba et al., 1978.

participation (Schultze, 2001, 365). As the SES model cannot fully explain the variation in political participation within and between countries, Brady et al. (1995) also include resources other than the socioeconomic status in their extended resource model of political participation.

Similarly, one important strand of social movement theory highlights the importance of resource mobilisation for collective action. As proponents of the resource mobilisation approach argue, grievances and frustrations alone are not sufficient for the emergence or the persistence of social movements. They underline the importance of strategic actions by so-called social movement entrepreneurs and their access to and use of resources for the mobilisation of larger numbers of people.

To be sure, critics of the resource mobilisation approach point out that the availability and strategic mobilisation of resources do not explain everything, either. Newer framing approaches therefore rather stress the construction of shared meanings – e.g. of contentious issues, of group belonging or of the legitimacy of collective protest – as the basis of mobilisation.

The main argument of this article is that, under certain circumstances, religion can contribute to the political participation and collective mobilisation of migrants. On the one hand religion may be a source of material and immaterial resources that are politically relevant. And on the other hand, it may help to frame individual participation as well as contentious issues and protest in such a way that migrants find it easier to get involved, for instance by contributing to the political and protest activities of migrants' being perceived as legitimate.

Why should this be the case? First of all, religious communities can be an organisational resource. Many religions encourage their adepts to form religious organisations of some kind or other and thus create interpersonal networks that may serve also as a political resource. Religious communities differ from ethnic and other civic communities in that they imply specific practices that can reinforce their network structures. For instance, many religious communities congregate regularly in religious services and ceremonies, which facilitate face-to-face encounters and may thus contribute to fostering social networks. In many cases, members may even be morally obliged to come together and worship in public or to participate in community affairs. In line with Émile Durkheim's sociology of religion, we can furthermore assume that religious rites and rituals foster social integration and thus the ties that make up social networks.

Secondly, religious communities very often refer to a transnational imagined community, such as global Catholicism or the *umma*. Thereby, not only do they permit migrants to perpetuate their membership in their country of origin through transnational religious networks (Levitt, 2001, 20), but they

may open up new transnational social fields which are not necessarily limited to migrants and post-immigration minorities, nor to specific countries of residence and origin. Additionally, the idea of belonging to a greater community – be it transnational or not – constitutes a fertile ground for the creation of overarching structures. It may help overcome differences between individual religious congregations, associations or groups and thus be the basis to build coalitions that can provide more resources and greater legitimacy for leaders.

At the same time, religious communities may also bridge the gap between migrants and the majority in the country of residence. This can be assumed to be a particularly important factor in migrant and minority political participation, since members of the majority tend to have access to more resources relevant in the political process – for instance, they generally have more money, and are more likely to be fluent in the respective language, know the basic functioning of their country's political system as well as the media, and so on. In some cases, religious communities may also bridge barriers of class and education more easily than other organisations, which, again, would have similar effects as bridges between minority and majority. Also, as Evangelos Karagiannis and Nina Glick Schiller (2008) show, migrant religious communities can also open up 'pathways to incorporation' other than those foreseen by the dominant structures in the 'host' country (Karagiannis and Glick Schiller, 2008, 275).

Last but not least, not only can religious structures be a resource for political involvement, but religious beliefs and texts can also be used to frame political action. Biblical texts, for instance, can be used to legitimise public actions. Religious metaphors, allegories and parables can serve as a frame for claims-making and protest. As Richard L. Wood argues, the theologies of different religious communities may influence the outcomes and the persistence of their political involvement in a decisive way (Wood, 2002).

To be sure, religious communities differ greatly in their form and degree of organisation as well as in their composition. Moreover, the cultural dimension of religion is closely linked to a congregation's structure. For instance, it may contribute to reinforcing a congregational structure as well as broader networks, but it may also be an obstacle. Are believers encouraged to practice their religion in private or does the religion stress public ceremonies? Does it support or discourage participation in the wider community, especially in political affairs? Moreover, and this is significant, does it promote the creation of overarching structures? In addition, it should be remembered that the elements religious contents offer for framing political involvement diverge, too. Also, no religious community exists outside a religious field, and it is not

insulated from the political context, either. In the context of the religion of migrants, it is likely to be especially important whether the particular religion constitutes a minority or a majority religion in the country of residence. The degree of regulation of the religious field is also likely to be of importance, above all with respect to minority religions and less institutionalised religious communities. Although they share many structural characteristics, religious communities, therefore, are likely to differ in their social network structure and in the resources that arise from them, too.

In the previous paragraphs, a large number of factors have been discussed with reference to the question whether and if so, how, religion may contribute to individual political participation and collective mobilisation of migrants. As has been suggested above, it is possible to summarise these many factors to three main elements: religion as an organisational resource, religion as a source of frames for political involvement and/or protest and the context in which migrants exercise their religion and participate politically. The focus of this article is on the first of these elements, and it only covers the other two in passing. Of course, it would be best to present and analyse empirical data on all three aspects of the relation between religious and political participation of migrants, but this would go far beyond the scope of this chapter.⁵

Organisational Structures and Political Involvement of Migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa in Berlin

Taking these theoretical considerations as a starting point, this section will now present some empirical findings from Berlin. These are based on twenty-three interviews and four more informal conversations with church leaders and pastors, representatives of Christian umbrella organisations, representatives of one African and several non-African Muslim organisations, representatives of secular associations and umbrella organisations. Also, I participated in several church services, meetings, and celebrations carried out by different religious and secular associations. Most of the interviews and observations were made in 2009, and some interviews were added later in order to complement the information gained through the earlier interviews. The official

5 The findings presented here are, however, part of a larger project which aims at covering all three aspects and also adds a comparative perspective to the analysis since the study includes both the religious and political involvement of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in Berlin and in Paris.

register of associations run by the local court of Charlottenburg (*Amtsgericht Charlottenburg*) was an indispensable source of information on the number of sub-Saharan African migrant associations.

Migrants from sub-Saharan Africa and Germans of sub-Saharan African descent constitute only a small minority within the migrant and minority population in Germany. Even including North Africans, there are only about half a million persons of African origin resident in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt 2011),⁶ i.e. they make up some 0.6% of the population. In addition, there is a considerable number of undocumented migrants from African countries, although this number is probably lower than for other European countries as France or the U.K.⁷ The majority of those who were born outside Germany came as students, as spouses or children of persons already residing in Germany, as highly qualified labour migrants, asylum seekers or as refugees (Benndorf, 2008, 41). The main countries of origin of the sub-Saharan population in Berlin are displayed in figure 1.⁸

As figure 1 illustrates, the majority of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in Berlin originally came from countries either with religiously mixed populations or with a Christian majority. Fewer migrants came from predominantly Muslim countries. Nevertheless, to our best estimates, about half of the sub-Saharan citizens in Berlin are Christians, about one-third Muslims, and a fifth to a quarter either consists of adepts of traditional African beliefs or of a different or no religion.⁹ Unfortunately, there is no data available which would allow an analysis of the socioeconomic composition of the sub-Saharan population in Berlin or Germany by religion. However, it does not seem reasonable to assume systematic differences between Muslims and Christians as it is unlikely

6 The German Federal Statistical Office (*Statistisches Bundesamt*) include all persons with a so-called migration background in their estimate, i.e. everyone who, after 1949, migrated to what is now the territory of the German Federal Republic, as well as all foreigners born in Germany, and everyone born as a German in Germany to at least one immigrant or foreign parent (translation into English by the author; definition in the original: *Zu den Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund zählen 'alle nach 1949 auf das heutige Gebiet der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Zugewanderten, sowie alle in Deutschland geborenen Ausländer und alle in Deutschland als Deutsche Geborenen mit zumindest einem zugewanderten oder als Ausländer in Deutschland geborenen Elternteil'*/Statistisches Bundesamt, 2011, 6/).

7 Due to a different colonial history, language barriers etc.

8 According to the numbers of registered foreign residents of Berlin on 30 June 2006; i.e. not including Germans of sub-Saharan African origin nor undocumented migrants not registered with the Berlin authorities.

9 Data sources: Statistisches Landesamt (2012b), CIAonline (2012), AAonline (2012a, 2012b), Department of State (2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d); calculations by the author.

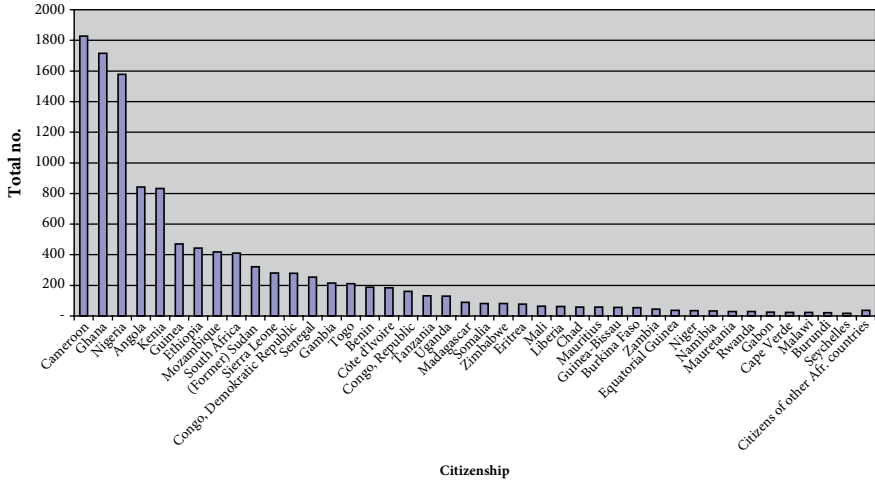


FIGURE 1 *African citizens in Berlin (2011) (not including North Africans).*
 DATA SOURCE: STATISTISCHES LANDESAMT BERLIN 2012A; GRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

that there are systematic differences in socioeconomic terms between Muslim and Christian migrants at the point of their migration if all major countries of origin are taken into account together.¹⁰

In comparison to other migrant groups, African migrants¹¹ are underrepresented in German political parties: only 0.2% of them are party members. However, they are slightly more active in trade unions. As far as there is valid data available, they seem to be as active as the native population in terms of general civic participation, mainly in transnational, ethnic or cultural, and religious groups (Benndorf, 2008, 349).

Almost Invisible: Muslims from Sub-Saharan Africa in Berlin

In Berlin, there are at least 250 organisations – associations, churches, pressure and self-help groups etc. – which were founded by or which focus on sub-Saharan migrants.¹² The majority of them are secular groups, but around fifty are Christian churches, and one is a Muslim association. In recent years,

10 Of course, it cannot be excluded that the one group or the other is disadvantaged on the labour market due to religious discrimination.
 11 Including North Africans.
 12 Calculation by the author, based on the City Council's official register of associations (2010), thorough research on the Internet, as well as information provided by umbrella organisations.

there have been attempts to create encompassing umbrella organisations: a secular one which aims at representing the whole sub-Saharan community in Berlin, and a Christian one whose goal it is to bring together and speak for all churches of an African approach in Berlin and Brandenburg. Obviously, there are also many organisations that focus on migrants in general, including sub-Saharan African migrants, and probably the most important migrant umbrella organisation, the Migration Council (*Migrationsrat Berlin-Brandenburg*), also includes sub-Saharan migrants' associations.

In the following, the situation and especially the isolation of Muslim migrants from sub-Saharan Africa as African religious and political actors in Berlin will be analysed. It will be shown that in their case, a severe lack of religious self-organisation goes along with political quiescence and that migrants from sub-Saharan Africa who are Muslims may hardly draw on their religion if they want to get involved politically.

Despite the growing number of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in Berlin and their rather high level of self-organisation, there are no African mosques in the city. There are some Sufi associations which, in fact, are German-dominated (Grübel and Rademacher, 2003, 351–355), and the Berlin branch of the African Muslim Brotherhood.¹³ Also, there are no or hardly any African Muslim social support structures. As representatives of both Catholic and Protestant social and legal support centres for African migrants pointed out in interviews, Muslim migrants often turn to Christian support structures, when in need.¹⁴ A few representatives of secular or Christian associations pointed out that they had heard about an African imam or a shaykh, but did not know any details. And even a representative of the only visible African Muslim association told the same story: he had heard about Ghanaian Muslims who met privately in order to pray together, and had a person whom they called imam. Also, he knew that during Ramadan people got together in private flats. But he did not know any details.

However, his is a small sub-Saharan Muslim organisation, which has its roots in a Sunni German-speaking Muslim association¹⁵ with members of different origin. Whereas their 'parent association' focuses on religious education

13 According to the official register of association, there is a branch of the African Muslim Brotherhood in Berlin. However, I was not able to contact them.

14 As Adogame points out, the situation is similar even for the North African Muslims in Germany. Although they constitute a far bigger group than Muslims from African countries south of the Sahara, they do not have much religious infrastructure of their own at their disposal (Adogame, 2006, 62).

15 Apparently, they did not leave in conflict, and it was the representative of the German-speaking association who put me in touch with the sub-Saharan Muslim association after I had interviewed him.

and services in Berlin and partly also on social and political issues related to the recognition of their religion by the German authorities, the sub-Saharan Muslim organisation was set up to focus on Africa as well as on African migrants in Berlin.

The association grew out of a loose network of believers, who attended the same mosque, and its formation and formal registration originally was meant to lead to the creation of a (sub-Saharan) African mosque. According to one of my interlocutors, an official representative of the group, they wanted to create a place for religious, but also cultural practices and education, where Muslims from all over (sub-Saharan) Africa could get together, exchange ideas and search for solutions to their common problems. As my interlocutor pointed out and as the association's bylaws state, they had ambitious plans. Not only did they aim at creating their own mosque following the example of an African mosque in Hamburg. They also wanted to build a network of the African Muslim diaspora in the region of Berlin and to contribute to their self-organisation and representation and to the peaceful living together of all people in Berlin. Moreover, it was their goal to support the transmission of the 'correct values' of Islam, as they put it, as well as of African culture and values. Last but not least, organising development projects focussing on the most vulnerable members of African societies was also an aim of theirs.

Over the years, providing development aid and job application courses for migrants in Berlin have become the main goals and activities of this association. It contributes to the renovation of a hospital's mosque in Cameroon, and the creation of sanitary facilities attached to the mosque but open to everyone. Furthermore, they help a youth in Niger to finance an operation and donate to poor families during the Ramadan to ensure that these have the means to celebrate it.

In contrast, the organisation does not cater for the religious needs of all sub-Saharan Muslims in Berlin. Around ten members meet once a month, they do not offer religious education, Arabic lessons, prayer groups or anything the like. And while they are quite successful in raising funds for their development projects and in their programmes to improve the labour market insertion of (sub-Saharan) migrants in Berlin, the representation of all sub-Saharan Muslims in the region seems to have been too difficult to organise. Whereas at the beginning, about fifty people were interested in creating a mosque and organising the representation of sub-Saharan Muslims in Berlin, after a while there were only about a dozen active members left. These are men only, most of them under or just over forty years old. Their countries of origin are diverse, including Cameroon, Togo, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Nigeria. Despite this diversity in terms of countries of origin, an association of ten to twelve people, of course,

would find it extremely difficult to lay a successful claim to represent and unite all the sub-Saharan Muslims in Berlin.

Nevertheless, at the time the interviews were made, they had established ties with local institutions – benefiting from the expertise and contacts of their president, who is an urban and regional planner – and were members of a small Muslim network which includes their ‘parent association’ and seven different religious associations, most of them local initiatives. Ties with their original mosque were still close, as they still go there for Friday prayers and hold their meetings there every month. Two of the African Muslim association’s members were also active in an informal ethnic association, bringing together members of an ethno-linguistic group from Cameroon resident in Berlin. The association’s president, furthermore, is the leader of a secular association, which focuses on rural and urban development in Africa as well as on improving the situation of migrants in deprived neighbourhoods of Berlin. As he put it, this secular association has the same goals as his Muslim association, ‘just without religion’.

At the same time, the sub-Saharan Muslim association had not become a member of the largest umbrella organisation of African associations in Berlin. Moreover, although they had their office in the same building and on the same floor as other sub-Saharan migrant organisations, they did not seem to work together. As the person in charge of another association located there told me when I interviewed him, he did not know anything about the Muslim association even though his colleague from two doors down the corridor was their president.

Indeed, although it is the association’s expressed goal to create a network with all kinds of organisations in Berlin and all over Germany, they seem rather isolated in the African associational field and their visibility there is limited. The Muslims from sub-Saharan Africa have not been able to set up religious organisations in Berlin that could serve as a resource for their political involvement. Despite the fact that both Muslims as a religious minority and sub-Saharan migrants as a particularly vulnerable migrant group would have many reasons to mobilise and although individual sub-Saharan African Muslims see the need to get involved individually and collectively as sub-Saharan African Muslims in Germany, they cannot draw on their religion in order to do so. Within the Muslim field, they are not able to get their issues on the agenda and thus cannot draw on ethnically different or mixed organisations and wider networks. As the president of the African Muslim association put it, there is not much interest ‘in Islam’ for Africa and Africans. While this fact led to the creation of his association, the latter has not been an efficient remedy. Despite this organisation’s efforts to unite the African Muslim community and to speak

for them, Muslims from sub-Saharan Africa are still more or less invisible as religious as well as political actors in Berlin.

*'We Can Do More than Playing the Drums and Shaking Our Hips':
African Christians and their Organisations in Berlin*

In contrast, (sub-Saharan) African Christians in Berlin are much more present and better organised. There are about fifty Christian churches 'of an African approach'¹⁶ in Berlin.¹⁷ As the following sub-section will show, they are organised both in small individual congregations and in broader networks of congregations. African Christians have far more material and immaterial resources than their Muslim counterparts and are visible as religious and political actors in the city.

Two of the fifty congregations are Roman-Catholic and belong to the archdiocese of Berlin; one of them is run by a German member of a Catholic missionary order. One congregation is a francophone Calvinist community and a special status member of the Lutheran *Evangelische Kirche Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz* (EKBO). About twenty are Pentecostal churches, and the rest are either independent Protestant churches or belong to different Protestant denominations. The composition and size of these churches varies: Some bring together mainly migrants from one country, while others are explicitly international and in some cases try to attract also non-Africans. Many of the congregations are quite small with no more than fifty members, but some attract several hundred people to their Sunday services. In addition, there are also two Christian drop-in centres, which offer social and legal support to sub-Saharan migrants.

The vast majority of the sub-Saharan African migrant congregations formally belong to two African Christian umbrella organisations: a local one and a European one, which are both based in Berlin. These two umbrella organisations co-operate closely, share premises and almost seem to be but one. In addition to their membership in these umbrella organisations, ten of the Pentecostal churches are also members of the *Bund freikirchlicher Pfingstkirchen* (BFP), a German Pentecostal organisation which includes a number of Pentecostal congregations – only some of them migrant churches – whose pastors the BFP has trained and examined. It has the status of a

16 The expression 'of an African approach' is borrowed from the self-description of a European umbrella organisation or network of African churches based in Berlin.

17 The representative of a local umbrella organisation knew the details of just over forty communities, but estimated that there must be about sixty. I was able to identify forty-nine of them.

Körperschaft öffentlichen Rechts (KdöR), i.e. basically the same legal status as for example the *Evangelische Kirche*.¹⁸ Eight of the Pentecostal churches' pastors, five of them BFP pastors, belong to their own association in Berlin. Seven congregations are represented in an intercultural working-group which belongs to a broader, rather conservative Christian network in Berlin, again five of them members of the BFP and four also of the Berlin-based association of sub-Saharan Pentecostal pastors. In addition to these organisations, most sub-Saharan migrant churches in Berlin are members of the International Association of Christian Communities in Berlin and Brandenburg (*Internationaler Konvent Christlicher Gemeinden in Berlin und Brandenburg e.V.*), which aims at representing and supporting all migrant churches and missions in the region.

This list of organisations, networks and memberships already gives a good idea of how the (sub-Saharan) African Christian community is structured. Not only is there a multitude of very diverse churches, there are also two organisations which are explicitly African Christian migrant organisations and which bring together and speak for almost all African churches in Berlin. In addition to these organisations, with the network of African Pentecostal pastors there is another Christian association set up by and bringing together African migrant leaders. At the same time, the BFP, the archdiocese, the EKBO, the International Association and the said Berlin-wide Christian network offer opportunities to develop ties with non-African and non-migrant churches and established Christian institutions, and some of them dispose of considerable resources.

Indeed, while individual churches as well as the Muslim association described above have managed to receive funds from the EU for their social projects, and to establish good working relations with the local authorities, some of the Christian associations also have been able to tap resources provided by the mainstream churches in Germany or other established religious institutions or organisations. This is not to say that they get everything for free, but, for example, already the simple fact that small independent migrant-initiated churches often can rent premises from the established Lutheran Church must be considered a great privilege compared to the difficulties Muslim communities face when looking for premises. This is true also for the two African Christian umbrella organisations who rent their – shared – office space from the Protestant *Missionswerk*. What is more, one of the two Christian

18 The Roman-Catholic Church and the *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland* (EKD) with its regional churches, the *Landeskirchen*, e.g. EKBO, are the two mainstream established churches in the Federal Republic.

drop-in centres is financed by the Catholic Church and run by German members of the said missionary order.¹⁹

In addition, less tangible resources result from their networks. For instance, the unifying umbrella structures they have created give (sub-Saharan) African Christian leaders a capacity to act that (sub-Saharan) African Muslim leaders can only dream of. To be sure, just like the African Muslim association described above, the two Christian umbrella organisations at first attracted many people interested in their work and started with great enthusiasm. And just like their Muslim counterpart, they experienced that people lose their enthusiasm and that in the end only a small number of very committed members remains and carries on the work of the association. Nevertheless, while the two umbrella organisations in this respect resemble the Muslim organisation, there still is an important difference: their members are representatives of congregations, i.e. in contrast to the members of the African Muslim association they stand for a much larger number of sub-Saharan migrants than just themselves. Moreover, as long as the others do not explicitly leave the organisations, the umbrella organisations still have the mandate to speak for all of them, too. This effect is reinforced by the fact that their leaders themselves already represent different currents in Christianity which range from Catholicism over different Protestant strands to Pentecostalism.

Also, the structures sketched above point to another important difference between the situation of African Christians and Muslims in Berlin, and in most European settings. Even if there have been long struggles between secular and Christian forces since the times of the Enlightenment, Christian churches nowadays are perceived widely as legitimate actors in the public sphere in most European countries, except for the *laïc* countries of France and Turkey. Whereas sub-Saharan Christians thus are able to benefit from long-standing organisational and institutional arrangements, sub-Saharan Muslims can only rely on the help of communities who are themselves struggling for recognition. For instance, the existence of the francophone Catholic and Calvinist communities precedes the arrival of larger numbers of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa as these are a rather new migrant and minority population in Germany. And although the International Association became a registered association only in 1997, it has its beginnings in the 1970s – a time when migrants from sub-Saharan Africa only started to arrive. These organisations have become important for the African Christian community over time, but the African migrants did not need to found them. What is more, the presence of different migrant

19 The other centre is run by two Pentecostal pastors – one Ghanaian, one of German origin – and financed by donations.

churches in Berlin also paved the way for African migrant churches and Christian organisations.

To be sure, small local Pentecostal churches set up by African migrants as well as transnational Pentecostal churches attract the suspicion and mistrust of the majority society, too. Moreover, as several of my interlocutors pointed out, (sub-Saharan) African migrants often feel less than welcome in established religious communities for their different style of worship. And they sometimes feel they are considered to be good enough for playing the drums, for dancing and singing once a year at special 'multicultural' events, but are not taken seriously otherwise. As a representative of one of the African Christian umbrella organisations put it:

And we already said [when we got an invitation] to some events, we want to be involved in the organisation, and not when everything already has been done and then they ask us, whether we, er, could contribute anything to add a bit of colour, we don't do that. Er, we, too, can do more than playing the drums and shaking our hips.²⁰

Nevertheless, in the case of sub-Saharan Christians, the patronising and sometimes racist attitudes they encounter as Blacks in a society that still considers itself as all-white do not combine with the same amount of mistrust and pressure to justify themselves that Muslim individuals and organisations have to deal with. Not a single one of my Christian interlocutors felt the need to stress that they were loyal to Germany or that they respected the German constitution. All of the Muslim interlocutors did stress the fact that they were moderate, loyal and believed in a democratic political order.

The Political Involvement of Sub-Saharan Christian and Muslim Migrants in Berlin

Unsurprisingly, the most explicitly politically active African migrant organisations are, of course, secular organisations that were set up for political reasons and purposes. There are at least two hundred cultural, ethnic, or homeland oriented associations, asylum seekers support and anti-racist groups, media associations, women's associations, and a working-group which has been set up by the sub-Saharan migrants within a local section of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), and focuses on the African continent and (sub-Saharan) African migrants in Germany. Some of these groups are more visible and more explicitly political organisations than others. For instance, while most of the ethnic

²⁰ Translation from German by the author.

associations were not set up to get involved politically, the working group of the SPD evidently is a political organisation.

A few years ago a secular African migrant umbrella organisation that brings together African cultural, social and political groups (though no political groups affiliated with political parties) was also established. So far, it has over twenty member associations and aims at representing all African migrants in Berlin. Both in its self-description and its activities, it presents itself as a political association. For instance, it supports the campaign for a memorial for the African victims of Germany's colonial past and the so-called Berlin conference of 1884–1885. It is also involved in the protests against police brutality and racism in the German police forces that were sparked by the obscure death of Oury Jalloh from Sierra Leone in a cell at a police station in Dessau.²¹ Moreover, at the time I interviewed several representatives of this African migrant umbrella organisation, one of them was also a board member of one of the most important general migrant umbrella organisation in Berlin. The latter is an explicitly political organisation insofar as it wants to represent and give a strong voice to all migrant groups in Berlin.

In contrast to the African Muslim association the local African Christian umbrella organisation is a member of the secular umbrella organisation and, at the time the interviews were conducted, a representative of the European Christian umbrella organisation was a representative of the secular network.²² Moreover, the local African Christian umbrella organisation itself is explicitly political in its outlook as its official website illustrates well. Under the heading 'Politics' (*Politik*), they point out that it is one of their declared objectives to

21 Oury Jalloh, a refugee from Sierra Leone, died on 7 January 2005 because of a fire in his cell at the police station in Dessau, Sachsen-Anhalt. Both Oury Jalloh's hands and feet were tied up when the fire broke out and the police officer in charge apparently turned off the fire alarm initially instead of coming to his rescue immediately. When the officer finally went to check on the prisoner, he supposedly was not able to help him due to smoke. The exact circumstances of Jalloh's death have not been completely explained until today. In 2007, two police officers from Dessau, who were accused of causing bodily harm with fatal consequences and involuntary manslaughter respectively, were cleared of all charges for lack of evidence. However, there was an appeal against the Dessau court's decision lodged to the Federal Court of Justice (*Bundesgerichtshof*), who annulled one of the acquittals in 2010 and referred the case to the Regional Court (*Landgericht*) in Magdeburg (SZonline 2010a, SZonline 2010b). In 2012 one of the officers was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter and fined (10,800 euros). The case has not been fully resolved, yet. (Initiative Oury Jalloh 2014).

22 He stepped down from his office in the secular organisation later that year for personal reasons.

create a 'feeling of love for Germany' (*Liebesgefühl für Deutschland*) among the African community in the Berlin/Brandenburg region. It is their strategy, so the organisation claims on the website, to motivate Africans to take on more social and political responsibility, for example by taking up German citizenship and by joining German political parties. Also, it aims at becoming a role model and a leader in terms of integration into German society,

because we want to, er, encourage Christian people of African origin also to get involved. Not only spiritually, but also socially, politically, and culturally,²³

as one of their representatives said. Moreover, since they see themselves as a voice of African Christians in Berlin and of African migrants in Berlin in general, representatives of the organisation participate in conferences, public panel discussions, workshops, and even in events organised by political parties.

Individual pastors and church members also get involved politically as Christians. In part, they are the same persons who are involved in one of the umbrella organisations, but some of them are also politically active outside these structures. For instance, one of the Pentecostal pastors is quite active in secular associations, too, and was a member of the foreigners' council (*Ausländerbeirat*) of a town near Berlin. When he was a candidate for the council, he drew on the support of his church and asked the church members who had the right to vote in these elections to vote for him. Other pastors participate in public panel discussions or write articles on issues such as the exploitation of natural resources in Africa by the Europeans, on European migration and refugee policies and 'Fortress Europe', and racism.

The important point, however, is not that there are sub-Saharan migrants who are politically active and who happen to be Christians. What is important here is that they get involved politically as Christians and using their religious networks as a resource. For instance, for their political work, the leaders of the local umbrella organisation draw on their religion in several ways. First of all, and most importantly, they dispose of a far greater legitimacy than they would if they acted in the name of their individual churches. Their umbrella organisation gives them the authority of leaders who have the mandate to speak for several hundreds of people while some of their churches have no more than forty adult members. Also, while many migrant churches, especially small Pentecostal communities, are often disqualified by the German majority as

23 Translation from German by the author.

being obscure and dangerous 'sects',²⁴ they appear much more respectable if they act as a representative of an umbrella organisation of all African churches, including, among others, two Catholic congregations. Aware of this need for unity, they work very hard to bridge the differences between members. Secondly, they draw on resources such as premises or contacts in the majority society they would not have as representatives of a secular or a Muslim organisation. For instance, they rent a room from the German *Missionswerk*. Also, they have the support of German pastors and volunteers who, for instance, know the German political system and who are German native speakers. Moreover, the very creation of the two African Christian umbrella organisations was initiated by native German pastors. Thirdly, the umbrella organisations also are an opportunity for individual pastors or just Christian believers whose congregations are apolitical to get involved politically as Christians. While the priest responsible for one of the two Catholic congregations may not want to have anything to do with politics, members of this community may well find getting politically active as Catholics within the umbrella organisation attractive and important. Last but not least, both the leaders of the umbrella organisations and of individual churches have the possibility to quickly reach large numbers of people through their religious networks. Furthermore via their local umbrella organisation they can get in touch with and potentially mobilise the members of the secular African migrant umbrella organisation and, via the latter, also non-African members of the secular regional migrant umbrella association.

They do not only use their Christian umbrella organisation as a political resource, as has already been suggested above. As the just mentioned example of the candidate for the foreigners' council of his town shows they also benefit from the fact that their individual churches are networks. Via those, they can mobilise others and increase their own leverage. They also use the fact that they represent a Christian organisation to get involved politically because it lends them authority. Last but not least, in several Protestant and Pentecostal churches, pastors raise political issues in their sermons from time to time and call on people to vote in elections if they have the right to do so. In one of the two Catholic congregations, the priest might not raise political issues, but still addresses matters of integration and participation in German society.

In contrast, the African Muslim organisation is too small to constitute a political resource for its members. Indeed, since sub-Saharan African Muslims as Muslims are hardly visible as religious actors, they have hardly any structures

24 To be sure, in Weberian terms they are sects. However, the term *Sekte* (sect) is a very pejorative one in everyday German and usually used – also by the two established churches among others – to portray deviant religious communities as harmful.

to get involved in or to use for political purposes. This does not mean that migrants from sub-Saharan Africa who are Muslims do not get involved politically – on the contrary, there are several individual Muslims who are very active politically. Yet, they are not active as Muslims. (Sub-Saharan) African Muslims who become active politically do so in secular associations, and usually without any reference to their religious background. Religion apparently is not a political resource for them. They do not get active politically in the name of their religion, neither to attain their secular, nor their religious goals. As individuals, they can more easily take advantage of secular network structures.

Hence there is what might be called a co-variation between the religious organisational structures and the political involvement of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in Berlin: African Christians are well organised with inter-communal ties and ties with secular and with non-African actors. They get involved politically as Christians, and as Christians they are recognized. For African Muslims, meanwhile, being politically involved as Africans and Muslims does not seem to be an option.

Discussion and Conclusion

In order to conclude, it seems adequate to return to the theoretical considerations presented at the beginning of this article. Three factors were described as most relevant for religion to be a political resource: organisational, cultural and contextual. The very brief discussion of the empirical material from Berlin has revealed that, in a nutshell, both among Muslims and Christians from sub-Saharan Africa, there are individuals who try to use their religion as a resource for social and political participation and projects. It seems, however, far more difficult for Muslims to do so than for Christians.

The organisational structure of religious communities seems to matter mainly insofar as it is impossible to draw on religion as a resource for political participation and collective mobilisation if there is no such organisational structure. If, as has been the case of the African Muslim association, the attempt to establish an institution for religious and cultural education, a structure and venue for regular conventions and shared rituals fails, then there simply is no religious structure that could be a resource. It matters insofar, too, as the existence of individual congregations or associations seems not to provide enough resources. Instead, overarching structures and unity across theological boundaries seem essential – a fact that has not been taken into account adequately in the theoretical section above. It is not so much the individual church or association which constitutes a resource, but rather the federation of several

associations. This means that it is necessary for religious groups and leaders to overcome theological and interpersonal differences in order to build overarching structures which then can be a really valuable resource for individual leaders and a voice of their community.

Cultural and contextual elements seem to contribute to the differences between the organisational structures the Christians and Muslims from sub-Saharan Africa have been able to set up in Berlin. For the Christians it is far easier to get organised as it is a norm to be a member of one particular congregation. Muslims, on the contrary, theoretically can go to any mosque for Friday prayer and usually do not become 'members' of a mosque. To be sure, also among Christians, there are communities and individual religious leaders who feel a stronger obligation to participate actively in society than others. But the religion provides stronger incentives to get organised and then these structures provide resources for those who also want to become involved politically.

Also, African Christians can draw on an established network of institutions while African Muslims can only try to connect with a community still struggling to find its place in European societies. Moreover, while African Christians are in the position to complain about the lack of support they receive from the established German churches, about a lack of financing etc., African Muslims feel they have to justify themselves and have to demonstrate frequently how open, moderate and harmless they are. Christians can openly take the most conservative positions without being criticised as being oppressive or dangerous in the same way as Muslims are criticised. In contrast, Muslims have to pledge allegiance to the constitution and to the democratic order all the time.

In a nutshell, in the present case, Muslims from sub-Saharan Africa find it much harder than Christian migrants from the same continent to get organised also because the Christians can count on some form of support in these matters from the already existing Christian organisational structures in Germany, while the Muslims have to start from the scratch in a generally unfavourable environment. Nevertheless, on both sides groups and individuals can draw on their religion as a political resource only, if religious institutions reach a certain organisational level. Then they give their leaders the necessary capacity to act, and may help to acquire the necessary tangible resources such as money, premises, and office equipment as well as intangible resources like information, know-how, prestige and legitimacy.

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Between Ghana and the Netherlands: Ghanaian Muslims Engaging in Interreligious Relationships

Martha Frederiks and Stanisław Grodź

Introduction

Migration as well as the intersection of migration, religion and identity has become a 'hot' academic topic. In the last two decades books, articles and thematic issues of journals on the impact of migration on religion seem to proliferate. Authors explore how migration affects the religious beliefs or practices of migrants, how religious community formation in the new context takes place or investigate the transnational networks of religious migrants groups. For the Netherlands alone (one of the loci of this case-study contribution) numerous books and articles are published annually, that study the religiosity of Muslim and Christian migrants to the Netherlands (e.g. Castillo Guerra, Wijzen and Steggerda, 2006; Jansen and Stoffels, 2008; Frederiks and Pruiksma, 2010; Meulen, 2009; Knibbe, 2009; Koning, 2009; Sunier, 2010; De Koning, 2011).

Academic research seems to be mainly geared towards the impact of the new migration context on the faith and the faithful and to the question how religious migrants connect with kindred religious groups and individuals in the new migration context and beyond. Very few publications investigate the intersection of migration and interfaith relations. Questions such as whether and if so how, patterns of interreligious cohabitation and interfaith relations developed in the country of origin, are impacted by migration or how interfaith experiences and transformations of beliefs and practices in the migration context impact faith communities and interfaith relationships 'back home', remain under-exposed.

These intriguing questions on how migration impacts not only interfaith relations in the migration contexts, but also how these experiences feed into the (inter)faith dynamics in the countries of origin, form an ambitious research agenda for the years to come. This contribution in no way aims to answer all these questions. Rather, it is a modest attempt to explore one aspect of this corpus of questions. Concretely, in this contribution we aim at investigating interfaith attitudes and experiences of Ghanaian Muslims in Ghana as well as explore whether and if so how migration to the Netherlands has impacted the attitudes and perceptions of Ghanaian Muslims with regard to interfaith relationships. More in particular, this case-study explores whether there are lines of continuity between the patterns of interfaith interactions by the Ghanaian Muslims in Ghana and the way in which the first generation of Ghanaian

Muslim migrants to the Netherlands interacts with other religious groups in the Dutch context.

Before we embark on this exploration, a few preliminary remarks are necessary. Materials on Ghanaian Muslims (or West African Muslims in general) and their interfaith interactions in the Netherlands (and even in Western Europe) are scarce. While the total number of people of sub-Saharan African descent in the Netherlands is estimated at 163,000,¹ Muslims from that region form only a fraction of the total of Africans in the Netherlands. Most migrants from sub-Saharan Africa are Christian (Castillo Guerra, Wijzen and Steggerda, 2006; Jansen and Stoffels, 2008; Frederiks and Pruiksma, 2010). Muslims of sub-Saharan descent also form only fraction of the total number of Muslims in the Netherlands. The largest group of the African Muslims is formed by the Somalis, most of who came to the Netherlands as refugees following the fall of the Barre regime in 1991 and the subsequent civil war and famine (Reek and Hussain, 2007, 17; Frederiks, 2010a, 50). Thus, Ghanaian Muslims form a 'double minority' in the Netherlands: they are a minority among Ghanaians migrants who are predominantly Christian as well as a minority within the Dutch Muslim community, which is dominated by Muslims from Morocco and Turkey.

This contribution therefore has an explorative character. We take the following approach: first we investigate interfaith relations in Ghana, developing this theme against the historical background of the arrival of both Islam and Christianity in Ghana. Secondly we explore the migration of Ghanaians – and particularly Ghanaian Muslims – to the Netherlands and investigate how Ghanaian Muslims situate themselves in the various religious and ethnic networks in the Netherlands, with a particular attention for the interfaith interactions. Finally we draw some tentative conclusions about the impact of migration on the attitudes and perceptions of Ghanaian Muslims towards interfaith relations.

The Ghanaian Context

Both Islam and Christianity have a several centuries' long history in Ghana.² While Islam gradually moved from the north to south, Christianity penetrated

1 This calculation is based on Foquz ethnomarketing who estimates the total number of Africans (Moroccans exempted) at 183,000. The number includes Egyptians (11 percent of the total). <http://www.foquz.nl/allochtonen/afrikanenG1.html>, accessed 22 May 2011.

2 For the sake of brevity in this section whenever we will refer to geographical terms as 'south', 'north' or the like, we will refer to the territories that are contained within the borders of the present day Ghana.

the area of the present-day Ghana from the coast upwards. However, exceptions have to be noted. The Dagartis and other acephalous ethnic groups in the north and north-west became Christian in the effect of the missionary activity of the White Fathers coming from the erstwhile French colony of Upper Volta. The spread of Islam among the Fante in the south is the product of Fante dissatisfaction with the Christian churches operating in their region and of contacts with Muslim settlers – freed slaves, colonial soldiers and *ulama* serving as their imams – and finally the result of activities of the Ahmadis invited from Pakistan (McCoy, 1988; Debrunner, 1967, 170, 240–241; Fisher, 1963, 117).

The first contacts with Islam in the northern parts are usually traced to the 15th century, when the trans-Saharan trade, and more particular the cola-nut trade, brought Muslims traders known as Dyula (also known under the names of Wangara or Yarse) to the Volta basin, marking the beginning of Islam in the kingdom of Gonja (Levtzion, 1968, 55–63; Goody, 1971, 186–187; Wilks, Levtzion and Haight, 1986, 13). Later, from the 16th century onwards, also Hausa Muslims from Hausaland and Borno began to settle in northern Ghana (Goody, 1969, 203; Bari, 2009, 151).³ While the dispersed Muslim communities had been present in the area, Islam began to have some modest social and political influence from the late 17th century in the political entities created in the north (Levtzion, 1968, 87, 91, 125–130, 139–140; Wilks, 1989; Samwini, 2006, 27–30). Scholars point to the fact that the officially accepted Islamic presence there had its limitations. Muslims were to help the ruler(s) in governing the state, not to challenge the status quo (Weiss, 2006, 49–50).⁴

Islam reached the Asante area in the mid-18th century as a result of the Asante domination of the northern kingdoms. Muslims were permitted to settle in the Asante territory, and eventually also in the capital city of Kumasi, in the so-called *zongos* (Muslim quarters) to further their commercial interests and serve as advisors and helpers to the chiefs (Owusu-Ansah, 1987, 148; Wilks, 1966, 318–319; Samwini, 2006, 31). With the ascension of a Mampon chief to the stool of the paramouncy in Kumasi in the late 18th century, some Muslims (known later as *Asante nkramo* – Asante Muslims)⁵ were incorporated into the staff of the royal palace, as people responsible for the spiritual safeguard of the

3 The dates of the first contacts are debatable. J.S. Trimingham (1964, 46) maintained that Islam reached the Volta basin only in the 19th century.

4 Thus – as Weiss pointed out – the Islamization of the society and its structures could proceed only at a very slow pace and was heavily dependent on the will of the ruler(s).

5 ‘Today, they consider themselves to be Asante and are not part of the Zongo community’ (Schildkrout, 2006, 589).

king (Owusu-Ansah, 1987, 150; Wilks, 1975, 250). However, the Asante strictly controlled their Muslim subjects, using their services and foreign connections but preventing them from interfering in the political-stately affairs. It should be noted, though, that deposition of one of the kings in the late 18th century for becoming too inclined towards Islam did not result in retaliations against Muslims. They retained their privileges during the reign of his successors, even being allowed to proselytise among the Asante, though with very little success. Islam, perceived as a religion of the conquered, posed no significant spiritual threat or challenge to the Asante. In addition, an Asante taboo on mentioning one's place of origin warranted some anonymity and a certain integration of strangers into the Asante society (Wilks, 1975, 253–254; Wilks, 1966, 328; Schildkrout, 1970, 243–254).⁶

In the first half of the 19th century the influence of Islam reached the coastal area through settlers coming from other European-controlled areas in the form of freed slaves, or soldiers employed by the colonial authorities (Addo, 2009, 41; Debrunner, 1967, 170, 240–241). The northern Muslims reached the coast only by the end of the 19th century after the British crushed the power of the Asante and opened the roads towards the south (Levtzion, 1968, 32; Wilks, 1971, 136).

Still the extent of Islamisation of various ethnic groups in this period in the region of the present day Ghana remains debatable. For example, the northern kingdoms of the Gonjas, the Dagombas, the Mamprusis and in Wa developed a pattern in which Muslims formed a social stratum distinct from the chiefs and warriors, as well as distinct from the commoners. Transition between the strata was restricted because it involved a change in the social standing of an individual and her/his family, and that was strictly controlled. Some members of the aristocracy were Islamised; but the common perception was that a chief could not be a Muslim since that would prevent him from participating in some traditional rituals essential for the welfare of his chiefdom.⁷ To some extent Muslims were also distinct from warriors since they were thought to be people who could not shed blood. The open and irenic attitudes towards the non-Muslims, characteristic for the teachings of Al-Hajj Salim Suwari, were practiced by many Dyula merchant-clerics who came to settle in the northern

6 Some of the *ulama* who visited Kumasi (e.g. sharif Ibrahim Barnawi, a Hausa) kept distance from the local Muslims considering them as pagans (Wilks, 1966, 323–324) and sharing the opinion of Usman dan Fodio (Levtzion, 1968, 106).

7 Some chiefs and warriors adopted Muslim names (or their local equivalents), prayed with the Muslims occasionally (though some had imams assigned to the local court) and took part in Muslim (or Islamised) festivals.

kingdoms (Wilks, 2000, 96–98).⁸ The ‘northern pattern’ of restricting Muslims to one social stratum was later adopted by the Asante, though the strong conviction that Islam was the religion of the conquered, continued.

Some authors argue that the popularisation of Islam took place in Northern Ghana from the late 19th and early 20th centuries onwards, partly as a result of a gradual, class-related process of adoption of Islam (Sarba, 2010, 35) partly as a result of colonial policy, which Peter Clarke typifies as ‘protectionist’ and ‘sympathetic’ to Muslims (Clarke, 1982, 191–192). Others advocate a later date of the popularisation of Islam; they stress that the Islamisation, especially of the chiefly Dagomba stratum, accelerated only after the political changes linked to the Independence and as a response to the activities of the Christian missionaries among the acephalous peoples of the north (Boi-Nai and Kirby, 1998, 533–537).⁹

Islam has only made a limited impact in the southern areas (Sarba, 2010, 38). However, the censuses conducted after the Independence show that most of the Muslims in Ghana actually live in the southern part of the country. This does not prevent even the Ghanaians to perceive the North as ‘Muslim’ and Muslims as ‘the Northerners’ (Anquandah, 1982, 136–137; Dovlo, 2004, 50–52; Weiss, 2006, 67–68).¹⁰ To a certain extent it is understandable as strictly speaking most of the Muslims living in the south do not belong to the southern ethnic groups.

Christianity was first brought to Ghana in the 15th century, taking the form of the arrival of the Portuguese (Debrunner, 1967, 17; Omenyo, 2002, 34–38). Though there was a continued ‘Christian’ presence in the form of a chaplaincy to the European staff at the slave-castles along the Ghanaian coast from that time onwards, few efforts were made to spread Christianity to the local people.¹¹ Sustained attempts at the evangelisation of the indigenous population

8 Suwari taught, for example, that unbelief is the result of ignorance, and in God’s plan some people stay longer in that state, than others. So, active proselytisation interferes with God’s plans but Muslims should lead exemplary lives and thus attract the interest and following from non-Muslims. Using arms is permissible only in self-defence; Muslims may live under the authority of non-Muslim rulers as long as the latter guarantee them conditions to lead their life according to the precepts of Islam. (Wilks, 2000, 98).

9 That was linked to the chiefs’ worries that their long term subordinate peoples were slipping from under their control.

10 Research conducted by the *Islam in Africa Project of the Christian Council of Ghana* in the 1970s showed that the majority of Muslims in Ghana lived in the South. The 2000 national census confirmed that, showing that 60% of Muslims in Ghana live in the southern towns.

11 Portuguese Augustinians made some efforts in the 16th and 17th centuries (Debrunner, 1967, 17–19). In the 18th century a number of Ghanaians, such as Jacobus Capitein (Kpobi, 1993)

began only in the 19th century, with the Basel Mission and Bremer Mission taking the lead, soon followed by the Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries (Debrunner 1967; Addo, 2009, 109–162; Sarba, 2010, 47–49). Due to the colonial policy the North remained closed to Christian evangelisation from the southern direction until the Independence in 1957 (Clarke, 1982, 191),¹² leading to the present situation where Christianity is the predominant religion in the South and Islam has been associated with the North (Sarba, 2010, 48–50).

Typical for Ghanaian Christianity is its abundance of indigenous churches, a development that started with the prophetic movements and the emergence of the African Independent/Instituted Churches (AICs) in the early 20th century, followed from the 1970s by a new wave of indigenous churches of the Pentecostal-Charismatic type (Baëta, 1962; Gifford, 1998, 57–112; Omenyo, 2003, 173–176; Gifford, 2004; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005).

Data collected at the end of the 20th century indicate that about 60–70% of the population of present-day Ghana is Christian, about 16% Muslim and between 14–24% first of all describe themselves as adherents of traditional religions.¹³ Though on the national level, Muslims form a minority in Ghana, the regional experience may be quite different. In some parts of the North as well as in certain quarters of the southern towns and cities one may get an impression of living in a predominantly Muslim society. Likewise one can acquire it while travelling in the country along the main roads and spotting mosques.¹⁴ Early European travellers and some later researchers in the region made such observations (Trimingham, 1964, 27; Levzion, 1968, 188). Meanwhile, as Marloes Kraan (2001, 35–36) points out, concepts like ‘minority’ and ‘majority’ are relational and situational terms.

and Philip Quaake (Carretta and Reese, 2010) were taken to Europe to be trained as ministers and later employed as missionaries with the aim of evangelizing their own people. Their impact was limited.

12 With the exception of the activity of the White Fathers on the border with Upper Volta from 1906. They made inroads south even to the Dagomba country already in the 1940s.

13 Gifford (1998, 61) quoted the figures of 60% Christian, 16% Muslim, 20% adherents of traditional religions. The census of 2000 suggest a higher percentage of Christians and a lower percentage of traditional believers: Christian 68.8% (Pentecostal/Charismatic 24.1%, Protestant 18.6%, Catholic 15.1%, other 11%), Muslim 15.9%, traditional 8.5%, other 0.7%, none 6.1%. See <http://www.umsl.edu/services/govdocs/wofact2007/geos/gh.html>, accessed 25 May 2011.

14 Practice shows that a mosque located in a visible place by the main road does not always indicate the existence of a big and vibrant Muslim community.

Interreligious Relations in Ghana

Generally speaking Ghana has been known for its harmonious interreligious relationships. Unlike Nigeria or the Senegambia area Ghana has no history of 19th century *jihads* (Clarke, 1982, 111–152; Frederiks, 2003, 128–151). The region experienced only their very distant resonances (Holden, 1965; Goody, 1970). Most of the 20th century has been free of interreligious clashes as well. Nathan Samwini has pointed out that during several decades of the second half of the 20th century relations became more strained due to a Muslim resurgence from the 1950s and a Christian Pentecostal revival from the 1970s (Samwini, 2006, 66–106, esp. 86–99, 172–184).¹⁵ This resulted in a number of clashes from 1970s to the late 1990s with a relatively quiet period between 1982–1994 (Samwini, 2006, 192). It needs to be emphasized however that though religion played a significant role in these conflicts, not all of these clashes were of an interreligious nature; some of these conflicts occurred among Muslims (e.g. between the Wahhabi inspired Ghanaian group *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a* and the Tijanis or between the Ahmadis and the Sunni Muslims), some between Muslims and non-Muslims, others among Christians, and again others between Christians and traditional believers (Samwini, 2006, 193–208).¹⁶ Especially the 1990s were marked by an awakening of Muslim and Christian proselytism, which effectively did not achieve significant success. Many of the top officials on both sides – Christian and Muslim – encouraged restraint and efforts to build peaceful relationships between believers of both religions and acted in order to resolve the conflicts (Dovlo and Asante, 2003; Dovlo, 2004, 49–50). Even the leading Neo-Pentecostal figures, like Mensa Otabil, eventually stressed the need for peaceful coexistence (Goethe Institute Accra, 2004, 221). Since the late 1990s the relations seem to have improved again.

Clarke and Samwini attribute the generally speaking harmonious interreligious relations chiefly to the accommodative character of the Ghanaian Islam. This accommodative attitude is usually traced to the time of Islam's arrival in

15 He indicates many reasons: the growth and development of the Tijaniyya *tariqa* as a distinct way of professing Islam from the 20th century onwards, the arrival of the polemically-oriented Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission in Ghana in 1921, British colonial policy that strengthened the position of Muslims in Northern Ghana and the emergence of the Muslim political movements, e.g. a Wahhabi inspired *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a*. Gifford (2004, 169) pointed out that sermons of Nigerian preachers extrapolating the Nigerian situation to Ghana were generally not well received.

16 Samwini notes that the majority of the clashes from the 1950s onwards took place among Muslims and between Christians and Muslims, with a few among Christians and between Christians and the traditional believers. For the latter see e.g. Dijk (2001).

Ghana and linked to the commercial interests of the early Muslim traders, their Sufi allegiance as well as to their minority position amidst a population that predominantly adhered to the traditional religions (Clarke, 1982, 98; Samwini, 2006, 31–32).

Other authors point to the flexibility and adaptability of the African context as the source of the harmonious relations. Already in 1966 Spencer Trimingham wrote that ‘the African idea of harmony of society maintained itself over against any idea of Islamic exclusiveness’ (Trimingham, 1966, 128). Iain M. Lewis pointed to an openness for accommodation of certain strands of Islam (Lewis, 1966, 60). Lamin Sanneh also stated ‘that traditional African cultures have intrinsic resources of adaptability and discernment’ (Sanneh, 1997, 22, 29). A view again corroborated by others (Onwubiko, 1994, 117). Sanneh identifies the hospitality and tolerance of African cultures as crucial for what he calls ‘the African matrix’ for interreligious relationships (Frederiks, 2010b, 263). Though there might be some truth in the identification of the African context as one of the reasons for the harmonious relations, the authors do not explain why at times (in the past as well as the present) this generally speaking harmonious outlook on life gives way to violent outbursts (ethnic as well as religious).

Still others, such as Johnson Mbillah and Cosmas Sarba point to the traditional religiosity as a shared commonality between the Ghanaians across religious traditions. Mbillah speaks about ‘the innate African religiosity, which is live and let live with our religious diversities in harmony’ (Mbillah, 2004, 5). Sarba in his research on interreligious relationship and the Akan traditional values points in a similar direction. In his thesis he partly attributes the harmonious relations to the ties of consanguinity and bonds of marriage across religions (Sarba, 2010, 264). However, he also explores resources in Akan spirituality which, he feels, contributes to irenic interreligious living. Sarba proposes a theory that the key component of the interreligious art of relating is formed by the way in which the Akan perceive truth. According to Sarba the Akan see truth as divine and universal, but they do not believe in the universality of one particular religion:

Each religious tradition has divine truth, a deposit of faith. To the Akan, truth is divine and is not the preserve of one particular religion or culture (Mbiti, 1989:101; Opoku, 1996:67). Every religion and for that matter culture contains within it a certain degree of divine truth, the veracity of which, to the Akan people, is determined by its fruits (spiritual and material) and not just by the mere content of its deposit of faith (Sarba, 2010, 110–111).

This, according to Sarba, generates 'a certain general attitude of doctrinal apathy' which results in an open attitude towards all religious traditions as well as in a rejection of extremist and exclusivist positions.

The general doctrinal apathy, which is the consequence of the belief in universality of divine truth and functionalism of religion, has two implications for Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana. Firstly, the indifference to religious particularism underlies the tolerant attitude, openness and even utter acceptance that both Muslim Akan and Christian Akan display in view of available approaches to the Divine, interpretations of the origin and destiny of human existence (Opoku, 1993). In view of this, religious fanaticism which demonizes association with members of other religious traditions has no place in Ghanaian religious imagination. (...) Secondly, the doctrinal apathy also enables the Akan people to, consciously, consistently, and rightly so, reject aggressive and extreme religious exclusivism perpetuated by some Christians and Muslims which could endanger community harmony (Sarba, 2010, 111–112).

Whether this perception of truth and its implications for interreligious relationships is something specific to the Akan or whether this is a more generally shared view in African traditional cultures and whether or not this outlook on life is sustained amidst the all-pervasive influence of globalisation, growing religious fundamentalism and the impact of transnational networks, is an area for further research.¹⁷

Supporting Sarba's argument still another aspect of the indigenous worldview could be taken into consideration, i.e. the need for daily efficacy of religion: the conviction that the contact with the supernatural needs to bring real effects in the everyday life of the people. Vincent Boi-Nai and Jon Kirby have studied the dynamics and reasons for the Islamisation of the Dagombas in the second part of the 20th century. Yet, their research of the tiny Christian Dagomba minority and of the interreligious relations among the Dagombas shows that though the Dagomba Christians are sometimes treated by their Traditionalist and Muslim compatriots as outcasts and even traitors, they are also closely watched with interest as far as the effectiveness of their contacts

17 Rahman Yakubu, a PhD candidate, is researching the interreligious relationships among the Dagomba and the impact of a shared Dagomba worldview on these relations. The initial results of his research seem to point into a similar direction. Ongoing PhD research project of the Protestant Theological University and Utrecht University.

with the supernatural is concerned. This is not to be taken as a pro-Christian propaganda but as a sign that the search for the most effective contact with the supernatural (regardless of its immediate label, be it Muslim, Christian, Traditionalist, or other) is one of the deepest concerns of this African society (Boi-Nai and Kirby, 1999). Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu points in a similar direction when explaining the popularity of prosperity gospel strand of Christianity in Ghana (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005, 222–223).

Summing up the outline of the Ghanaian context in its religious and inter-religious relations aspects we may say that people socialised in the Ghanaian context are familiar (and at ease) with a situation of religious plurality that is rooted deeper than ethnic and cultural divisions. Although adherence to Islam, Christianity and the traditional religions is not treated lightly, it seems that their adherents accept religious differences as a given of life; at the same time they constantly search for a higher degree of efficacy their religions could provide them with in daily life.

Ghanaians' Migration to the Netherlands

The migration history of the Ghanaians to the Netherlands has a number of different phases. The first phase is connected with the deterioration of the socio-political situation in Ghana from the mid 1960s onwards (Killick 2000, 51–67).¹⁸ Large groups of people migrated to the United States, Canada and Britain to seek employment. When in 1971 Britain tightened the immigration rules for the people from the Commonwealth – the so-called Immigration Act – the Ghanaians began to look to continental Europe, often considering it as a springboard for migration to the U.K. or USA (Nimako, 2001, 117–118; Arhinful, 2001, 10–11). The Netherlands together with Germany (McIntyre, Baniel and Pfeiffer 2004; Jensen, 2004, 60–61; McIntyre 2006) and Italy became the most popular destinations (Buttici, 2012, 204).¹⁹

18 Chan Choenni in his report *Ghanezen in Nederland* (2002, 8) observes that the Ghanaians are prone to migrate when the economic or political circumstances in their country of origin deteriorate, though they usually return home eventually. When oil was discovered in Nigeria in the mid 1970s, nearly a million Ghanaians moved there.

19 In Italy many Ghanaians settled in Pordenone, near Venice. The total number of Ghanaians in Italy is around 45,000. See <http://newamericamedia.org/2010/12/in-tough-times-italys-ghanaian-immigrants-find-solace-in-evangelical-faith.php>, accessed 21 May 2011. For studies on Ghanaian Christians in Italy see e.g. work of Annalisa Buttici.

In these early years only few Ghanaians were in the possession of residence permits. This changed in 1975 when the Dutch government legalized the status of about 10,500 people (mainly Turks and Moroccans), who had been staying and working in the Netherlands without a permit. Also a substantial number of the Ghanaians benefited from the measure.

The second phase of the Ghanaian migration to the Netherlands started from 1983 and was triggered by a prolonged draught in Ghana as well as by the expulsion of about 1 million Ghanaians from Nigeria in that year (Arhinful, 2001, 10). Some considered the chain migration and family reunions following this second phase, to be a separate phase (Nimako, 2001, 119; Awuah, 2005, 55).

Presently the Central Statistics Office estimates that there are around 20,000 Ghanaians in the Netherlands, the majority of whom has Dutch citizenship (Choenni, 2002, 10).²⁰ However, it is a common knowledge that in addition to this group there is a sizable number of Ghanaian *sans-papiers* (Arhinful, 2001, 10; Morssink, 2009, 21).²¹

The Ghanaians, generally speaking, have a 'low profile' in the Dutch society. As they came neither from the former Dutch colonies, nor as labour migrants or refugees, they were not included in the government programmes for the minority groups. Though their community is steadily but unobtrusively increasing due to a chain migration, this falls under 'a silent migration pattern'. In addition, Ghanaians are conceived to be 'unproblematic' migrants: they have a reputation as hardworking and self-sufficient people and the unemployment level among them is relatively low (Nimako, 2001, 121–122; Choenni, 2002, 15–17). New migrants often receive shelter and aid through the Ghanaian religious and cultural networks; these networks serve as a safety net for newcomers and aid migrants in familiarising themselves with the Dutch society and Dutch regulations (Choenni, 2002, 28).

The Ghanaian community became the focus of public attention only during the so-called 'Bijlmer calamity'. On the night of October 4, 1992 an El-Al Boeing

20 Statistics for 2007 indicated 19,437 Ghanaians. www.mighealth.net/nl/index.php/Ghanezen_in_Nederland, accessed 19 January 2009. This number did not include migrants of irregular status. The already mentioned VPRO radio 747 AM series entitled *Madiwodo* estimated the total number of the Ghanaians at 40,000. www.lolaradio.googlepages.com/vproghanezeninnederland, accessed 19 January 2009. According to the Dutch Central Statistics Bureau there were 12,000 Ghanaians in the Netherlands on 1 January 2004 (Haar, 2007, 93).

21 The number of *sans-papiers* in the Netherlands is estimated at anything between 46,000 and 116,000, with many Africans among them. See the bulletin of Nederlands Interdisciplinair Demografisch Instituut, *Demos*, 19 (May), 2003, <http://www.nidi.knaw.nl/web/html/public/demos/dmo3051.html>.

747 cargo plane crashed in Bijlmer, a borough of Amsterdam, killing a large number of its residents. The subsequent publications on the numerous Ghanaian victims – people with and without a legalised status – attracted nationwide attention.

Ghanaians are known in the Netherlands for their strong social networks consisting of religious organisations, women's associations, organisations facilitating funeral arrangements, ethnic organisations, organisations grouping people from the same place of origin etc. (Kraan, 2001, 54–55).²² The Dutch Ghanaian community has several FM radio stations, presents programmes on local television channels and publishes a number of local journals and newspapers (Nimako, 2001, 125; Choenni, 2002, 17–19).²³ All this underscores the self-sufficiency of the community. In 2003 the national media paid attention to the Ghanaian community. The broadcasting company VPRO produced a five hour radio programme about the Ghanaians in the Netherlands while in 2004 the NMO, the Dutch Muslim Broadcasting company, presented a 30-minute documentary on the Ghanaian Muslims.²⁴

Ghanaian Muslims in the Netherlands

Most Ghanaians in the Netherlands are Christian. A number of them belong to the 'mainline' churches such as the Roman Catholic All Saints Parish in Amsterdam or the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church, but the majority of the Ghanaian Christians in the Netherlands have established new Pentecostal or Charismatic type churches (Nimako, 2001, 127). Often starting off as house-fellowships, these churches lack the finances to build or rent permanent places of worship. In the past they often met in parking garages for Sunday worship. For that reason their activity attracted some public attention (Jongeneel, Visser and Budiman, 1996, 178–213; Haar, 1998; Haar (ed), 1998). Recently housing estate companies have built a number of multi-purpose structures such as *De Kandelaar*

22 The Ghanaian also maintain dense transnational networks both with fellow migrants in other countries as well as with relatives and friends at home (Arhinful, 2001; Morssink, 2009).

23 For the radio companies see e.g. www.radioakasonoma.com or www.communicatieplein.nl/onderwerpen/doelgroepcommunicatie/communicatiemetallochtonen/Over_allochtonen/Overig_Chinezen_Ghanezen_Irakezen_Ghanezen/Mediagebruik, accessed 18 January 2009.

24 The VPRO radio 747 AM series entitled *Madivodo* was mentioned already and the Dutch Muslims Broadcasting company NMO featured a 30 minute documentary on Ghanaians in The Netherlands on 11 January 2004. See www.nmo.nl. Unfortunately the documentary cannot be retrieved.

(the Chandelier) to facilitate worship space and community activities; a number of Ghanaian Christian migrant churches make use of these facilities.²⁵

An estimated 3,000 Ghanaians in the Netherlands are Muslim (Musa, 2007, 36). Most of the Ghanaian Muslims came to the Netherlands in the early 1990s, as part of the second wave of the Ghanaian migrations (Musa, 2007, 36). The majority are Sunni. Some belong the Wahhabi-oriented *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a*, while others are Tijani (Musa, 2007, 47).

Unlike Ghanaian Christians, many of whom have established their own religious communities, Ghanaian Muslims have tended to join existing English-speaking religious communities. In the Netherlands there are no mosques established by West Africans or Muslims from sub-Saharan Africa. Even the number of mosques where English is the main language, is very limited. Most Ghanaians, *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a* as well as the Tijani, have therefore joined Pakistani mosques where they can participate in religious activities without the language barrier.²⁶ The same mosques are also frequented by the Surinamese Hindustani Muslims, a group known for its open attitude to non-Muslims (Heelsum, Fennema and Tillie, 2004, 30–32).

Only for special occasions, such as funerals, name-giving ceremonies, Ramadan activities, the commemoration of the birthday of the prophet and important Sufi leaders (*mawlid*), space is rented in order to meet specifically as Ghanaian Muslims. These Ghanaian Muslim community meetings are organised by one of the Ghanaian Muslim organisations, i.e. Stichting Zumunta,²⁷ Stichting Wadata, Soyayya Association or others. These associations also arrange Qur'an classes for children, adult education programmes and – in the case of Zumunta – coordinate radio programmes (Musa, 2007, 42–45). The Damba festival, a particular cultural feature for the Dagombas and some of their northern neighbours, has been celebrated in Amsterdam since 2010. Its Muslim and traditional components have been variably stressed depending on the context and interests of the organizers. Only recently Damba has been celebrated outside the traditional regions of the Dagombas and other northern ethnic groups. For the southern Ghanaians it has been a 'Muslim' celebration.

25 <http://www.dekandelaar.nu/>, accessed 21 May 2011. The Chandelier is used as a place of worship by some 15 different migrant Christian communities.

26 See e.g. 'Ramadan in Amsterdam Zuid Oost', 5 September 2009, which describes the Ramadan in the Taibah mosque where Pakistani, Surinamese, Antilleans and Ghanaians join each other in prayers, cooking and sharing *iftar* meals etc. <http://www.rnw.nl/suriname/article/ramadan-amsterdam-zuid-oost>, accessed 18 May 2011.

27 Zumunta has a membership of around 200 people and focuses, according to its website, on fostering unity and promoting of cultural and religious values. <http://www.recogin.org/organisatie.php?item=7&org=16>, accessed 15 May 2010.

In the European context the festival seems to become entirely a 'cultural' affair and a tourist attraction, though people who favour its relocation want the youngsters of the Ghanaian origin 'to be exposed to the culture of their roots'.²⁸

Generally speaking the Tijanis and the Wahhabis cooperate in the Ghanaian organisations; however, similarly to the situation in Ghana, tensions have arisen around the celebration of *mawlid* (practised since 2003), an event which the Wahhabi Muslims consider to be an unacceptable innovation (Samwini, 2006, 193–194; Musa, 2007, 47). Nevertheless, despite these tensions, the organisations have not (yet?) broken apart along the lines of religious factions. Cooperation and mutual support in the context of migration are considered to be more important than theological differences. Attempts have even been made to set up an international organisation, representing all West African Muslims in the Benelux: the West African Muslim League (Musa, 2007, 45). But this organisation does not yet seem to have materialized.

A smaller group of the Ghanaians belongs to the Ahmadiyya movement, which has been active in Ghana since the 1921 (Fisher, 1963, 117–120). These Muslims – an estimated 30 people – have joined the Surinamese and Pakistani Ahmadiyya mosques (Musa, 2007, 39; Choenni, 2002, 21).²⁹ Possibly due to their modest number and to the non-confrontational attitude of the Surinamese, the Ahmadiyya keep a low profile in the Netherlands (Heelsum, Fennema and Tillie, 2004, 30; Landman, 2010, 72). Joint programmes between the Ghanaian Ahmadis and the rest of the Ghanaian Muslims are rare, following the rifts that marked the relations between these two factions in the Ghanaian North, especially in the Wa area (Samwini, 2006, 194; Musa, 2007, 39).

Christian-Muslim Relations

An openness to interreligious cooperation is characteristic for the Dutch Ghanaian community, including the Ghanaian Muslim community. It is not uncommon for the Ghanaian Christians to visit a Hindu temple or join Muslim prayers when the occasion arises. Likewise, there is no aversion to interreligious collaboration among the members of the Muslim community.³⁰

28 See <http://www.ksshare.org/projects>, accessed 22 May 2011.

29 See also VPRO radio broadcast *Madiwodo*, part IV, 3 April 2003.

30 Cf. VPRO radio 747 AM programme *Madiwodo*, Part IV, broadcasted on 3 April 2003, www.lolaradio.googlepages.com/vproghanezeninnederland; *Ghanezen in Nederland*, broadcasted by the NMO on January 11, 2004, www.nmo.nl/67-Ghanezen_in_Nederland.html?aflevering=2079, accessed 4 July 2006.

The already mentioned Stichting Zumunta has worked side by side with Pentecostal groups in sensitisation programmes on community health issues targeting HIV and Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases, when a few years ago it became clear that the Ghanaians were identified as one of the high risk-groups for contracting HIV (Veen et al., 2004, 35). Ghanaian imam Joe Ibrahim together with a Methodist and a Pentecostal pastor participated in phone-in radio programmes organised by the community health organisations, and went out into the streets with Christian colleagues, distributing condoms with the motto: 'If Muslims observe the rules of Islam, they don't need condoms; but if they leave the way of Islam, it is better to use a condom than to kill a person'.³¹ Ghanaian Muslims and Christians also co-operate in funeral societies which are usually organized along the lines of ethnic groups (Forum, 2001, 17). Therefore it seems fair to state that the generally speaking harmonious relations between the Christians and Muslims in Ghana seem to have been exported to the Netherlands³² and might be one of the reasons why the Ghanaian Muslims have blended into the Dutch society without too much difficulty.

Conclusion

After having tried to trace the Ghanaian Muslim community and their interfaith attitudes in Ghana and the Netherlands, several observations and conclusions can be made; the conclusions are only tentative, since much more research should be done on the subject.

First of all, the discovery of the striking lack of attention given to the Muslims from the sub-Saharan Africa in general – and from West Africa in particular – in the contemporary English-language literature on Islam in Western Europe came as a surprise. Recent overviews of Islam in the Netherlands and Belgium – i.e. by Shadid and Van Koningsveld (2008), by Sunier (2010) and De Koning (2011) – ignore the sub-Saharan Muslims. Partly, this could be explained by the comparatively small number of the sub-Saharan Muslim migrants.

31 Cf. <http://depubliekearena.at5.nl/index.asp?menuitemId=1586>, accessed 4 July 2006. Similar openness to interreligious cooperation can be seen among the Hausa speaking Muslims in Hamburg, many of whom are Ghanaians. The website of the African Muslim Association in Hamburg explicitly mentions cooperation with the Christian community. See <http://african-muslim-association.de/qna6.html>, accessed 19 May 2011.

32 Cf. VPRO radio 747 AM programme *Madiwodo*, Part IV, broadcasted on 3 April 2003, www.lolaradio.googlepages.com/vproghanezeninnederland.

However, the fact that even the Dutch Somali community, a relatively substantial group of about 19,000 Muslims (Frederiks, 2010a), was dealt with only in a few casual remarks, raises a suspicion that studies about migration and Islam in the European context, mainly focus on certain ethnic groups. The full scope of the diversity of the Muslim migrants is not taken into account. This is unfortunate because the West African (as well as Surinamese) Muslims come with quite an interesting inheritance and with experiences that could be helpful in the European context.

The brief exploration of Ghanaian Muslims in the Netherlands showed that migrant Ghanaian Muslims have linked up with both the non-Muslim Ghanaians as well as with Muslims from other cultural backgrounds. To a certain extent they blended into these other groups, yet have retained enough consciousness of their own identity to act as 'Ghanaian Muslims' in everyday life and on festive occasions. Despite their fairly recent arrival in the Netherlands, they have shown great willingness and enterprise in functioning in the Dutch society. They participate with the non-Muslim Ghanaians in cultural and social organisations and have established a number of religiously based organisations, which cater for the specific needs of the Ghanaian Muslim communities. They have exhibited a willingness to cooperate with Dutch organisations (e.g. the community health organisation), are making use of the Dutch media systems (e.g. radio and television stations) and address their community on relevant societal issues. They seem to have settled in the Dutch context without too much difficulty. This relatively easy blending of the Ghanaian Muslims into the Dutch context can be, at least partly, attributed to the generations-long indigenous ability and experience of successfully negotiating their presence as a minority that retains its distinctiveness, yet at the same time forms a part of the wider society and takes part in its life. Thus, we hypothesise that attitudes pertaining to cultural and religious pluralism 'migrate' with migrants to the new migration context, and seem to shape their initial responses to the religious and cultural diversity in the new migration context. Whether these negotiation skills and abilities will endure and are transmitted to the second and third generations migrants remains to be seen and will depend to a large extent on the experiences in the new migration context.

Interreligious relationships generally speaking seem good. Where functional or socially required Ghanaian Muslims and Christians cooperate (e.g. in funeral societies) and both seem willing to cross the ethnic and religious boundaries and interact with other communities. This tallies with Sarbo's observations that Ghanaians are adept at social interaction across ethnic and religious communities. Whether this attitude of openness among Ghanaian

Muslims in the Netherlands is generated by a shared worldview or a shared religiosity, as Sarbo advocates for the Ghanaian context, is hard to say on the basis of the present material. However, in this open attitude towards others there is a striking resemblance with the attitude of the Surinamese community in the Netherlands.

Tensions within the Muslim community, such as those between the Sunnis and the Ahmadis, and between the Tijanis and the *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a* have been brought to the European context but seem to have lost some of their sharp edges due to the migration context. It remains to be seen whether the conflicts will escalate or whether ways of reducing the tensions will be devised should the number of the migrant Ghanaian Muslims increase, especially when one of the groups gains dominance (in numbers or influence).

Though much more research is needed, a tentative conclusion could be that the Ghanaian Muslims experience their faith as only one part of a much wider identity. At times the emphasis is on a shared Muslim identity, while at other times their ethnic or national Ghanaian identity seems prevalent. This makes them flexible to participate with equal vigour in both Islamic and cultural organisations. Coming from a religiously plural background most of the Ghanaian Muslims have been socialised in learning to accommodate a measure of otherness and in negotiating their identity in culturally as well as religiously plural society, without feeling threatened. Hence, the integration of the Ghanaian Muslims – as well as the Ghanaian community at large – in the Dutch society seems to go rather smoothly. The Ghanaians fully participate at different levels in the Dutch society. Though, in all fairness, in matters of economic justice – i.e. equal participation in the labour market – there is still a world to be won for first and second generation immigrants in the Netherlands (Choenni, 2001, 28), regardless of their religious or ethnic affiliation.

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Fulani Identity, Citizenship and Islam in an International Context of Migration

José C.M. van Santen

Introduction

Xenophobic tendencies increasingly seem a 'normal' phenomenon of European societies. In this article I will deal with Islamic Fulbe (Peul, Fulani) – among whom I worked for 26 years in Cameroon and with whom I interact on a daily basis in the Netherlands – and their 'ethnic and religious identity' in the context of international migration. On what base do the Fulbe people from various countries interact in their 'alien' surroundings? Do they do so on the basis of their ethnic or their religious identity? Does religion become more articulated due to possible processes of exclusion in their new environments? How do they perceive these identities when they move back or visit their 'home' country? Though in this article the Fulbe will be addressed as a West African people, the Cameroonian and the Dutch society will be taken as exemplary.

The Fulbe people, divided into different clans and groups (Diallo, Guichard and Schlee, 2000), can be found throughout West but also East Africa.¹ Their identity is based on their (former) economic occupation as nomad livestock-keeping people, which is the reason why in many regions they have been marginalised through a complicated process of inclusion and exclusion. However, in some countries (Nigeria, Cameroon) the opposite situation occurred: they had political power, were at the forefront of the process of Islamisation, and they included people from other groups (Van Santen, 1993, Paden, 1973; Johnston, 1967). I will pay attention to Fulbe Islamic presences in Cameroon and elsewhere in order to understand the relation between the Islamic and the Christian or other religious communities.

Though in the past the Netherlands had a solid tradition of Islamic studies² and a fair tolerance towards Muslims in daily life, now a different wind is

1 See also <http://www.webpulaaku.net>, accessed 12 March 2011; more information can be found typing into a web search engine: webPulaaku/Fulbe-Haal-Pulaar/Gorgaawe/, accessed 12 March 2011, 26 November 2012.

2 After all the Dutch once colonised the country that population-wise has the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia (see Geertz, 1968).

blowing. As in many other countries immigrants are confronted upon arrival with the country's renewed emphasis on autochthony and feelings of 'belonging' and 'localisation', the flipside of processes of globalisation. The New World order pronounced in the 1990's by the United States after the end of the Cold War is not necessarily one of increasing cosmopolitanism, but is characterised – so the Dutch example shows – by a return to all sorts of parochial feelings where people try to avoid contact with 'the other and her or his religion' as much as possible. In the Dutch debate concerning inclusion and exclusion and cultural and religious identities especially Islam is regarded as a *Fremdkörper* (the odd one out). What does all this mean for the West-African Muslims?

Fulbe Identity: Nomads, Islamic Kingdoms, the Elite, and Poor Peasantry

The Fulbe can be found throughout West Africa. Their number varies. Authors from the twentieth century talk about six million, on their own websites the Fulbe mention twelve million. They are scattered throughout the savannah, ranging from Senegal and the Gambia in the West, to Chad, the Central African Republic and some remained on their way to Mecca in Sudan (Schlee and Diallo, 2000; Azarya, 1976, 9; Murdock, 1959, 415). Everywhere they use the same language – though with dissimilar dialects – and they construct their identity according to the historical, political, economic and relational context in which they are active. A common feature of all groups is their Islamic identity and the centrality of *deftereenkeewu*, the ability to read and write, and to compose and/or appreciate poetry (Schlee and Diallo, 2000; Van Santen, 2000; 2012).

In the pre-colonial period Islamic kingdoms were a political force in West Africa for more than six centuries. In 1804 in Nigeria Uthman dan Fodio – a Pullo (singular of Fulbe) – founded the Sokoto Empire which expanded to Cameroon (Hiskett, 1973; Kirk-Greene, 1958). The Fulbe were at the forefront of this expansion and they subjugated acephalous groups. Having set foot in the southern parts of these countries, the British and the French – the latter replaced the Germans after the First World War – colonized the northern Islamic regions of both countries. In Northern Cameroon and in parts of Nigeria the Fulbe have been able to keep the political power they had obtained in the pre-colonial period (Van Santen, 1993; Burnham, 1996, Paden, 1973, Johnston, 1967), while in other areas, for example in Benin, Niger and Mali, they found themselves in a very marginalised position (Van Santen, 2000; Bierschenk, 1992; Boesen 2007; Amselle 1987). In regions where they had a dominant political power position it led to a general process of 'conversion' to

Islam of many members of other groups, whose inclusion into the Fulbe society took place via Islamization (Van Santen, 1993).

The means of subsistence is generally considered to be the most important difference between the Fulbe and the other groups: the non-Fulbe people are often sedentary. Here it should be mentioned that critical remarks – with which I totally agree – have been made concerning the use of ‘ethnic labels’, as it provokes the existence of certain groups specifically defined by the use of characteristics like ‘history’, ‘culture’, ‘features’ and the like (Socpa, 2006, 81; Geschiere and Nyamnjuh, 2001), while ethnic notions have proved to be fluid, volatile and ever changing (Socpa, 2006, 80; 2002, 217; Amselle, 1987). However, literature on politics of the landscape still affirms that economic occupations of the various groups in West Africa often vary: minority groups are supposed to affirm their (often exclusive) claims on resources and mark a physical and cultural place for themselves, especially in those cases where they feel marginalized (McGregor, 2003). These claims can provoke conflicts and clashes that need not be religiously motivated.³

Existing literature on the Fulbe agrees that they raised and herded cattle as their main occupation and strongly disliked agriculture (Van Santen, 1993; Azarya, 1976, 9; Diallo and Schlee, 2000), but they are not a homogenous population. In general, in Cameroon but also elsewhere, we can distinguish several groups:

- An elite class; these are descendants of the former political leaders who had remarkable political as well as economic power. The Fulbe included members from other groups through marriage.
- Simultaneously in most West African countries there are still many Fulbe nomads who are quite marginalized on the political and economic scene (Moritz, 2008; 2010; Van Santen, 2000; 2012). They are nominally Muslim.
- Some Fulbe, even after settling in villages, still own large herds of cattle but they no longer traverse long distances. They cultivate the land and sometimes still engage in herding cattle, though pastures and access to pastures is ever decreasing for various reasons (see Van Santen 2000; 2003; 2008; 2012). There are many poor peasants among them.

The Fulbe who came to live in towns and even those who migrated to Europe, try to keep a special relation with their cattle:

3 In North Cameroon clashes took place between certain dissimilar groups who had all been Muslims for centuries: Arab Choa – Kotoko; Fulbe – Guiziga, etc. (Socpa, 2002, 252; Issa, 2001; Issa and Adama, 2002).

- Ammadou had lived in town ever since he left his father's compound at the age of twelve. Afterwards he moved to Europe. He had a Western as well as a profound Islamic education. His father, a well-known marabout, had been to Mecca, so was a Hajji. Ammadou's background was unmistakably that of a straightforward Muslim. He still had his own herd with that of his father's somewhere *haan'der ladde* (in the countryside), cared for by a herdsman, *gaynaako*, who in return for the job got a calf every year. When Ammadou's son was born, he gave the baby his share: a cow of his own that was going to have little ones and those in turn would have little ones, in that way increasing the child's own herd.⁴
- Omari had important political functions in the area he was born and was a member of Parliament. When I asked him, 'do you still have cattle?' he responded immediately, obviously from the bottom of his heart, with the following words: 'Thank God, I have!' (*Usoko Allah, mi mari*).⁵

The pastoral Fulbe are organized in descent groups. Their marriage system is in principal endogamous, but to maintain a superior economic, social, as well as political position, a combination of exogamous and endogamous rules were used (Dupire, 1962; 1976; 1981). The importance of cattle for the Fulbe is reflected in their pre-Islamic religion (Baldé, 1939, 630–644) and their language. Conscious avoidance of labour that is not related to cattle is visible within groups that became sedentary more than a century ago and equally among those Fulbe who migrated to Europe.

In the perception of the Fulbe themselves, the social distance between them and the local population was, apart from the language, stressed in terms of a special Fulbe way of life, called *pulaaku*, a term symbolizing and setting the boundaries of Fulbe identity (Stenning, 1960, 368–370; St.Croix, 1945; Bocqueneé, 1986, Bongfiglioli, 1988). It concerns a whole set of qualities, including *munyal* (endurance, resignation, ability to be patient), *ngorgu* (being brave, courage), *marugo na'i* (keeping cattle), *enndam* (kindness), *hakkilo* (consideration, intelligence), *neddaaku* (dignity), *ardungal* (leadership), *darja* (honour and prestige derived from having a position), *ndottaaku* (honour and prestige derived from being old), *juldankum* (being a Muslim; often confused with being a Pullo) (VerEecke, 1986; 1988). All these features seem to be based on an introvert temperament and the conditions of pastoral life in particular. It basically comes to the fore in withdrawal and reserve, called *semteende* (Dupire, 1981, 169). So, the fundamental virtues of *pulaaku* are stoic sobriety and reserve.

4 Fieldnotes August 1999.

5 Fieldnotes July 1987.

An ideal Pullo is gentle, proud, introverted but helpful to his (or her) fellow Fulbe. He/she attains respectability by keeping physically and socially at a distance from other people and by refraining from a display of joy, pain, anger or curiosity. The ideal Pullo is taciturn, conceals his or her real thoughts, and despises the common vivacity ascribed to the non-Fulbe living around them (Dupire, 1962, 53; Azarya, 1976, 10). Consequently he/she is contemptuous of conspicuous richness and consumption (Riesman, 1977). Ideally he/she lives austere, pays no attention to external signs of material comfort and is content with the little material goods he/she possesses. *Pulaaku* is considered as something hereditary as well as a role one plays. According to these stereotypes a Pullo will never get angry, either with her husband, with his wife (wives), or with their children, in front of a visitor or stranger. Of course, we are dealing here with idealized cultural characteristics, or 'Fulbe ideology', which in the literature has been too easily adopted by various authors. However, it is 'idealised' by the Fulbe themselves as well. The new generations in Africa as well as in Europe and the United States are involved in the new media, and the information they spread to keep the 'basics of their culture' alive are called *puulaako* or *pulaagu* (according to the region the person who initiated the website comes from) and relate to the characteristics mentioned above.⁶

Fulbe perception of themselves also indicates a biological foundation for the difference between them and the 'others'. They like to consider themselves as 'more white' than the 'black' people surrounding them (Dupire, 1981, 168). French colonial administrators added their vision to this biologically biased stereotype by even measuring the skulls of Fulbe people to compare them with those of the groups around them. They concluded that 'the Fulbe people were weak' (*faiblesse du Peul*, see Diallo, Guichard and Schlee, 2000), and that the common idea of other groups still persisted that the Fulbe could not carry out heavy work. Poor male Fulbe, who settled in towns, will often work as night watchmen, tailors, and the like. The richer ones may engage in commercial activities. I never came across a Pullo working as a cook or carrying out other servile tasks. Fulbe nomad women trade their milk-products or (especially *wodaabe*) travel and trade nationally and internationally. Journeys, known as *tigu*, to sell magical herbs from Niger to Senegal or Sierra Leone are easily undertaken (Boesen, 2007; Van Santen, 1993).

Apart from the economic occupation the difference between the Fulbe and the people around them is also defined in terms of religious differences. In Cameroon they used Islam as an 'ethnic marker' between them and 'the other'

⁶ See for example <http://www.tabitalpulaaku-international.org/tabital120/index.php> and <http://www.tabitalpulaaku.fr/>, accessed 12 March 2011.

(Van Santen and Schilder, 1994). However, knowledge of the holy book and the duties, commandments and prohibitions that come along with Islam, differ enormously from group to group, from village to town. Islam as a religious identity also comes to the fore in their categorisation of other human beings. In general the Islamic Fulbe were the Fulbe. For the non-Islamic people they used the term *haabe* (singular *kado* – heathen), meaning ‘non-believers’. To define those populations who did not belong to their ethnic group but who had converted to Islam, so new-believers, they used the term *juulbe* meaning ‘those who pray’ (from the verb *julugo*: to pray).

Although the worlds of women and men are strongly segregated – in a nomad society more than in the settled contexts – women are much respected. They prepare food and they churn the milk that they sell at marketplaces. The men herd the cattle. To be able to sell their milk, women sometimes have to walk long distances and, as we learned above, they migrate to trade when milk is not available. In many villages in a sedentary Fulbe society in rural areas women continue to sell milk, but most of them have their own economic occupations, also when living in towns. These occupations form part of the concept *ndewaaku* – a part of *pulaaku* – with which women also gain much respect, especially from the male population. In urban areas women often trade from within their household. Fulbe men, as well as women, have jobs in the administrative centres, banks, etc. On the other hand, commercial activities at the markets for items not related to cattle or magical skills are undertaken by men. I never came across a female shopkeeper. I never saw Fulbe women till the land, not even among the poor Fulbe groups, unlike the Islamised and non-Islamic women from other groups.

The concept of *pulaaku* serves as identification for both sexes. In the European and Western context it means that women can also have their own economic occupations, and are not the docile subordinated creatures the media in the ‘West’ like to picture when presenting Muslim women (Roggeband and Verloo, 2007).

Interreligious Coexistence

As we are dealing in this volume with ‘combined characteristics of interreligious coexistence and extensive human mobility that both contribute to complex continuously changing constellations of socio-political relationships’, as the convenors of the Lublin workshop stated in their call for papers and with ways in which ‘religion and ethnicity evince ambivalent characteristics as tools for constructing and deconstructing identities’ (Adogame, in this volume p. 12),

I would like to pay attention to the coexistence of various ethnic identities and religions in one of the countries where the Fulbe people had sojourned for centuries, that is in Cameroon.

In this country, due to the specific political situation, the process of conversion to Islam has been instigated by the Fulbe. We are dealing with the conversion from a 'traditional' religion, as Weber and Bellah called it (Hefner, 1993, 7, 9) to the world religion of Islam. In north Cameroon the Christian missionary activities only started from 1945 onwards, but while the Christians emphasised the role of the clerics (especially the Catholics, the various Protestant churches to a lesser extent) in the propagation of the new religion, Islamisation did not involve the same pressure to proselytise. Teachers of the Qur'an were neither paid nor sent in this area by an institutionalised religious body. They settled down wherever they liked, started teaching, and may or may not have been successful. In general, among the non-Fulbe groups within one family one can find Islamised persons (women as well as men and both genders Islamised on their own initiative),⁷ converts to one of the many Christian congregations, or people who still carry out the rituals of their own religion (called 'pagans' in most of the literature). The Qur'an teachers and many Muslim friends explained to me regularly that the Islamic and Christian religion differ only in three basic points: the Holy Trinity and Jesus being the son of God, the absence of the necessary ritual washing, and the fact that religious experts – priests as well as nuns – cannot marry in the Catholic church (Van Santen, 1993, 157). I heard the priests on several occasions preaching about the intolerance of the Islamic religion.⁸ The presence and vigorous activities of the Pentecostal churches need to be highlighted, too. However, I have not been able to observe their proselytising activities extensively.

The many mosques in the north Cameroonian landscape were and are built by private parties, though we may observe dissimilar features these days as waves of fundamentalism can be witnessed: many teachers preach in mosques on Friday and at their homes in the evening for women (Van Santen, 2009;

7 The difference in impact conversion may have on the lives of women and men, and the fact that their motives to convert may be dissimilar, have not been given much attention by authors dealing with these issues, (for example, Van der Veer, 1996; Hefner, 1993, 4; Ranger, 1993, 65; Larsson 1991; Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991; Peel, 1990; Mandivenga, 1989; Brierley and Spier, 1988). Yet, if we want to understand relations between Muslims, Christians and other people, it is of importance.

8 Written down in such unscientific terms I probably do injustice to more open-minded missionaries. Some of them carried out extensive studies on Fulfulde language and culture. See Noye (1974) and equally Giuseppi (1997).

2010; 2012a); new private Islamic schools are built with money coming from the core-areas of Islam (often Saudi Arabia), and since the 1990's 'white' preachers (called Pakistani) are wandering around to preach a purification of Islamic practices in the area. It is nevertheless not a strictly institutionalised movement, and many different – and sometimes contradictory – views are expressed.

In Fulbe elite society the ability to read and write is the most important and this is partly, though certainly not merely, related to their wish to be able to read and write the Qur'an. It also comes to the fore on international internet sites. To indicate civilization in Fulfulde, the words *neddaaku* and *perndam* or *ferdu* are used (close to the notion of the original French word *civilité*), which are connected with noblesse or 'someone to be respected' (thus a *peerdo* is a civilised person). Nevertheless Fulfulde also makes use of the word *deftereenkeewu* or *defterenkeere*, which includes the word *deftere* (book; pl. *defte*) and expresses a civilisation related to the ability to employ the finesse of Fulfulde in the world of writing, and which in many respects uses a language that differs from the daily spoken language. Fulfulde was written in the Arab script. These features continue to play a role after local as well as global migration. In hostile surroundings it seems to be the straw to hold onto. Once abroad the Fulbe continue to write in Arabic and try to teach the script to their children. On websites the fact that some Fulbe, who were taken along as slaves to the Americas, were able to hold onto this ability is prominently exposed, as the examples in the footnote indicate.⁹

9 Yerro Mahmood (Yarrow Mamout) had worked out his freedom and became a landowner and a local character in Georgetown, Washington, DC. He is known to have practiced Islam publicly. By 1807 he was free and had purchased stock in the Columbia Bank, being one of the first to do so. Yarrow lived to be more than 100 years old. His portrait is in the Smithsonian museum in Washington, DC. Ibrahim Abdul Rahaman was a Pullo, a cavalry leader, who was captured returning home from a successful battle. His homeland was Timbo, (Futa-Jalon) in present day Guinea. He lived from 1762 to 1829. He had been a student in Timbuktu and still wrote Arabic after being away for more than thirty years. In 1828, at age of 66, after 40 years of slavery, he finally gained his freedom. He was known as the 'Prince of Slaves'. Another Pullo, Omar ibn (Said) Sayyid (1770–1864), was taken from a famous family of teachers from Futa Toro in present day Senegal. He lived more than a half century as storyteller and an oriental (Muslim) saint to neighbours and visitors from near and far. Omar left several short pieces of his writing, which were prayers from the Bible and the Qur'an. He died in 1864 at the age of 94, and was buried on the Owen Hill plantation in the family burial ground. See Austin (1997) and Alford (1986) and the presentations located at www.jamtan.com/jamtan/Fulani.cfm (go to 'History' and then 'Diaspora') accessed 14 April 2011, 26 November 2012; see also <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jC2124XhYsg> accessed 29 November 2012; <http://www.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum211/timelines/htimeline3.htm>, accessed 12 April 2011; African Diaspora Research Project <http://www.cc.colorado.edu/Dept/HY/HY243Ruiz/>

In this great literary as well as literate tradition (Boyd and Shagari, 1986; Ba and Lacroix, 1962) the Fulbe underline women's right to be educated – Uthman dan Fodio the founder of the Sokoto Empire gave the example (Ogunbiyi, 1969).¹⁰

All these aspects may define the ideas, models, visions, expectations, fears and experiences that the migrants bring with them to non-African countries. How strongly do these traits remain rooted in their worldview? How does it affect the relationships, especially those between Muslims and Christians, in the new countries and in their regions of origin? In the next paragraph we will pay attention to the way the Fulbe in their history dealt with migration.

The Fulbe, Mobility and Migration

Due to their nomadic origins the Fulbe culture has often been characterised as a 'culture of mobility' (Bongfiglioli, 1988; Boesen, 2007).¹¹ From our categorization of the many different groups and the distinction between the Fulbe groups in town and those that still go on transhumance it may have become evident that contemporary practices of mobility are no longer only related to pastoral life. Often they occur out of a wider economic necessity, for example when the herds get lost during periods of draught. Boesen narrates that nomad (*wodaabe*) women in Niger already in the 1970's were at the forefront of international migration movements leaving the children and the household in the care of 'their' men (Boesen, 2007, 42). In 1997 I met Fulbe nomad groups – women and men – in the Loire region of France. They had come to perform the *guereewol*, the famous dance of the men¹² at cultural festivals, but while the audience adored the dances, it was obvious that they themselves were more interested in the trade of the items they had brought along from Africa. For Mauritania Ciavolella (2008; 2009) states that Fulbe's mobility corresponds to a strategy for dealing with the state that according to him represents a form of rejection of political authorities or a tactic to bypass the state (i.e. urban-rural and

Research/diaspora.html, accessed 10 April 2011; <http://www.msu.edu/unit/uap/africa.html>, accessed 14 April 2011.

10 For the importance of women see also <http://www.webfuuta.net/bibliotheque/aisow/femme-vache-foi/tfm.html>, accessed 15 April 2011, 26 November 2012. For poetry see Ba et Lacroix (1962).

11 http://www.writing.com/main/view_item/item_id/1426409-Fulani-Migration, accessed 13 April 2011, 25 November 2012.

12 See the film of Werner Herzog "Herdsmen of the Sun" (1989).

transboundary mobility): 'Thus their practices of mobility are linked to political logics of inclusion and exclusion from formal and substantial citizenship, and mobility represents, rather than a necessity dictated by pastoralism, a political resource in order to flee political and socio-economic disruption'.¹³

In this sense there is a large difference between the marginalised Fulbe in most West African countries and the Fulbe elite in northern Cameroon and Nigeria, who for a long time had a dominant cultural and religious position and who definitely and proudly were able to claim their national citizenship. However, as various authors have underlined and as I experienced during my research among the Fulbe in Benin, a feeling of superiority of Fulbe people towards people from other ethnic groups is not necessarily affected by a possible marginal position (Van Santen, 2000; Guichard, 2000; Boesen, 2007).

Diallo, Guichard and Schlee (2000) remark that many 'Western literate' Fulbe in various countries such as Mali¹⁴ (Amselle, 1987), Bénin (Guichard, 1990; Bierschenk, 1992), Nigeria (VerEecke, 1988), and Cameroon (Mouiche, 2011; Pelican, 2008) created organisations in order to define a new Fulbe identity. These new intellectuals want to function as mediators between Fulbe society and the various state administrations. 'Literate' Fulbe distinguish themselves by their willingness to construct and mobilise their ethnic group in order to be able to make legitimate claims towards the state and in order to become intermediaries for the various development agencies. So ethnic identity is easily turned into a political resource (Diallo, Guichard and Schlee, 2000, 237).

In the Mauritanian case, the Fulbe became the main victims of ethnic persecutions by the state authorities. With the baathist banner of the Arab identity and of a Moorish 'ethnic' exclusiveness of the country (1989–1991), during which tens of thousands of 'Negro-Mauritanian' citizens were persecuted and literally displaced to Senegal by the army, the Fulbe became victims of a history of elite ethno-political competition which they had never taken part in before. With the 1989 'events', the Fulbe tried to circumvent or 'to disengage from' the state, taking again 'the way of the bush'. In their oral accounts, the crossing of the border with Mali corresponds to an old idea of fleeing political centralizations, in this case of the Mauritanian state (Ciavolella, 2009; Leservoisier, 1994).

In Cameroon various associations for the social, cultural and economic development of the M'bororo (Fulbe who still go on transhumance) have been

13 Paper on the Internet www.mecon.nomadit.co.uk/pub/conference_epaper_download.php5?, no numbering, accessed 15 march 2011.

14 <http://www.webpulaaku.net/leyDe/wasolon/index.html>, accessed 15 April 2011.

created (MBOSCUA/UNION;¹⁵ Entraide; l'Association Billitol; CARPA)¹⁶ by the Fulbe intellectuals. Some work for all Fulbe people, some only for the nomad populations. A Nigerian association called *Mi yetti Allah* (I thank God)¹⁷ took part in linguistic seminars in Benin. On that occasion they tried to construct a transnational organisation, in which Islamic values got a prominent place (Diallo, Guichard and Schlee, 2000, 238).

In Africa, during the colonial administration times, movements to the city were carefully controlled. Migratory movements originated from the colonial need of workers for the infrastructure, mines and agriculture for export (Sivini, 2007, 167, 173). Much forced labour was involved.¹⁸ Only after independence did cities start to grow and attract a large number of people from the rural areas. Sivini is of the opinion that when the aid projects came – and he takes the example of projects in Senegal at the border with Mauritania – the migratory flows increased. For that reason he regards the intervention in areas where the exodus is generated as alibis for policies designed to limit immigration. Migration to European countries in the mid-seventies (during a period of long drought) was temporal – it was the time of the 'back-and-forth' migration. Migrants financed the building of clinics, mosques and schools to finally return to their native village, where someone always had to be ready to take the place of the returning migrant. However, with the ever stricter visa regulations practices of migration changed. Migrants' stay abroad was prolonged, as it was hardly possible anymore to go and come back. Thus migrants stay much longer in Europe, either legally or illegally. Sivini observed that in the local economy the influx of money fuels trade, transport and building works (Sivini, 2007, 164–165).

The Fulbe people were among the migrants who made it to Europe or elsewhere, making use of the routes connecting Chad with Libya (de Haas, 2007).

15 <http://www.villageaid.org/mboscuda.html>, accessed 28 October 2011. <http://pulaku.blogspot.fr/412286/Insecurite-les-Mbororo-sont-en-dangers-de-mort-au-nord-cameroun/>, accessed 28 September 2011. <http://pulaku.blogspot.fr/r21374/PERSPECTIVES/>, accessed 27 October 2012, 25 November 2012. Association Horé Poulakou, Association pour le Développement économique, social et culturel des mbororos du Nord Cameroun. (Association for the economic social and cultural development of the Mbororos of North Cameroon), B.P. 1295 Garoua, Cameroun; <http://pulaku.blogspot.fr/2/>, recognized by the state by order No. 423/RDA/D21/Bapp.

16 See Van Santen 2012b; 2000.

17 <http://tp.w3-com.com/www.tabitalpulaaku-international.org>, accessed 12 March 2011; <http://www.tabitalpulaaku.fr/>, accessed 13 February 2011.

18 <http://www.tabitalpulaaku-international.org/tabital20/index.php>, accessed 12 March 2011, 16 November 2012.

De Haas underlined that not all or most migrants crossing the Sahara were 'in transit' to Europe.¹⁹ In particular, Libya, until recently, was an important destination country in its own right. An estimated 65,000 to 120,000 sub-Saharan Africans enter the Maghreb yearly overland, of which only 20 to 38 percent are estimated to continue their journey to Europe. The total number of successful irregular border crossings by the sub-Saharan Africans should be counted in several tens of thousands. De Haas estimates 25,000 to 35,000 per year. He assumes that the majority of migrants enter Europe legally and subsequently overstay their visas. The total annual increase of the registered West African population in the EU has been estimated around 100,000 since 2000. This is still relatively modest compared to the total EU immigration of 2.6 million in 2004.²⁰

Sources of numbers of legal and illegal migration never mention the background of the migrants, so the number of the Fulbe amongst them can only be guessed. I do know that a number of the Mauritanian Fulbe people made it to Europe.

In the Netherlands a common way for young female or male migrants to avoid deportation was to lie about their age, as minors could not be sent back by force. As the cause of the Mauritanian Fulbe migration was unknown and unrecognised in the Netherlands some may have done so. However, most of the Fulbe, from various countries in West Africa, staying in the Netherlands,

19 <http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/pdfs/Irregular%20migration%20from%20West%20Africa%20-%20Hein%20de%20Haas.pdf>, accessed 23 March 2011.

20 Although a multitude of trans-Saharan routes exists, at least until recently the majority of overland migrants entered the Maghreb from Agadez in Niger. Agadez is located on a historical crossroads of migration itineraries, which often follow revived sections of older trans-Saharan and Sahelian (caravan) trade routes and which have now extended all over the Sahel zone and deep into western and central tropical Africa. There are two major itineraries leading to Agadez. Migrants from Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo or Benin usually travel via Niger's capital Niamey. Migrants from Nigeria, Congo, Congo-Brazzaville, and other central African countries pass directly from Nigeria, usually after regrouping in Sokoto and Kano in northern Nigeria (Barros et al., 2002). From Agadez, migration routes bifurcate to the Sebha oasis in Libya (via the Dirkou oasis) in the north-eastern direction and to Tamanrasset in southern Algeria in the north – western direction. From Sebha in southern Libya, migrants move to Tripoli and other coastal cities or to Tunisia. From the coast migrants travel by boat to either Malta or the Italian islands of Lampedusa, Pantalleria, and Sicily. Other migration routes connect Sudan with the Kufra oasis in south-eastern Libya and are mainly used by migrants from Sudan (principally from the Darfur region), Ethiopia and Eritrea. Other routes connect Chad with Libya and are used by the Nigerian, Cameroones, Congolese and Sudanese migrants (de Haan, 2007).

arrived on a legal basis. They either entered with student visas or by marriage, or they had sojourned in other European countries on their way. Most of those who came illegally have been in lengthy legal procedures and profited from the abolition that was proclaimed by the Dutch government in 2006.²¹

Ciavolella (2009) mentions that the Fulbe immigrants do not remain inactive after their forced exile from the country and/or their marginalised position within the country. They try to create urban associations, which imitate trans-local lobby groups of other communities, claiming a 'tribal' solidarity under the influence of political discourses on autochthony. This is in line with the Fulbe associations in other West African countries. A group of a dozen of migrants in the Western countries even tried to build up a formal transnational association in order to reinvest migrants' remittances in their villages of origin. Ciavolella (2009) concludes that new forms of mobility depend on the logic of inclusion and exclusion to formal and substantial citizenship.

In relation to the already mentioned attachment to their identity in their new surroundings, the Internet sites for Fulbe people are blossoming and they address the transnational 'ethnic identity'. They deal with the Fulbe culture, language and sciences. One of them²² discusses all sorts of events varying from music to making cheese. In the case of the latter the Fulbe writing on the internet site refer to their former lifestyle. This site has a connection with Facebook and people from many different countries, living in West Africa, as well as in Europe or the United States, are attached to it. They do not mention religion, besides an occasional *mi yetti Allah* (I thank God) at the end of an item.

Tabital Pulaaku, another international site, has various regional sites attached to it.²³ They recently organised a gathering in Yagoua (Cameroon) in order to receive Fulbe people from other countries, and also their 'brothers' from the diaspora.²⁴ Here too, the Fulbe intellectuals took the initiative and besides the usual *Insh'Allah* (if God wants so), religion was not mentioned.

21 The Government (*Tweede Kamer*) voted in 2006 for an abolition for immigrants who had arrived in the Netherlands before 2001, when the asylum laws changed. About 30.000 people got a permit to stay.

22 <http://www.blog-pulaagu.com/>, accessed 11 February 2011.

23 <http://www.tabitalpulaaku-international.org/tabital120/index.php>, accessed 12 February 2011.

24 On the website quoted in footnote 22 it was expressed in the following way: *L'Association Bilitol Fulfulde antenne du Mayo-Danay (JvS, a province) à Yagoua (JvS, a town in Est-Cameroon near the Logone river) organise chaque 2 ou 3 ans un Festival International des Arts et de la Tradition Peuls dénommé Festival Tabital Pulaaku (FIATRAP) qui rassemble des Peuls et Amis de la Culture peule ... La 5ème édition est prévue pour Avril 2011 incha Allah, et nous attendons cette fois ci grâce à notre site JAMAA TABITAL PULAAKU la présence de*

There exists a Belgian version of Tabital Pulaaku. In 2011 an item of the site was closely connected to the celebration of the 'World Day of Milk' that was held on 1 June 2011, while making reference to this 'natural ingredient that is so much related to "the Fulbe way of life"'. The famous statue of Manneken-Pis, in Brussels, was dressed like a West African cattle keeper. This was also a reminder that milk is a source of income for women and lies at the base of their 'culture' (see also Sow, 1966). The world climate crisis and its negative implications for people keeping livestock was an issue, too.²⁵ Religion is only mentioned on the site when Happy New Year wishes are expressed: may Allah (God) give you a good 2011. Another site, in Fulfulde, pays attention to international items.²⁶ In May 2011, the fact that Dominique Strauss Kahn, the former director of the International Monetary Fund, was accused of having abused a Fulbe woman was discussed.²⁷ The fact that this woman was a working single mother was not an issue.

We may conclude that the national and international Fulbe organisations are based on 'ethnic sentiments' rather than on religious ones. However, it remains important to see what happens in the daily lives of the Fulbe (or West African Muslims in general) when they have migrated. What is their relationship with other non-Islamic migrants? How do they relate to what the press in

beaucoup de nos frères de tous les 20 pays africains ou se trouvent les Peuls et même ceux de la Diaspora. Alh. Dahirou Abiss. Ecrivain, Historien, Président Bilitol Fulfulde Mayo-Danay à Yagoua CAMEROUN. See also: <http://www.leseptentrion.net/2011/12/le-festival-international-des-arts-et-de-la-tradition-peuls-a-eu-lieu-a-yagoua/>, accessed 15 November 2012.

- 25 *Le 1er Juin 2011, A Bruxelles ce sera le célèbre Manneken-Pis, habillé en éleveur africain, qui offrira pendant toute la journée le célèbre liquide blanc nourricier aux passants: Il y aura un programme culturel et artistique varié qui, en plaçant le lait et l'élevage au centre...L'objectif est de montrer au publique que pour les peuples éleveurs africains le lait est plus qu'un aliment : c'est une source de revenus subséquent pour les femmes, un pilier de l'alimentation humaine et un maillon important de la culture. Partout dans le monde les éleveurs sont confrontés à d'importants problèmes environnementaux, notamment avec le changement climatique.... Bonne année 2011 – Allah hokku een hitaande 2011 welnde.* <http://www.blog-pulaagu.com/>, <http://www.tabitalpulaaku-international.org/>, accessed 13 February 2011, <http://www.dhieretdaujourdhui.fr/index.php/2010/05>, accessed 26 November 2012. On the websites of 'vétérinaires sans frontières women's important role was left out: le lait est l'une des seules sources de nourriture et de revenus. <http://www.veterinairesansfrontieres.be/newsitems/view/84/zone:africa>, accessed 26 November 2012.
- 26 <http://www.mbiimi.com/>, accessed 21 May 2011.
- 27 http://www.mbiimi.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=825:dominik-stros-kaan-woppiii-fmi&catid=37:kabaruuji-afrik&Itemid=136, accessed 24 May 2012.

the Netherlands likes to call the Judeo-Christian roots of the host country? In the next paragraph I will take the Netherlands as an example.

Immigration and The Netherlands

On 1 January 2009 according to Social and Cultural Planning Institute (SCB – *Sociaal cultureel Planbureau*) there were 1,8 million ‘non-western’ immigrants in the Netherlands, that was 11% of the total Dutch population. Two thirds of them belonged to the four large groups of origin, that is Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean. The West-African immigrants find their place among the others. Half of these people are already second generation, i.e. born in the Netherlands (CBS rapport 2009, 17).

As Geschiere (2009, 137–152) remarks, immigration into the Netherlands followed the same sort of trajectory as in other countries of north-western Europe. In the 1950s repatriates returned from the former colonies. In the 1960s, due to the expansion of the economy, guest workers arrived, first from the countries like Spain and Italy, later from Turkey and Morocco. In the 1980s it became clear that these ‘guest workers’ would not necessarily return after ‘their labour’ was done. In a later period ‘family reunion’ became an important factor in the further influx of people from Morocco and Turkey. In the 1990s increasingly harsh measures were taken to restrict the immigration due to ‘family reunion’.

Immigration – legal as well as illegal – from West African countries slowly started in the 1990s but sped up after that period. The statistics mention only the immigrants from Surinam and the Antilles (former colonies), Morocco, Turkey, China, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. The rest is referred to as ‘other’, though in the report specific attention is paid to problems with the Somali immigrants (CBS report, 2009, 52).

Due to the history of the typical Dutch model of pillarisation (inclusion and exclusion of members of social groups according to their various religions) that only slowly faded two decades ago, specific feelings of belonging have traditionally been internalized by most members of the Dutch society. Everyone had a background that was linked to a specific religious and social worldview. Various groups tolerated each other but did not interact socially. The political landscape was defined according to the pillarisation. Due to this model of social separation, the model of cultural integration – likewise the French model – only started to play a role after the idea that ‘the Netherlands could be a multi-cultural landscape’ was supposed to have failed. This failure was related to the national political developments in which right-wing anti-immigration

parties got an increasing number of votes.²⁸ To speed up integration *inburgeringscursussen* (courses to 'citizenise' immigrants) were organised. In 2011 the anti-Islam Party of Freedom (*Partij Voor de Vrijheid* – PVV) became the second largest party on the Dutch political scene and its leader's provocative speeches until recently always address Islam as a *Fremdkörper* in the Judeo-Christian European landscape.

In this landscape the terms 'allochthones' and 'autochthones' play a prominent role. The initial need for a 'neutral' term to indicate immigrants had led to the use of the term 'allochthones'²⁹ within the various circles of the state administration. However, it triggered the use of the term 'autochthone', a term with which the Dutch started to define themselves. In the whole dynamic surrounding these terms citizens give predominant relevance to discourses and practices of belonging, within their 'own' group. However, who is 'allochthone' and who is 'autochthone' is a matter of absolutely unclear classification, and the term 'allochthone' soon started to be used mainly for the Moroccans and the Turkish. While the term had initially been chosen for its 'neutral' and 'coolly scientific' implication, it rapidly acquired, as Geschiere explains, highly emotional and stigmatizing implications because of its increasing limitation to the two main Muslim groups (Geschiere, 2009, 151). Since the 1990s many East African people immigrated to the Netherlands, especially Somali Muslim people.³⁰ They have been stigmatised more or less in the same way as the other Muslim groups.

Being born on Dutch soil does not seem to matter anymore, as even the second and the third generation are still referred to as 'allochthones'. Thus the right to citizenship gets denied purely on the basis of the Muslim religion. Since 2009, the yearly report on integration of the CBS (Social and Cultural Planbureau)³¹ no longer uses the terminology to refer to stigmatization. Instead they started using 'non-Western', while fearing that the same will happen to

28 First by the party called *Lijst Fortuyn* which attracted 17% of the votes in the 2002 national elections even though (or more likely, because) Pim Fortuyn himself was assassinated some days prior to the elections.

29 First used in a collection of articles edited by H. Verwey-Jonker in 1971. In 1989 a report on immigration issued by the Dutch Ministry (WRR) got the title *Allochtonenbeleid* (Policy on Allochthones).

30 From the end of the 1980s with a peak year in 1993, the Netherlands became acquainted with the Somalis, who fled the civil war in their country. Most of them are Muslims. In 2007 there were about 18,800 Somalis, of which at least one parent was born in the country of origin. In 2001 this was still 29,600, but the number decreased as many escaped the Dutch Islamophobia and migrated to the United Kingdom. (CBS report, 2010, 2–14).

31 Mérove Gijsberts and Jaco Dagevos. Jaarrapport Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau 2009, 37.

this term. The fear is substantiated by the fact that they define people by what they are not and not by what they are. In May 2012 the Board of Societal Development (*Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling* – RMO)³² followed the recommendation of the minister in charge (Minister Leers) who proposed to officially abandon the concept.

The issue of the West African Muslim immigrants ought to be placed on this whole complicated scene. Certain quarters of Amsterdam have a high percentage of former Ghanaian inhabitants from the southern part of that country and most of them arrived in a far later period than the mentioned Muslim groups (see Frederiks and Grodź in this volume). These mainly Christian groups are far less stigmatised. So what happens to the Muslim West-African immigrants? Their exact numbers are not available, but from my own observation I can conclude that many Dutch citizens at first do not necessarily recognise them as being Muslims, unlike the East-African immigrants. The city of Utrecht has its own organisation for West-African immigrants. They organise all sorts of activities around the theme of citizenship. They give information about the rights and duties of being a Dutch citizen, about the health care system, and they organise discussion about the nature of the Dutch society and the rules for 'integration'. In addition they offer help for youngsters with problems at school, problems concerning health care and the like. Though the variety of religious backgrounds is acknowledged, it is not considered to be an issue.³³ However, the Fulbe will openly state their religion.

In daily life the Fulbe immigrants from the various regions in West Africa and with dissimilar dialects recognize each other within a second when they meet. If they come across each other by accident they will stop and on the basis of their 'ethnic identity' start a conversation. Here the 'ethnic' factor seems to be more important than the religious component. A weekly international car-market that for many years used to take place in the city of Utrecht was a special occasion to meet each other. The rich ones may look for cars to buy and to ship to their home country. Others were there for smaller jobs to carry out in order to make some money. In general when we look at the jobs the Fulbe acquire, they confirm the ethnic stereotype: they often do not take on a heavy workload like for example the Ghanaians. They remain as much as possible in the trade business or a related field, all in accordance with the idea that they are too fragile to do the heavy and dirty work.

32 <http://www.volkskrant.nl/vk/nl/2686/Binnenland/article/detail/3252237/2012/05/08/Overheid-moet-afstappen-van-begrip-allochtoon.dhtml>, accessed 8 May 2012.

33 <http://www.hadinkai.nl/activiteiten.html>, accessed 9 April 2011, 15 November 2012.

Most 'non-Western' migrants think of themselves as fairly well integrated. However, they do not feel well accepted and they dislike the societal climate towards immigrants. Highly educated immigrants are even more negative and indicate that they quite often have to deal with discrimination (CBS 2009, 30).

The Fulbe people move freely everywhere, may speak the language, but for social interaction on a more intimate basis they remain within their own group. If a Cameroonian Fulbe meets other Cameroonians they easily exchange information, and enter into a social relation on the base of their former citizenship. Here religion is not an issue, and if a non-Muslim comes from the northern region of Cameroon where their language, Fulfulde, is the lingua franca, they are regarded as being very close.³⁴ The fact that in their home country there are no difficulties in social and economic interaction on the basis of religion also helps. Nigeria is the exception.

While in the exchanges between the West Africans religion is not an issue, within the exchanges between the West African and the Dutch people the largest obstacle has to do with the reciprocal images of Muslims and non-Muslims. There is much mutual incomprehension, especially between the higher educated Muslims and low educated Dutch people. One gets the idea that both worlds are incompatible.

'Muslims get the feeling that Islamic "culture" is not respected'; a yearly report of an important administration states (CBS report, 2009). Here we find another hindrance: the Dutch official documents seem to categorize Islam as a 'culture' and not a religion, thereby denying the variety of 'cultures' within which Islam has been adopted as a religion: a Muslim is a Muslim, full stop. That the West African Muslim immigrants do not feel happy with this categorisation may be evident. Especially the Fulbe, who have such a strong sense of their 'cultural and ethnic' background, as the aforementioned websites indicated, feel quite uncomfortable as they do not necessary feel at ease with Muslim Turkish and Moroccans groups on the thin basis of a similar religion. They consider those groups' definition and practices of being a Muslim not in accordance with their own. In most Muslim communities in West Africa Muslims pray five times a day. Even a bus on the road will stop during time of prayers, so that Muslims can carry out this obligation, etc. The Dutch Muslim groups will not necessarily do so. The difference in regard to 'the women's issue' (Van Santen, 2012a) is also a matter of attention. The fact that women should be covered with a burqa or would not have access to education is considered as an abuse of religion.

34 See also Lacroix (1962).

The specific virtue of the Fulbe ideology – *pulaaku* – also creates a distance between the Fulbe’s worldview and the European society with its capitalist ideology. According to *pulaaku*, ideally a person lives austerely and should not pay attention to external signs of material comfort. In addition one should not share inner thoughts with other people, and one should be introvert. These characteristics also contradict daily practices whereby people discuss intimate items even at the playground of their children’s school. For a Fulbe such a behaviour provokes a feeling of disgust and dislike: dirty laundry should not be hung outside. According to *pulaaku* a Pullo will never get angry: extroversion and vivacity is not appreciated.

In social exchange between the Fulbe *pulaaku* plays a role, though such will never be expressed. It is recognised in the behaviour of the ‘Fulbe other’ when she or he is met, even if the latter is a ‘stranger’, a Pullo from another country. Meeting a member from one’s ethnic group is experienced as a pleasure and a relief from all the pressure of the ‘alien’ country in which the Pullo daily exposes oneself. To be able to speak the shared language, even if the other may speak another dialect, is much appreciated. Common and uncommon words and expressions may be the subject of long discussions. I observed that the pleasure to share the characteristics of *pulaaku* is larger than the pleasure of meeting a fellow Muslim.

All Fulbe I know keep in touch with the family they left behind on a weekly, if not daily basis. Money is sent back, earnings are spent on medical care for those who remained behind, and if it can be afforded, regular visits are paid while bringing back many items from the ‘rich’ world. In this way quite large circles can profit from the new life of the migrant. In the next paragraph I will pay attention to the xeno-Islam discussion in the Netherlands and put it in a historical perspective as the Fulbe immigrants need to position themselves in this discourse.

Xeno-Islam Discourse

In the Netherlands in the encounter between Muslims and non-Muslims it is not religion for the sake of religion that is at stake. It also concerns all the issues that come these days with the anti-Islam discourse. I will put this discourse in a historical perspective.

The Netherlands have occupied a central position in the study of Islam for a long time. For instance, in the 17th century Orientalists like Jacobus Golius, researched Islamic literature and made it accessible to a larger audience. The famous Dutch scholar Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936) started the

European tradition of the study of Islam on a larger scale. The Dutch novel writers Marcellus Emants and Louis Couperus went on journeys to various Islamic countries. Also the presence of the first printed copy of the Qur'an in the university library in Leiden, the publication of the internationally acclaimed *Encyclopaedia of Islam* by Brill, a Dutch publishing house (first edition 1913), and various International Institutes for the Study of Islam in the Modern World³⁵ have put the Netherlands firmly in the centre of the study of Islam outside the Muslim world. Furthermore the Arabic language has been taught at Leiden University since the seventeenth century. Research has also emerged in the Dutch academia on topics relevant to the study of Islam in the sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite all these academic efforts the Netherlands are part of the Western world where in every-day perception Islam has become intrinsically linked up with 'terrorism'³⁶ since the attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York in 2001. In the West, these attacks have fuelled controversies about the relation between Islam and violence and, in the eyes of many, they have reaffirmed lurking stereotypes about the cultural backwardness of Muslims.³⁷ In the perception of the popular Western media Islam has become a threat, not only to the Western way of life, but to humanity as a whole, endangering highly acclaimed 'Western' values like democracy, freedom and worldwide peace.³⁸ All sorts of prejudices about Islam and Muslims have surfaced, encouraging Western people of all walks of life to air their unfounded opinions about this religion, ranging from defenders of animal rights attacking the Muslim way of slaughtering animals and women's groups calling for support for battered Muslim women, to National Intelligence specialists presenting details about global networks of terrorism operating from local Dutch mosques.

However, outside the Western world, this link between Islam and terrorism is less eagerly made. In many African commentaries the liability for the terrorist attacks in America is, at least partially, put on the past and present arrogance displayed by the United States towards international treaties and other countries and the peoples therein. So, there is a clear disparity of opinions between the West African immigrants and the majority of habitants in the countries that host them, as the former continue to listen to news items via the news sites in

35 For example: ISIM and LUCIS, <http://www.hum.leidenuniv.nl/lucis/>, accessed 31 March 2012.

36 The term terrorism is obviously not a neutral term, but implicates political disapproval.

37 In the Netherlands the one-liner: 'Islam is a backward culture' [*Islam is een achterlijke cultuur*], formulated by the Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn, provided food for much anger and little reflection.

38 As if European practices have achieved these aims.

their home country and their websites. The unwavering support which the United States are thought to offer to the state of Israel, despite the latter's violation of many UN resolutions, is repeatedly mentioned in this respect. In the resistance of the Palestinians, many Africans recognise their own struggle for independence in the mid-20th century. Therefore many Africans are less ready to equate the 9/11 attacks with a disgraceful act of terrorism and an onslaught on humanity. Instead they see them as an almost justified form of resistance towards the superpower behaving extremely badly. The United States and European politics are reproached for being purely opportunistic and imperialist, promoting only its own interests, be it through its support of pro-USA dictatorial regimes everywhere in the world or its strong controlling influence over the policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which are not seldom blamed for the long lasting economic malaise in Africa, an economy that only in recent years started growing (see Van Santen, 2008). For this reason support for Osama bin Laden could be heard everywhere within African civil society, resulting in popular products such as posters or T-shirts with Osama bin Laden's portrait (alone or with that of former president Bush) that are for sale at local markets in Africa.³⁹ In fact, the question as to who was actually behind the attacks was considered a matter of minor importance and has not given rise to a more negative attitude towards Muslims in the press or in private interaction. All the same, in Africa, just like in the rest of the world, people have expressed and express their horror over the loss of life of so many innocent people during the so-called Islamist terrorist attacks, that also occurred in Kenya, Nigeria or Somalia, while underlining that Islam is ill-used in these cases. Though the present USA president Obama is somewhat more appreciated (due to his African roots) than his predecessor, the outlook on world politics and Islamic movement remains quite different than that of most people in the host country. That no difference is made between the various Muslim societies and their dissimilar 'cultural' background in the host countries does not really help even for those who officially have become European citizens.

Conclusion

In this article I looked at the social and religious background of the Fulbe people – as one of the many West African Muslim groups – and their

39 For this paragraph I made use of the introduction which I wrote in co-operation with my colleague Anneke Breedveld for a never published book on Islam in Africa. I worked in Cameroon during the 9/11 attacks.

experience of migration especially to Europe, with the Netherlands taken as an example. I tried to find out if it was the 'ethnic' or the 'religious' component of their identity that was more important to them in their new surroundings, and how the context of migration in general and the European context in particular affected this.

On the one hand the Fulbe are confronted with an emphasis on their religious background which, though part of their 'cultural identity' in their region of origin, is self-evidently not the only identity they have. I described how they – though considered to be orthodox Muslims – do not feel comfortable with the content that is given to the category 'Muslim' in their new surroundings. The Fulbe in the Netherlands are not inclined to go to mosque, making an occasional exception during the religious festivals. They will carry out their prayers in the intimacy of their homes as they do not feel much affiliation with the other Muslim groups. The whole issue of women's roles within Islam, so central when Islam in European societies is discussed, the debate on women's veiling – they consider women wearing burqa ridiculous – or a possible denial of education for women, is alien to what they know in their traditional daily experience.⁴⁰ Respect for women as well as women's economic standing is included in their 'ethnic code' – *pulaaku*. In the discussion on one of their websites concerning the Fulbe woman implicated in the Dominique Strauss Kahn affair no negative comments were made on the fact that she was a hardworking woman. There was great support for her case. We also learned that the nomad Fulbe women may migrate far from home to carry out their economic activities. Migrant Fulbe women carry out their economic activities and have jobs if these are available, despite the fact that the society – in our example the Dutch one – reduces their identity to just that of a 'Muslim woman'.

In some countries the Fulbe had political power while in others they could be quite marginalised. In the encounter between the various Fulbe people elsewhere in the world, this background does not play a role. Also the clan differences and descent groups do not come to the fore in the encounters between the various Fulbe groups. I mentioned that they took pleasure in the encounter on the base of their 'ethnic' identity, and not necessarily due to their Muslim background. On various websites and in international organizations the link with the former pastoral lifestyle is made. During their stay in Europe, the Fulbe or other Muslim Cameroonians did not regard the non-Muslim Cameroonians (or even fellow Africans for that matter) as the 'other' but rather as being close to them.

40 Elsewhere I have described these aspects for Cameroonian society, see Van Santen (2010).

In the contact between the Muslim immigrants and the Dutch people religion seems to be an enormous hindrance, due to all sorts of prejudices concerning Islam. However, in my opinion, a closer look reveals that it is not religion that is at stake. Acceptance of large groups with another religion and accompanying lifestyle is related to power-positions and the symbolic capital of the group that introduces the new lifestyle. In general, Muslims arriving in the Netherlands do not have this capital, and they belong to the economically poor classes. In addition Islam became even more associated with negative characteristics after the 9/11 attacks. Therefore the Fulbe immigrants, being Muslims, get a larger awareness of their Muslim identity: while before departing to Europe their contact with 'the other', the non-Muslim, was in most countries – with the exception of Nigeria – taken for granted and not regarded as a problem, upon return to their country they may see it differently.

In addition, due to the new fundamentalist discourse in many countries in West Africa, young people discuss various religious issues on internet sites (Gueye and Van Santen, 2006). All the same, on religious sites the connection between the ethnic Fulbe identity in relation to the Muslim identity is not essential and on most Fulbe sites religion is not the main issue, while the former nomadic lifestyle is.

The largest hindrance for integration is related to the immigrants' outlook on life. We mentioned that in the Fulbe code of life people socially and physically keep a distance. The openness in discussion concerning all sorts of intimate issues in the host country – in face-to-face relations as well as in the media – is not always appreciated by the immigrants. The introverted attitude of the Fulbe may be understood by the European people, who refuse to recognize that many different cultures accepted Islam putting it into practice in dissimilar ways, as a dissenting behaviour of the immigrants that has roots in their religion, while in the Fulbe case it is in no way related to Islam. Also the prejudice that the Fulbe migrated to profit economically is contradictory to their virtue of contempt for richness and consumption. In addition, if immigrants listen to and watch the news items on their own internet-sites, regardless of whether they themselves and/or their children officially have become European citizens, then the discourse and outlook concerning various international problems may be poles apart from the outlook of their European neighbours. The discussion of the last decades around Islam partly triggered these dissimilar outlooks.

To conclude, differences between the immigrants' world-view compared to that of the 'national citizens' are politically rather than religiously based. However, the citizens in the host country all too often judge the Muslim immigrants – including the West African Fulbe – solely on the basis of their religion.

The Fulbe people will not easily discuss this contradiction in order to convince 'the other' that her or his perceptions are based on a lack of knowledge. Their persistently introverted behaviour will prevent the Fulbe from doing so. It is still too early to make any comments on the possible second generation.

Accepting diversity is not the strongest of behavioural attitudes these days in the European context. The immigrants as well as the citizens of the host countries still have a long way to go before they will really meet in the middle.

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Religion, Ethnicity and Transnational Migration between West Africa and Europe: An Epilogue

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Introduction

One and a half decades have passed since Gerrie Ter Haar in her book *Halfway to Paradise* drew attention to a group of people that researchers had tended to overlook: African Christian migrants in Europe (Ter Haar, 1998, 4–5). Since then, a wealth of mainly ethnographic material has been published, mapping and describing the width of African Christianity in Europe (Adogame and Weissköppel, 2005; Adogame, Gerloff and Hock, 2008; Währisch-Oblau, 2009; Simon 2010; Ludwig and Asamoah-Gyadu, 2011; Adogame, 2012).

However, while Ter Haar's observation brought about extensive research into African Christian migrants and their religious communities, another group of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa still remains underexposed. Muslim migrants from sub-Saharan Africa – and in particular West Africa – seem to suffer from what Etienne Smith in this volume has called a 'double invisibility': they remain invisible within the wider African community that has been conceptualized by the general public as 'Christian', as well as within the wider Muslim community that has been conceptualized as being from North African or Middle Eastern or (in the case of UK) Asian descent. This double invisibility may to some extent explain the near absence of West African Muslim migrants to Europe from academic research. This volume has brought together contributions that address various aspects of West African Muslim migrants in Europe.

West African Islam, heavily influenced by colonial representations based on the work of Paul Marty (Marty, 1917) has in academic and colonial discourses been construed as an irenic form of Islam.² Black Islam (*l'islam noir*) is usually represented as a peaceful Sufi Islam that is accommodative and tolerant of

1 My sincere thanks go to Stanisław Grodz. His suggestions and insights during our discussions about the conclusions that could be drawn from this project were extremely helpful and have helped to shape this epilogue.

2 Gina Smith in her contribution refers to the work of Talal Asad who has pointed out that the colonial construct of *l'islam noir* served to reinforce colonial constructions of Arab Islam as violent. Etienne Smith, in his contribution to this book, affirms that the academic and

other religious traditions; its members are thought to maintain cordial relations with non-Islamic religious communities and individuals. One of the leading queries of this book project has been investigating how West African Muslims, often conversant with living in religiously plural contexts, interact with the European context, and whether, and if so how, migration impacts these perceived congenial patterns of interreligious relating, both in destination countries as well as – through a feedback loop – in the countries of origin.

This epilogue tries to tease out some overarching observations about these two topics. First, it explores patterns of self-representation of West African Muslims in Europe, paying specific attention to the role of religion and ethnicity. Second, it examines the impact of migration on patterns of interreligious relating both in the new migration context and – where material is available – also in the context of origin.

Migration, Ethnicity and Religion

Migration is by no means a new phenomenon to West Africans. Travel, religious pilgrimage, nomadic existence and trek have always been part of the West African way of life. From the Dyula merchants trading in gold, slaves and kola-nuts to the Fulani herdsmen in search of greener pastures for their cattle, from the Jakhanke scholars journeying to propagate Islam to 18th century West African youths travelling to Europe for education, mobility has been a prominent feature of West African societies throughout the centuries.

In more recent times, with the enforcement of borders and an emphasis on national identities, traditional itinerant existence has been under strain (Lindijer, 2005). Yet, in times of economic recession, natural disasters or political instability, many West Africans still turn to mobility as an obvious way to improve their life-conditions. At times this mobility takes the form of migration within the region (Stock, 2013, 262–281). But West Africans have also looked beyond the region for new opportunities. Until recently for example, Libya was an important destination country for West African labour migrants. Since the mid-twentieth century there have also been substantial groups of West Africans leaving the African continent, migrating to Europe, North America and the Gulf region in search of a better future. José van Santen in her contribution calls attention to Fulani *wodaabe* women from Niger, who were at

colonial representations of *l'islam noir* focus on its presumed irenic character. Yet he queries to what extent this notion has become part of the perceptions of the wider public.

the forefront of international migration movements when in the 1970s a prolonged draught threatened the welfare of their families. The migration of these *wodaabe* women can be conceived as iconic for how many West Africans perceive locality in a pragmatic way rather than as a given. This is true for the perception of locality within as well as outside West Africa, for West Africans also practice transit migration within Europe, when circumstances elsewhere seem to look more promising.

This long tradition of mobility means that in the West African context 'migration' and 'migrants' are valued positively. Migrants are considered to be enterprising and resourceful; they are esteemed, respected and held in high regard. But in Europe, West African migrants meet a very different appraisal of migration, in which negative imageries and at times hostile and racist attitudes prevail. Nearly all contributors mention racism experienced by African migrants in Europe. Etienne Smith, Afe Adogame as well as Miriam Schader stress that their informants – Christians as well as Muslims – consider racism to be the most tenacious obstacle to their full participation in European societies. While Monika Salzbrunn's study of Senegalese migrants in Switzerland underscores what Steven Vertovec has called the 'super-diversity' of migrants (Vertovec, 2007) and her descriptions of the highly diverse and generally well-educated Senegalese migrant population in Switzerland remind the reader that neither sweeping generalisations about African migrants in Europe, nor victimization of migrants, nor methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller, 2002) can stand the test of serious research, the recurring comments about the omnipresence of racism are salient and highly disturbing.

Over and above racism that seems to affect all West African immigrants without respect of persons or religious convictions, West African Muslims also suffer from the prevalent negative imagery about Muslims in Europe. Etienne Smith calls this the 'double burden' (being black and Muslim) of West African Muslims. All the West African Muslims Schader interviewed, thought it important to stress their loyalty to Europe, something which none of the West African Christians had considered necessary. To add insult to injury, West African Muslims at times also experience denouncement from fellow Muslims in Europe.³ Gina Smith accounts that Senegalese Fulani Muslims in France were told they were not 'true' Muslims and therefore did not qualify to lead prayers

3 Though West African Christian migrants do not usually seem to experience such explicit denouncements, one of Schader's informants expressed frustration at not being taken seriously and being mainly called upon to participate in events to add some colour and exotism, by saying: 'We can do more than playing the drums and shaking our hips'.

in the mosque.⁴ Thus, afflicted by racism, Islamophobia and discrimination within the *umma*, the West African Muslim immigrants face a triple marginalisation in Europe.

Both West African Christians and West African Muslims have developed strategies to cope with these negative experiences in Europe. However, there are some remarkable differences in their coping tactics. Miriam Schader, researching whether religion can serve as a resource for political participation in migration contexts, found that West African Christian migrant organisations in Berlin actively and effectively engage the political arena to address these issues. In contrast, the West African Muslim migrants rarely undertake collective action in the political domain. Schader attributes this discrepancy in political participation, amongst other things, to the different level of organizational infrastructure of the two groups. West African Christian migrants – unlike their Muslim counterparts – have (generally speaking) a high level of religious organisation. In addition to their own well-developed structures, West African Christian migrants can also tap into existing European Christian networks and resources, thus representing a political lobby to be reckoned with. Pyong Gap Min (Min, 2005, 100) has pointed out that well-defined organizational membership-structures are to some extent inherent to Christianity. Christian religiosity usually channels participation in religious communities through membership-structures, leading to an identifiable membership. This implies that spokespersons of churches (including migrant churches) represent religious communities in the public domain. Islam or other religious traditions such as Buddhism, or Hinduism, do not have such explicit membership structures. Therefore, Muslim leaders primarily take part in public debates as individuals, and not as representatives of larger religious communities. This limits their political influence.⁵

4 Etienne Smith, researching Senegalese Muslims of Serer and Jola descent, observed that some of this antagonism was mutual. His Senegalese informants also criticized Maghreb Muslims; they considered them to be either hypocritical by claiming pure Arab Muslim descent yet behaving in an un-Islamic fashion or too puritanical and Salafi.

5 Pyong Gap Min makes this observation with regard to the American context (Min, 2005). Comparing the religious participation of Korean Presbyterians and Indian Hindus Min notes that much research into migrant religiosity seems to depart from and theorize upon a Christian-congregationalist normativity. However, religious traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam do not have congregational structures; their religious devotion is much more individually and domestically oriented. Based on his case-studies Min argues that research into migrant religiosity needs to take both congregational life and domestic religiosity into account.

In addition to differences in organisational infrastructures, Schader also opines that Christianity's long historic connectedness with Europe contributes significantly to the political coping strategies of West African Christians. Because Christianity is well-established in Europe and less politically sensitive than Islam, African Christians feel at liberty to protest against immigration bills, expose racism or criticize societal developments. Unlike their Muslim counterparts, they tend not to feel apologetic about their presence or their viewpoints. Where Christian migrants can piggyback onto the historically acquired position of Christian churches as legitimate actors in the public domain, West African Muslim migrants in Europe do not have access to similar historically acquired privileges and positions.

It is worthwhile noting however, that notwithstanding the fact that West African Muslim migrants in Europe lag behind in creating representational structures, they can access powerful and well-structured transnational Islamic networks: the brotherhoods (the *tariqat*). Etienne Smith, Monika Salzbrunn as well as Martha Frederiks and Stanisław Grodź underscore the influence of Tijani or Murid brotherhoods among their members in the diaspora. Yet, neither the Tijanis, nor the Murids, who in various West African countries are deeply involved in political scene, seem to have engaged the political arena of the migration contexts. So far the activities of the *tariqat* are mainly geared towards the spiritual well-being of their members (*talibes*) in the diaspora, with – in the case of the Murids – an occasional venture into proselytising activities among Muslims from other regions.

Because of the prevailing negative sentiments towards Muslims in Europe and because of their limited collective access to political structures that can effectuate change, West African Muslim coping strategies often seem to centre around foregrounding ethnic and cultural rather than religious belongings in the public domain. Where Adogame postulates that West African Christians emphasize their religious identities and international/global aspirations in European migration contexts, West African Muslims seem to choose a different strategy. They highlight their ethnic identities, presenting themselves as Fulani, Dagomba or Serer, or use larger identity constructions such as Senegalese, Ghanaian or (West) African.⁶ The underlying presumption seems to be that cultural diversity, unlike religious divergence, is not perceived to be a (significant) threat to European values; rather, cultural representations are presumed to evoke positive sentiments, such as curiosity, appreciation and approval.

6 For comments on the trend of ethnicising regions or even whole continents, see Adogame's contribution in this volume.

These ethnic and cultural self-representation strategies take different forms. At times West African Muslims select ways of self-representation that are completely devoid of religious connotations. Salzbrunn's example of the Senegalese community in Switzerland deciding to organize a wrestling match as their contribution to the 2012 Lausanne week of combatting racism, can serve as an illustration of this. At other times the strategy entails stripping an event of its religious symbolism and presenting it as a 'cultural event' only. Frederiks and Grodź exemplify this by describing how the Dagomba in The Netherlands present the Damba festival solely as a cultural festivity. Again at other times, the strategy consists of presenting religion as culture. A good example of this is Tilmann Heil's account of Senegalese Fulani in Catalonia who staged a traditional Islamic wedding ceremony under the label of 'Senegalese cultural performance'.

Cultural and ethnic self-representations are important coping strategies of West African Muslim immigrants, seeking recognition and affirmation in the public domain. But research has made it abundantly clear that culture and methods of cultural retention are a central concern of all migrants. It has been widely argued in the literature that culture is a crucial aspect in the self-understanding and identity construction of first generation migrants in their new destination contexts (Gregory, 1989; Laliotou, 2004; Kandiyoti, 2009). This is evidenced by the numerous cultural associations initiated by migrants. These associations intend to create 'a home away from home' and help migrants to retain their cultural values and practices, preserve or transmit language skills or celebrate cultural or national events and festivals together (see e.g. Frederiks and Grodź on examples of associations established by Ghanaian migrants). Often these associations organize social activities. But as Van Santen has pointed out with regard to the Fulani, interactive websites and blogs also have begun to assume the role of cultural associations, creating virtual transnational communities. Migrants use these portals to assist one another transnationally in retaining and sustaining their cultural heritage.

As early as 1978 Timothy Smith pointed out that religion can be a significant factor in the retention of culture (Smith, 1978). This is especially true in those situations where culture and religion are interwoven (Min, 2005). Gina Smith evidences this for Fulani Muslims in France. She noticed that Fulani Muslims rarely joined other Muslims in the local mosques. Rather, Fulani Muslims chose to perform their religious duties, such as the *salat*, in a local prayer room in an exclusively Fulani company. In addition, they set up a number of Fulani associations to raise money for schools and wells in the home villages of their area as well as finance an annual Fulani event, that takes the form of a yearly visit of a Fulani Tijani sheikh to his *talibes* in the diaspora. Thus, by practising

religion and maintaining their specific Fulani traditions as well as by creating new Fulani religious rituals (e.g. annual visit of the sheikh) in the 'diaspora', they boost, sustain and invigorate their Fulani (*Haalpulaar*) identity through religion in a migration context.

The Impact of Migration on Patterns of Interreligious Relating

Considering the fact that research has made it abundantly clear that religion is important for migrants (Stepick, 2005) and that countless studies focus on the intersection of migration, religion, ethnicity and identity formation (Levitt, 2003; Levitt, 2004; Schreiter, 2009), it is surprising how little attention has been given to the question if, and if so how, migration affects patterns of interreligious relating and interreligious coexistence. Research seems to focus mainly on questions such as how migration alters and transforms religious beliefs and practices of specific groups of migrants, how migrants shape their religious community formation or how migrants negotiate between loyalties to religious communities in the country of origin and the destination country/region.

While current research into transnational religious networks and practices explores the dynamics and implications of transnational exchanges (Glick-Schiller, 1997; Min, 2005; Pitkänen, 2012), it does not seem to entail the question how migrants' experiences with religion and religious diversity in the migration context feed back into the contexts of origin. In the few cases that research addresses these issues, the focus seems to be on the circulation of religious-political ideas and remittances⁷ rather than on the circulation of actual people as agents of change (Wilson, 1998; Kurian, 2002). One distinct conclusion is therefore that there is a pertinent need for a multi-locational approach investigating how migration impacts religion; research that examines the full circle of connectedness of migrants and migrants' religious communities, that takes into account the role of migrants as agents of change and investigates how their experiences in migration contexts (may) impact religious communities, practices, ideas and patterns of interreligious relating in their countries of origin.

Though none of the contributions in this volume discusses the full circle of connectedness between West Africa – Europe – West Africa, various contributors comment on part of this loop. Etienne Smith, Heil and Frederiks and Grodź all postulate that attitudes pertaining to cultural and religious pluralism

7 E.g. Prema Kurian has shown how Indian Americans both financially and ideologically support the Indian Hindutva movement (Kurian, 2002).

'migrate' with migrants to the new migration context and seem to shape their initial responses to the religious and cultural diversity in the new migration context. Heil's study of Casamançais in Catalonia seems to indicate that the sustained contact amongst migrants from the same region of origin probably plays a vital role in the endurance of these attitudes.

Furthermore, migrants coming from multi-religious contexts seem to be able to adapt more easily to the European milieu than migrants coming from a predominantly Muslim context (Frederiks, 2010). Frederiks and Grodź illustrate how Ghanaian Muslim migrants in the Netherlands seem to be able to switch effortlessly between interacting with Ghanaian Christian migrants, fraternizing with English-speaking Muslims from other parts of the world during the *jumua* prayers and collaborating as Ghanaian Muslims from different traditions in religious education programmes or Ramadan activities, thus negotiating religious diversity with great skill. They hypothesize that this relatively easy blending of the Ghanaian Muslims into the Dutch context can be attributed – at least to a certain extent – to the generations-long indigenous ability and experience of successfully negotiating their presence as a minority that retains its distinctiveness, yet at the same time forms a part of the wider society and takes part in its life.

Gina Smith demonstrates that Fulani Muslim migrants from Senegal who had been socialised in a predominantly homogeneous Fulani Islamic environment proved less adept in negotiating cultural and religious diversity in the migration context. They kept aloof from Senegalese Christian migrants as well as from Muslims from other traditions and other parts of the world and adopted more segregationist attitudes, thus producing a 'little Futa Toro nucleus' in the religiously diverse migration context. In contrast, Fulani Muslims from the religiously more diverse region of Fuladu proved more skilled at negotiating diversity.

Etienne Smith in his contribution argues that the Senegalese heritage of secularism and pluralism has long-lasting effect on the migrants to Europe both in terms of beliefs and habits. According to Smith, migration seems to affect the religiosity of the second generation more than the first, with second generation youngsters either turning to a more explicit religious practice (i.e. the *banlieue* effect) or to a more secularised attitude. Whether therefore skills and abilities to negotiate religious and cultural diversity can be transmitted to second and third generation migrants remains to be seen and will depend to a large extent on how young people are socialised. Determining factors may, amongst others, include the ability of parents to transmit their religious/cultural heritage and values, the cultural and religious constellation of the migration context as well as the experiences of first and second generation migrants in the new migration context.

Gina Smith is the only author in this volume who, although briefly, also addresses the Europe-West Africa (in her case the France-Senegal) side of the circle of connectedness. During her fieldwork in Senegal, Smith interviewed a number of Fulani migrants who had lived in France but returned to their home villages. Based on these interviews Smith mentions a series of examples of how migration experiences have impacted the religious composition of the country of origin as well as patterns of interreligious relating, thus exemplifying how migrants can initiate or fuel religious change. Smith relates for example how a prominent member of a leading Tijani family in Fuladu converted to Shia Islam while living in France and on his return to Fuladu established a Shia community, resulting in a significant number of Fulani Shia converts. With this case Smith demonstrates that the exposure to religious diversity in migration contexts can result in significant changes in the religious landscape in the country of origin. Likewise, she shows how living in a religiously diverse society had invigorated an awareness of self-identity among Fulani Muslim returned migrants. But this renewed sense of Fulani Muslimness was not an exclusive identity but rather an identity which combined pride of their Fulani Islamic heritage with respect for the religious other, both within and outside the *umma*. Smith therefore hypothesises that alongside traditional structures such as joking relations between ethnic groups, migrant experiences of religious diversity may also play a significant role in fostering attitudes that promote congenial interreligious relating and religious coexistence in religiously predominantly homogeneous areas.

Smith's examples highlight the pertinence of adopting a multi-locational approach in the study of the complex connectivities between migration, ethnicity and religion. In order to comprehend religious alterations and vicissitudes on the various nodes in transnational networks as well as the impact these fluctuations have on patterns of interreligious relating, it is germane that the various localities and their interfaces are researched in interdependence. A multi-locational approach that investigates the full circle of connectedness of religion and migration and that conceives migrants as potential agents of change in the migration contexts as well as in their countries of origin, therefore seems to be a prerequisite for attaining a more in-depth understanding of the dynamics between religion, ethnicity and migration.

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