

**MAPPING A NATION: SPACE, PLACE AND CULTURE IN THE
CASAMANCE, 1885-2014**

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MAPPING A NATION: SPACE, PLACE AND CULTURE IN THE CASAMANCE, 1885-2014

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This dissertation examines the interplay between impersonal, supposedly objective “space” and personal, familiar “place” in Senegal’s southern Casamance region since the start of the colonial era to determine the ways separatists tried to ascribe Casamançais identity to five social spaces as spatial icons of the nation. I devote a chapter to each of these five spaces, crucial to the separatist identity leading to the 1982 start of the Casamance conflict.

Separatists tried to “discursively map” the nation in opposition to Senegal through these spatial icons, but ordinary Casamançais refused to imagine the Casamance in the same way as the separatists. While some corroborated the separatist imagining through these spaces, others contested or ignored it, revealing a second layer of counter-mapping apart from that of the separatists.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mark W. Deets is a retired Marine aviator and a PhD candidate in African History at Cornell University. Deets began his doctoral studies after retiring from the Marine Corps in 2010. Before his military retirement, Deets taught History at the U.S. Naval Academy. Previous assignments include postings as the U.S. Defense and Marine Attaché to Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and Mauritania (2005-2007), as a White House Helicopter Aircraft Commander (HAC) and UH-1N “Huey” Operational Test Director with Marine Helicopter Squadron One (1999-2002), and as Assistant Operations Officer and UH-1N Weapons and Tactics Instructor with the “Stingers” of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 267 (1993-1998).

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This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Taryn, and our children – Dillon, Katy, Faith,
Danny, Joshua, and Grace – for their love, support, encouragement, and patience
throughout this chapter of our lives together.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANFOM	<i>Archives Nationales de France, Section Outre-Mer</i> / National Archives of France, Overseas (i.e. Colonies and Departments) Section
ADZ	<i>Archives du Diocèse de Ziguinchor</i> / Archives of the Ziguinchor Diocese
ANS	<i>Archives Nationales du Sénégal</i> / National Archives of Senegal
AOF	<i>Afrique Occidentale Française</i> / French West Africa
BDS	<i>Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais</i> / Senegalese Democratic Party
CAF	African Cup of Nations (soccer tournament)
CAOM	<i>Centre des Archives d’Outre-Mer</i>
CFA	<i>Communauté Financière Africaine</i> / African Financial Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service
GNRS	Gambian National Record Service
GNS	<i>Gendarmerie Nationale du Sénégal</i> / National Gendarmerie of Senegal
GoS	Government of Senegal
IFAN	<i>Institut Français/Fondamental d’Afrique Noire</i> / French Institute of Black Africa (Dakar)
MAC	<i>Mouvement Autonome Casamançais</i> / Movement for Casamançais Autonomy
MFDC	<i>Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance</i> / Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance
PFPC	<i>Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance</i> / Women’s Program for Peace in the Casamance
PRA	<i>Parti du Regroupement Africain</i> / African Coalition Party
PRA-S	<i>Parti du Regroupement Africain au Sénégal</i>

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

RTS	<i>Radiodiffusion Télévision Sénégalaise</i> / Radio-Television Senegal
SAF	Senegalese Armed Forces
SFIO	<i>Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière</i> / French Section of the Workers' International
WARC	West African Research Center

INTRODUCTION

They first met at one-thirty in the afternoon on April 8, 1982. Mamadou “Nkrumah” Sané could barely contain his enthusiasm to greet the man he had heard so much about: Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor. The modern Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance (*Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance*, MFDC) grew out of this meeting between two well-educated men – one a Christian from the south bank of the Casamance River (Diamacoune) and the other a Muslim from the north bank (Sané). After growing up in the Buluf region of the Casamance (northwest of Bignona), Sané left Senegal in 1964 to continue his university education in Europe. Passing through Mauritania and Morocco, Sané finally landed in Paris in 1966. He participated in leftist agitation in the streets of Paris in 1968, an experience that profoundly marked his political outlook.¹ [See Fig. I-1.]



Figure I-1: Map of the Casamance (shaded green) and of towns along the Casamance River. Carabane is actually an island in the mouth of the river. The Soungrougrou is not shown but is a tributary on the north bank of the Casamance positioned between the towns of Bignona and Sedhiou. Retrieved on 8 September 2016 from <http://theafricanqueen-crystal.blogspot.com/2011/03/looking-at-map.html>.

¹ Mamadou “Nkrumah” Sané, as recounted in René Capain Bassène, *L’abbé Augustin Diamacoune Senghor: par lui-même et par ceux qui l’ont connu* (Paris : L’Harmattan, 2013), 106. All translations from French in this dissertation are mine, unless otherwise noted.

Father Diamacoune also left Senegal in 1964, but he left to attend seminary in Belgium.² After seminary, Diamacoune returned to the Casamance to take up his duties with the Catholic Church. In 1967, he began broadcasting a children’s radio program on Radio-Television Senegal (RTS) that ran until 1980. As separatist sentiment boiled throughout the 1970s, Diamacoune used the radio program to denigrate the “little Wolof” and the “little Toucouleur” from “Senegal” – meaning northern Senegal – as “strangers” to the Casamance. Over time, Diamacoune, who went by the nickname “Papa Kulimpi” on the radio, began to construct a *discourse of grievance* that constantly pitted Senegal as something “other” than the Casamance.³ In Paris, Sané’s wife told her husband about the views of Papa Kulimpi she had heard on RTS while growing up in the Casamance.

As tension and grievances mounted in the late 1970s, Sané decided he had to return to the Casamance to meet Diamacoune. That sentiment grew after 1980, when Diamacoune gave speeches in Ziguinchor and Dakar, asserting a historical argument that the Casamance had never been and could never be a part of Senegal. From Paris, Sané agitated for Casamançais independence. But he knew that he needed a committed local stakeholder in the Casamance. He flew back to Senegal in search of Diamacoune. He finally tracked down the elder man in Kafountine.

Diamacoune played the benevolent host to his well-traveled guests in a reception room in his quarters provided by the Catholic Diocese. Received initially by Diamacoune’s niece, Sané and his companions, Marcel Bassène and Mamadou Diémé, waited for the priest to join them. Diamacoune entered the room wearing his clerical robes and greeted the men with a hearty

² Augustin Diamacoune Senghor became known by his middle name to avoid confusion with independent Senegal’s first President, Léopold Sédar Senghor, who was no relation. Senghor died in 2001, and Diamacoune died in 2007.

³ “*Papa Kulimpi*” means “the bearded father” in the Jola language.

“*Safoul!*” in Jola.⁴ Diamacoune’s niece offered the visitors some drinks. Sané impressed his host by choosing Casamançais palm wine instead of the other sugary, processed drinks that had been offered. Sané explained that he and the others intended to revive the MFDC from its short existence in the 1950s to form a modern movement seeking the independence of the Casamance.⁵ Sané later recalled, “The priest was proud of me for my patriotism so he got up out of his chair and embraced me without saying a word.”⁶ The modern MFDC was born.

About four months later, after taking oaths in a “sacred forest” near Diabir, Sané and thousands of other separatists marched into Ziguinchor on December 26th to remove the Senegalese flags flying over government buildings around the city. Senegalese intelligence services, catching the scent of planning days before, had arrested Father Diamacoune on the 23rd. Senegalese security forces – primarily from the National Police and the *Gendarmerie Nationale* – greeted the separatists with sporadic force, wounding a few here and there but killing none.

A more focused response came in the days following the march, however, as security services arrested and jailed some of those who had attended the march or otherwise demonstrated separatist sympathies. When separatists planned another meeting for the same sacred forest near Diabir almost a year later, the Senegalese government sent *gendarmes* to break up the meeting. Separatists greeted the *gendarmes* with a flurry of violence that left four of the *gendarmes* dead, their bodies mutilated. The Senegalese mustered a more forceful response weeks later, attacking a separatist position near the village of Mandina Mancagne, near the southeast side of Ziguinchor. The MFDC rebels, who took up the name of *Atika* under the command of a French

⁴ “Safoul!” means “hello” or “good day” to a group in Jola.

⁵ Sané later claimed that there has never been two different MFDCs but only one, a party continuously advocating Casamançais independence since the 1940s. Not a single scholar of the Casamance has supported Sané’s assertion.

⁶ Sané, as recounted in Bassène, *L’abbé*, 107.

colonial army veteran, Sidy Badji, scattered into the forest.⁷ What followed was over thirty years of sporadic, low-intensity conflict that killed more than 5,000 people, displaced 60,000, affected 90,000 by land mines⁸ (including about 500 civilians killed or maimed by land mines)⁹, and left 800,000 living in a state of insecurity.¹⁰ Now in its thirty-fifth year, the conflict has earned the ignominious title of “Africa’s longest-running civil conflict.”¹¹ Many consider it a stain on Senegal’s oft-cited record as one of Africa’s few democracies without interruption by a *coup d’état* since independence in 1960. From where did the stain emerge?

I argue that it emerged from contested spaces. From January 2005 to July 2007, I served as the U.S. Defense and Marine Attaché to Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde.¹² The Senegalese government and the MFDC had signed a cease-fire agreement in December 2004, shortly before my arrival in Dakar. During this assignment, therefore, it became part of my official duties to accompany the U.S. Ambassador to meetings with the international community in Dakar involved in the Casamance peace process. I also individually attended meetings with the Senegalese Armed Forces (SAF) and with the MFDC. Over time, I found it curious that no one at these meetings ever pulled out a map, showing what the particular territorial claims of the separatists were.

Instead, I heard repeated references – a discourse, in other words – to particular social spaces where Casamançais felt something different from their fellow Senegalese. Indeed, the manifestation of identity in these *spaces* turned them into *places* where Casamançais felt more

⁷ “*Atika*” means “warrior” in Jola.

⁸ UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), “Senegal: Finding Incentives for Peace in Casamance,” 25 Jun 08, allAfrica.com, accessed 19 Jan 09, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806251043.html>

⁹ Handicap International, “Etude d’Urgence sur l’Impact des Mines en Casamance” (October 2005-May 2006), 8.

¹⁰ Ferdinand De Jong and Geneviève Gasser, “Contested Casamance: Introduction,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 39:2 (January 1, 2005): 213.

¹¹ Jean-Claude Marut, “A l’Ouest, quoi de nouveau? Les obstacles à la paix en Casamance,” *Les Cahiers d’Outre-Mer* 64 : 255 (2011): 363.

¹² In 2010, I retired from the U.S. military.

Casamançais and a bit less Senegalese.¹³ Whether a forest, a rice field, or a soccer stadium, these contested spaces took on elements of *place*—and became icons of the nation making territorial claims by their discursive power. Thus, while one might reasonably expect a separatist movement making a territorial claim to define that claim with a map, the conflict has produced few maps. Rather, Casamançais separatism depended on a degree of territorial ambiguity, especially regarding the eastern border of the Casamance.¹⁴ In the place of colonial and postcolonial cartography, it depended on a discourse about space and place to designate belonging against a Senegalese “other.” It employed cultural markers to construct these spaces as “Casamançais.” I consider the repeated reference to these spatial markers through a discourse of grievance against the Senegalese state to be what I call “discursive mapping.”

In this dissertation, therefore, based on evidence from oral, material, and archival sources collected in Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, France, and the United States, I argue that the MFDC discursively mapped the Casamance with particular spatio-cultural symbols: The River, The Rice Field, The School, The Forest, and The Stadium. In short, these spatial icons became contested spaces operating on a dialectic between “space” and “place” to impose order on bodies and resources while also determining who “belonged” where.

But there is a second part to my argument because not everyone living in the Casamance accepted the ascription of these icons to a separatist identity. While nationalists appealed to Casamançais, and particularly Jola (the majority ethnic group of the Lower Casamance), culture

¹³ I discuss in more detail what I mean by “space” and “place” in the section of this chapter starting on p. 15.

¹⁴ Scholars of the Casamance and Casamançais themselves seem to agree on the western border as the Atlantic Ocean, the northern border as the international border with the Gambia, and the southern border as the international borders with Guinea-Bissau and Guinea-Conakry. But the eastern border seems to be much fuzzier. Some informants draw the border along the Gambia River east of Kolda while most separatists draw it along the Falémé River and incorporate cities such as Kédougou and Matam. The population of Matam, however, would likely be surprised to learn that they were a part of the Casamance and not Senegal. Oral history interview with Bertrand Diamacoune, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014; oral history interview with MFDC members, Bignona, 24 April 2014.

to “map” the nation, ordinary Casamançais corroborated, contested, or ignored nationalist assertions in accordance with their own interests. While the MFDC’s discourse of grievance “counter-mapped” against the mapping practices of the colonial and postcolonial states, ordinary Casamançais exhibited a second layer of counter-mapping apart from that of separatist elites. In essence, these ordinary Casamançais “counter-mapped” against the assertions of the separatists to suggest that they could inhabit these social spaces as Casamançais and Senegalese *at the same time*.

Sources and Methodologies

This dissertation depends on a variety of archival, cartographic, material, and oral sources. I depend on the colonial and national archives at the *Archives Nationales du Sénégal* (ANS), i.e. the Senegalese National Archives in Dakar, as well as the Gambian National Record Service in Banjul, for many of the cartographic and documentary sources that show how the colonial and postcolonial states mapped the Casamance. I depend on the archives of the Catholic Diocese of Ziguinchor to analyze much of the communication and correspondence between Father Diamacoune and various actors in the MFDC, the Catholic Church, the Senegalese government, and some non-governmental organizations (NGOs). I add texture to these sources with documents from the private archives of Ansoumana Abba Bodian, one of the early separatist agitators along with Diamacoune, and those of Jean-Claude Marut, a French political geographer who has devoted much of his adult life to studying the Casamance conflict.

One of the most important of these sources from Marut was “Casamance: Pays du Refus” (Casamance: Country of Refusal). Marut scanned page-by-page and then e-mailed to me the long essay that Father Diamacoune wrote in response to the findings of French archivist Jacque

Charpy during the 1993 ceasefire. The Senegalese government and the MFDC agreed during the ceasefire to a “testimony,” or a sort of arbitration, of the legal and historical questions surrounding Casamançais union with Senegal. In other words, historically speaking, was the Casamance a part of Senegal or not? Charpy found that it was. Diamacoune devoted 170 pages to demonstrating that it was not. This source has proven to be of inestimable value to me and other scholars of the Casamance conflict.

Nearly as useful for access to the thoughts and political discourse of Diamacoune, Sané, and other separatist leaders are the works by René Capain Bassène, a young Jola man from the Casamance who sought to understand the conflict amidst which he grew up. Bassène has compiled primary source interviews and written testimonies of actors in the conflict into two books that were very useful for this dissertation: *L’abbé Augustin Diamacoune Senghor: par lui-même et par ceux qui l’ont connu* (published in 2013) and *Casamance: Récits d’un conflit oublié (1982-2014)* (published in 2015). Taken together, these primary sources have given me a solid base for analysis of the discourse of grievance used to counter-map the Casamance against Senegal, a discourse fused together by these separatist elites.

But I have also tried to place the human beings who make up the nation into the contested spaces nationalists defined according to their own interests. I combine social history methodologies and social history approaches to nationalism with spatial history’s focus on the politics of space. Spatial historians have been criticized for focusing so much on space that they forget about the human beings living there. I overcome this challenge by employing oral histories from elites and from ordinary Casamançais who inhabited the spaces I examine.

One of my largest contributions with this dissertation will be to provide a history of Casamançais separatism directly while incorporating the viewpoints of ordinary Casamançais.

That is not to say that I eschew elite histories related to the conflict. I incorporate them, too. But I have intentionally set out to incorporate as many non-elite viewpoints as possible. To do so, I have relied on oral histories collected by myself as well as those collected by other researchers and deposited at the Gambian National Center for Arts & Culture in Banjul. To access the thoughts of Diamacoune and other separatist leaders, I depend on sources held by the Catholic Diocese of Ziguinchor, the sources published by Bassène, and oral interviews with still-living nationalist actors.

I depend on oral sources to gain the perspective of ordinary, non-elite Casamançais, who mostly wanted to be left alone to live their lives without interference from the Senegalese state or the MFDC. While much of the narrative of the separatist struggle in the Casamance comes from elites competing over the resources of the postcolonial Senegalese state, I have tried to obtain as many non-elite voices as possible. I tried to push out of the urban centers of Dakar and Ziguinchor to interview peasants and lower-to-middle class Senegalese citizens in small towns and rural villages. Though a man, I tried to obtain access to the voices of women. I had more success gaining access to elite women rather than poor, peasant women, who often told me they had little to say that would be important enough for my research. Yet, when I stayed around long enough to hear these women move on to other subjects in conversations with others in their communities, I discovered that they did care about politics – at least at a local level. And their viewpoints were, in fact, of great interest to a researcher of nationalism and spatial history.

The reader will note that a number of my oral history interviews come from unnamed informants. When informants signed a written consent agreement in accordance with Cornell University's Institutional Review Board policy on human subject research, I have referred to them by name. But some informants felt too threatened by the current security situation in the

Casamance, with an ongoing separatist conflict, to agree to be cited by name. Therefore, I have guarded the anonymity of these sources while providing some explanation for the position and authority of the informant to speak on the matter in question. This distinction also provided a point of analysis between elite separatists and non-elite, ordinary Casamançais. The elites did not seem to care who knew they were supporting separatism. Some of them, like Bertrand Diamacoune (Father Diamacoune's younger brother), for example, had already spent time in Senegalese jails and felt that the Senegalese state could do little else to them. But ordinary Casamançais still harbored fears of what security forces might do to them if they found out they were speaking with a Western researcher about the ongoing conflict. Thus, I have guarded their security and their confidence.

No source base is perfectly able to cover every angle. But I have tried to employ as many different types of sources from as many different perspectives as I could. This diverse source base was critical to my analysis of the nation not only "from below" and "from above" but in many ways "from the middle," where everyday Casamançais negotiated the meanings and practices of their lives in relation to a multitude of forces, values, and interests. Finally, this diverse source base enables me to address why the MFDC never achieved independence for the Casamance. It allows me to show why its discursive counter-mapping failed to fire the imaginations of ordinary Casamançais trying to earn a living, raise their children, worship their gods, and contribute positively to their societies.

Periodization

This history begins with the conclusion of the Berlin Conference in 1885 because after this conference, colonial officials began to draw the borders of the modern Senegalese nation-

state. First, they had to negotiate bilateral agreements on what they had worked out on a multilateral basis at Berlin.¹⁵ French officials concluded separate agreements with the Portuguese and the British, leading to the surveying and demarcating of the northern and southern borders of the Casamance. The Casamance did not really become French until after the treaty of 12 May 1886, by which the Portuguese, who had maintained a presence in Ziguinchor for centuries, ceded Ziguinchor to the French. The French agreed to the northern border of the Casamance by an agreement signed with the British on 10 August 1889. Colonial officials entrusted separate boundary commissions to survey and demarcate each border. I argue that these boundary commissions attempted to fix bodies and resources in space to identify, control, and exploit them for the profit of the metropole. As the boundary commissions completed their work and the French established a colonial administration in the Casamance in 1890, the Casamance as a cartographic entity came into being.

But as the modern MFDC has shown, that cartographic existence was only half the story. The geographic, imaginary existence of the Casamance took much longer to form. Separatists asserted that the Casamance had existed well before colonial cartographers put pen to paper. They asserted a pre-colonial identity for the Casamance that carried into the colonial era. This geography emerged from places of difference with Senegal, tied to the landscape. These differences could be seen and experienced in the dense, green forests, in the cool waters, and in the abundant rice fields of the Casamance. Thus, these geographies emerged from the lived experiences of Casamançais in Casamançais spaces and places.

¹⁵ For an interesting new perspective on the Berlin Conference and “the Ottoman scramble for Africa,” see Mostafa Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2016).

Such imagined conceptions of the Casamance, however, appeared only recently. In many ways, they emerged from the separatist movement. Some Western scholars have perpetuated this discourse from the separatists. On the other hand, colonial-era Casamançais intellectuals and even some colonial officials had been arguing for a special Casamançais particularity for decades. Colonial officials and most Western scholars of the Casamance have claimed a special place for the Casamance, as if it were a kept lover in need of protection. All parties to the conflict seemed to agree on this Casamançais particularity, emerging from the colonial era. In 1939, colonial official J. Malbranque argued for Casamançais “autonomy” because of Casamançais differences with the rest of French West Africa.¹⁶ In 1993, Father Diamacoune claimed, “Perhaps because of the nearly eternal Casamançais resistance, France never knew how to implement a regime of administration that was convenient, dynamic, and effective.”¹⁷ And in 1997, the Government of Senegal, in a pamphlet entitled “The Truth about Casamance,” confirmed the existence of “the natural region of Casamance, located in the southern part of Senegal, which comprises the two administrative regions of Kolda and Ziguinchor.”¹⁸ Senegalese leaders intended the division of the Casamance into two administrative regions to counter the notion of the Casamance as a single political entity. But their continual reference to “the natural region of the Casamance” granted some validity to the idea of the Casamance as something different, separate, or “other.”

¹⁶ ANS 1Z 0096 Rapport de J. Malbranque sur la Casamance: nécessité et avantage de son autonomie. Malbranque claimed in the document to be an “Academy Official” and “Former Investigator at the Ministry of Labor” as well as “Former Director of Mission of French West Africa.”

¹⁷ Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, “Casamance: Pays du Refus: réponse à Monsieur Jacques Charpy” (Ziguinchor: Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance, 1995), 17. I thank Jean-Claude Marut for my copy of this nationalist manifesto written by Diamacoune, at the time the Secretary-General of the MFDC.

¹⁸ Government of Senegal, “The Truth about Casamance” (Dakar: Ministry of Communication, The Republic of Senegal, 1997), 9.

Thus, scholars have built on this notion of particularity to argue that “the Casamance” emerged from a postcolonial discourse about modernity. In contesting the sovereignty of the modern Senegalese state, the MFDC, while appealing to ancestral “traditions,” actually made a quite modern move. It posited a geographic and territorial imaginary running counter to Senegal. It posited not an alternative to modernity but rather an alternative modernity, one divorced from Senegal and its colonial and postcolonial history.¹⁹ Hence, I conclude the dissertation with the most recent ceasefire of 2014, hoping that the contested spaces analyzed in this work will become known as spaces of peace instead of those of violence and division.

My intervention in nationalism studies

Following 1885, nationalism became the means of making claims on the colonial and postcolonial states in Africa. African political leaders believed that nationalism held the proverbial keys to “the political kingdom.”²⁰ These leaders, however, could not dictate the terms of nationalist imagining. Like other nationalists, they had to appeal to certain cultural representations to make their territorial claims, but the meanings of those representations were seldom accepted by all social groups in the nation.

Since nationalism is inherently about space and human beings, it provides a vehicle for discussing how human beings imagined the nation with references to particular spaces and places according to their own interests. While “imagining” the nation required Casamançais to think of themselves as part of a larger nation—whether Senegalese or Casamançais—the success of the

¹⁹ On Casamançais particularity, tradition, and modernity, see Vincent Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims: Education, Migration and the Birth of Casamançais Nationalism (Senegal),” PhD Thesis, School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London (2002), and Mamadou Diouf, “Between Ethnic Memories & Colonial History in Senegal: The MFDC & the Struggle for Independence in Casamance.” In *Ethnicity & Democracy in Africa*, ed. Bruce Berman et al., trans. Jonathan M. Sears (Oxford, England; Athens, Ohio: J. Currey; Ohio University Press, 2004), 218–239.

²⁰ Kwamé Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana, as quoted by Basil Davidson, *The Black Man’s Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Time Books, 1992), 162.

nationalist project depended on the success of local imaginings. The contested spaces I examine in this dissertation became the places where Casamançais nationalism either succeeded or sputtered. Therefore, I argue that space itself constituted and functioned as another means of imagining the nation.

My project builds on a robust literature on nationalism. Many scholars concur with Benedict Anderson that nations have been “imagined” into existence through particular “cultural artefacts.”²¹ Scholars divide, however, over who gets to imagine the nation, what the particular “cultural artefacts” were, and how they facilitated nationalist imagining. Imagining the nation was often viewed as an elite project. But African nationalists who failed to build political will across social boundaries eventually found themselves marching at the head of a proverbial parade with no band members—which often proved to be a dangerous position.²²

Thus, in addition to the work of Anderson, my project builds on the work of scholars of nationalism focused on non-elite roles in nationalist imaginings. I endeavor to show how and why ordinary Casamançais chose to corroborate, contest, or ignore the separatist discourse. Anderson’s notion of “print-capitalism” may have performed some of the work of imagining the nation, but low literacy rates in most of the formerly colonized world dictated other means as well.²³ Elizabeth Schmidt demonstrates why these non-print means of imagining the nation were so important. She argues that in late colonial Guinea, the nation was neither dictated “from above” by colonial elites nor was it imagined “from below” by grassroots activists. Rather, elites joined subaltern social groups to form “a broad-based ethnic, class, and gender alliance,

²¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed. (London; New York: Verso, 2006), 4-7.

²² Of the thirty-two states represented at the inaugural session of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) in 1963, only five had not been violently overthrown by 1997. John Reader, *Africa: a Biography of the Continent*, 1st American ed. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1998), 667.

²³ On imagining the nation through “print-capitalism,” see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

trumping rivals that were constrained by their narrow ethnic, regional, and elite male focus.”²⁴ Ziad Fahmy provides a model of how this cross-class, cross-gender, multi-ethnic imagining might have worked in his examination of nationalist discourse in colonial Egypt through what he calls the “media-capitalism” of music, radio, and vaudeville, performed in colloquial Egyptian Arabic.²⁵ Marissa Moorman argues that aural representations like these humble “the bombast of nationalist politics by locating patriotism not on the battlefield or in the political arena but in the practices and sounds that permeate everyday life, such as music.”²⁶ Moorman asserts that being Angolan is “less about knowing where one is located physically than about knowing where one is historically and culturally.”²⁷ My dissertation builds on these histories of the nation utilizing non-print sources to complicate the narrative of elite attempts to “map” the nation in the heads of Casamançais.

I have so far often referred, and will continue to refer, to the participation of “ordinary Casamançais” in the nation-building project. I take this term from Fahmy’s conception of “ordinary Egyptians.” Like Fahmy, I use “ordinary Casamançais” in an expansive, capacious manner. By this term, I mean anyone who was *not* from the typical identity of the nationalist elites: missionary-educated or, after the French sought to limit religious involvement in the colonies, state-educated men with access to the resources of the state or the church. This definition of nationalist elites ignores the perceptions, ideas, and contributions of large social groups: women, peasants, fishermen, polytheists, homosexuals, the urban poor, etc. Admittedly, “ordinary Casamançais” encompasses a large population in comparison to the separatist elite.

²⁴ Elizabeth Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea, 1939-1958* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2005), 1-2.

²⁵ See Chap. 1 of Ziad Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation through Popular Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

²⁶ Marissa J. Moorman, *Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to Recent Times* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2008), 2.

²⁷ Moorman, *Intonations*, 2.

But that is part of my point: Casamançais nationalism ultimately sputtered because it could not reach these “ordinary Casamançais” on the river, in the rice field, in the forest, etc. Ultimately, therefore, the separatist identity was not capacious enough.

Though the separatists referred to these five social spaces to discursively map the Casamance, they had to depend on cultural practices already in place. They could not “stage” the nation in these spaces in only one, monolithic fashion – the way that Carola Lentz describes in her analysis of national commemoration during the fifty-year Jubilee celebrations in Africa after 2010.²⁸ Lentz claims that commemoration organizers “had to stage the various ceremonies and rituals that were to mark the occasion in spatial terms.”²⁹ This staging made commemoration a contentious exercise because of the need to forge a nation that reflected on “how the composite parts of the country – the various administrative regions and/or different ethnic groups making up the national population – were to be represented.”³⁰ And although this contention “rarely call[ed] into question the nation-state’s boundaries [unlike the Casamance], the sense of national belonging [was] not evenly distributed in spatial terms.”³¹

My argument goes a step beyond that of Lentz. I argue that not only was there a difference in spatial imaginings between regions or ethnic groups, but there was also a diverse set of imaginings within specific ethnic groups and within particular spaces. In other words, regardless of how the Senegalese state or the MFDC tried to “stage” national space, ordinary Casamançais still imagined the nation in various ways over time and at the same time.

²⁸ Carola Lentz, “The 2010 Independence Jubilees: The Politics and Aesthetics of National Commemoration in Africa,” *Nations and Nationalism* 19:2 (2013): 231–233.

²⁹ Lentz, “The 2010 Independence Jubilees,” 231.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

My intervention in spatial theory and history

Thus, my dissertation examines key Casamançais “spaces” to analyze how they also became contested “places” over time. I define “space” as a physical domain of three dimensions for human action.³² When I refer to the space analyzed in each chapter of this dissertation as a “social space” (i.e. The River, The Rice Field, The School, etc.), I mean the physical space containing the interactions of human beings involved in social relations. These interactions bring meaning to the physical, three-dimensional space to eventually transform the “space” into “place.” As Yi-fu Tuan explains, “‘Space’ is more abstract than ‘place.’ What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.”³³ Thus, I define “place” as space with meaning. That meaning can only appear with the passage of time. Indeed, place is space with *history*. And spatial history only emerges from the lived experiences of human beings within space, transforming that space into place.

Space, however, once transformed into place, does not remain stagnant. Doreen Massey urges us to remember that places also change with time. She asserts that synchronic constructions of place “fail to realize, or to admit...that places are always already hybrid.”³⁴ Hence, she argues for a conception of space and place as “envelopes of space-time,” acknowledging that we cannot separate space from time. Because space and place change with time, I refer to their operation over a given space and over a certain amount of time as a “space-

³² To begin making the distinctions that I draw between space and place throughout this dissertation, I offer the definitions above. But as I demonstrate in Chapter 5, one should remain skeptical of objective definitions of space. As Henri Lefebvre cautioned, “Space is not a scientific object removed from ideology or politics; it has always been political and strategic.” Henri Lefebvre, “Réflexions sur la politique de l’espace,” in *State, Space, World: Selected Essays of Henri Lefebvre*, ed. Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 170 (emphasis in the original).

³³ Yi-fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 6.

³⁴ Doreen B. Massey, *For Space* (London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), 183.

place dialectic.” The operation of this dialectic, however, does not preclude the operation of simultaneous, multiple imaginings by various Casamançais. Thus, I argue for multiple spatial imaginings not only over time but *at the same time*.

I apply Massey’s concept of space-place envelopes to the Casamance, regarding each of the spatial icons in this study as contested spaces with meanings that changed over time for the various actors working, playing, and living in them. I argue that as separatists “staged” these spaces as “Casamançais,” they “counter-mapped” the Casamance against Senegal in the minds of Senegambians and made these space-places useful cultural representations to those trying to define the nation on both sides of the conflict.³⁵ This type of discursive mapping worked in a similar fashion to other types of mapping and counter-mapping.³⁶ Like Thongchai Winichakul’s notion of the national “geo-body,” it tied—or attempted to tie—a cultural identity to a particular territory. It formed a discursive border of belonging between “them”—the *nordistes*—and “us”—the Casamançais.³⁷

This would be just another postcolonial take on colonial mapping if it were not for two different levels of “counter-mapping” that I highlight. The separatist elites of the MFDC performed the first level of counter-mapping against the cartographic practices of the colonial and postcolonial states. Ordinary Casamançais performed the second level, by refusing to accept the assertions of the separatist elite that being Casamançais meant one could not also be

³⁵ On “staging” the nation, see Raymond B. Craib, *Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2004), 2-7; and Lentz, “The 2010 Independence Jubilees.”

³⁶ For a few examples of the literature on “counter-mapping,” see Joel Wainwright and Joe Bryan, “Cartography, Territory, Property: Postcolonial Reflections on Indigenous Counter-Mapping in Nicaragua and Belize,” *Cultural Geographies* 16:2 (2009): 153–78; and Nancy Peluso, “Whose Woods Are These? Counter-Mapping Forest Territories in Kalimantan, Indonesia,” *Antipode* 27:4 (1995): 383–406.

³⁷ On the “geo-body,” see Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), especially chapters 7, 8, and 9. The French term *nordiste* has often been used—usually in a somewhat derisive manner when the speaker is from the Casamance—to refer to Senegalese northerners, or those from the part of Senegal north of The Gambia.

Senegalese. Therefore, ordinary Casamançais counter-mapped the Casamance less through discursive mapping and more through performative mapping, or in other words, through the everyday practices of their lives – whether near the river, in the rice field, the school, the forest, or the stadium. They found ways to live together that did not necessarily require the rejection of Senegalese identity.

My intervention in Casamançais, Senegambian, and African history

“This historical study is also for future historians a thread of research that will permit them to effect more complete works ...”³⁸

--Christian Roche, author of *Histoire de la Casamance: Conquête et Résistance, 1850-1920*

A number of scholars have already done excellent work on ethnic and national identification in the Casamance. I divide these scholars into two groups. First are those focused primarily on the precolonial and early colonial cultural history of the Casamance region who refer only tangentially, if at all, to the contemporary Casamance conflict. Much of this scholarship has focused on religion or trans-Atlantic trade. Many of these scholars have depended on ethnographic and social history methodologies such as the analysis of oral histories and oral traditions and the examination of material and cultural sources such as architecture, ceremonial masks, or shrine ceremonies. The second group of scholars has focused on the contemporary history, politics, or sociology of the conflict itself. This group tends to focus on elite actions, as they analyze the formation and actions of the separatist movement. While they have also employed some social history methodologies, they have generally focused on elite experiences.

³⁸ Christian Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance: Conquête et Résistance, 1850-1920* (Paris: Karthala, 1985), 7. Also see Frances Anne Leary, “Islam, Politics and Colonialism: A Political History of Islam in the Casamance Region of Senegal (1850-1914),” PhD Thesis, Northwestern University, 1970.

Though not focused directly on the conflict, the scholarship of the first group remains nevertheless important to understanding the cultural identity of the separatist movement. This scholarship points to means by which nationalists may have imagined the nation without depending on “print-capitalism,” as defined by Anderson.³⁹ Peter Mark, Dominique Darbon, Robert Baum, Olga Linares, and Ferdinand de Jong have built on the foundation laid by late colonial and early postcolonial French ethnographers like Louis-Vincent Thomas, Paul Pélissier, and Jean Girard.⁴⁰ Thomas, known as “the doyen of Diola [i.e. Jola] ethnographers,”⁴¹ published one of the first detailed ethnographic monographs on the Jola in 1959, entitled *Les Diola: essai d’analyse fonctionnelle sur une population de Basse-Casamance*. In this extensive ethnographic study, Thomas hints at the process of Europeans reducing diverse ethnolinguistic groups in the region to “the Jola” to identify the people living in the Lower Casamance, effectively reducing from fifteen to eight the number of Jola sub-groups found along the banks of the Lower Casamance.⁴² Thomas focuses his ethnographic lens on the Jola of Kassa, generally the region west of Ziguinchor on the south bank of the Casamance River, centered on the town of

³⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

⁴⁰ Louis-Vincent Thomas, *Les Diola: essai d’analyse fonctionnelle sur une population de Basse-Casamance* [The Jola: A Functional Analysis of a Lower Casamance Population], Mémoires de l’Institut Français d’Afrique Noire (IFAN) 55 (Dakar: IFAN, 1959) ; Paul Pélissier, *Les Paysans du Sénégal, les civilisations agraires du Cayor à la Casamance* (Saint-Yrieix (Haute-Vienne): Imprimerie Fabrègue, 1966) ; Jean Girard, *Genèse du pouvoir charismatique en Basse Casamance (Sénégal)* (Dakar: IFAN, 1969) ; Peter Mark, *A Cultural, Economic, and Religious History of the Basse Casamance since 1500* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner-Verlag-Wiesbaden GmbH, 1985) ; Dominique Darbon, *L’administration et le paysan en Casamance: essai d’anthropologie administrative* (Paris: Editions A. Pedone, 1988) ; Olga F. Linares, *Power, Prayer, and Production: The Jola of Casamance, Senegal* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992) ; Robert Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade: Diola Religion and Society in Precolonial Senegambia* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Ferdinand De Jong, *Masquerades of Modernity: Power and Secrecy in Casamance, Senegal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

⁴¹ Robert M. Baum, “The Emergence of a Diola Christianity,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 60:3 (1990): 370.

⁴² I must thank Peter Mark for this insight, one also mentioned by Abdourahmane Konaté and by Mamadou Diouf. See Mark, *The Wild Bull and the Sacred Forest: Form, Meaning, and Change in Senegambian Initiation Masks* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 22; Konaté, *Le problème casamançais, mythe ou réalité?: un ancien préfet témoigne* (Dakar, 1993), 12-13; and Diouf, “Between Ethnic Memories & Colonial History in Senegal,” 226.

Oussouye. To many, being “Casamançais” really meant being a Jola from Kassa.⁴³ I will expound on why that is the case. For now, I note that the region’s name came from the Portuguese attribution of political power to the *mansa*—the Mandé “king”—of *Kassa*.

Did the research focus of Western ethnographers affect the contemporary equation of the Casamance with the sub-region of Kassa? I argue that Casamançais separatism was in part a byproduct of European colonial competition. Though Casamançais exhibited their own agency in influencing these events, this dissertation demonstrates that Western researchers contributed to a public discourse ascribing “Jola-ness” to cultural features found originally in Kassa. That is not to say that some of these cultural features were not also found in other parts of the Casamance. But they originally became attributed to Jola identity from first European contact in Kassa.

Jean Girard, while also focusing on Kassa, was the first ethnographer to note the significance for the Jola “social contract” of the transition from the religious practice of *kahat* to that of *bukut*. Girard argues that the transition from practices related to the “fetish” of *kahat* to those of *bukut* indicated a transition from clan to lineage cultural power in the Lower Casamance. This transition was paralleled by a switch from collective “fetishes” to more individual “fetishes.” Girard asserts that as the Jola “social contract” came to depend less on the public *kahat* (a fetish “served” by the priest-king or “slave” to the fetish at Oussouye) and more on the secret *bukut* (male-only societies based on fetishes served during the male circumcision and initiation ceremonies in “sacred forests”), the Jola also made a transition from collectivism to individualism and—at least implied by Girard—from “tradition” to “modernity.” Girard also

⁴³ Jean-Claude Marut, *Le conflit de Casamance: ce que disent les armes* (Paris: Karthala, 2010), 36-37; Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims,” n. 30, p. 25.

notes, however, that this transition to “modernity” took women “backward,” or at least out to the margins of the public political domain.

This transition from *kahat* to *bukut* became especially important to the “gendering” of the Casamançais nation as masculine. In effect, it gendered *kahat*—even though a fetish “served” by a male priest-king—as feminine and *bukut* as masculine. This is not to say that women had no power in the Casamance. Jola society is matrilineal, meaning that Jola trace their family heritage through the mother instead of the father. Moreover, women have played important political roles throughout the period under consideration in this dissertation, with the events of the Floup (Jola) rebellion of 1942 led by Aline Sitoé Diatta as perhaps the most famous example.⁴⁴ Yet, women’s social power declined over the course of the colonial period, and if anything, postcolonial Casamançais separatism further eroded female social power through a masculine national imagining led by missionary-educated males. Writing before the genesis of the modern separatist movement, which began in the late 1970s, Girard nevertheless points our attention to the gendering of Jola and Casamançais identity in *The Sacred Forest*.⁴⁵

Through the transition noted by Girard—though he probably had no idea that contemporary separatists would use it this way—Casamançais women found themselves—as I will show in Chapter Four—literally and figuratively on the margins of sacred forests foundational to Casamançais national identity. The gendering of national space like this comes as no surprise to scholars like Ann McClintock, who asserts that “[a]ll nationalisms are gendered,

⁴⁴ For more on this rebellion, see Wilmetta Toliver, “Aline Sitoé Diatta: Addressing Historical Silences through Senegalese Culture,” PhD Thesis, Stanford University (1999); Wilmetta J. Toliver-Diallo, “‘The Woman Who Was More than a Man’: Making Aline Sitoé Diatta into a National Heroine in Senegal,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 39:2 (2005): 338–60; Robert M. Baum, *West Africa’s Women of God: Alinesitoué and the Diola Prophetic Tradition* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2016).

⁴⁵ For more on gender in the Casamance, see Séverine Awenengo, “Ethnicité et genre. Femmes et constructions identitaires en Casamance au 20e siècle (Sénégal),” in *Perspectives historiques sur le genre en Afrique*, ed. Odile Goerg (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2007), 59–76.

all are invented, and all are dangerous” because they represent “relations to political power and to the technologies of violence” in ways that inherently exclude women.⁴⁶ The MFDC largely failed to attract female adherents of the Casamançais nation because it failed to imagine the nation with women on a mass scale outside the village compound.

Possibly more than any other scholar of the Casamance, Peter Mark connects precolonial material culture to changing ethnic identities. Mark’s scholarship serves as one of the best examples of unique social and cultural history sources and methodologies for writing the history of the Casamance. He argues that precolonial architecture and masking ceremonies provide evidence of how flexible and mobile cultural identities were in the precolonial trans-Atlantic trading environment. He also counters the notion that precolonial African societies never changed by showing how those identities influenced each other. For example, Mark considers changes in ceremonial horned masks from the Buluf region of the Casamance as evidence that “the stateless and decentralized Jola” and the Mandinka, “western outriders of the great Mande civilization, with its centralized states and stratified social structure,” had “extensive contact with one another... [leading] to the sharing of social institutions.”⁴⁷ Eventually, as the Jola and “Portuguese” absorbed the Bainouk—widely considered the original, “autochthonous” inhabitants of the Lower Casamance—and Mandinka have increasingly absorbed the Jola, it became harder to define Casamançais “authenticity” at the same time that it became easier to assert a unique Casamançais identity.⁴⁸ Separatists have been less successful in defining who they are as compared to who they are not. Mark adds texture to his argument about the

⁴⁶ Anne McClintock, “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family,” *Feminist Review* 44 (July 1, 1993): 61. This article later appeared as a chapter in McClintock’s book, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

⁴⁷ Mark, *The Wild Bull and the Sacred Forest*, 1.

⁴⁸ In addition to Mark’s work on “Mandingization” in *The Basse Casamance since 1500* and in *Wild Bull*, see Linares, *Power, Prayer, and Production* and Steven Thomson, “Revisiting ‘Mandingization’ in Coastal Gambia and Casamance (Senegal): Four Approaches to Ethnic Change,” *African Studies Review* 54:2 (September 2011): 95–121.

relationship between shared material culture and shared social institutions by noting that the “sense of a common Jola identity” cannot solely be explained by “shared customs among the diverse groups who speak related dialects.” More importantly, “It is a sometimes conscious response to the political situation that often pits the Casamance against the rest of Senegal and that has led in the past decade to the growth of a separatist movement. This confrontation serves to stress the common interests of the inhabitants of the Casamance.”⁴⁹

Robert Baum adds further texture to Mark’s work with material sources by focusing on changes in Jola practices—particularly on practices related to religious shrines during the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Baum’s work depends on an impressive collection of oral histories and oral traditions collected during his fieldwork among the Jola of Esulalu, a Kassa village west of Ziguinchor. While Baum focuses primarily on the increasing correlation between mobile forms of wealth and identity and particular spirit shrines in the region related to precolonial trans-Atlantic trade, he also notes Jola reaction to encounters with Islam and Christianity. He asserts that these encounters did not constitute a “spiritual crisis of conquest, no sense of a world that had changed beyond their capacity to influence events.” Nevertheless, these encounters also had a profound impact, as the world religions “brought with them new ideas and ritual practices and enjoyed the prestige of being associated with powerful European or Muslim communities.”⁵⁰ Increasingly, during the nineteenth century, it was this association with outside forces tied to these worldviews, that heralded significant change for the people of the Lower Casamance. Since the Casamance itself was largely the creation of these outside forces—particularly through colonial mapping practices, as discussed in Chapter 1—I begin the dissertation with the start of formal colonialism at the conclusion of the Berlin Conference in 1885.

⁴⁹ Mark, *The Wild Bull and the Sacred Forest*, 24.

⁵⁰ Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*, 130.

Christian Roche bridges the two groups of Casamançais. Perhaps most important to the cultural identity of the separatist movement was his *Histoire de la Casamance: Conquête et Résistance, 1850-1920*,⁵¹ one of the first histories to treat the Casamance as its own polity. Roche was the last French principal of the prestigious *Lycée Djignabo* in Ziguinchor during the early 1970s. He later served as a technical adviser to the Senegalese Ministry of Education.⁵² His history of the colonial conquest of the Casamance—or to be more precise, Casamançais resistance to such conquest—resonated with separatists in need of rhetorical ammunition for defining a Casamance historically apart and unbowed to foreign domination. Roche shows that even though the Jola gradually ceased armed resistance, “they were maladjusted to the new colonial existence.”⁵³

In the 1980s, separatists quickly seized on this narrative of traditional Casamançais resistance. Diamacoune often referred to Roche’s work when claiming that the Casamance had been “conquered,” but it “never submitted.”⁵⁴ In fact, Roche’s argument provided much ammunition for Diamacoune’s 1995 “response to Mr. Jacques Charpy,” the French “arbitrator” of the historical and legal questions surrounding the MFDC’s separatist claims during the 1993 ceasefire. Diamacoune’s version of Casamançais history depended on the almost “natural” predilection of Casamançais to “resistance” against “strangers,” meant to justify the MFDC’s claim that the Casamance had never truly been a part of Senegal. Charpy’s testimony had argued otherwise.⁵⁵ Diamacoune referred to Roche’s “testimony” as a credible scholar and professional

⁵¹ *The History of the Casamance: Conquest and Resistance, 1850-1920*. This was the book based on Roche’s 1975 doctoral dissertation and published in 1985, just a few years after the violence began in 1982 and 1983.

⁵² Christian Roche, *Le Sénégal à la conquête de son indépendance, 1939-1960: chronique de la vie politique et syndicale, de l’Empire français à l’indépendance* (Paris: Karthala, 2001), back cover.

⁵³ Christian Roche, “Conquête et résistance des peuples de Casamance, 1850-1920,” PhD Thesis, Université de Lille (1975), 15.

⁵⁴ Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 7.

⁵⁵ Jacques Charpy, “Casamance et Sénégal au temps de la colonisation française,” in *Comprendre la Casamance: chronique d’une intégration contrastée*, ed. François-George Barbier-Wiesser (Paris: Karthala, 1994), 475–500.

who had spent significant time in the Casamance to refute the testimony of Charpy. In effect, Diamacoune pitted one French historian against another.

Among the second group of scholars directly addressing the history of the separatist conflict, Jos van der Klei became the first scholar to connect the cultural identity of the separatist movement to “the Sacred Forest” as a form of “popular protest.”⁵⁶ I expand on Van der Klei’s analysis of the Sacred Forest while enlarging the lens of spatial analysis to other social spaces where the MFDC tried to build “place.” In addition to the Sacred Forest, for example, I analyze changes in the ways people thought about sports like soccer and wrestling—and in the ways people imagined and performed the nation in sports stadiums in particular—to show how these spaces near the cultural center still depended on reference to a cultural “Other” to do their discursive work in defining “us” and “them.” Doing so allows me to avoid false dichotomies between “traditional” and “modern” practices in the history of sub-Saharan Africa. Like Paul Nugent, I look at the process of “mapping” the Casamance, but I do so through the six “space-places” mentioned earlier.⁵⁷

Perhaps the most extensive body of work on the conflict itself emanates from French scholars Jean-Claude Marut, Vincent Foucher, and Séverine Awenengo-Dalberto as well as Senegalese scholar Mamadou Diouf.⁵⁸ Marut has been studying the Casamance conflict for decades and remains the first scholar to produce a book-length treatment of the conflict’s history. Marut has contributed numerous chapters and articles to the scholarship on the conflict since the

⁵⁶ Jos van der Klei and Peter Geschiere, “La relation état-paysans et ses ambivalences: modes populaires d’action politique Chez les Maka (Cameroun) et les Diola (Casamance),” in *L’Etat Contemporain en Afrique*, ed. E. Terray (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1987), 315-6.

⁵⁷ Paul Nugent, “Cyclical History in the Gambia/Casamance Borderlands: Refuge, Settlement and Islam from C. 1880 to the Present,” *The Journal of African History* 48:2 (2007): 221–43.

⁵⁸ Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*; Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims”; and Séverine Awenengo Dalberto, “Les Joola, la Casamance et l’État (1890 - 2004) : l’identification Joola au Sénégal,” PhD Thesis, Université Paris Diderot—Paris 7 (2007). Each of these authors has also contributed numerous articles to the literature on the contemporary conflict, as will become evident throughout this dissertation.

early 1990s, including two different chapters for the edited volume produced during the 1993 ceasefire. This dissertation comes closest to Marut's work than any of the others. As a political geographer, Marut has tended to focus on elite actions tied to the state. In his book, Marut argues that Jola ethnicity was only one of several identities that separatists "mobilized" in the Casamance and that mobilization went beyond "instrumentalization." He asserts that the mobilization of identity also served as a "political language," that it became the voice of the Casamance in the national discourse over how to "live together" following independence.⁵⁹

I offer something different by singling out five spaces for analysis through the historical and geographic arguments of the modern MFDC. I do so because separatists made historical and geographical arguments about these five spaces. Not only do I analyze why and how they did that, but I also analyze the ways ordinary Casamançais thought about and acted in these space-places as well.

Absolutely crucial to the interpretation I offer here is the work of Mamadou Diouf on Senegalese nationalism. Diouf argues that the colonial political economy brought about the "Islam-Wolofization" of the Senegalese nation-state. He claims that the accommodation reached between French colonial officials and the *marabouts* of the principal Sufi Muslim religious orders in control of large constituencies providing labor for groundnut production in northern Senegal increasingly led to a Senegalese identity that was ethnically Wolof and religiously Muslim.⁶⁰ Léopold Sédar Senghor—the anti-colonial leader who became independent Senegal's first president in 1960—referred to this identity as "*Sénégalité*," which

⁵⁹ See Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 29-30.

⁶⁰ *Marabout* is a French term for "Muslim cleric." See Mamadou Diouf, *Histoire du Sénégal: le modèle islamowolof et ses périphéries* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2001) and Diouf, "Between Ethnic Memories & Colonial History in Senegal." According to the CIA World Factbook, Senegal is currently 43.3 percent Wolof and 94 percent Muslim.

inherently produced a particular center and various ethnic and religious peripheries. It also produced a territorial center—the Wolof heartland found in the area of northern Senegal east and northeast of Dakar, from St. Louis to Diourbel—and a territorial periphery in the remaining territory of Senegal, including the Casamance.⁶¹ I build on Diouf’s “Islam-Wolof” model of Senegal to show how the MFDC and non-elite Casamançais have contested that model while trying to avoid religious and ethnic conflict with a putatively multi-ethnic, multi-confessional Casamançais nationalism.

Foucher also has contributed much excellent scholarship on the origins, events, history, politics, and economics of the conflict. He argues that the migration of educated Casamançais elites—*évolués*—and female maids to Dakar, contrary to portrayals of Casamançais “difference” and “separation” from Senegal (especially as portrayed by the MFDC), actually tied the Casamance to Dakar in profound ways. This migration produced “difference” and facilitated Casamançais claims on the state.⁶² Each of these scholars deals with space in one form or another. They do not, however, focus on the “mapping” performed through the space-places I discuss here. Nor do they focus on why separatism failed to resonate with ordinary Casamançais.

Awenengo-Dalberto’s work also focuses on elite actions. She studies the formation of the postcolonial Casamançais political elite. She examines the agreement of an earlier form of the MFDC—often referred to as the “original MFDC” or the “historic MFDC”—to tie their interests during the 1950s to the rising political star of Leopold Senghor. This original MFDC,

⁶¹ For more detail on the history of this Senegalese heartland, see David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880-1920* (Athens, Ohio; Oxford, England: Ohio University Press; James Currey, 2000) and Cheikh Anta Mbacké Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal, 1853-1913* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007).

⁶² See Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims,” especially the Introduction and Chapter 1.

led by a Jola schoolteacher named Emile Badiane and other “literate notables,” effectively ended possibilities of a postcolonial future apart from Senegal when it agreed to disband to join Senghor’s *Bloc démocratique sénégalais* (BDS). But Diamacoune and other leaders of the modern MFDC claim that Badiane struck a deal with Senghor to join his party in return for Casamançais independence after twenty years of Senegalese independence. No record of such an agreement exists, but the rumor of such an agreement continues to constitute an important part of the modern MFDC discourse about Senegalese “traitors” and the need for Casamançais independence.⁶³

A few exceptions to those focused on elite interpretations and actions directly related to the origins of the conflict would be Wilmetta Toliver-Diallo’s dissertation on the “silences” surrounding the life and legacy of Aline Sitoé Diatta and Paul Diédhiou’s work on the particularism of Jola identity in the village.⁶⁴ Building on the narrative first provided by Girard, Toliver-Diallo shows how MFDC leaders, especially Diamacoune, exploited Diatta’s story to posit her as an icon of not just anti-colonialism but the Casamançais nation. This Jola priestess gained fame in 1942 for the notoriety of her rainmaking ceremonies in Kabrousse during a time of drought. Diatta used the platform of her rainmaking to spread her message of resistance to French rice requisitions, peanut cultivation, and military recruitment. French colonial forces arrested Diatta along with seventeen men in January 1943 and sent her to Timbuktu, from where she was never heard again.⁶⁵ Father Diamacoune revived her story in 1980 to demand that

⁶³ Ansoumana Bodian, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 19 April 2014. On the power of “rumor,” see Luise White, *Speaking with Vampire: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2000).

⁶⁴ Toliver, “Aline Sitoé Diatta.” To be fair, Robert Baum also bridges my two groupings of Casamançais with his chapter on Aline Sitoé Diatta as a “contested icon” of the separatist conflict. See Robert M. Baum, “Prophetess: Aline Sitoé Diatta as a Contested Icon in Contemporary Senegal,” in *Facts, Fiction, and African Creative Imaginations*, ed. Toyin Falola and Fallou Ngom, Routledge African Studies 1 (New York; London: Routledge, 2010), 48–59.

⁶⁵ *Archives Nationales du Sénégal (ANS)*, Dakar, 11D1/0226 Floups rébellion et affaire Aline Sitoé Diatta.

French and Senegalese authorities return her body to the Casamance for proper burial and to provide a full account of what happened to her. He claimed that Diatta personified the Casamançais tradition of resistance to authority and that French and Senegalese cooperation in concealing her whereabouts demonstrated their cooperation in the “colonial” exploitation of the Casamance.⁶⁶

Diédhiou, a Jola scholar from the village of Youtou (south of Ziguinchor, near the Bissau-Guinean border), has been one of the few scholars to examine why the separatist discourse failed to resonate with ordinary Casamançais in the village. He shows that villagers were more concerned with living their lives on a daily basis and only engaged with the regional conflict when it affected their own interests, as it did for villagers in Youtou when emigrants from the Buluf region in northern Casamance arrived in the neighboring village of Kaguit searching for land to cultivate rice. Diedhiou suggests that because the new arrivals were better connected to the Senegalese state and brought “modern” ideas of land tenure to the question of who owned what land around Kaguit, they were able to exploit and essentially steal land from villagers in Youtou.⁶⁷ While Diedhiou comes closer to highlighting non-elite agency in the development of the conflict and thereby highlighting diversity among the “separatists,” his approach is largely synchronic and does not show how non-elite interaction with places like the rice field changed over time.

By and large then, literature related to the Casamance conflict has either addressed the conflict directly but primarily from elite points of view or addressed it only indirectly from non-elite points of view. I aim to do both.

⁶⁶ In addition to Toliver-Diallo’s dissertation, see her article, “‘The Woman Who Was More than a Man’,” as well as Baum’s “Prophetess.”

⁶⁷ Paul Diédhiou, *L’identité joola en question: la bataille idéologique du MFDC pour l’indépendance* (Paris: Karthala, 2011), 226.

Organization of the Argument

Instead of organizing this dissertation chronologically, I have organized it spatially to focus attention on the separatists' discursive mapping through its spatial discourse of grievance. Within each chapter, however, I have tried to narrate this history chronologically as much as possible. Thus, in my first chapter, I examine "The River." This chapter sets up the rest of the dissertation by examining how "the Casamance" came to be. It looks at the process of colonial competition in the Lower Casamance during the precolonial and early colonial periods as this region evolved from a space of cultural and economic exchange between Africans and Europeans to a space largely defined by European navigation and mapping of rivers. French colonial officials referred to the Upper Guinea Coast as the "Southern Rivers" area.⁶⁸ Regardless of what Europeans called it, the Casamance River came to define the region that took its name, this ribbon of simultaneous connection and division. The river connected the Lower Casamance to commerce and cultures further upstream. But it also became a marker of sorts—a marker of cultural identity and diversity—within the Casamance itself. On a metaphysical level, the River also symbolized the source of life in the Casamance, where every meal begins with rice and is often joined by fish. Every rice field and every fish need water. In the Lower Casamance region of Senegal, that water came from the Casamance River.

As the water flows from the river to the rice field, my second chapter examines "The Rice Field" as a space-place of special importance for the cultural identity of the Casamance.

⁶⁸ *Les Rivières du Sud* in colonial correspondence. For more on European mapping of the Casamance, see Nugent, "Cyclical History in the Gambia/Casamance Borderlands."

Thomas called the Casamance a “civilization of rice.”⁶⁹ Rice has been the staple of the diet in the Casamance for the entire period under consideration here. It was also a primary good exploited by colonial authorities and trade houses. But it was more than that. In the Jola cosmology, rice may be even more sacred than the water that nourishes it. The Rice Field is also a space of gender formation. Nearly all Jola (if they grow up in the Lower Casamance) have spent time in the rice field. They spend many long hours there together planting, tending, and harvesting. A particular gender division of labor takes place where men dig and irrigate the rice field and women plant, transplant, and then harvest the rice.⁷⁰ Cultural mixing with Mandinka—Mandingization—has changed this gender dynamic, though, as Mandinka men have seldom worked in their rice fields, considering it “women’s work.”⁷¹ Regardless of who produces it, rice has been the staple of not only the Casamançais diet but the Senegalese diet, too. Rice imports from Southeast Asia provide a larger percentage of Senegalese rice than the Casamance. But no other region of Senegal grows rice like the Casamance. And no other region has produced a separatist conflict tied to the cultural identity surrounding the Rice Field. Separatism did not exactly emerge, however, from the minds of rice farmers.

Instead, it emerged from the minds of colonial and postcolonial elites like Badiane and Diamacoune. Hence, my third chapter examines “The School” as a social space where nationalism began to take root during the late colonial and early postcolonial periods. Numerous Africanists have examined the development of the nationalist elite through missionary education. I do not plan to replicate their work. Rather, I am interested in the manner in which Casamançais

⁶⁹ Thomas, *Les Diola*. Also, Thomas, “Les Diola d’antan: A Propos des Diola ‘Traditionnels’ de Basse-Casamance,” in *Comprendre La Casamance: Chronique d’une Intégration Contrastée*, ed. François-George Barbier-Wiesser (Paris: Karthala, 1994), 74-77.

⁷⁰ See Linares, *Power, Prayer and Production*.

⁷¹ Numerous interviews in the Casamance, March and April 2014, e.g. The “Notables” of Sindian, group interview, Sindian, 6 April 2014; and MFDC Bignona, group interview, Bignona, 24 April 2014.

schools acted as spaces of discipline that taught the meaning of citizenship and a particular interpretation of national history. In many ways, the contemporary debates about Casamançais identity began in those classrooms. And the debate has continued to the present.

If academic and public discourse was important to The School, it was equally important to “The Forest.” My fourth chapter examines the development of a discourse about “the Sacred Forest” that emerged with the separatist conflict in the 1980s and 1990s. Like the Rice Field, the Forest has been a place of strong attachment for all ethnic groups in the Casamance. It has been a place of mystery and imagination, where Casamançais schoolchildren were told that “the spirits” live. Casamançais forests have also been targeted for colonial and postcolonial economic exploitation. In fact, the Forest’s exploitation became one more component of a “discourse of grievance” pronounced by Diamacoune and other separatist leaders. The Forest has been especially important to the gendering of the Casamançais nation through the male initiation ceremonies normally called *bukut*. These ceremonies have changed with the homogenization of forests in the Casamance. This homogenization has reduced the diversity of sacred forest shrines in the Casamance into a monolithic version of “the Sacred Forest.” But just as there were no natural, monolithic ethnic or religious traits of “Casamançais” identity, there was no such thing as *the* Sacred Forest. Rather, there were diverse forms of sacred trees, groves, or forests tied to individual villages and towns making these shrines *their* Sacred Forest. Thus, I analyze these “Casamançais” spaces to see how they were used to “imagine,” represent, or contest the nation over time.

In my fifth and final chapter, I regard “The Stadium” as another social space-place where the nation was manifested and contested. I do so through the lenses of soccer and wrestling cultures in the Casamance. Many Casamançais regard *Casa-Sports*, the regional soccer club, not

as their club team but as their *national* team.⁷² *Casa-Sports* has played an important role in the Casamance conflict as well. When separatists first began to meet in Ziguinchor during the late 1970s and early 1980s to discuss the need to assert autonomy from Senegal, they met at the *Casa-Sports* home stadium (now named for Aline Sitoé Diatta).⁷³ Many observers attribute the start of the violence to a hotly contested national soccer championship between *Casa-Sports* and *Jeanne d'Arc*, a team from Dakar, in 1980. Senegalese intelligence services reportedly sought to penetrate the *Casa-Sports* membership and, once the violence began, targeted *Casa-Sports* for arrests and reprisals.⁷⁴ Yet *Casa-Sports* to this day has its own section in the national soccer stadium of Senegal, cheering on Les Lions. How could a soccer club so focused on not being a part of Senegal appear so prominently in the Senegalese national soccer stadium?

For Casamançais from Kassa, the answer is simple: those soccer fans are not *real* Casamançais. To them, a real Casamançais wrestles; he does not play soccer. Thus, I also include a section in Chapter Six on the history of wrestling heroes like Double Less and the contemporary Balla Gaye 2. I look at the wrestling stadium also as a place of national formation, as a place where the nation has been constructed but also negotiated. Gender also operates in the wrestling stadium, as women learn to wrestle as young girls, just like the boys do. But once they become adults, there are few women still wrestling. What are these claims tied to identity and authenticity about? Why have wrestling personalities become so influential in the Casamance? These are some of the questions addressed in my final chapter.

⁷² Bignona chapter of the MFDC, group interview, Bignona, 24 April 2014.

⁷³ Numerous informants in Ziguinchor, such as former *Casa-Sports* official, personal interview, village near Ziguinchor, 20 March 2014; Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 27 March 2014.

⁷⁴ Anonymous informant, personal interview, Diabir, 20 March 2014; Bignona chapter of the MFDC, group interview, Bignona, 24 April 2014.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the development of these space-places provides a sort of discursive mapping indicating who belongs in the nation and who does not. Yet, just as there were Casamançais who found wrestling a more authentic expression of their identity, there were those who identified with these space-places more or less than others. Many of these space-places held particular cultural importance for the Jola; some were equally relevant to Mandinka and other ethnicities in the region. Regardless, the contested development of these spaces into places determined, to some extent, how far the separatist movement would travel. In the end, the answer was not that far. My hope is that this dissertation will draw attention to the workings of power in these space-places and to the people who made their lives there.

CHAPTER 1

THE RIVER

The word ‘Casamance’ finds its origins in the name of the country where Jola-Kasa is the primary language: *kasamu Aku*, in other words, ‘the country of waterways,’ even more precisely: ‘the country emerging from the great waters’ (the Casamance River is called, in fact, ‘Kawungha,’ derived from the word *Hasamu*, which means ‘river,’ signifying the ‘great river’). Thus, it’s the country of the Jola *par excellence*, which includes the Rivers Gambia, Casamance, Cacheu, and Geba, etc. *Kasamu Aku* is in our days once again a name much more in use among our Jola brothers in Guinea-Bissau. The [Portuguese] Governor Honorio Pereira Baretto, posted to Bissau in the middle of the 19th century, noted that, according to what he read in the old Portuguese documents, the Casamance was the first river along the West African coast ascended by the Portuguese. It was in 1645 that Gonzalo Gamboa Ayala founded the trading centers of Farim and Ziguinchor. Of the latter, the Portuguese have given a motto very significant for the Casamançais resistance movement: ‘*Invicta Felix!*’ [Happy Invincible!]¹ -- The Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance

Published only a few years after the Casamance conflict began, this quote from a manifesto of sorts by the Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance (MFDC), *La voix de la Casamance* (The Voice of the Casamance), demonstrates at least two important things about the MFDC’s discursive counter-mapping of the Casamance. First, this mapping began with the Casamance River itself, as the primary geographical feature defining this “country of waterways,” or what the French often referred to as *les rivières du Sud*, the “Southern Rivers area.”² The mapping also began with the river because of its importance to cultures across the

¹ MFDC, “‘La Voix de La Casamance’...une Parole Diola,” ed. Dominique Darbon, *Politique Africaine* 18 (1985), 127. The Portuguese founded Farim on the Cacheu River, in north central contemporary Guinea-Bissau, and Ziguinchor on the Casamance River, the next major river to the north.

² Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 53. References to *les Rivières du Sud* are prevalent in the primary and secondary source literature on the Casamance. For a few more examples, see Annie Chéneau-Loquay, “La raison: Géographie « des » Casamance,” in *Comprendre la Casamance: chronique d’une intégration contrastée*, ed. François-George Barbier-Wiesser (Paris: Karthala, 1994), 47 and 54; Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 2; Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 18, as well as n. 27 on p. 316. Barry claims that while the French, from their post at Saint-Louis, referred to the area as “the Southern Rivers area,” the British, from theirs in Sierra Leone, referred to the same area as the Northern Rivers region or the Upper Guinea Coast.

Casamance. Just as important to imagining the Casamance as a country apart from Senegal was its neighbor to the north, the Gambia River, the river explored, mapped, and eventually colonized by the British in the middle of “Senegal,” colonized by the French. As the Portuguese colonized the area surrounding the Cacheu River, the next river to the south of the Casamance, colonial mapping of rivers largely came to define the mapping of modern nation-states in this part of the world. It separated the Casamance from the rest of Senegal and brought a Lusophone influence to Ziguinchor and other communities along the south bank of the Casamance River.

Second, this genealogy of the name “Casamance” has been contested. In fact, the primary group of people who support this claim to the Jola origins of the word have been, unsurprisingly, mostly Jola – and largely those Jola associated with or sympathetic to the MFDC. Whether or not this etymology points to a case of ethnic nationalism, most scholars of the Casamance believe that the name of the river and the region came not from Jola origins but instead from the arrival of the Portuguese along the river in the fifteenth century. Portuguese documents claim that the explorer Alvaro Fernandez “discovered” the Casamance River in 1446.³ In fact, the name results from a meeting of European and African empires. At the time, the Portuguese learned from the people of Mandé origins living along the banks of the river that “*mansa*” was the Mandé word for “king.” “*Kassa*” was the area just west of modern Ziguinchor inhabited by the “Cassanga” people. Thus, the local people referred to the “Mansa” of Kassa, the local ruler established by the Mandé migration from the inland Mali Empire.⁴ Eventually,

³ On the problematic notion of Europeans “discovering” indigenous African, Asian, and American places, Mary Louise Pratt argues: “As a rule the ‘discovery’ of sites like Lake Tanganyika [or the Casamance River in this case] involved making one’s way to the region and asking the local inhabitants if they knew of any big lakes, etc. in the area, then hiring them to take you there, whereupon with their guidance and support, you proceeded to discover what they already knew.” See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Rev. ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), 198.

⁴ Thomas, *Les Diola*, 9; Mark, *History of the Basse Casamance since 1500*, 12; Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*, 65, 75; Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 53-54.

the area became known to the Portuguese and their mixed-race descendants in the region as “the Casamance,”⁵ centered on the wide river that brought travelers to “a verdant and mysterious country, the most remarkable but also the most troublesome country in Senegal.”⁶

As much for its beauty and trouble, the Casamance also became known for its cultural mixing. It eventually earned a reputation as a crossroads of sorts, one linking the Sahel to the Guinean regions. It became known as a Senegambian melting pot, causing some contemporary Senegalese to call it “the most Senegalese region of Senegal” because it brought together ethnic groups from all over the Senegambian region—Wolof, Fula, Toucouleur, Serer, Manjak, Mancagne, and Balanta, just as much as Jola and Mandinka.⁷

Yet, in the Senegalese national imagination, the Casamance gained a reputation for difference from the rest of Senegal – difference based on the beauty of the Casamance River and the lush green forests, the intricate webs of mangrove swamps, and the wide rice paddies surrounding the River and its tributaries. It was also a difference based on a history of resistance to foreign control of the river that brought so many travelers to the region.⁸ The contemporary Senegalese government has coded this difference and resistance as “natural” phenomena of the Casamance. It has depended on “natural” depictions of the Casamance River, the surrounding region, and the people who lived there to refer to the “Casamance, a natural region of Senegal.”⁹

⁵ Thomas, *Les Diola*, 9.

⁶ On the mixed-race Luso-Africans known as “the Portuguese,” see Peter Mark, “Portuguese” *Style and Luso-African Identity: Precolonial Senegambia, Sixteenth-Nineteenth Centuries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002). For more on imperial naming practices from the Australian context, see Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (New York: Knopf, 1988).

⁷ Nouha Cissé, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 1 April 2014; Landing Savané, remarks at conference at the *Université Assane Seck* at Ziguinchor following presentation by Professor Amadou Kadel Kane (Geography Department, *Université Cheikh Anta Diop*, Dakar) called “Perceptions des frontières et recompositions territoriales,” 19 March 2014.

⁸ For a comprehensive treatment of the colonial conquest in the Casamance, see Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*.

⁹ Government of Senegal, *The Truth about Casamance* (Dakar: Ministry of Communication, The Republic of Senegal, 1997), 8. Also, see transcript of speech given by Senegalese President Macky Sall, Ziguinchor, 17 March 2014, to launch a new initiative for peace and the development of the Casamance – “*Casamance: Pôle de développement*.”

But what is “natural” about it? Why would a government engaged in an ongoing separatist conflict refer to the separatists’ region as “natural?” And why would the separatists agree? [See Fig. 1-1, below.]



Figure 1-1: The Republic of Senegal, 1989

The geography of “the Southern Rivers area” has become a central component of the contested discourse between the MFDC and the Senegalese government since the separatist movement began to gain traction with Casamançais in the late 1970s. Since the Casamance – like The Gambia nearby – was formed on the geography of a river, this chapter examines how the Casamance River became an icon for the imagination of the Casamance in opposition to Senegal.¹⁰ In short, how did colonial and post-colonial geography and cartography affect these

¹⁰ For more on African river history and national identities, see Heather J. Hoag, *Developing the Rivers of East and West Africa: An Environmental History* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); Sara B. Pritchard,

imaginings? If postcolonial separatist elites found this geography beneficial to separatism, how did ordinary Casamançais think about and practice identity relative to the River? To the French and, later, the Senegalese, the Casamance River was a stream of economic resources. To the MFDC, it was a symbol of separatism. Yet, for some Casamançais, though they appreciated various material and cultural aspects about the river, it remained simply a river, having little to do with politics. Though state mapping may have hardened identities in the region, it did not determine them. Casamançais found ways to shape and maintain their own identities, regardless of the influences of outside forces like explorers, missionaries, and colonial powers.¹¹ While separatists like Father Diamacoune “counter-mapped” against the idea of the Casamance as the southern region of Senegal, some ordinary Casamançais “counter-mapped” against the national imagining of the separatists, revealing a second layer of counter-mapping while effectively denying nationalist elites like Senghor and Diamacoune complete hegemony over defining “the nation.”

In this chapter, therefore, I argue that while colonial and postcolonial mapping transformed the Casamance River from a borderland stream into a separatist enclave, ordinary

Confluence: The Nature of Technology and the Remaking of the Rhône (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011); Robert W. Harms, *River of Wealth, River of Sorrow: The Central Zaire Basin in the Era of the Slave and Ivory Trade, 1500-1891* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Robert W. Harms, *Games against Nature: An Eco-Cultural History of the Nunu of Equatorial Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: The Senegal River Valley, 1700-1860* (Cambridge: New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Sandra E. Greene, *Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter: A History of Meaning and Memory in Ghana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), especially Chap. 2: “Of Water and Spirits”; and Jan Vansina, *Being Colonized: The Kuba Experience in Rural Congo, 1880-1960* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010). For a small sampling of non-African river history, see Tricia Cusack, *Riverscapes and National Identities* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010); Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1995); Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985); and Fernand Braudel, *The Identity of France*, 1st U.S. ed., trans. Siân Reynolds, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1988-1990).

¹¹ On the hardening of identities in the Senegambia region for colonial “divide-and-rule” strategies, see Mark, *A History of the Basse Casamance*; Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*; Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*; Mark, “Portuguese” Style and Luso-African Identity, 31-32; Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*; and Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*.

Casamançais related to the river in their own ways, based on their own local values and interests. The mapping of the Casamance River started with surveying equipment and maps, which produced an enclosed strip of Senegal sandwiched between The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. A century later, however, separatists counter-mapped with a form of mapping that was more discursive, to the point where postcolonial rumor and myth held as much power as colonial cartography. Thus, The River became one of the first spatio-cultural symbols to be employed by Diamacoune and other separatists to counter-map the Casamance against the cartographic practices of the colonial and postcolonial states. But not everybody in the Casamance experienced the river in the same way. Ordinary Casamançais revealed a second layer of counter-mapping against the counter-mapping of the separatist elites.

The Precolonial River in a Senegambian Borderland

The Casamance River is not unlike other rivers along the Upper Guinea Coast. While it originates in the southeastern part of Senegal, it is fed by the Futa Jallon Plateau in what is now eastern Guinea. [Refer to Fig. 1-1.] This massif covers about 50,000 square kilometers, from the base of the Gambia River south to the modern borders of Sierra Leone. The terrain to the south of the plateau is mountainous and feeds the Senegal and Niger Rivers as well as the rivers of the Southern Rivers Area. Rapid waters and steep waterfalls can be found in the vicinity of the plateau, but these waters calm by the time they reach the flat coastal plain of the Upper Guinea Coast, where the Lower Casamance is located.¹² Contemporary visitors to the Casamance by maritime transportation enter the two-mile wide mouth of the Casamance River from the Atlantic Ocean. After running a course of about 190 miles (300 kilometers), advancing past the towns of

¹² Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, 3.

Ziguinchor, Sédhiou, and Kolda, the River's strength and breadth reduce to a fraction of those near its mouth. It is also fed by the Soungrougrou River west of the town of Sédhiou and is sandwiched in between the Gambia River to the north (in modern Gambia) and the Cacheu River to the south (in modern Guinea-Bissau).

Well before the arrival of Europeans, life in what is now the Lower Casamance had been centered on the Casamance River. The river served as the primary source of life in the region: it not only brought water to the rice fields while providing fish and seafood for the diet of those living on its banks, but it also served as a transportation and communication artery bringing commerce to the region.¹³ Commerce brought foreigners and, eventually, migration – migration to other parts of the Atlantic world and to other parts of West Africa. As much as material conduits of humans and their goods and cultures, these rivers became important cultural symbols to the humans on their banks. Scholars of the Upper Guinea Coast have demonstrated the fluid and hybrid nature of these precolonial cultural and economic exchanges.¹⁴ Throughout these changes, the River remained a source of life supporting a “civilization of rice” garnished with the

¹³ I heard this statement in nearly every oral history I collected in the Casamance. To cite a few specifically: Bilaly Keita, Director of the Affiniam Dam, Affiniam, 30 October 2014; Casamançais refugee to The Gambia, Banjul, 14 March 2014; Bertrand Diamacoune, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014; Sindian Notables, group interview, Sindian, 6 April 2014.

¹⁴ This precolonial migration and cultural mixing has been well established by other historians. Walter Rodney was one of the first scholars to focus a monograph on “the Upper Guinea Coast,” which he defined as “the relatively small section of the West African Coast between the Gambia and Cape Mount [near the southern boundary of modern Liberia].” Rodney, *Upper Guinea Coast*, vii. For more on this area, including the Senegambian region that overlaps it from the north, see Philip D. Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975); Mark, “Portuguese” Style; Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*; Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*; Walter Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations along the Guinea-Bissau Coast, 1400-1900* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2003); Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Edda L. Fields-Black, *Deep Roots: Rice Farmers in West Africa and the African Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008); and Emily Lynn Osborn, *Our New Husbands Are Here: Households, Gender, and Politics in a West African State from the Slave Trade to Colonial Rule* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011).

“fruit of the sea” and the Casamance River.¹⁵ But with such social, economic, and, eventually, environmental changes, this civilization could not remain the same.¹⁶

Contrary to the notion of a “static” Africa that saw little change until Europeans showed up, changes were already in motion before the arrival of Fernandez and the Europeans who followed.¹⁷ Scholars and contemporary Casamançais consider the Bainouk the “original inhabitants” of the Casamance. The Bainouk quickly secured a place as middlemen in regional trade in beeswax, ivory, animal hides, rice, and – increasingly – slaves. Over the course of the sixteenth century, however, the Floup (eventually called the Jola) – through conquest, slave-raiding, marriage, and cultural absorption – replaced the Bainouk in the middleman role. Though scholars disagree on where the Floup came from, there is no disagreement on their migration into what is now the Lower Casamance or on their displacement of the Bainouk.¹⁸

Increased interaction with Europeans influenced the fortunes of Senegambians. The Bainouk clearly benefitted from their role facilitating trade with Portuguese. But other Europeans soon appeared to compete with the Portuguese: French, British, Danish, and Dutch. While the Bainouk established their reputation in trade, the Floup appeared hostile to “strangers,” earning a reputation as fierce but “uncivilized” warriors.¹⁹ Bainouk fortunes as traders diminished with those of the Portuguese in the region, as British and French traders

¹⁵ On the Casamance as a “civilization of rice,” see Louis-Vincent Thomas, “Les Diola d’antan,” 70, 74-77.

¹⁶ For more on the environmental changes, see Chap. 2 of this dissertation, “The Rice Field.”

¹⁷ For examples of the mistaken notion of a static Africa with no history – no change over time – see Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956) and Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, *The Rise of Christian Europe* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965).

¹⁸ Mark, *History of the Basse Casamance*; Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*; Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*. While most scholars assert that the Floup migrated into the Lower Casamance from the kingdom of Gabu, a subsidiary of the Mali Empire in what is today eastern Guinea-Bissau, Baum claims that the Floup were already a coastal people, moving into the Lower Casamance from an area further south along the Upper Guinea Coast.

¹⁹ William Fox, *A Brief History of the Wesleyan Missions on the Western Coast of Africa* (London: Aylott and Jones: J. Mason, 1851), 236. Fox opined, “The Jollars (or Feloops) are nearly the zero of the thermometer of African civilization in this part of the continent. They are a wild and unsociable race of people, of a gloomy disposition, and are supposed never to forgive an injury...”

established commercial relationships with the Mandinka along the Gambia River.²⁰ By the end of the seventeenth century, the Floop had established themselves in most of the area now considered the Lower Casamance.²¹ As they did so, the “commercial center of gravity” in the region shifted north, away from Cacheu.²²

In 1645, the Portuguese established the first permanent European commercial presence on the Casamance River at Ziguinchor. They were able to do so only after befriending allies further south along the Cacheu River – after 1588 – and then spreading north into the Casamance and Gambia River regions. Clearly, Portuguese penetration of the Lower Casamance took some time – 58 years in this case. It certainly was not immediate. Floop hostility initially prevented Europeans from penetrating the region via the Casamance River. In fact, no other European power would make significant inroads along the Casamance River until the French Navy began to probe the mouth of the Casamance again in 1827.²³

By that time, the precolonial Casamance had become a borderland where goods, people, and cultures were exchanged in a dynamic trading environment driven by trans-Atlantic and trans-African – including trans-Saharan – trade.²⁴ Dutch, British, and French traders followed the Portuguese, appearing in Senegambian coastal trading centers in the centuries that followed to compete with the Portuguese settlers (known locally as *lançados*). But the Portuguese – and their mixed race descendants – remained the principal link of European commercial ties to the

²⁰ Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, 31, 53.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

²² *Ibid.*, 53.

²³ Charpy, “Casamance et Sénégal,” 479.

²⁴ For more information on the impact of the trans-Saharan slave trade, see Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Hunwick and Powell, *The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam*; Eve Troutt Powell, *A Different Shade of Colonialism: Egypt, Great Britain, and the Mastery of the Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Ibrahima Thioub, “Regard critique sur les lectures africaines de l’esclavage et de la traite atlantique,” in *Les historiens africains et la mondialisation*, ed. Issiaka Mande and Blandine Stefanson (Paris: Karthala, 2005), 271-292; and Robin Law, *The Oyo Empire, c.1600-c.1836: A West African imperialism in the era of the Atlantic slave trade* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

region for at least two centuries, in spite of the ups and downs of the Portuguese crown. Through a process of biological and cultural mixing (*métissage*), a new merchant class of mixed Luso-African origins arose in the region, becoming known as the “Portuguese.”²⁵ From the trading base at São Domingo near the Cacheu, these “Portuguese” intermarried and traded with the local inhabitants, which included the Bainouk, the Floup, the Mandinka, the Balanta, the Manjak, the Papel, and the Mancagne. They were the offspring of the *lançado*-African unions and also known as *filhos de terra* [sons of the land], with strong commercial ties to Cape Verde.²⁶ They embodied the cultural mixing prevalent in the precolonial borderland along the Casamance River. The dynamic nature of these identities changed with the intensification of French commercial activity and colonial mapping during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Before that time, “the Casamance” does not appear on any European maps in the precolonial period except to refer to the Casamance River. Representative of maps at the time was this map, in Figure 1-2, by Guillaume de l’Isle, cartographer for France’s King Louis XIV.²⁷ One notes the color-coded depiction of the African “countries” (*pays*), from north to south, of the Fula, the Wolofs, and the Mandinka. There is no such country as “the Casamance,” however, though the juxtaposition of “Portuguese” along with “Bagnuns” or “Bainouks” in the vicinity of the Casamance River speaks volumes about the later colonial distinction between European “nations” and African “ethnic groups.”²⁸

²⁵ For the rest of the chapter, I adopt Peter Mark’s convention of using quotation marks around “Portuguese” to refer to the mixed-race descendants of Portuguese settlers and Senegambian wives. Portuguese without quotations marks refers to “white” settlers and merchants from Europe’s Iberian Peninsula.

²⁶ Mark, “*Portuguese*” *Style*, 14.

²⁷ For more on French cartography in this period, see Christine Marie Petto, *When France Was King of Cartography: The Patronage and Production of Maps in Early Modern France* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007).

²⁸ For more on this distinction, see John Alexander Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982) and Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford; New York: B. Blackwell, 1987).



Figure 1-2 : Carte de la Barbarie de la Nigritie et de la Guinée. Par Guillaume De l’Isle de l’Académie Royale des Sciences. C. Inselin sculpsit. A Paris, chez l’Auteur sur le Quai de l’Horloge à l’Aigle d’Or, avec Privilège, Aout 1707. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

As another example, the British explorer of West Africa, Mungo Park, like De L’Isle, affixed ethnic labels to the territory surrounding the Casamance River to note which ethnic groups lived where. In 1795, Park explored the Gambia River and its surrounding territory on his way to explore the Niger River system. In his memoirs published after the journey, he published a map of West Africa, noting that the “Feloops” surrounded the area around the Casamance River.²⁹ Park’s map, like De L’Isle’s is representative of European mapping of this region at the time. I will address the European fascination with ethnicity later in the chapter, but

²⁹ For his description of the “Feloops” and other ethnic groups in the region, see the first three chapters of Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa Performed under the African Association, in the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797, With an Appendix, Containing Geographical Illustrations of Africa*, By Major Rennell, 3rd ed. (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1799).

for now, the point is that as of the publication of this map in 1810, there was no such thing as a “natural region” or nation known as “the Casamance.” [See Fig. 1-3, below.]



Figure 1-3: Cropped image from “Route of Mr. Mungo Park from Pisania on the River Gambia, to Silla, or the River Joliba, or Niger; With his return by the Southern Route to Pisania,” a map in Mungo Park’s *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*, 6th ed. (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1810), from Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas, available at http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/history_africa.html, accessed on 14 November 2015.

The rest of the nineteenth century marked the decline of Portuguese power on the Casamance River and increasing tension between the French and the British as the French established a permanent presence on the Casamance River and the British did the same on the Gambia. The fortunes of Africans also rose and fell with new commercial activity in this borderland. Whereas European traders had mostly grafted themselves onto existing Senegambian trade networks since the late fifteenth century, intensified colonial competition in the late nineteenth century proved more disruptive to local societies, economies, and political arrangements. By this time, the focus of European trade had shifted north in the Southern Rivers

Area – from the Portuguese trading centers on the Cacheu River to the French and British trading centers along the Casamance and Gambia Rivers.

Hence, African and European political and commercial rivalries played out together. The Bainouk, as the region's traditional middlemen, watched their fortunes plummet throughout the nineteenth century along with the decline of the Portuguese Crown at home and abroad.

Weakened by domestic political divisions and Napoleon's invasion of the Iberian Peninsula, the Portuguese "could do little more than make formal protests" over French and British incursions into the Casamance, territory the Portuguese for centuries had considered part of "Portuguese Guinea."³⁰ The Mandinka stepped in to replace the Bainouk as the middlemen of the region and to reap the reward as the principal interlocutors with the growing number of French and British traders. The Floup/Jola (by this time, they were increasingly referred to as the "Diola/Jola") also benefitted.³¹ This process of Bainouk decline and Mandinka and Jola ascension in the commercial history of the region took place over the course of about 150 years. And it had spatial ramifications: by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Jola and Mandinka had pushed the Bainouk out of the area surrounding Sedhiou, the commercial center.³²

On the other hand, the Jola and Mandinka did not push the Bainouk out as much as they married them out. As Peter Mark claims, "Cultural transformation in the Casamance has long been a far more complex process than simply successive waves of conquerors replacing earlier inhabitants."³³ Rather, successive cultural groups established a degree of hegemony in an area by incorporating members of the earlier group into the new group's families and cultural

³⁰ Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*, 133. Much of the Portuguese decline resulted from Napoleon's invasion of the Iberian Peninsula and the subsequent displacement of the Crown to Brazil.

³¹ Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, 53.

³² *Ibid.*, 57.

³³ *Ibid.*, 11.

groupings “by means of marriage, adoption, and assimilation.”³⁴ In the Lower Casamance, increasingly Jola through marriage, migration, and trade, this assimilation occurred via the Casamance River and its associated waterways.

For European trade along the Casamance, Portuguese misfortune meant opportunity to the French and the British. The French were especially eager to replace the Portuguese on the Casamance River basin to counter British influence along the Gambia River.³⁵ In 1827, the French Navy started to explore the mouth of the Casamance. A decade later, the French officially began to cement their position on the Casamance by sending an expedition from Gorée to stake out the possibilities for a more permanent commercial presence. Commandant Dagorne, commander of the Gorée garrison, led the expedition and reported that Portuguese commerce at their last remaining enclave on the Casamance – Ziguinchor – “posed no threat to increased French activity in the region.”³⁶ He also recommended the establishment of French *entrepôts* at Carabane and Sédhiou because of the trade potential in wax, ivory, animal hides, and rice.³⁷ [See Fig. I-1 in the Introduction, p. 1.]

Dagorne’s report was one of the first to refer to the Floup as the “Jola” or “Yola,” the term used by Wolof who accompanied the French to the Casamance as interlocutors with the indigenous population.³⁸ By 1850, Emmanuel Bertrand-Bocandé, the French *résident* at Carabane, wrote, “The first name [Floup] was given to them by the Portuguese; it is by the name of ‘Jola’ that the Wolof sailors from Gorée and Gambia designated them. In their language, the

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ *Archives Nationales de France, Section Outre-Mer (ANFOM), Sénégal et Dépendances IV, Dossier 2*, as quoted in Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, 55.

³⁶ ANFOM, 185 Mi 45, as quoted in Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, 55.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ ANFOM, Sénégal et Dépendances IV, Dossier 25, “Casamance, Rapport de la Commission d’Exploration,” (May 1857), as quoted in Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, 55. The Wolof are Senegal’s largest ethnic group primarily found in the northern part of the country.

Aiamats, the Floups, and the Jola are all the same people.”³⁹ Regardless of what they were called, outsiders lumped together the distinct sociolinguistic sub-groups of the Lower Casamance into one “Jola” ethnic group. In spite of the differences between a north shore Jola from Boulouf or Fogny and a south shore Jola from Kassa, they demonstrated the capacity to unify against foreign threats.⁴⁰

With the establishment of Carabane in 1836-1837, the French effectively cut off Portuguese trade with the Bainouk and the Jola. Jola on both banks of the river began to bring their surplus rice to Carabane to trade for iron, cloth, cattle, and guns.⁴¹ This early trade marked the beginning of Jola production for the market. Eventually, the Jola offered palm oil, rubber, and ground nuts as well, according to European demand. As the British lubricated the machinery of their Industrial Revolution primarily with palm oil and were reputed to pay better prices than the French, north shore Jola often found it more profitable to produce palm kernels and make the voyage to Bathurst [Banjul]. Since the French chose to lubricate their industrial machinery primarily with peanut oil, other Jola grew ground nuts and traded with the French on the Casamance.⁴² This trading arrangement suited both parties until the Jola began to interfere with other French commercial activity in the last half of the nineteenth century.

Therefore, by the time of the Berlin Conference, the Casamance had become a borderland region where goods, people, and cultures were exchanged in a culture dominated by the mixed race “Portuguese.” Ziguinchor, essentially Portuguese since 1645, officially became French by

³⁹ Bertrand-Bocandé, “Notes sur la Guinée Portugaise ou Sénégal Méridionale,” in *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, xii, No. 67/68 (1849): 327, as quoted in French by Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, 60.

⁴⁰ Louis-Vincent Thomas, “Foreword” to Peter Mark, *The Wild Bull and the Sacred Forest: Form, Meaning, and Change in Senegambian Initiation Masks* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), ix, plus Western government official from the Casamance, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 27 March 2014; Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014. For an account of this cultural unity against Mandinka Muslim slave raiding in the late nineteenth century, see Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*.

⁴¹ Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, 64.

⁴² Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic slave trade*, 130.

the 12 May 1886 agreement between the French and Portuguese governments.⁴³ The Luso-African bourgeois class of Ziguinchor were less than thrilled with this agreement. But once the finality of the agreement became clear, they rushed to gain access to the French colonial state while the Jola fled to escape it. These opposite reactions to the intensification of French colonial rule could be seen in the communities' reactions to military recruitment to serve France in the First World War. The "Portuguese" welcomed the opportunity to prove their value to the colonial state so that they could later make demands of it while the Jola refused to support the French in any way.⁴⁴

If the Casamance River formed a space of Senegambian and Atlantic connection, it also served as a line of division. While it connected those downriver to those upriver and vice versa, these links were not always peaceful, as the late nineteenth century raids of *marabouts* Foday Kaba and Foday Syllah – coming from the east – revealed. The River also divided to a certain extent those on the north bank from those on the south bank. This division results from the history of Islamic conversion in the region. The raiding of Kaba, Syllah, and Birham Ndiaye did not convince the Jola in Fogny to convert to Islam. But neither did it prevent them from doing so. By 1945, a majority of north shore Jola had converted to Islam – mostly because of the

⁴³ Convention relative à la délimitation des possessions respectives dans l'Afrique occidentale; signée à Paris le 12 mai 1886, Gouvernement-Général de l'AOF, Répertoire des Archives, Sér. F. [1922-], 2F17, 2F41, 2F42, 2F43, 2F48. Also in Ian Brownlie, *African Boundaries: A Legal and Diplomatic Encyclopaedia* (London: C. Hurst, 1979), 351. On the Portuguese establishment of a trading post at Ziguinchor in the mid-seventeenth century, see Pierre Xavier Trincaz, *Colonisation et régionalisme: Ziguinchor en Casamance* (Paris: Editions de l'ORSTOM : Institut français de recherche scientifique pour le développement en coopération, 1984; and René Pélissier, *Naissance de la Guinée: Portugais et Africains en Sénégambie, 1841-1936* (Orgeval, France: Pélissier, 1989).

⁴⁴ Foucher, "Cheated Pilgrims," 126-127. For more on the recruiting drive led by Blaise Diagne, the first African elected to the French National Assembly, see Myron J. Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts: The Tirailleurs Sénégalais in French West Africa, 1857-1960* (Portsmouth, NH; London: Heinemann; J. Currey, 1991); Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude & Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); G. Wesley Johnson, "The Ascendancy of Blaise Diagne and the Beginning of African Politics in Senegal," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 36:3 (July 1, 1966): 235–53; Irving L. Markovitz, "The Political Thought of Blaise Diagne and Lamine Gueye: Some Aspects of Social Structure and Ideology in Senegal," *Présence Africaine* 4:72 (1969): 21–38.

commercial advantages to having access to Islamic networks in the region, not because of the violence of the raiding *marabouts*. The Casamance River limited the *marabouts* to Jola communities primarily on the north bank. The *marabouts* were only popular with European powers as far as they complicated the colonial conquest of other European powers.⁴⁵ But the *marabouts* also complicated colonial mapping of the Casamance. Though they may not have referred as much to paper maps, the *marabouts* had their own geographies in their heads. They had already performed a degree of discursive mapping about what territory was theirs and what belonged to others.

Hence, we should distinguish “territory” from “territoriality,” a term used by scholars to describe some of what I have been calling “discursive mapping.” *Territoriality* describes a sense of “what is mine” and “what is yours.” As anthropologist Daniel J. Gelo notes, paper maps may not always be the best way to describe this notion:

A group’s territoriality is perhaps not best represented by a map at all... Rather, a verbal description of territorial principles (as evinced in subsistence practice, language and cognition, oral tradition, and historical evidence of actual locations and activities), reconstructed from native and nonnative sources and augmented by statistics and several visual representations, is more likely to capture *territoriality*.⁴⁶

Because colonial mapping rarely took into account indigenous mapping, it did not acknowledge that indigenous people already had their own borders. Colonial powers were certainly aware of divisions among indigenous peoples, and they exploited them to impose colonial order. But

⁴⁵ For more on the raiding Muslim *marabouts*, a.k.a. the Maraboutic Wars, see Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*; Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, especially Chapter VI; Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*. On the spread of Islam in the Casamance, see, in addition to these works, see Leary, “Islam, Politics and Colonialism”; Mark, “Economic and Religious Change”; and Nugent, “Cyclical History in the Gambia/Casamance Borderlands.”

⁴⁶ Daniel J. Gelo, as quoted in Imre Sutton, “Cartographic Review of Indian Land Tenure and Territoriality: A Schematic Approach,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 26, no. 2 (2002): 69. For more on North American indigenous spatial imagination in relation to paper maps, see Juliana Barr, “Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the ‘Borderlands’ of the Early Southwest,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 68:1 (January 1, 2011): 5–46.

colonial powers rarely gave indigenous people credit for mapping those divisions in their own minds and in their own ways.

To analyze the political and social histories of the precolonial Casamance, I have referred to the Casamance as a “borderland.”⁴⁷ This term has come to encompass an array of meanings among historians. Of course, borderlands are formed on or around borders, but recent historiography asks, “Whose borders?” Who gets to define those borders? How do they define them, and why do they define them that way? In 1999, John R. Wunder and Pekka Hämäläinen attacked an article by Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron. Adelman and Aron had argued that a borderland was not the same thing as a frontier or a “zone of contact” between different peoples or civilizations. The first historian to use the term “borderland,” Herbert Eugene Bolton, in reference to the development of the U.S.-Mexico border, emphasized “a site of imperial rivalry.”⁴⁸ Thus, Bolton’s interpretation required the meeting of competing imperial powers, according to Adelman and Aron. Such was certainly the case in the precolonial Casamance as European colonial powers – especially France, Britain, and Portugal – competed for commercial influence in the region. But what about “the peoples in between,” as suggested by Adelman and Aron’s sub-title? People living in the Casamance also influenced the formation of this borderland.⁴⁹ Did not their influence also matter to the formation of this “borderland?”

Wunder and Hämäläinen protested that Adelman and Aron’s focus on empires erased indigenous people from the map. They portrayed the arguments of Adelman and Aron as

⁴⁷ The “borderland” literature gained prominence in the 1920s with scholars of the U.S.-Mexico border like Herbert Eugene Bolton. See Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (Yale University Press, 1921). Peter Sahlins’ *Boundaries*, about the French-Spanish border in the Pyrenees, has also been important to more contemporary analyses of this literature. See Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

⁴⁸ Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History,” *American Historical Review* 104:3 (1999), 816.

⁴⁹ See Nugent, “Cyclical History in the Gambia/Casamance Borderlands.”

claiming that “[b]orderlands are places of European imperial rivalry... Once the rivalry is over, borderlands can become bordered land, where national borders are defined, and indigenous peoples are swallowed up by national cultures.”⁵⁰ As Wunder and Hämäläinen showed that Native Americans influenced these border-making processes in North America, the precolonial Casamance demonstrates how Africans did the same. The social and cultural identities of the people living in the Lower Casamance certainly changed over this period from about 1450 to 1850, but they were not “erased from the map.” If anything, they became more interdependent and fuzzy. But maps seldom account for such hybridity and change over time.

Colonial Mapping and the Transformation of a Borderland

Foday Syllah threw the map back into the hands of Captain Arthur Herbert Kenney of the Royal Engineers. Syllah might as well have thrown it in Kenney’s face. Kenney was the British Commissioner to the 1890 British-French Boundary Commission. The Commission had been charged with demarcating the boundary between The Gambia and Senegal following the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 that roughly created the borders of modern Africa.⁵¹ The British called Syllah “the military adventurer who considers himself the Emir of Combo, [oppressing] the Jolahs as he finds convenient.”⁵² Indeed, Syllah and his fellow Mandinka Muslim *marabout*, Foday Kabah, had spread terror throughout Jola communities in Fogy, the area of the Casamance north of Bignona, while conducting slave raids under the guise of *jihad*.⁵³ But the

⁵⁰ John R. Wunder and Pekka Hämäläinen, “Of Lethal Places and Lethal Essays,” *American Historical Review* 104:4 (1999): 1229–34.

⁵¹ Letter from Captain A. H. Kenney, British Commissioner to the Boundary Commission of 1890, to G. T. Carter, Administrator of The Gambia, dated December 18, 1890, *Gambian National Record Service* (hereafter *GNRS*).

⁵² Sir S. Rowe to Sir H. T. Holland, Government House, Bathurst, October 22, 1887, in MP 1-1 Papers relating to the Boundaries of the Gambia Colony and Protectorate, *GNRS*. For the French reporting on the Boundary Commission, see *ANS*, 1F/0016 Rapport sur les travaux exécutés par la Commission française de délimitation, 5 juin 1891.

⁵³ *Marabout* is a French term referring to a Muslim cleric.

raids had little to do with Islam and were instead poor justification for the pursuit of booty and plunder.⁵⁴ Syllah's marauding had begun to interfere with the activities of the Boundary Commission, which had drawn the southern boundary of the Gambia along the San Pedro River and thereby divided Combo – Syllah's "country" – in half.⁵⁵ The commissioners had given Syllah the impression that the border would not interfere with his "sovereignty" in Combo.⁵⁶

But in fact, it did, and everybody involved knew it – in spite of official British rhetoric. In December 1890, Syllah sent an armed party to the surveyors to order them to halt the survey immediately. The commissioners refused and determined that a *rapprochement* was needed. Hence, Syllah himself arrived on horseback at the location of the surveyors, accompanied by a party of a few hundred armed men, to assert his position. Clearly, from the thrown map, the meeting did not go well. Kenney later protested to the Administrator of the Gambia:

...Foday Selah exhibited intentional insolence towards the Commissioners before his followers. His manner when addressing the French Commissioners exhibited disdainful hauteur, and he was on several occasions insolent towards me. He asked so many questions as to how the boundary was fixed in London that I thought it best to produce the map, when he flung it back into my hands with a very rude gesture. He asked how the Queen knew the extent of his country and whether she would come to see the spot she had agreed to limit her protection to. He treated me as if he thought me acting in the French interest and responsible for a treaty handing over part of his country to France. He said I was not straightforward, saying smooth words and cutting his country in two. He did not attempt to conceal before the French commissioners his dislike to the French. I would beg your Excellency to be pleased to express to the French Commissioners your regret that they should have been so badly received by the King of a Country under British Protection. I would also beg to recommend that in case Foday Selah does not make complete submission to your Excellency a sufficient escort to ensure respect towards the Commission should be sent with it, when it returns to Native Combo to lay out the Southern Boundary after completion of the Northern Boundary from Jerniak Creek to the bend of the Gambia. I would estimate this

⁵⁴ Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*; Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*; Mark, "Economic and Religious Change among the Diola of Boulouf"; Leary, "Islam, Politics and Colonialism."

⁵⁵ French and British boundary commissioners often referred to Combo as Syllah's "country." See, for example, Kenney's December 18, 1890 letter to G. T. Carter, as well as Carter's subsequent report to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated December, 1890, *GNRS*.

⁵⁶ Letter from Kenney to Carter, December 18, 1890, *GNRS*.

escort at not less than a strong company of Regular Troops drawn from the West India Regiment at Sierra Leone.⁵⁷

Of course, Syllah posed a number of pertinent questions that Kenney and the other commissioners could not answer without prevarication. This prevarication resulted in part from the imperial machinations at the Berlin Conference, attended exclusively by representatives of European empires, plus an American “observer,” without a single African representative.⁵⁸ But the objective of the conference was to preserve peace between the colonial powers, not between Africans, nor between Africans and Europeans. After the Conference, Britain’s Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, remarked,

We have been engaged in... drawing lines upon maps where no white man’s feet have ever trod. We have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, but we have only been hindered by the small impediment that we never knew exactly where the mountains and rivers and lakes were. But still, whatever superficial incongruity there might have been in those partitions of the unknown, it has had this one solid practical merit – that it has removed possible causes of quarrel from those members of the different nations who, on account of their very adventurous and gallant and self-devoted lives, are too apt to push with undue ferocity the claims of their respective countries against each other.⁵⁹

It may have seemed wonderful to Europeans that they were working out their quarrels over the African continent peacefully, but European “partitions of the unknown” were not unknown to Africans – neither the territory being partitioned nor the potential effects of those “superficially incongruous” partitions. And Africans certainly knew that little would be worked out peacefully between themselves and the Europeans.

Though Africans were not invited to participate at Berlin, they were aware of what was happening to their territory, if not to their entire continent. Contrary to the popular notion that

⁵⁷ Letter from Kenney to Carter, December 18, 1890, *GNRS*.

⁵⁸ The U.S. representative was the American Minister to Berlin, John A. Kasson. See Peter Duignan and L. H. Gann, *The United States and Africa: A History* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), 133-134.

⁵⁹ “The Mansion-House Banquet To Her Majesty’s Ministers,” *Times* [London, England] (7 August 1890), 6. *The Times Digital Archive*, accessed 25 September 2015.

Africans were “duped” into accepting “arbitrary” and “artificial” borders that divided their people, Syllah was not “duped.”⁶⁰ He knew very well what was happening and expressed his displeasure at having his country cut in two by a colonial border. He also understood what European “mapping” of his country implied, which is probably why he threw the map back at Captain Kenney. Though Kenney insisted he was not “cutting [Syllah’s] country in two” or “handing over half of his country to the French,” that is exactly what was happening, and Syllah knew it.

Kenney’s letter could serve as an abstract for a treatise on colonial mapping practices in West Africa, as across the colonial world at the time.⁶¹ As in the colonial Egypt written about by Timothy Mitchell, colonial officials would get their way, or the colonized faced the specter of British (or French, German, etc.) force of arms.⁶² Colonial mapping backed up by colonial troops did not necessarily freeze previously fluid environments where people exchanged goods and cultural aspects freely in borderland zones like the Casamance. But it certainly changed

⁶⁰ All borders are “arbitrary” and “artificial,” not just African borders. See Simon Katzenellenbogen, “It Didn’t Happen at Berlin: Politics, Economics and Ignorance in the Setting of Africa’s Colonial Boundaries,” and Paul Nugent, “Arbitrary Lines and the People’s Minds: A Dissenting View on Colonial Boundaries in West Africa,” in *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits, and Opportunities*, ed. Paul Nugent and A. I. Asiwaju (London; New York: Pinter, 1996), 21–34 and 35–67.

⁶¹ For an introduction to the literature on colonial mapping practices, see Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*; J. B. Harley, “Deconstructing the Map,” *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization* 26:2 (1989); Denis Wood, *The Power of Maps* (New York: Guilford Press, 1992); Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*; Barbara E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765–1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); D. Graham Burnett, *Masters of All They Surveyed: Exploration, Geography, and a British El Dorado* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); and James R. Akerman (ed.), *The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

⁶² In the case of Egypt, until Mitchell covers some of the military history of the 1882 British “occupation,” one almost forgets that behind every textbook, floor plan, and newspaper stood a Maxim gun, staring the colonial subject in the face. And behind the Maxim gun stood a British soldier, with the “remarkable self-certainty” that came from the backing of “the British public.” According to Mitchell, “This self-certainty was made possible by the enormous resources of the British Empire, including its new weaponry. It was a certainty that seemed to be generated in particular out of the coordination of these resources, by the modern means of transport and communication.” See Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 129. Portrayed as an entity backed up by an entire colonial system that ultimately meant violence for the colonized who refused to be “enframed,” the map, like the textbook and the school floor plan, did not look so benign.

them. In the Casamance, it changed the river into the central geography of a new economic order. But the river was more than a stream of cash; it also attracted colonial interest for its natural beauty.

Even those with an “imperial gaze” remarked upon the beauty of the Casamance River while surveying its “riverscape” for colonial potential.⁶³ Captain Lenoir, for example, of the French naval infantry, visited Sédhiou in June 1884, shortly before the Berlin Conference.⁶⁴ His report was published in the *Bulletin de la Société de géographie commerciale de Paris* later that year.⁶⁵ The bulletin’s title makes clear Lenoir’s purpose in visiting the Casamance: commerce.⁶⁶ But Lenoir couched his assessment in the Casamançais reputation for natural beauty. Addressing his report to metropolitan commercial interests, Lenoir remarked, “Sédhiou and the Casamance will certainly interest you a bit, but today I don’t have time to provide much detail on the riches and the beauty of this river, for there is nothing comparable in the rest of Senegal. As much as the river has a sad and naked appearance, the shores appear welcoming with splendid vegetation.”⁶⁷ Lenoir reveals that the beauty of the Casamance River interests him mostly in what it can produce. He bemoans, “What a shame that the indigenous people do not know how to extract from a soil so fertile all of the products that we know how to produce in France. What

⁶³ On the “imperial gaze,” see Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*; Akerman (ed.), *The Imperial Map*; Burnett, *Masters of All They Surveyed*; Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (New York: Knopf, 1988). On “riverscape,” see Tricia Cusack, *Riverscapes and National Identities* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010).

⁶⁴ The Berlin Conference consisted of a series of meetings from November 1884 to February 1885.

⁶⁵ The Bulletin of the Commercial Geography Society of Paris.

⁶⁶ On the connections between “exploration,” cartography, and colonialism, see Akerman (ed.), *The Imperial Map*; Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*; Davidson, *The Black Man’s Burden*; Edney, *Mapping an Empire*; Harley, “Deconstructing the Map,” 1–20; Katzenellenbogen, “It Didn’t Happen at Berlin”; Achille Mbembe, “At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality, and Sovereignty in Africa,” trans. Steven Rendall, *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (2000): 259–84; V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain*; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*; and Nugent, “Arbitrary Lines and the People’s Minds.”

⁶⁷ M. Lenoir, “M. Lenoir sur la Casamance,” lettre communiqué par M. Delor, Sédhiou, le 18 juin 1884, *Bulletin de la Société de géographie commerciale de Paris*, 1883/10-1884/10 (Paris: Société de géographie commerciale (France), 1884), 617.

are they missing? Better ways of farming.”⁶⁸ The Casamance was for centuries afflicted by foreigners like Lenoir who came to the Casamance, became enraptured by its natural beauty, and then became enraptured with the idea of exploiting its natural resources by farming differently from its indigenous inhabitants. The Casamance River was a source of beauty and a source of wealth at the same time. But the Jola had worked out over centuries how best to reap an abundant harvest from its resources.

If the French appeared more interested in what the Casamance could do for them than in what they could do for the Casamance, the Lenoir voyage confirmed that French administrators had more than sightseeing in mind for the Casamance. The Royal Belgian Geographic Society also picked up the news of Lenoir’s voyage. It reported, “Mr. Lenoir believes that once we have established some secure and easy means of communication – regardless of whether they are rapid – a considerable quantity of products from the region that separates the Casamance from Senegal, which remain to the present without buyers, will have an assured flow to Saint-Louis by the Senegal [River] and to Gorée by the Southern Rivers Area. Moreover, French manufactured products will find a huge market in Senegambia.”⁶⁹ As opposed to the innate characteristics of “the natural Casamance,” this report reveals how the Casamance River has been socially constructed and mutually constituted as a haven of natural solitary beauty and as a cache of natural resources for capitalist production.

In some ways, the French colonial state made “the Casamance” what it is today while making the Casamance River a space of division by mapping bodies and resources along the river banks for colonial production. The latter implied mapping the natural resources of the

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ *Bulletin de la Société royale belge de géographie*, Volume 8 (1884), publié par les soins de M. J. du Fief, Secrétaire-Général, Bruxelles, 696-697.

Casamance while simultaneously nearly erasing the human beings living in the Casamance from the map. Though situated on the northern bank of the Gambia River instead of the Casamance River, the sale of “Reis’s Concession” in 1895 is representative of this colonial commodification of bodies and resources along the Senegambian coastline during the late 1800s. [See map of Reis’s Concession in Fig. 1-4, below.]

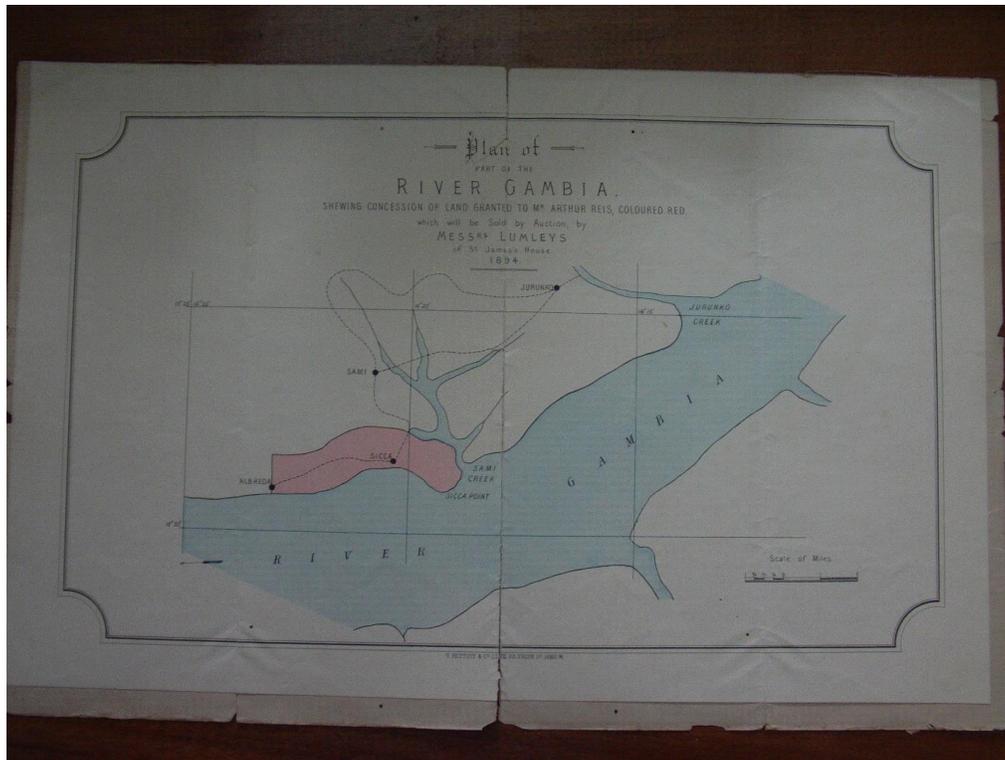


Figure 1-4: Map of Reis’s Concession, from ANS 10D1 0069 Delimitation of the Guinean and Gambian borders with Senegal.

It announced,

West Coast of Africa, in the Crown Colony of Gambia, Descriptive Particulars, Plan & Conditions of Sale of a Tract of Land about 7 square miles, on the north bank of the River Gambia, known as ‘Reis’s Concession.’ The Lands produce Mahogany, India-rubber, Palm Kernels, etc. and offer an opportunity of creating A TRADING STATION of an exceedingly promising kind, which Messrs. E. & H. Lumley have received instructions to sell by auction...on Tuesday, the 15th of January, 1895, at two o’clock precisely...⁷⁰

⁷⁰ ANS 10D1/0069 Délimitation des frontières entre le Sénégal et la Gambie et entre le Sénégal et la Guinée Française, “Reis’s Concession.” Emphasis in the original.

E. and H. Lumley ran Lumleys Auctioneers and Land Agents at “St. James’s House” in London. At least the Lumleys could be precise about the time and place of the sale. The “particulars” of the sale did not offer more precision: “Particulars. The Estate is situated on the North side of the River Gambia, and comprises about seven square miles, that is to say, seven miles long and about one mile wide, and extends from Albreda to Sicca Point. It is distant about seventeen miles from Bathurst [contemporary Banjul], the capital of the colony.”⁷¹ [See Fig. 1-5, below.]

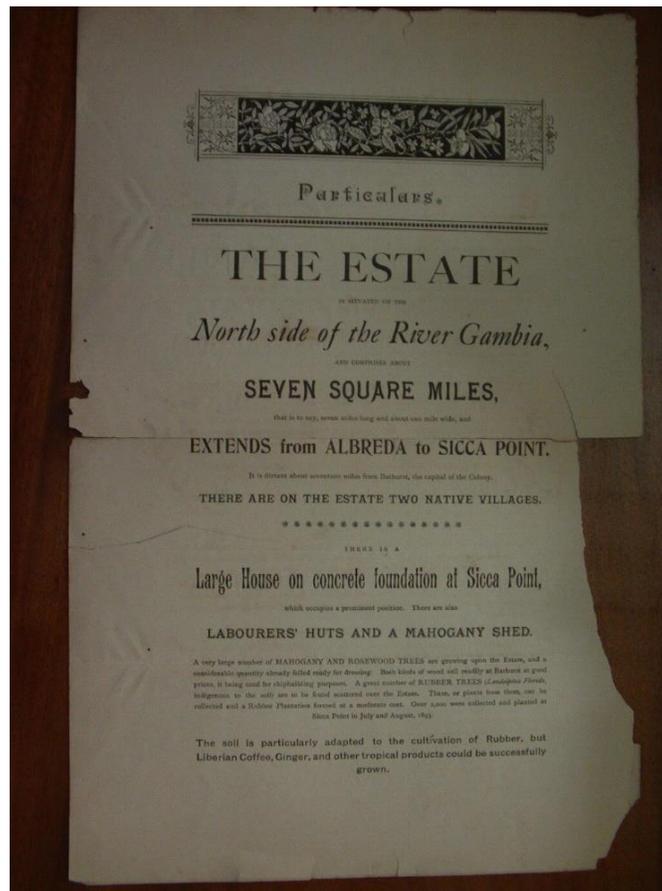


Figure 1-5: Flyer delineating “the Particulars” of Reis’s Concession, from ANS 10D1 0069 Delimitation of the Guinean and Gambian borders with Senegal.

⁷¹ ANS 10D1/0069 Reis’s Concession.

While describing the physical geography of the property, the flyer mentions, “There are on the estate two native villages,” along with “a large house on concrete foundation at Sicca Point, which occupies a prominent position. There are also labourers’ huts and a mahogany shed.”⁷²

All of this infrastructure – which included the humans living on the estate – was available for the production of, in addition to the previously mentioned agricultural products, rubber. The flyer continues, “A great number of rubber trees (*Landolphia Florida*, indigenous to the soil) are to be found scattered over the Estate.”⁷³ The British and French focus on rubber production in the Senegambia, seeming to look so promising in the late nineteenth century, subsided, in favor of other agricultural products like rice, peanuts, and cotton. Another page of the flyer claimed,

The Estate occupies an excellent position for Trade, or the establishment of a Factory... The trade is partly cash but chiefly bartering. A very large profit can be made upon certain articles of daily consumption and common use, such as Rice, Tobacco, Sugar, Kola Nuts, Cheap Essences, Tinned Goods, Gin, Rum, Kerosene Oil, Matches, Candles, Ready-made Clothing, Cheap Drapery, Hosiery, Tin Ware, etc. There is a good depth of water at Sicca Point, which renders the landing and shipping of goods and produce safe and easy. The transport of goods rom Bathurst to the Estate and vice versa may be performed at a moderate cost by purchasing large canoes, and employing them for that purpose instead of cutters... There is big Game for the Sportsman, and plenty to shoot on the Property and in the adjoining Country – Leopards, Crocodiles, Monkeys, Deer, Hippopotami, and occasionally Lions are to be found. The opportunity of creating a trade station here is unequalled.⁷⁴

That humans were elided from the picture – except for their capacity for labor – in favor of flora and fauna demonstrates the links Henri Lefebvre tied between space and capitalist production.

Lefebvre’s analysis focuses on the spatial practices of states to argue that space is defined by capitalist interests. The liberal state, to Lefebvre, has destroyed “natural space” and replaced it with “abstract space” – space easier to control and map. He asserts that “nature is now reduced

⁷² ANS 10D1/0069 Reis’s Concession.

⁷³ ANS 10D1/0069 Reis’s Concession.

⁷⁴ ANS 10D1/0069 Reis’s Concession.

to materials on which society's productive forces operate."⁷⁵ Thus, the state has taken the varieties of space that distinguished place and produced a homogenized template by which taxes can be levied, troops can be raised, and business conducted. Indeed, these activities are fundamentally what states do.⁷⁶ To Lefebvre, "business" drives the meaning of space in the modern era, and the state is merely its vassal. As he explains,

Capitalism and neo-capitalism have produced an abstract space that is a reflection of the world of business on both a national and international level, as well as the power of money and the *politique* of the state. This abstract space depends on vast networks of banks, businesses, and great centers of production. There also is the spatial intervention of highways, airports, and information networks. In this space, the cradle of accumulation, the place of richness, the subject of history, the center of historical space—in other words, the city—has exploded. Space as a whole enters into the modernized mode of capitalist production: it is utilized to produce surplus value. The ground, the underground, the air, and even the light enter into both the productive forces and the products.⁷⁷

As the Reis Concession Estate Sale demonstrates, colonial officials mapped goods and products together with human beings to produce the largest possible profit.

Colonial officials in the Casamance literally mapped this production onto ethnicity. They brought the human beings back into the picture for the purpose of leveraging ethnicity to yield the best agricultural production from each area of the Lower Casamance. Two hand-drawn maps of the Lower Casamance by Lieutenant Colonel Albert Sajous, the *Commandant de Cercle* of Ziguinchor in the early 1940s, illustrate this exploitation. The first denotes the primary ethnic group in each area, along with a pie chart illustrating the ethnic breakdown of the area. The second notes the same ethnic groups in the same small areas but in the pie chart notes the

⁷⁵ Lefebvre, *State, Space, World*, 187. Yi-fu Tuan also argues that space is more abstract than place. See Tuan, *Space and Place*, 6.

⁷⁶ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); and James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁷⁷ Lefebvre, *State, Space, World*, 187.

agricultural production of each small area.⁷⁸ For example, Sajous's first map – his ethnicity map – shows that the area immediately southeast of Ziguinchor was primarily inhabited by Bainouk, though there were also Jola and other “diverse” ethnicities living in the area. [See Fig. 1-6, below.]



Figure 1-6: Map of primary ethnicities in each area of the south bank of the Lower Casamance, hand-drawn by Lieutenant Colonel Albert Sajous, the Commandant de Cercle at Ziguinchor, from *ANS 2G 43-75 Rapport annuel ensemble – 1943, Rapport annuel du Commandant de Cercle, Ziguinchor*.

His second map, which seems to complement the first, shows that for the same area, rice was the predominant agricultural product – about 35-40 percent, according to Sajous's pie graph. Millet, peanuts, forest products, and other “diverse” products made up the rest of the resources targeted for colonial extraction in this area. [See Fig. 1-7, below.]

⁷⁸ *ANS 2G 43-75 Rapport annuel ensemble – 1943, Rapport annuel du Commandant de Cercle, Ziguinchor*

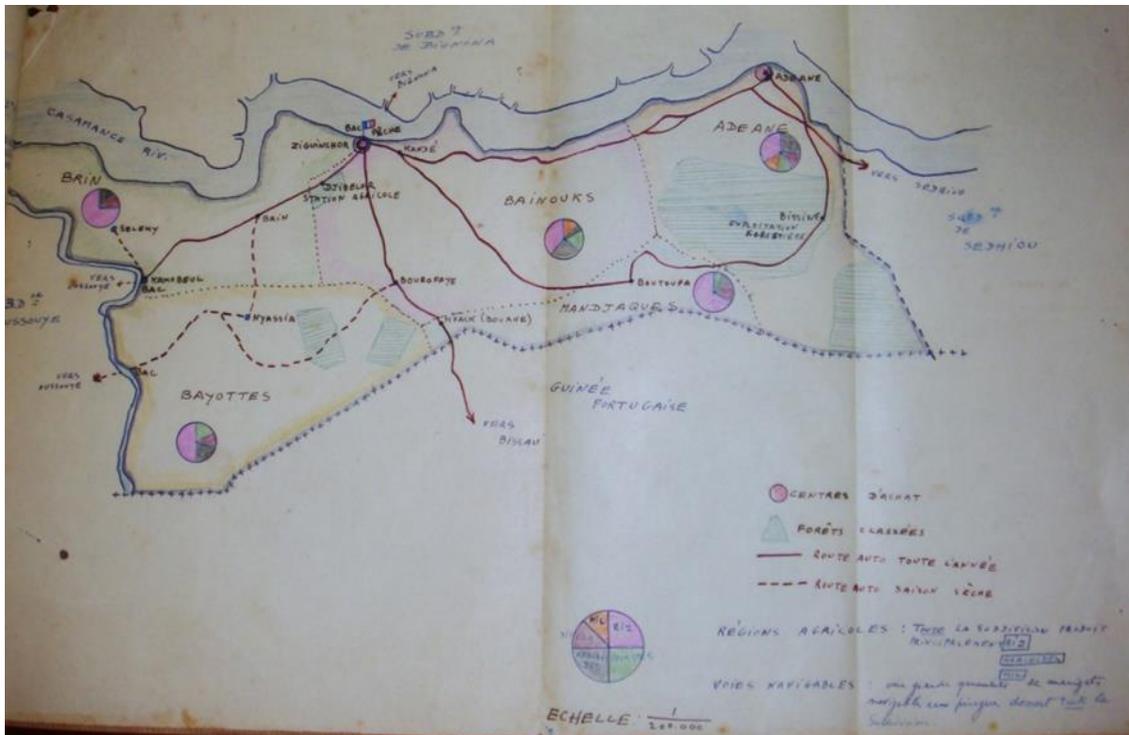


Figure 1-7: Map of primary agricultural products tied to ethnicity in each area of the south bank of the Lower Casamance, hand-drawn by Lieutenant Colonel Albert Sajous, the *Commandant de Cercle* at Ziguinchor, from ANS 2G 43-75 Rapport annuel ensemble – 1943, Rapport annuel du Commandant de Cercle, Ziguinchor. Note the crops in the pie chart: mil (millet), riz (rice), forestières (forest), arachides (peanuts), and divers (diverse).

These maps point to the ways colonial officials viewed the human beings they found in their new colonies: they did not regard Casamançais as citizens of a nation-state, with the natural rights thought to mark Western Civilization, but rather as colonial subjects intended for economic exploitation to the benefit of the metropole.⁷⁹ Hubert Deschamps, the Governor of Senegal while Sajous was the *Commandant de Cercle* in Ziguinchor, made this much clear to the residents of Oussouye in 1943. While visiting Oussouye on a tour of the Casamance, Deschamps declared, “You are our subjects, just like everybody else in Senegal, so you must submit to the same discipline. And what do we ask of you? The tax, a bit of rice, a small number of men for military conscription. In return, we bring you peace, medical care in our hospitals, and our

⁷⁹ Dividing the people of the Casamance for colonial extraction only reinforced a colonial policy of “divide and rule” that had been in effect since the *maraboutic* wars of the late nineteenth century. See Roche, “Conquête et résistance,” 14.

manufactures.”⁸⁰ Deschamps made French intentions clear. Colonial officials marked Africans by tribe not only to “divide and conquer” but also to allot and assign them to specific tasks of labor for agricultural production.

Colonial powers mapped ethnicity onto production to benefit the metropole, not the colony.⁸¹ Eric Worby refers to this mapping of ethnicity as “ethnographic cartography.” Worby analyzes the power in colonial naming and mapping of ethnic groups in the former Rhodesia.⁸² Worby coins the term “ethnographic cartography” to denote the “use of tribal maps to represent relations of political power over social space.”⁸³ Worby contends that ethnographic cartography has been “an important means through which academic constructs have been used as instruments of colonial domination.”⁸⁴ Furthermore, “[b]y fixing names to discrete territories, such maps served to both encode and represent the implicit, silent vantage point of the colonial state in relation to the subjects over which it presumed or desired to hold authority.”⁸⁵ The purpose of this authority was the production of a political economy that would benefit the metropole. When it became clear that such a political economy was not worth the cost of its construction, colonial powers in Africa began to decolonize.⁸⁶ Postcolonial African states sought to replicate these political economies so much that Frederick Cooper has argued that the only thing that changed at independence was the people in the buildings.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ ANS 11D1/0226 Gouverneur du Sénégal au gouverneur général, 22 April 1943.

⁸¹ The colonies “were supposed to pay for themselves,” however. See, for example, Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2005), 7.

⁸² Most of “Rhodesia” became what is now “Zimbabwe” upon independence in 1980.

⁸³ Eric Worby, “Maps, Names, and Ethnic Games: The Epistemology and Iconography of Colonial Power in Northwestern Zimbabwe,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20:3 (September 1, 1994): 371.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Frederick Cooper, “Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective,” *The Journal of African History* 49:2 (2008), 167–96; also, see Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

⁸⁷ Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

The Colonial Legacy in Postcolonial Mapping

The Senegalese state reinforced this mapping and the divisions it brought about through its administrative reform of 1984, dividing the Casamance into smaller administrative regions. The French colonial state mostly did not view the Casamance as a political entity separate from Senegal. Though plenty of colonial officials referred to the Casamance, the Colonial Geographical Service in some cases did not. Its 1941 report, for example, denoted separate maps for Ziguinchor and Tambacounda, not one map for “the Casamance.”⁸⁸ Jean-Claude Marut notes that near the end of the colonial era (1958), the administrative map of Senegal did not include a region labeled “the Casamance.”⁸⁹ In fact, it was not “distinguished from the other regions (*cercles*) of the colony of Senegal.”⁹⁰ On the other hand, some French residents of the Casamance clearly thought of the Casamance in separate terms well before independence. J. Malbranque, for example, wrote a document in 1939 linking Casamançais “development” to its “autonomy.” He entitled the twenty-page document “*Développement de la Casamance, Lié à son autonomie.*”⁹¹ Thus, in spite of the lack of a region named “La Casamance” from the 1958 map, there were plenty of Senegalese who thought of the Casamance as a region different from the rest of Senegal. Besides, other maps did label the Casamance as “the Casamance.”⁹² And colonial policy had vacillated between treating the Casamance as one entity and dividing it into two or three districts. Shortly before independence, though, in 1944, the Casamance was again

⁸⁸ ANS 2G 41-02, « Rapport sur les travaux exécutés de 1938 à 1941, Service Géographique de l’AOF, » 56, Tableau d’Assemblage des Cartes au 1,000,000° et 500,000° de l’Afrique Occidentale Française.

⁸⁹ Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 358. Senegal won its independence from France on April 4, 1960.

⁹⁰ Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 358.

⁹¹ “Development of the Casamance, linked to its autonomy.” ANS 1Z 0096 Rapport de J. Malbranque sur la Casamance: nécessité et avantage de son autonomie.

⁹² See, for example, « Schema routier de la Casamance, » in ANS, 11D1 0390 Affaires politiques et administratives : cartes et plans du Sénégal et de la Casamance.

reduced to one administrative region, governed from Ziguinchor, with six subdivisions in Bignona, Kolda, Oussouye, Sédhiou, Velingara, and Ziguinchor.⁹³ This “Casamance” did not extend to the Falémé, as Father Diamacoune would later claim, but merely to the Gambia River. No one at the time thought the Casamance extended all the way to Kédougou in *Sénégal Oriental* (Eastern Senegal), despite the later claims of separatists that it did.

Yet, it would be erroneous to assert or imply that French colonial officials considered the Casamance a separate colony from Senegal. Though they established a separate colonial administrative position – a “Superior Administrator” – to handle Casamançais affairs rendered more difficult by distance and geographical separation by the Anglophone colony of The Gambia, this Administrator reported to the Governor of Senegal, not directly to the Governor-General of French West Africa.⁹⁴ Hence, the French clearly never considered the Casamance a separate colony from Senegal. And if they intended to “divide and conquer,” they also knew they needed to preserve stability for trade along the axis of the Casamance River. In 1938, the *Administrateur Supérieur* of the Casamance reported, “...the reason that militates in favor of the administrative unit of Casamance (that is to say a single district) is that the three constituent districts constitute a geographical and physical entity with a natural link, the river.”⁹⁵ Therefore, it was necessary to “also coordinate and unify all matters relating to relations with neighboring foreign colonies ... and maintain the export trade flow that is done naturally from East to West.”⁹⁶ Thus, while the policy of conquest was “divide-and-rule,” the policy of post-conquest consolidation was more like “unite and maintain stability.”

⁹³ Charpy, “Casamance et Sénégal au temps de la colonisation française,” 490.

⁹⁴ The *administrateur supérieur* of the Casamance thus stood between the French *commandants de cercle* and the governor of Senegal. For more on this relationship, see Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*; Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims”; and Awenengo-Dalberto, “Les Joola, la Casamance et l’Etat.”

⁹⁵ ANS 11 D 1 292 Rapport de l’administrateur supérieur, 1938.

⁹⁶ ANS 11 D 1 292 Rapport de l’administrateur supérieur, 1938.

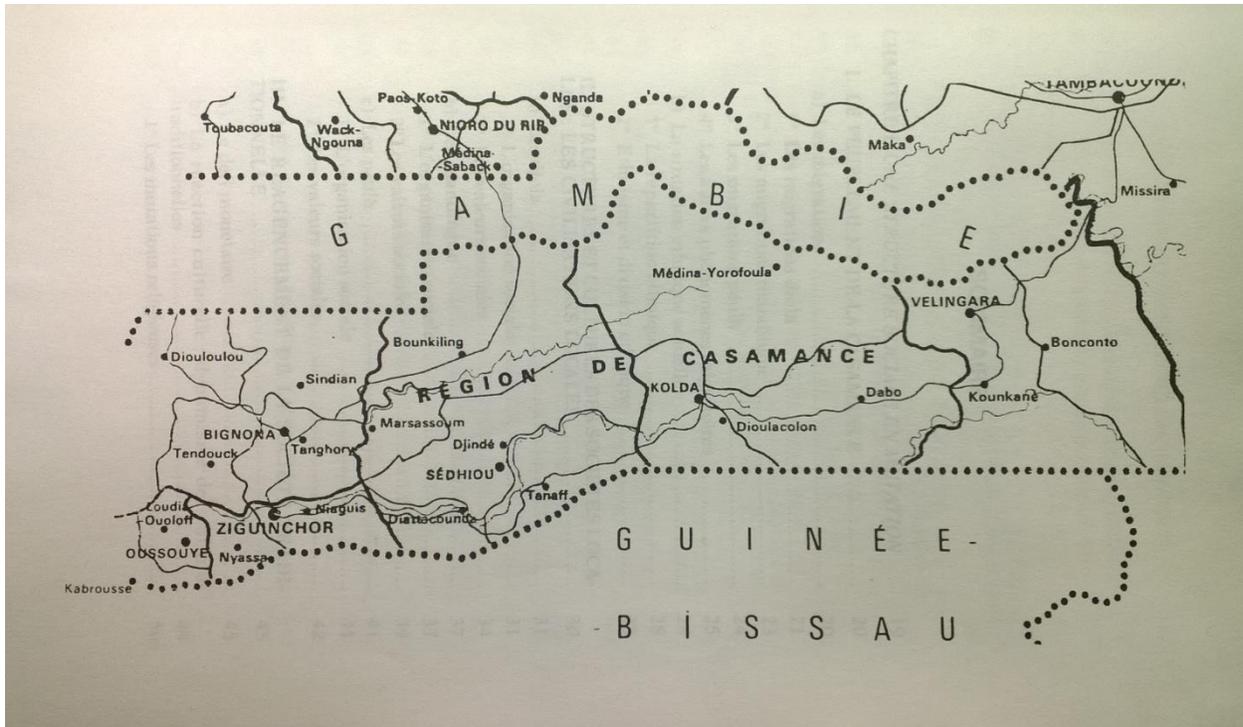


Figure 1-8: From Dominique Darbon, *L'administration et le paysan en Casamance: essai d'anthropologie administrative* (Paris: Editions A. Pedone, 1988), 7.

Separatists decried the 1984 administrative reforms for wiping the Senegalese map of the name “Casamance” while changing the names of Casamançais administrative regions to Ziguinchor and Kolda. [See Casamance map before the reforms, Fig. 1-8.] They claimed the Senegalese government prohibited the word “Casamance” and sent a “military governor” to take over the region of Ziguinchor.⁹⁷ To many Casamançais, whether part of the MFDC or not, this reform appeared to be an attempt to divide Casamançais following the marches and the violence of December 1982 and December 1983 in and near Ziguinchor.

Thus, Senegalese postcolonial mapping of the Casamance River system continued to build on the legacy of French colonial mapping. State officials in both eras sought to “see like a state” by qualifying and quantifying space in rather inexact terms while claiming scientific

⁹⁷ Document from personal archives of Bertrand Diamacoune, copyrighted “Casamance Info Center in Switzerland” (2001), 7.

accuracy and objectivity thought to inhere the practice of cartography at the time. French colonial officials, especially, sought to tie bodies to resources by limiting mobility for the purposes of exploiting regular sources of labor and then taxing the profits from that labor. The colonial and postcolonial states, however, encouraged ties with Dakar to the extent possible to cement the links of Casamançais to the Senegalese state.

Counter-Mapping the Casamance via The River

Land of romance and of rhythms that adorn mangroves and rivers, hospitable, welcoming, and smiling, this ‘green and beautiful Casamance in the clear moonlight,’ as was affectionately sung in the villages for many generations, is suddenly and brutally projected onto the stage, suddenly becoming, paradoxically, ‘the rebellious Casamance.’⁹⁸

--Oumar Diatta, Casamançais journalist

Because of the freedom by which numerous groups of Africans and Europeans came, went, and mingled in the area, many Senegalese have claimed that this “rebellious Casamance,” far from being rooted in difference with Senegal, was, in fact, “the most Senegalese part of Senegal.” Nouha Cissé, the former principal of *Lycée Djignabo* and the current president of *Casa-Sports*, saw the Casamance River not as a space of division but as “*un espace fédérateur*” – a unifying space, a space that brings people together.⁹⁹

To counter what they viewed as the “Wolofisation” of their nation, however, separatists like the Diamacoune brothers and Mamadou Sané began to limit who could be unified in this federating space. They began to obfuscate the borders of the Casamance to turn away “the little Wolof, the little Serer, and the little Toucouleur” as “strangers” to the Casamance.¹⁰⁰ They could

⁹⁸ Oumar Diatta, *La Casamance: essai sur le destin tumultueux d'une région* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), 33.

⁹⁹ Nouha Cissé, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 1 April 2014. For more on *Lycée Djignabo*, see Chap. 3. For more on *Casa-Sports*, see Chap. 5.

¹⁰⁰ In his children's radio program as “Papa Kulimpi,” the “bearded father” in Jola, Father Diamacoune referred to the “little Wolof, the little Serer” and the “little Toucouleur” as “strangers” who did not belong in the Casamance.

not very easily blur the international borders to the north – demarcated by the Joint Boundary Commission at the start of the colonial era – or to the south. Neither could they move or obfuscate the western border of the Atlantic Ocean.

But they could move or obfuscate the eastern border. Thus, Bertrand Diamacoune claimed that the original Casamance went as far east as “the Falémé River” – the modern border with Mali – and as far north as the town of Matam on the Senegal River.¹⁰¹ Bertrand’s brother, Augustin, also claimed the Casamance – *la Grande Casamance* – stretched “from the Atlantic to the Falémé,” a chunk of territory that coincided with the borders of the Catholic Diocese of Ziguinchor.¹⁰² In *Pays du Refus*, the essay he wrote during the 1993 ceasefire, he argued, “The country that constitutes the geographical, historical, and political Casamance stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Falémé [River], a tributary of the Senegal River.”¹⁰³ It is doubtful that a Jola Catholic priest would have had much influence in the primarily Mandinka and Fula Muslim Middle and Upper Casamance, not to mention a town on the Senegal River Valley like Matam. It is more doubtful that any resident of Matam ever considered herself or himself Casamançais.

Statements such as these, however, beyond the role that waterways played in the separatists’ historical, territorial claims, reflect the lengths to which separatists were willing to go to claim a more glorious past for the Casamance – a past with a dignity gradually chipped away, in their view, by the Senegalese state. The separatists may have modeled this argument after Senghor’s model for Senegal, since an attrition of spatial grandeur also occurred to Senghor’s vision of a “French-speaking African nation” following independence.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, many

Thus, he started trying to alienate northerners and instill hatred and distrust of them among Casamançais at a young age. Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 96.

¹⁰¹ Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014; Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, “Pays du Refus,” 2; Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 40.

¹⁰² On the role of the Catholic Church with Casamançais separatism, see Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 59-62.

¹⁰³ Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 2.

¹⁰⁴ Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Nationhood and the African Road to Socialism* (Paris: Présence africaine, 1962), 70.

separatists believed that Senghor so doggedly held on to the Casamance because he could not tolerate further attrition of the territory for his Senegalese nation.¹⁰⁵

The separatists also expanded the definition of “the Casamance” to counter accusations of Jola tribalism. If separatist leaders – most of whom were Jola – left the territorial definition of the Casamance at the Lower Casamance – roughly the area between the Atlantic and the Soungrougrou River – inhabited principally by Jola, then Casamançais nationalism would appear to be no more than Jola ethnic nationalism. As Jean-Claude Marut notes, “Even if all the Jola [were] not fighting for independence, the large majority of those fighting for independence [were] Jola, and the rebellion [was] rooted and conducted only in the Lower Casamance, the Jola homeland.”¹⁰⁶ Putting it more succinctly, a journalist claimed, “Not every rebel is a Jola, but every Jola is a rebel.”¹⁰⁷ Thus, the ambivalence of the MFDC discourse on ethnicity led to a conflation of “Jola” and “Casamançais” identities. Some Casamançais spoke of a “Jola Republic” based on “the three Bs”: the towns of Banjul, Bignona, and Bissau.¹⁰⁸ Such a republic would make separatism more of a concern for the neighboring countries of The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau – as much as it was for Senegal.¹⁰⁹

The separatists responded to accusations of tribalism in three ways. First, they claimed it was Jola “nature” to sit back and listen to all viewpoints before making a decision and committing to a cause. But once a Jola commits, they claimed, he – this stereotypical Jola was

¹⁰⁵ High-ranking NGO official from the Casamance, personal interview, Dakar, 3 June 2012; Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014.

¹⁰⁶ Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 63. On the “over-representation” of Jola in the MFDC, see 62-67.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with a Senegalese journalist in Ziguinchor, March 2007.

¹⁰⁸ Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014; Notables of Sindian, group interview, Sindian, 6 April 2014; Ansoumana Abba Bodian, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 19 April 2014; senior MFDC official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 April 2014; as well as Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 3.

¹⁰⁹ It already was an issue for the Gambian and Bissau-Guinean states, as the conflict often spilled over the international borders into southwestern Gambia and northwestern Guinea-Bissau. See Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, Chapters 5, 8, and 15.

always gendered as masculine – committed “all the way.”¹¹⁰ When the other ethnic groups saw the Jola level of commitment, according to the separatists, they were content to step back and allow the Jola to lead. Second, some separatists claimed that the other ethnic groups agreed to Jola leadership during their last “sacred forest” meeting before the fateful December 1982 march into Ziguinchor, acknowledging that the Jola were the most committed to the cause because the specific grievances the separatists listed against the Senegalese state were rooted primarily in the Lower Casamance, where the Jola lived.

Finally, though it often annoyed or offended the other ethnic groups, there were some Jola among the more committed separatists who claimed “autochthony” for the Jola as a mandate for Jola leadership. Father Diamacoune made The River an essential part of this claim. He employed the imagery of The River – a riverscape – to lay claim to Jola leadership of the MFDC while also constructing a multi-ethnic Casamançais nation. Diamacoune used the multi-ethnic Casamançais to counter the government’s accusations of practicing “tribalism.” He narrated a particular history of the “migratory waves” that brought the ethnic groups of the Lower Casamance into the area to make the case for Jola autochthony, even though the Bainouk had been accepted as the autochthones of the Lower Casamance for generations.

Mamadou Diouf argues that this construction of the Casamançais nation was absolutely essential for the construction of a multi-ethnic Casamance in opposition to the “Islamization” of the Senegalese nation. Diouf accuses Father Diamacoune of intentionally fostering the conflation between “Jola” and “Casamançais” with a pre-colonial history that posits the Jola at the center of a multi-ethnic Casamançais “river”:

¹¹⁰ Western government official from the Casamance, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 27 March 2014; Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014; Notables of Sindian, group interview, Sindian, 6 April 2014; Ansoumana Abba Bodian, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 19 April 2014; MFDC Bignona, group interview, Bignona, 24 April 2014; senior MFDC official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 April 2014.

The concept of mixing and migratory waves' confluence into a single great river helped the Abbé [Father/Priest] Diamacoune as a first step to mask ethnic diversity and merge difference: he took the Joola culture as a common denominator without saying so. He pays this price in order to produce the Casamançais, unique, essential, and radically different from the Senegalese and from his own remarkable ancestors.¹¹¹

The construction of this multi-ethnic “river” may also have been an attempt by Diamacoune to elide the historical factionalism among the Jola, who were, at least in part, a colonial creation and often characterized by infighting and constant warfare, typically living in a siege mentality during the pre-colonial era because of the high prevalence of Muslim slave-raiding in the region. Consequently, factionalism has ruled the Casamance, and there has never been great agreement among scholars on the definition of a Jola identity.¹¹² As the “doyen of Diola [Jola] ethnographers,”¹¹³ Louis-Vincent Thomas, observed: “One cannot speak of the Jola except in the plural...Each [group] has appreciable socio-cultural and linguistic differences, as well as obvious antagonisms. But all of them, conscious of belonging to a common group, know how to close ranks and present a unified front to foreign aggressors.”¹¹⁴ According to Diamacoune, the Senegalese were “foreign aggressors,” but whether the Jola could “close ranks” to join a multi-ethnic coalition to resist “Senegalese colonialism” remained – in spite of Diamacoune’s nationalist discourse – an open question even beyond his death.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Diouf, “Between Ethnic Memories & Colonial History in Senegal,” 231.

¹¹² Again, see Mark and Baum, in addition to Barry, for more on pre-colonial commerce and the flexible nature of pre-colonial and colonial identity formation in the Senegambia. To see other examples of flexible identity formation—in terms of gender as well as ethnicity—in West Africa, see Judith A. Byfield, *The Bluest Hands: A Social and Economic History of Women Dyers in Abeokuta (Nigeria), 1890-1940* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002); Judith Byfield, “Unwrapping Nationalism: Dress, Gender, and Nationalist Discourse in Colonial Lagos,” Paper 30, Boston University African Studies Center, 1–21; Sandra E. Greene, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast: A History of the Anlo-Ewe* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1996); and Greene, *Sacred Sites*.

¹¹³ Baum’s term in “The Emergence of a Diola Christianity,” 370. Thomas was the first Western scholar to publish a detailed ethnography of the Jola people. See Thomas, *Les Diola*.

¹¹⁴ Thomas, “Foreword” to Mark, *The Wild Bull and the Sacred Forest*, ix.

¹¹⁵ “Senegalese colonialism” from press interview with Diamacoune in *Sud Hebdo*, 1 February 1990.

Diamacoune constructed the Casamançais multi-ethnic river in “migratory waves” centered on the all-important Jola wave. These waves “are composed of multiple stratifications that are overcome and eventually covered over and mixed.”¹¹⁶ The first wave was the Jola wave coming from Gabu, a region in eastern Guinea-Bissau. The Jola wave was “the oldest, the largest even, and longer than the territory that extends from the Falémé to the Atlantic, [which] can be considered as the ‘the shared trunk of several branches.’”¹¹⁷ Sharing this Jola “trunk” were the Bainouk (the *indigènes*, or the original inhabitants), Manjak, the Mancagne, and the Balanta.¹¹⁸ Diamacoune placed the Jola, who migrated to the region from the Kingdom of Gabu, a sub-entity of the Mali Empire, on par with the original inhabitants, the Bainouk, whose numbers were diminished by the Jola migration, as well as other demographic pressures.¹¹⁹ Following this first wave were the Mandinka, completing the Mande sub-groups, who “covered the Casamance territory, more or less from the Falémé to Soun Grougrou...thus the Upper and Middle Casamance,” and “finally the ‘Fula’ wave, which extends from the Falémé all the way [to the west] to engulf an eastern part of the Middle Casamance.”¹²⁰

Diamacoune joins these migratory waves into a great multi-ethnic river, thus, to construct a multi-ethnic Casamançais nation on his terms:

Thus it [the Senegalese government] goes so far as to wish to make the Casamance problem simply a ‘Joola’ [Jola] affair; this is inaccurate, it could be rigorously explained with reference to the extent and precedence of the ethnic stratifications, or even by the decisions taken by the Assembly before 25 December 1982 [the sacred forest meeting near Diabir], with people of all ethnic groups, religions, backgrounds, and political views together, which marked the start of the current events in the Casamance. The demonstrators had set off from Falémé to participate, at Ziguinchor, in the march by more than a hundred

¹¹⁶ Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 2.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ On this migration from Gabu and subsequent ethnic and cultural mixing, see Mark, *A Cultural, Economic, and Religious History*; Mark, “Portuguese” Style; Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic slave trade*; and Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*.

¹²⁰ Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 3.

thousand Casamançais on 26 December 1982, with people of all ethnic groups, religions, backgrounds, and political views together. Those who have gone through and followed closely the genesis and the progress of the events in Casamance know very well why the burden of this struggle rests especially on the Diola [Jola] country, and also why this war of national liberation was at first restricted voluntarily to the Lower Casamance Zone... With its propagandistic manipulations of local and outside opinion, Senegal spoke of a supposed demand for a 'Diola Republic' by the demonstrators of 26 December 1982. The Senegalese operation tended to get the Casamance into trouble with the surrounding countries. Let no one be mistaken about it.¹²¹

Thus, Diamacoune implies, the Jola did not seek a leadership role in the Casamance, but neither did they shy away from it, as they were the first among many to assert a truly authentic but multi-ethnic Casamançais identity. He also accuses the Senegalese government of fomenting security concerns with Senegal's neighbors – The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau – to enlist their help against the rebels. Thus, this Senegambian borderland became, as explained by Oumar Diatta above, a zone of rebellion, defined by colonial and postcolonial mapping of the Casamance River and the surrounding river system, in a way that elided factionalism not only among the Jola but among the other ethnic groups of the Casamance as well. This elision was necessary to construct a unified Casamançais identity against the Senegalese "other." The MFDC needed the elision to counter-map the Casamance apart from Senegal.

The discursive nature of this counter-mapping avoided engaging the Senegalese state too much on its terms while making similar spatial claims. But it also demonstrated the difficulty of engaging states on their cartographical terms. Nancy Peluso, Joel Wainwright, and Joe Bryan examine contemporary indigenous counter-mapping in response to efforts of state capitalism to control or exploit natural resources in spaces to which indigenous people have traditionally held property rights of some kind – like in the Casamance. Peluso examines these rights in response to forest mapping in Indonesia by "state land managers and supporting international institutions,

¹²¹ Ibid.

such as the FAO, the World Bank, Worldwide Fund for Nature, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.”¹²² She finds that “local groups can claim power through mapping by using not only what is on a map, but what is not on it” and that a key aspect of such a challenge is “the re-insertion of people on resource maps.”¹²³ In this fashion, maps effectively “pose alternatives to the languages and images of power and become a medium of empowerment or protest.”¹²⁴ But postcolonial counter-mapping is not sufficient to correct injustices wrought by colonial mapping.

In 2009, Wainwright and Bright examined indigenous counter-mapping and the law to see if it was possible to attain justice for indigenous land rights under the contemporary legal systems in Nicaragua and Belize. The results of their investigation were complex and rather ambivalent. They discovered an “aporia”¹²⁵ in the nature of the claims and the legal systems in which they had to be made.

Notwithstanding the creativity expressed through these projects, they remain oriented by the spatial configuration of modern politics: territory and property rights. This spatial configuration both accounts for and limits the power of indigenous cartography. This impasse is not a contradiction that can be resolved; rather, it constitutes an aporia for which there is no easy or clear solution. Nonetheless, it must be confronted.¹²⁶

This aporia represents what I call “the postcolonial conundrum”: indigenous people in the formerly colonized world must construct identities through concepts like “ethnocartography” and “discursive mapping” because the tools of cartography have largely been controlled by the state. Thus, with what has been left to them, they have counter-mapped the nation in their own ways.

¹²² Nancy Peluso, “Whose Woods Are These? Counter-mapping Forest Territories in Kalimantan, Indonesia.” *Antipode* 27, no. 4 (1995): 384.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 386.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ “An irresolvable internal contradiction.” From the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online*.

¹²⁶ Joel Wainwright and Joe Bryan, “Cartography, territory, property: postcolonial reflections on indigenous counter-mapping in Nicaragua and Belize,” *Cultural Geographies* 16:2 (2009): 153.

Indigenous peoples in Nicaragua and Belize claimed their rights to property “based on customary use and occupancy.”¹²⁷ In each case, indigenous persons won in court to correct “state-sanctioned practices that have characteristically resulted in the displacement, dispossession, and destruction of indigenous livelihoods.”¹²⁸ However, Wainwright and Bryan have also discovered that “these successes have met unexpected limitations and produced unintended effects that complicate their translation into justice.”¹²⁹ In short, they argue, “these strategies do not reverse colonial social relations so much as they rework them.”¹³⁰ Reworking social relations has been the goal of the MFDC since 1982. But Wainwright and Bryan do not provide much hope for those with such a goal. Their frustration on this point is palpable.

Contemporary legal systems may change somewhat to accommodate forms of customary law, but more fundamental change is hard to imagine. And two wrongs do not necessarily make a right. Alienating those of particular descent – such as Wolof in the Lower Casamance – from “their lands” based on indigenous counter-mapping may satisfy the vengeance of those wronged by colonial and postcolonial mapping in the first place. But it will not posit a durable solution to the problem—as Wainwright and Bryan acknowledge.¹³¹

Conclusion

Colonial mapping not only brought the Casamance into being by demarcating colonial borders separating it from the rest of Senegal. It also made the Casamance River the central piece of that geography. Thus, mapping and The River in the Casamance have been closely

¹²⁷ Ibid., 154.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 153.

¹³¹ As Wainwright and Bryan write: “Within this literature, indigenous cartography tends to be viewed as a practice of replacing bad colonial maps with good anti-colonial ones...Even maps of indigenous lands may reproduce unequal social relations.” Wainwright and Bryan, “Cartography, territory, property,” 154-155.

linked since the conclusion of the Berlin Conference in 1885. But the diplomats in Berlin did not have the last word. Africans also influenced the mapping of their continent. Whether it was Foday Syllah in Combo in 1890 or Father Diamacoune during the ceasefire of 1993, Senegambians influenced the ways that people thought of particular spaces. They influenced “who belonged” where and when through their own interpretations of the histories and geographies that defined the Casamance.

These “influencers,” however, like the colonial power, did not have complete autonomy to write the story or to map the territory the way they wanted. Ordinary, “everyday” Casamançais also influenced these processes, especially after the advent of the Casamance conflict, as they chose to corroborate, contest, or simply ignore elite mapping of “their” country. If separatist elites chose to transform the Casamance River from a space of unification into a symbol of rebellion, ordinary Casamançais split over whether to ratify this national imagining or reject it altogether. Of course, there were many people in between. Plenty of people sympathized with the separatists, especially after feeling the sting of northern cultural arrogance or after experiencing an exploitation of the Senegalese state.

What becomes clear, however, after talking to contemporary Casamançais on the ground, is that the Casamance River has come to mean more to them than a ribbon of blue on the map or a stream that must be crossed to reach another part of Senegambia or the Upper Guinea Coast. They respect the river as a sacred source of life and as a powerful resource for transportation, irrigation, hygiene, and, on occasion, destruction. But they also consider it one more space that has been exploited for the benefit of Senegalese and the loss of Casamançais. Thus, along with The Forest, The River emerges less as a “natural” space with only a materialist meaning but as a different kind of natural space, a space packed with meaning. When contemporary Casamançais

talk about the Casamance River, they talk about a space of familiarity and belonging; in other words, they talk about “place.”

In the next chapter, we turn to another one of these spaces packed with meaning and to one of these ordinary social groups – peasants – to examine how the phenomena examined in this chapter (mapping and The River) affected the life of the peasant. Doing so allows us to do more than link The River to The Rice Field. It allows us to show how the peasant employed her or his own agency in pursuit of her/his own interests. It shows that regardless of how the MFDC portrayed the peasant as an icon of Casamançais culture, and particularly of Jola culture, the peasant possessed the power to contest this portrayal. The links between these two chapters, hence, exist not only in the mind of an American historian of the Casamance but in the links between the bureaucrats who built and managed the Dam of Affiniam and the peasant Casamançais rice farmer. The Casamançais “civilization of rice” starts with water. But it also depends on the labor of the peasant to mold the earth and the water into a form that produces rice, the staple of the Casamance.

CHAPTER 2

THE RICE FIELD

The rice field between Kandialang and Mandina Mancagne has seen more than its share of the Casamance conflict. It is a rice field that separates by about a kilometer these two villages on the southeast side of Ziguinchor. In December 1983, separatists from the MFDC met in the forest near Mandina Mancagne to plan their assault on Senegalese security forces massing in Ziguinchor following the 6 December murder and mutilation of three Senegalese *gendarmes*. The *gendarmes* had tried to break up a separatist meeting in the “sacred forest” of Diabir almost a year after the fateful march, planned in that location, that ignited the separatist violence.¹ But this time, another group of rebels planned to assault Ziguinchor from the Casamance River, debark from a location near the port, and attack security forces in the city from the north while other rebels massing in the forest outside of the rice field infiltrated the city from the south. The rebels’ pincer movement likely startled Senegalese forces, but the rebels attacked with “guns, bows and arrows, and bush knives” against the modern combat power of the Senegalese Armed Forces (SAF), armed with automatic rifles and machine guns, mortars, artillery, armored

¹ According to Paul Diedhiou, there are questions about the authenticity of this “sacred forest,” as there may not have been a fetish, or spirit shrine, to go with it until the December 1982 separatist meeting. i.e. It appears that separatism produced the shrine, not the other way around. As such, this “sacred forest” serves as an example of how Casamançais nationalists constructed “place” to suit their needs. See Diédhou, *L'identité jóola en question*, 317-327.

personnel carriers, and combat aircraft. The clash of these forces left “at least 19 dead and 80 wounded.”² The Casamance “question” had become a civil war.³

That war was developing a rather asymmetric character, but the MFDC hoped to counter the weapons asymmetry with its intimate knowledge of the Casamançais operating environment. For generations, this knowledge had transformed “space” into “place,” and as much as children in the Lower Casamance found themselves growing up in or near a river or a forest, they also found themselves in a rice field. The MFDC took this common experience and endeavored to transform that rice field into *The Rice Field* – a common cultural symbol, or icon, of the Casamançais nation.⁴ Following the repulsion of the MFDC assault on Ziguinchor in 1983, rebel forces disappeared into the forest. Senegalese security forces tracked many of them to other parts of the Casamance, resulting in mass arrests and incarceration, if not torture.⁵ As quickly as violence in the Casamance began, it subsided after 1983, after the Senegalese state arrested and imprisoned MFDC leaders like Father Diamacoune, Mamadou Sané, and many others.⁶

² Regarding the arms with which MFDC rebels initially fought the Casamance conflict and the casualties from the December 1983 attack, see Jacques Lacotte, “‘Serious Violence’ Reported in Casamance,” *Agence France Presse* (AFP) in English, 0715 GMT 19 Dec 83, as well as the following articles from the dossier “Casamance Conflit” at the *Archives Nationales du Sénégal* (ANS), Dakar: “Menées subversives en Basse-Casamance: Des individus armés tentaient d’envahir Ziguinchor,” *Le Soleil*, 19 December 1983; Jules Charles Diallo, “Les affrontements en Casamance: 19 morts, 80 blessés, 100 arrêtés: un feu nourri près de deux heures,” unknown newspaper, December 1983 (this article noted four women killed among the attacking rebels); and Jules Charles Diallo, “Les affrontements en Casamance: Retour au calme à Ziguinchor,” unknown newspaper, December 1983.

³ For a few examples of scholars and officials referring to “the Casamance question,” see Lawrence S. Woocher, “The ‘Casamance Question’: An Examination of the Legitimacy of Self-Determination in Southern Senegal,” *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 7 (2000), 341–80; and Andrew Manley, *Guinea Bissau/Senegal: War, Civil War and the Casamance Question* (New York: UNHCR, 1998).

⁴ As in other chapters, I will capitalize “The Rice Field” only when I intend to draw attention to the ways in which the nationalist movement reduced the diverse array of rice fields, and the identities surrounding them, into a monolithic, symbolic version of The Rice Field for Casamançais nationalism.

⁵ See the following Amnesty International reports: “Senegal: Torture, the Casamance Case,” 23 May 1990; “Senegal: Mass Arrests and Torture: Most of the Detainees Appear to Be Prisoners of Conscience,” 1 June 1994; “Senegal: Climate of Terror in Casamance,” February 1998; “Senegal: Putting an End to Impunity: A Unique Opportunity Not to Be Missed,” April 2002. To be clear, both sides have perpetrated atrocities, as numerous oral history informants attested from personal experience; thus, the Senegalese Army was not the only guilty party.

⁶ Senegalese police had arrested Diamacoune (at Ziguinchor) and Sané (at Bignona) three days before the separatist march in Ziguinchor in December 1982. See Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, interview with René Capain Bassene, in *L’abbé*, 46; and Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 100.

Following his release from prison in 1988, Diamacoune emerged to declare the independence of the Casamance in 1990.⁷ Shortly thereafter, separatist violence reignited and then sporadically intensified, waxing and waning for the next three decades.

The rebels came back to Mandina Mancagne in 1997. They began lobbing mortar rounds into Ziguinchor, targeting the Senegalese Army's Fifth Battalion based on the northwest side of Kandialang. In one day of fighting, the Senegalese Army lost twenty-five soldiers to the MFDC assault.⁸ The SAF responded with their own mortars and artillery and took up defensive positions in Kandialang following the displacement of many villagers to Colobane and other neighborhoods on the northwest side of Ziguinchor, away from the fighting.

Hence, the rice field south of Kandialang literally became a contested space for the identity of the Casamançais nation, as direct and indirect fire flew over the rice field in each direction, killing and maiming Senegalese on both sides of the rice field and on both sides of the conflict.⁹ Eventually, the Senegalese Army outflanked the rebels in Mandina Mancagne and drove them out of the village – but not before the MFDC planted land mines on the roads leading out of the village to cover their retreat.¹⁰ One Senegalese journalist for *Radio France Internationale* (RFI), Demba Ndiaye, later recalled,

⁷ “Casamance Independence Demanded, Reaction: Leader Demands Independence,” *Sud Hebdo* (in French), 1 February 1990, 3-6.

⁸ ANS Casamance Conflit, “Militaires tombés à Ziguinchor: La liste des victimes” and “Ziguinchor sous le Choc,” both articles recounting SAF casualties in the battle of Mandina Mancagne from 19 August 1997, in *Le Soleil*, 24 August 1997, p. 2. Another report published five years after the battle claimed that 26 SAF soldiers died in the battle: see Demba Ndiaye, “Mandina Mancagne, un village dans la guerre,” *Radio France Internationale* (RFI) Online, published 27 December 2002, accessed 18 May 2016 at http://www1.rfi.fr/actu/fr/articles/036/article_18908.asp.

⁹ The Jacques Lacotte *AFP* report cited above notes that fifteen of the “raiders, including four women, had been killed while the security forces lost four men with another 20 wounded.” The rice field south of Kandialang was not a battle field as much as an obstacle. Its mud and shallow water presented an obstacle for SAF and the MFDC to go around rather than through. Getting stuck in the middle of this rice field would turn it into a killing field. Thus, most of the casualties associated with this rice field occurred on its edges, not in the middle of it, as each side fired across it.

¹⁰ Ndiaye, “Mandina Mancagne.”

Tens of Mandina Mancagnes exist all over the Casamance, villages that have lived in the flesh twenty years of war, chasing thousands of villagers from their homes and their rice fields and scattering their livestock, those not already decimated by the war. It will be necessary, once peace has returned, to take some years to heal wounds, to revive once again a region that is a sort of Senegalese El Dorado, but is today murdered, disfigured, fed up, and famished even though it was called in another life the granary of Senegal.¹¹

Casamançais villages that, like Mandina Mancagne, “lived in the flesh” the impact of the war also “lived in the flesh” rice production. The conflict threatened the reputation of the Casamance as “the granary of Senegal” because it threatened those producing rice in rice fields.



Figure 2-1: The rice field south of Kandialang...uncultivated since 3 August 1997, “the day the war came to Kandialang,” according to its contemporary inhabitants. This photo taken looking south from Kandialang. The village of Mandina Mancagne is behind the tree line to the left in this photo. Photo taken in April 2014.

Those familiar with Casamançais culture were not surprised that the conflict quickly moved from the streets of Ziguinchor to the edge of a rice field.¹² After all, Casamançais

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Daniel Jatta, personal interview, Banjul, 4 March 2014; a Jola refugee from Fogy, personal interview, Banjul, 14 March 2014; Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014; man from Kandialang, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 18 April 2014; residents of Kandialang, group interview, Ziguinchor, 21 April 2014; high-ranking MFDC official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 April 2014.

devoted much of their land not covered by forest or mangroves to rice production. Rice comprised the staple of the Senegalese diet, and the Casamance was the richest rice-producing region in the country. Though farmers in the Senegal River Valley east of Saint-Louis also grew rice, they did so only with irrigation. While in the Casamance, rice was grown under “diverse ecologies,” it was the only region where “rain-fed” rice was possible until rainfall amounts began to plummet in the 1970s.¹³ Moreover, the Jola had been known for their expertise as rice producers for generations. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Jola and their predecessors have been practicing wet rice cultivation in the region for at least a thousand years.¹⁴ Thus, scholars have noted the connections between the agrarian cultural identity of the separatists and the political economy of rice production in the Casamance.

¹³ FAO Corporate Document Repository, FAO Rice Information, Senegal (2000), accessed on 26 January 2016 at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y4347e/y4347e1k.htm>.

¹⁴ Joanna Davidson, “‘We Work Hard’: Customary Imperatives of the Diola Work Regime in the Context of Environmental and Economic Change,” *African Studies Review* 52:2 (September 2009), 119. Davidson, a cultural anthropologist, has written extensively on the subject of Jola rice production and environmental change in northwestern Guinea-Bissau, part of what Casamançais separatists considered the “Jola Republic.” She cites Olga Linares for the claim that “archaeological evidence suggests that Diola have been practicing their trademark wet rice cultivation techniques in this region for at least a thousand years.” But it is not clear what she means by “this region.” Perhaps she means the broader Upper Guinea Coast, but the Jola are fairly recent arrivals to the Lower Casamance. Other secondary literature concurs that they migrated *en masse* in the seventeenth century, fleeing the Mandé invasion of Gabou, a kingdom in contemporary eastern Guinea-Bissau. Their increasing presence in the Lower Casamance absorbed and displaced many Bainouk, considered the earliest known inhabitants of the Lower Casamance, as discussed in this chapter. For more on this Jola migration and ethnic mixing with the Bainouk, see Mark, “Portuguese” Style and Luso-African Identity; Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*; and Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*. Robert Baum complicates this consensus somewhat with the claim that the Jola migration from Gabou is not certain and that it may have originated from a point further south along the Upper Guinea Coast. See Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*, 71-72. For more on the various types of rice agriculture across the broader region of West Africa, see Roland Portères, “Les Rizières de ruissellement en Casamance,” in *Revue internationale de botanique appliquée et d’agriculture tropicale*, 32e année, bulletin 351-352 (Janvier-Février 1952): 34-37. For more of Davidson’s work on the links between environmental change and cultural change among the Jola of northwestern Guinea-Bissau, see Davidson, *Sacred Rice: An Ethnography of Identity, Environment, and Development in Rural West Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Davidson, “Of Rice and Men: Climate Change, Religion, and Personhood among the Diola of Guinea-Bissau,” *Journal of the Study of Nature, Religion, and Culture*, 6:3 (2012), 363-381; Davidson, “Basket Cases and Breadbaskets: Sacred Rice and Agricultural Development in Postcolonial Africa,” *Culture, Agriculture, Food & Environment*, 34:1 (2012), 15-32; and Davidson, “Cultivating Knowledge: Development, Dissemblance, and Discursive Contradictions among the Diola of Guinea-Bissau,” *American Ethnologist*, 37:2 (2010), 212-226. For more on the link between climate change and the Casamance conflict, see Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*.

These connections between the cultural identity and the political economy of the Casamance led to the production of an iconic Casamançais rice peasant, an allegedly authentic “son of the Casamance,” repeatedly posited by Father Diamacoune as the embodiment of the Casamançais nation. Because of this rice peasant’s cultural distinctiveness, he – except in a few cases, this iconic peasant was typically masculine – could not remain in the nation of Senegal.¹⁵ This iconic peasant emerged from an equally iconic place in Casamançais culture and history: The Rice Field. The Rice Field brought together the cultural characteristics that distinguished the Casamançais rice peasant from other Senegalese citizens and the political economy that allegedly made the Casamance *le grenier du Sénégal*, or “the rice basket of Senegal.”

In this chapter, I argue that this essentialized rice peasant emerged from the essentialized Rice Field through two transformative periods in Casamançais history. The first period occurred between 1850 and 1920, when three social processes made the rice field a refuge for Casamançais “authenticity.” The three processes were colonization, Islamization, and Mandinkization. Each process brought about social and cultural change over time that produced the postcolonial particularism of the separatist movement. 1850 marked the commencement of the colonial conquest in the Casamance following the installation (in late 1849) of Emmanuel Bertrand-Bocandé as the French *Résident* of Carabane, the island trading center in the mouth of the Casamance River. 1920 marked the end of Jola resistance to the conquest and the consolidation of exclusive French colonial rule.¹⁶ The second transformative period occurred between 1970 and 1990, when increasing pressure on Casamançais land combined with the disappointment of Casamançais, especially Casamançais elites, with the postcolonial Senegalese

¹⁵ Robert Baum analyzes the few cases where a woman personified the iconic Casamançais peasant, most famously in the case of Aline Sitoé Diatta, in Baum, *West Africa’s Women of God*.

¹⁶ Roche, *Historie de la Casamance*, “Deuxième Partie: Les premières résistances casamançaises,” and “Quatrième Partie: Les résistances des peuples de Basse Casamance (1890-1920).”

dispensation following the first ten years of independence. 1990 marked the intensification of the Casamance conflict following the release of Father Diamacoune and other separatists from prison and Diamacoune's declaration of Casamançais independence. These changes transformed the Casamançais rice peasant into an iconic, disgruntled separatist. And they transformed the Casamançais rice field into an iconic place – *The Rice Field* – to be contested by Casamançais on both sides of the conflict.

It may be tempting to view these two periods, which roughly coincide with the start and end of formal colonialism in Senegal (1885-1960), as privileging colonial agency over that of Senegalese. Though both forms of agency played important roles in producing the modern forms of the Senegalese and Gambian nation-states, this chapter is not about agency. It is about the changes over time that led to the separatist movement in the Casamance. The history of the Casamance is not only a French or a British story any more than it is only a Senegalese story or a Gambian story or a Wolof or Serer story. It is a story of complexity and heterogeneity. That is why I strive to demonstrate the complexity in the processes of Islamization, Mandinkization, and colonization along with the changes brought on by the postcolonial neoliberal crisis in Africa. These exogenous factors were not all that shaped Casamançais identity. But they brought changes to the Casamance that separatists like Father Diamacoune and Mamadou Sané were quick to exploit with their version of Casamançais history and geography.

If this periodization privileges colonial history, the fact is that colonial mapping and administration produced “the Casamance” as we know it today. If The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau did not exist as historically produced, postcolonial states, then neither would the Casamance. The Casamance would not exist without colonialism. But that does not mean that colonialism was the only important social process involved in producing the contemporary

situation in the Casamance.¹⁷ In the end, Casamançais interpreted in their own, local ways the social, cultural, economic, and political changes that took place over the century that followed the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference. As they occurred in and around the rice field, those changes are the focus of this chapter.

A Civilization of Rice: Production, Consumption, Community

For centuries, rice has served as the staple of the diet in the Lower Casamance. The Casamance became known as a “civilization of rice.”¹⁸ Especially for the Jola, cultivating rice was “a duty.”¹⁹ A meal without rice was not a meal. This “civilization of rice” originated in the rice field, where the rice was grown. But the rice was consumed, of course, at home with family and friends – in community. Hence, rice built community. The MFDC depended, at least in part, on this sense of community in the rice field to construct a Casamançais nation.

Rice was not just a foodstuff to the Jola. It was sacred. In fact, it was as sacred to many Casamançais as the water of The River or the trees of The Forest. The Jola viewed rice as “a gift from Emitai [the Supreme Being] to the ‘first ancestors’.”²⁰ Rice was sacred not just because wet rice cultivation requires copious amounts of time and hard work or because it fostered a unique culture; it was sacred because doing it right was a matter of life and death.²¹ To the Jola,

¹⁷ For those interested in debates on the periodization of African history, see Richard Reid, “Past and Presentism: The ‘Precolonial’ and the Foreshortening of African History,” *Journal of African History* 52:2 (July 2011), 135–55; Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Mamadou Diouf, “Sortir de la parenthèse coloniale. Un défi fondateur pour les historiens africains,” *Le Débat* 1/2002 (n° 118), 59-65; Frederick Cooper, “Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History,” *The American Historical Review* 99:5 (December 1, 1994), 1516–45; John Lonsdale et al., “States and Nations,” *Journal of African History* 34:1 (1993), 143–45; John Lonsdale, “The Emergence of African Nations: A Historiographical Analysis,” *African Affairs* 67:266 (January 1, 1968), 11–28.

¹⁸ The first ethnographer of the Jola, Louis-Vincent Thomas, referred to Jola society as a “civilization of rice,” a civilization later analyzed in detail by Paul Péliissier. Thomas, *Les Diola*. Also, Péliissier, *Les Paysans du Sénégal*; and Thomas in “Les Diola d’antan,” 74-77.

¹⁹ Daniel Jatta, personal interview, Banjul, 4 March 2014.

²⁰ Baum, *West Africa’s Women of God*, 27.

²¹ Davidson, “‘We Work Hard’,” 130.

“the end of work means death.”²² Thus, many rice fields had their own spirit shrines nearby, where the shrine’s priest prayed for good rains and a bountiful harvest every year.²³

This fusion of the physical and metaphysical in The Rice Field became an important means for the MFDC to foster Casamançais nationalism. It enabled the imagination of the nation in a place closely tied to Jola cosmologies. As Olga Linares has argued, rice production brought together the spiritual and the material in the Casamance. She contends this fusion was important because “...these two ways of looking at the human condition – the ideological and the productive – are deeply connected.”²⁴ Linares believes that the Jola approach to rice agriculture should be considered a “moral system,” with its own “body of legitimating ideas and beliefs.”²⁵ Moreover, Linares argues,

The ways in which human beings organize themselves to act upon the physical environment are ideologically structured, and ideologies in turn are forged in interaction. The system is constituted not only by the forces and relations of production, but also by a body of beliefs and ritual practices. These beliefs may go under various labels – ideology, religion, superstructure – but the point to remember is that they are at one and the same time social responses and ways of organizing the natural world. In these terms, productive processes are never value-free or neutral, but always informed by vested interests, personal motives and power relationships.²⁶

Linares is correct about the importance of this ideological fusion in the Casamance, but she did not know when she published *Power, Prayer, and Production* in 1992 the degree to which the MFDC would validate her argument.²⁷ After all, to most Casamançais, there was little difference between the physical and the metaphysical. The Rice Field was spiritual and material at the

²² Ibid.

²³ Linares, *Power, Prayer, and Production*, 23-27.

²⁴ Ibid., 4.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 4-5.

²⁷ Linares explains how her argument brings together the analyses of Louis-Vincent Thomas, with his analysis of the metaphysical in Jola society, and Paul Pélissier, with his materialist analysis of Jola society. See Thomas, *Les Diola* and Paul Pélissier, *Les Paysans du Sénégal*.

same time. But more importantly, the two were mutually constituted in the Lower Casamance. Rice production depended on the spiritual world of spirit-shrines while the spirit-shrines depended on the production of rice to maintain their power. Hence, the fusion of these two worlds enabled the nationalist project of making the nation *real* to Casamançais.

The fusion of the physical and the metaphysical in *The Rice Field* in the late 1970s made it a contested space shortly before the ignition of the conflict in 1982. This contestation resulted from the delayed implementation of the 1964 national domain law in Senegal, the onset of twentieth century climate change, and the increased pressure on the land from the migration of northern Senegalese to the Casamance in search of cultivable land. But to many Casamançais, this space had always felt like “place.” It was a place they felt they belonged. They recalled with fondness helping their mothers as young boys or young girls plant and transfer the rice shoots into the rice field. Once the boys were old enough, they recalled helping their fathers dig and prepare the rice field for planting, cultivation, and irrigation with a peculiar spade known as the *kayendo* (pronounced “kye-yen-doo”).²⁸ The *kayendo* is a type of fulcrum-shovel that has become an important cultural icon to the Jola.²⁹ The use of the *kayendo* became so prevalent in the Lower Casamance – even beyond the Jola – that separatists seized it, too, as a symbol of Casamançais cultural particularity.

Rice cultivation in the Casamance has typically followed a number of well-defined steps, worked out over centuries of practice. In many ways, each step of the process has been gendered because of the gendered roles of the community involved in accomplishing them. Joanna

²⁸ Nearly every single informant with whom I spoke in the Casamance referred to the *kayendo*, considered a uniquely Jola instrument for rice cultivation. e.g. Daniel Jatta, personal interview, Banjul, 4 March 2014; Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014; MFDC Bignona, group interview, Bignona, 24 April 2014.

²⁹ Thomas, *Les Diola*, 43-44.

Davidson aptly simplifies this “gendered division of labor.” She explains, “A married man and his unmarried sons are responsible for preparing the *butonda* [rice paddy] for rice planting, and a married woman and her unmarried daughters are responsible for transplanting rice seedlings and harvesting ripe rice.”³⁰ Indeed, to the extent that a nation has been imagined as a community of both genders in the Casamance, it was first imagined in *The Rice Field*. In Jola families at least, both genders contribute to the process of producing rice; thus, both play a role in providing food for the family.³¹ Both feed the family; thus, both help imagine the community.

The nearly continuous process of cultivating rice among the Jola of the Casamance typically consists of the following steps. First, men and women build and nurture the nurseries where rice seedlings will sprout and initially grow. With their *kayendos*, men dig and form the embankments containing the nursery and then dig the ridges and furrows where the rice shoots will grow. Men rest the *kayendo* on their knee while digging and lifting large clods of dirt. The men also broadcast and plant the rice seed. The women weed the field and fertilize it with manure from their family’s cattle. Four to six weeks after planting, the young rice shoots are removed from the nursery and transferred to the fields, where they are re-planted. About a week before transplanting, the men prepare the fields by building the embankments, ridging and furrowing. One of their greatest concerns once the shoots have been transplanted is controlling the salinity of the water in the rice field. They keep brackish water out by the construction of large dikes. If one of these dikes fails, the entire crop will be lost. They keep fresh water in by a

³⁰ Davidson, “‘We Work Hard,’” 125.

³¹ Mandinka men, on the other hand, typically do not contribute to rice cultivation, though their diet also depends on rice. Instead, they farm peanuts and leave the rice production to the women. That is why “Mandinkization” has been tied to peanut cultivation. Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, 28 March 2014, Ziguinchor; The Sindian “Notables,” group interview, 6 April 2014, Sindian; Nouha Cissé, personal interview, 9 April 2014, Ziguinchor; Abdoulaye Gassama, personal interview, 22 April 2014, Sindian; MFDC Bignona Chapter, group interview, 24 April 2014, Bignona; Thomas, *Les Diola*; Péliissier, *Les Paysans du Sénégal*; Linares, *Power, Prayer and Production*, Chap. 6: “Social relations of production re-structured,” 172-203; Davidson, *Sacred Rice*.

series of sluices and canals. As the rice grows and the water in the field dries up, the rice will be ready to be harvested. Harvesting the rice is normally a community task, as farmers are eager to gather their crop before nature can destroy it. Thus, it behooves the community to unite and perform this task together.³²

In this way, Casamançais have performed the community in The Rice Field. Men and women, young and old, play their roles in the process leading to a bountiful harvest of rice. And when it is time for harvest, the community displays its communal bonds that not only make the harvest possible but also make the community possible, as immediate family members often do not provide enough labor to harvest the crop in a timely manner.³³ Thus, these rice farmers must turn to “work associations” to complete the harvest and other time-sensitive tasks. Work associations are often based on the *hank*, which can refer to the “common residence” formed around an “open area or courtyard as a physical space bearing a proper name (Elufbajat, Hekeniin, Hujok, etc.), to all the men and their unmarried sisters residing around this space, or only to the male household heads occupying tightly clustered buildings surrounded by a common wall or fence.”³⁴ These work associations based on the *hank* provided a degree of social organization ripe for exploitation by separatists.

Their labor-based performances transformed the rice field into *The Rice Field*, a cultural icon also ripe for exploitation by the MFDC. They provided the means by which the social structure of the conjugal family unit expanded to the extended family, the compound, the village, the region, and finally, the nation. They transformed the *space* of the rice field into the *place* of

³² Linares, *Power, Prayer and Production*, 17-23. Getting the brackish water out has become more of a concern with the increasing salinity of the Casamance River over the course of the last several decades, to be discussed later in this chapter.

³³ Linares, *Power, Prayer and Production*, 66-70; Davidson, ““We Work Hard,”” 125-126.

³⁴ Linares, *Power, Prayer and Production*, 65.

The Rice Field that nearly everyone in the Casamance knows intimately as a place of belonging.³⁵ While the cultivation process just described comes from research and scholarship on Jola societies, similar processes have developed in other ethnic communities in the Casamance where rice forms the staple of the diet, such as the Mandinka, the Balanta, the Mancagne, the Manjak, and the Papel.³⁶ Thus, The Rice Field constitutes an incredibly flexible and powerful symbol for national belonging in the Casamance. The MFDC has used it to imagine the nation not just in Jola societies but across the Casamance.

According to this discourse, Casamançais “know” rice; Senegalese do not. Several oral history informants confirmed this sentiment. A man from Fogny claimed,

I have spent a lot of time in the rice field because it’s there that we [men] cultivate so that the women can transplant the rice shoots. Moreover, we help the women, after they harvest the rice, to carry it to our homes. I can say that in northern Senegal there are not many rice fields and that in the Casamance, the rice fields are very important, not only because they provide us sustenance but also because that has been the case since time immemorial for our grandparents. The rice field is the basis of the definition of the Casamance...For me, the rice field is a space of equality for men and women, and you know, all that one earns in the rice field one brings home to eat with one’s family.³⁷

Indeed, numerous informants have suggested that eating homegrown paddy rice with one’s family was part of what it meant to be Casamançais. To them, eating “sack rice” did not mean participating in the modern market economy as much as it meant less authenticity in being Casamançais. Bertrand Diamacoune remembered, “My papa never ate rice sold in the boutiques

³⁵ For a more detailed discussion of “space” and “place,” see the Introduction of this dissertation, which includes, among others, the work of Yi-fu Tuan, *Space and Place*; Noel Castree, “Differential Geographies: Place, Indigenous Rights and ‘local’ Resources,” *Political Geography* 23:2 (February 2004): 133–67; Massey, *For Space*; and Lefebvre, *State, Space, World*.

³⁶ There are distinct differences, however. For example, Mandinka men do not work in the rice fields; instead, they focus their labor on peanut production and leave rice production to the women. Nearly every oral informant I interviewed (out of 38 informants) confirmed this distinction. For example, Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014; village peasant in Fogny, personal interview, Niankite, 3 April 2014; Notables of Sindian, group interview, Sindian, 6 April 2014.

³⁷ A Jola refugee from Fogny, personal interview, Banjul, 14 March 2014.

[small shops] because for him, the rice sold in the boutiques had a bad odor. And he was not the only one who thought that; many people from the village thought the same thing.”³⁸

Diamacoune then explained why it mattered to eat rice that was more authentically

“Casamançais”:

For me, if there is no link between the nationalist movement and the rice fields, that’s not good, because the rice fields permit us to live as much as the river. For me, the majority of the other ethnic groups [in the Casamance] that have followed the actions of the Jola have now become more professional than the Jola with fishing, the cultivation of rice, the planting of orchards, the planting of trees, etc.³⁹

Bertrand Diamacoune suggested that the other ethnic groups were taking these symbolic spaces emerging largely from Jola society and making them their own. Coming from a man who often seemed to conflate Jola ethnic nationalism with Casamançais nationalism, this statement points to the importance of The Rice Field as a place of common experience between ethnic groups in the Casamance. Thus, just as The River became *un espace fédérateur*, separatists like the Diamacoune brothers posited The Rice Field in much the same way.⁴⁰

Along with this multi-ethnic character, other agricultural spaces joined the rice field as places where the nation was performed. The Rice Field in the Casamance was not always indicative of the Casamance as a “civilization of rice” as much as “civilizations of rice” ...and other things. In other words, “the rice field” has always been plural, even though Louis-Vincent Thomas’s “civilization of rice” model privileges Jola rice agriculture over that of other ethnic groups in the region. In fact, nearly every ethnic group along the Upper Guinea Coast developed a civilization of rice because rice was the staple of their diets. Thomas’s unit of analysis,

³⁸ Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Nouha Cissé referred to the Casamance River as an *espace fédérateur*, a “federative space,” or a space that brought people from different parts of the Casamance together. See Chapter 1 of this dissertation. Nouha Cissé, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 1 April 2014.

however, was the Jola, which is why he fashioned the Jola in particular as constituting a civilization of rice. Indeed, the Jola are the majority ethnic group of the Lower Casamance, where all of the separatist violence has occurred. Like the Jola, some of these other ethnic groups of the Lower Casamance also tapped and drank palm wine, not to mention growing peanuts and millet. In fact, they often looked forward to drinking some palm wine at the end of a long day in the rice field. In this way, cultivating rice and drinking palm wine were closely linked.⁴¹

At least for the men. One often finds a group of men in the Casamance sitting around, drinking palm wine, and talking loudly about sports, politics, women, etc. – like men in just about any other contemporary society. But one seldom finds a group of Casamançais women doing the same thing – unless they are working at the same time and without the palm wine. The women simply do not have time to waste. Casamançais women wake up early to walk to the river or to the nearest water source to fetch water for the morning's cooking and cleaning. They take care of the young children while the men prepare to go to the rice fields. Then they join the men in the rice fields to work. After a hard day of working in the rice field, while the men unwind drinking palm wine, the women prepare dinner while watching the young children. In the meantime, they may need to fetch more water. After serving the family dinner, they clean up from the meal. They collapse onto a mat at the end of the day, hoping to catch a few hours of sleep before waking up to start the same routine the next day.

Such a routine has allowed few Casamançais women much time to play large roles in public life. Nevertheless, many have – the Jola priestess Aline Sitoé Diatta being the most famous example. But even this limited public role represents a change over time for

⁴¹ Daniel Jatta, personal interview, Banjul, 4 March 2014.

Casamançais women. Women in the precolonial era participated on an equal basis with men in village palavers to discuss situations affecting everyone in the village.⁴² Colonization, Mandinkization, and Islamization eventually reduced, however, female participation in these community discussions. Colonization eventually brought Christian ideas about proper gender roles that drove women out of the public square. Mandinkization eventually drove men out of the rice field and into the peanut field, dividing the space for an agricultural “imagined community.” In Mandinka society, men tended to the peanut fields while women tended to the rice fields. Islamization eventually separated, spatially, men and women by gender while privileging male clerical leadership.⁴³ Thus, in most of the spaces where a nation could be imagined, men were left increasingly alone to do the imagining. Women, meanwhile, were increasingly relegated to the *hank* to oversee domestic life.

While the “civilization of rice” may have been more diverse than its title might suggest, it was a civilization that linked together various groups of people in the Casamance, so that they could “imagine” themselves as a single community, “inherently limited and sovereign.” As Benedict Anderson explained, “It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”⁴⁴ In the Casamance, this “communion” took place, first, in the rice field, and then around a bowl of rice. Even if a family in Kassa did not know a family in Kombo, they “knew” The Rice Field together. Through The Rice Field, they were linked, especially against “invaders” and “strangers” from the north and the east.⁴⁵

⁴² Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, 81-82.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁴⁴ Anderson, *Imagined*, 6.

⁴⁵ Diamacoune often referred to the *nordistes* (northerners) as “strangers” and “invaders.” For examples, see Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus.”

1850-1920: Islamization and the Mandinkization of the Casamance

The Rice Field first began to take shape as a place of Casamançais cultural distinction along with ideas about nations and nationalism during the late nineteenth century, as European colonialism steadily spread across the African continent. Concurrent with this colonization, Islam spread to the Lower Casamance from Muslim traders coming from northern and eastern Senegal. These trade networks also began to influence the ethnic identity of the Lower Casamance, as Jola and Bainouk traders increasingly found it in their interest to adopt Mandinka cultural markers along with Islam.

Mandinkization allegedly marked a process of significant change in the Lower Casamance, thought to affect religious practices, land tenure, gender roles, and agriculture. It was a process brought on along with the colonization and Islamization of the region after 1850, with a resulting “social structure in mutation.”⁴⁶ Much like the process of ethnic mixing that took place when the Jola absorbed and replaced the Bainouk in the Lower Casamance during the seventeenth century, Mandinka increasingly absorbed and replaced the Jola during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In fact, caught in between the expanding Jola from the coastline to the south and west and that of the Mandinka from the east, the Bainouk nearly seemed to disappear after 1600 – though not completely. They can still be found in the Lower Casamance as well as in the wider diaspora, but over time, they surrendered their position as middlemen in the changing borderland along the Casamance River to the Jola and especially the Mandinka.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Darbon, *L'administration et le paysan en Casamance*, 19. For more on the process of Mandinkization and the periodization starting with 1850, see Thomson, “Revisiting ‘Mandingization’ in Coastal Gambia and Casamance”; Linares, *Power, Prayer and Production*; Pelissier, *Les Paysans du Sénégal*; and Thomas, *Les Diola*.

⁴⁷ Linares, *Power, Prayer and Production*, 89. For more detail on the Mandinkization of the precolonial Middle Casamance, see Aly Dramé, “Migration, Marriage, and Ethnicity: The Early Development of Islam in Precolonial Middle Casamance,” in *New Perspectives on Islam in Senegal: Conversion, Migration, Wealth, Power, and Femininity*, ed. Mamadou Diouf and Mara Leichtmann (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 169-188.

This absorption and hybridization was partly cultural and partly economic. While the Jola, Manjak, Mancagne, and Balanta focused their agricultural activity on rice production, the Mandinka focused on the production of peanuts for trade with the French, especially after 1850 in the area surrounding the French trading post at Sédhiou.⁴⁸ The Senegambian region's increasing involvement in international trade meant that more farmers tried to substitute peanuts for rice – the growing seasons for these two crops were virtually identical – even though peanuts were not the dietary staple that rice was. Though these farmers had less rice on hand after the harvest, they had more currency for purchasing imported rice, grain, and other goods.⁴⁹ Thus, the market facilitated the Mandinkization of the Lower Casamance.

Mandinkization also affected the type of rice grown and consumed in the Lower Casamance. In 1850, the French *résident* at Carabane, Bertrand-Bocandé, reported that Casamançais grew two types of rice: “red rice” and “white rice.” Red rice, of the type *Oryza glaberrima*, also became known as “African rice,” because it was considered indigenous to West Africa and, particularly, to the Upper Guinea Coast. Over time, it became less desirable than white rice for commercial trade because of the quality and quantity of the yield. The Portuguese introduced white rice to West Africa after bringing it from East and Southeast Asia. From the family *Oryza sativa*, white rice became known in the Casamance as “Portuguese rice” or, because of the Mandinka role in international trade in the region, as “Mandinka rice.” Eventually, red rice was also referred to as “old rice” or “Jola rice.”⁵⁰ These changing labels demonstrated the flux of identities involved in rice production and commerce in the Casamance.

⁴⁸ Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*, 58.

⁴⁹ Donald R. Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 139.

⁵⁰ Emmanuel Bertrand-Bocandé, *Carabane et Sédhiou. Des ressources que présentent dans leur état actuel les comptoirs français établis sur les bords de la Casamance*, *Moniteur du Sénégal* No. 41 (1857), as cited by Christian Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*, 43-44. For more on the history of West African rice cultivation, see Judith Ann Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard

Along with this change in economic activity, many Jola increasingly found it in their interest when trading with Mandinka to become Muslim like the Mandinka, Wolof, and Toucouleur from the north and east. Linares asserts that “the first Manding families were welcomed because they were in a position to lead the local inhabitants in the learning and practicing of their new religion.”⁵¹ In other words, the Mandinka could help the Jola learn how to be Muslim, and being Muslim implied improved opportunities for trade and commerce, especially for Jola who matched their new religion with the cultivation of a new cash crop: peanuts.

Increasingly, therefore, Mandinkization implied that the rice field had to give way to the peanut field and that women had to give way to men. Whereas Casamançais farmers had focused on rice production for centuries, by 1975, when discussions about Casamançais separatism began to gain frequency and volume, peanut production outpaced rice production, as the Casamance produced 134,030 metric tons of peanuts and 86,510 tons of rice. While Casamançais increasingly cultivated peanuts for the market, many of them grew rice for the purpose of subsistence.⁵² The Mandinka gender division of labor between the rice field and the peanut field sent men from the peanut field to the market while relegating women to the rice field and the domestic sphere. But shifting crop production also implied less Casamançais (as a percentage of total population) focused on producing rice for the Casamançais diet. Ignoring the possibility of growing enough rice to feed all of Senegal, Casamançais – partly because many Jola refused to sell their rice – barely grew enough to feed themselves.⁵³ As Jean-Claude Marut

University Press, 2001); Fields-Black, *Deep Roots*; Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves*; and Davidson, *Sacred Rice*.

⁵¹ Linares, *Power, Prayer and Production*, 158.

⁵² Darbon, *L'administration et le paysan en Casamance*, 200.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 201.

quipped, “if there is a ‘rice basket of Senegal,’ it’s in Thailand, not in the Casamance!”⁵⁴

Mandinkization initiated this move to increased importation of rice for the Senegalese diet, with imports now supplying about eighty percent of Senegalese rice.⁵⁵

The success of this Mandinkization seems surprising, given the manner in which it started in the second half of the nineteenth century. Two Mandinka warlords, Fodé Kaba, from the Kingdom of Pakao, a country to the east of the Soungrougrou River, in what is now considered the Middle Casamance, and later, Foday Syllah, from Gunjur in what is now southwestern Gambia, used Islam as an excuse for raiding and forcefully converting Jola villages in Fogny (the area south of Kombo and north of Bignona on the north shore of the Casamance River) between 1877 and 1893.⁵⁶ The “raiding *marabouts*” from Pakao and Gunjur killed or enslaved hundreds of Jola. They terrorized numerous Jola villages in the region.

They freely pillaged the Jola until they ran afoul of colonial interests. In 1890, Foday Syllah began opposing and harassing the surveying activities of the Anglo-French Boundary Commission. Before the survey began, the surveyors had told Syllah that the colonial border would not divide “his country” of the Combo. As the border took shape, however, it became clear that it did. The British eventually chased Syllah out of the area, into exile in Saint-Louis in northern Senegal. But the inroads to the area for other Mandinka were not so easily undone. The Lower Casamance – at least on the north bank of the river – was becoming more and more Muslim and more and more Mandinka. That meant more and more peanut cultivation.

Paul Pélissier was the first scholar to note this social process of Mandinkization among the Jola. What is most striking is not the transformation of certain Jola cultural traits but the

⁵⁴ Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 51.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Darbon, *L’administration et le paysan en Casamance*, 24.

transformation of social structures as well. Again, the link between the cultural and the social, between the metaphysical and the physical, appears to be real and significant to people on the ground. Pélissier explained:

The Jola, hard working and after profit, essentially anxious to accumulate rice and to augment their cattle, have borrowed from the Manding [i.e. Mandinka], not only their religious conceptions, but also their life-style and their hierarchy of values. These peasants, rustic and concrete, have become, in the image of their models, contemplative and attached to long words. Real wealth is no longer based on material things; their love of work and sense of land have singularly diminished. At the same time, women have assumed in this new society a role comparable to the one occupied by women among the Manding.⁵⁷

This last sentence implied a regression for Jola women's participation in the public sphere.⁵⁸

Linares suggests that we should not be surprised by such social change. She also questions the uniformity of these social categories, as there are always exceptions to identities. She claims, "...no one ever carries a single identity. Members of all societies simultaneously hold a whole range of identities in the same way as they occupy a number of statuses and play a variety of roles."⁵⁹ Nevertheless, scholars of the Lower Casamance concur that Mandinkization brought significant social and cultural changes to the region. There may be exceptions to monolithic categories of identity, but these categories had meaning to those on the ground. And the categories appeared to manifest in material ways. Beyond religion and the dominant crop type, how else did Mandinkization affect Jola identity? And why did it matter to the separatist movement?

It matters because rebelling against peanut production became congruent with rebelling against colonial rule. Mandinkization became integrated with colonization and Islamization.

⁵⁷ Pélissier, *Les Paysans du Sénégal*, 799-800.

⁵⁸ Peter Mark also notes this change and the subsequent regression for women's public participation. See Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, 83.

⁵⁹ Linares, *Power, Prayer and Production*, 147.

And once the colonial authorities forged their “paths of accommodation” with Sufi *marabouts* from the Senegalese peanut basin, resisting peanut production – especially south of the Casamance River where Islamization and Mandinkization failed to expand as rapidly as in Fogny – also became synonymous with resisting the assertion of a Senegalese national identity based on the partnership between the *marabouts* and the French.⁶⁰

Yet eventually, Mandinka were accepted as “Casamançais” in a way that other Muslim migrants were not. Because of their increasing presence over centuries of trade and cultural exchange, separatists viewed the Mandinka as “Casamançais.” They labeled the Wolof and Toucouleur, however, as “strangers” to the Casamance, even though some Wolof families had also been living and trading in the Casamance for generations.⁶¹ The nearly simultaneous advances of Islam and Christianity in the Casamance compelled Father Diamacoune to assign the polytheistic beliefs of “the sacred forest” to Casamançais national identity instead of Christianity, as one might expect from a Christian cleric. That way, he could avoid dividing the Casamançais nation between Christians and Muslims.⁶² He could avoid alienating the majority of Mandinka. Mandinkization implied that Jola could not reject the Mandinka without rejecting themselves. Because Mandinkization occurred partly through biological mixing, it became a very intimate process. It was not a political phenomenon that became domestic.

It was a domestic phenomenon that became political, as more Mandinka and Jola married one another. Yet its political usefulness to the modern MFDC was also limited because of this process of internalization. Besides, by 1982, when the Casamance conflict began, the Mandinka

⁶⁰ On the reference to “paths of accommodation,” see Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*.

⁶¹ Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 96; Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014; a Wolof man from the Oussouye area of the Casamance, Ziguinchor, 12 April 2014.

⁶² For more on the complex, ambiguous, and somewhat puzzling religious identity of the Casamance, according to the MFDC, see Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

had been in the Lower Casamance for centuries. The Wolof and the Toucouleur, on the other hand, had not – at least not in large numbers. Moreover, the Mandinka social structure, while more hierarchical than that of the Jola, was not as hierarchical or as monolithic as the Wolof and other ethnic groups from the north.⁶³ Consequently, Jola land tenure practices – allegedly damaged or ignored by the Senegalese state, according to the MFDC – more closely matched those of the Mandinka than those of the Wolof and Toucouleur.

Finally, one must question the extent of Mandinkization overall in the Lower Casamance. Though the area around Sédhiou has certainly been known for more than a century as Mandinka country, most of the Lower Casamance is not. It is firmly regarded as Jola, even north of the river in Fogny, Buluf, Thionk-Essyl, and Combo. Thus, it does not appear that Mandinkization changed the primary identity of the Lower Casamance to the same extent as the earlier Jola and Mandinka absorptions of the Bainouk. Linares's assertion that "no one ever carries a single identity" continues to appear apt. Nationalist movements seldom deal in such nuance, however.

While the majority of Jola separatists did not directly demonize the Mandinka, they tended to demonize peanuts, the cultivation of which was closely tied to the Sufi marabouts of northern Senegal. A Dakar billboard in turn tied peanut production to the Senegalese President in the 1990s, Abdou Diouf, who was certainly demonized by Diamacoune and other separatist leaders. The billboard read, "Peanuts: The Revolution of Abdou Diouf."⁶⁴ Diamacoune and the MFDC made their message clear: Diouf's revolution should be resisted in the Casamance. A real Casamançais – an "authentic son of the Casamance" – grew rice. The ethnic implications of

⁶³ Darbon, *L'Administration et le paysan en Casamance*, 37. Darbon notes, "Les groupements mandingue, bien que moins anarchiques que ceux de leurs voisins diola, ne sont pas comparables aux sociétés politiquement structurées de la zone nord. L'unité politique se situe ici au niveau de la communauté villageoise quasi autonome. En effet, même si historiquement l'ensemble des groupes mandingue a été unifié, la structure sociale de base reste le village."

⁶⁴ See photo in Peter da Costa's article, "Senegal: Casamance Quandary," *Africa Report* 38: 2 (March 1, 1993), p. 59.

this discourse were clear but seldom directly stated by anyone except the Senegalese government, which often accused the MFDC of advancing Jola “tribalism.” Nevertheless, the MFDC tied Casamançais “authenticity” more to (Jola) rice production instead of (Mandinka) peanut production.

1850-1920: Colonization and Nationalism in the Casamance

It would be erroneous, however, to deduce that separatism solely brought conflicts over the proprietorship of rice fields to the Casamance, as if people living in the Casamance never found reasons before independence to argue over who had the right to certain tracts of land. While colonization largely contributed to conflicts over land, it did so primarily in the areas where the colonial state maintained some sort of presence. In areas where the colonial presence was less prominent, though, Africans still found their own reasons to contest proprietorship over land – as demonstrated by the maraboutic wars led by Fodé Kaba and Fodé Syllah.

Hence, Africans and Europeans – neither of which were monolithic categories in the Casamance – both contributed to conflicts over land. Several separate incidents in 1914 demonstrated that both contributed to confrontations over rice fields. One related to a riot between two villages in the Department of Oussouye – a Jola village called M’Lomp and a Wolof village called Loudia – that led to seven injured people. The riot developed over who had the right to particular rice fields. Most of the correspondence on the matter consisted of telegraph traffic between the *Administrateur de Cercle de Ziguinchor*, M. de Coppet, and the *Administrateur Supérieur de la Casamance*, M. Richard Brunot. The French arrested four of the perpetrators and sent them to prison for various terms, most of about one year.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ ANS 11D1 0224 Affaires politiques et administratives: Casamance, 1914-1924.

Another incident, which took place in 1913 but was reported in 1914, related to a disagreement between the governments of France and Portugal over the rights of farmers from Portuguese Guinea to farm rice fields in Fouladou, on the French side of the border, particularly in relation to the village of Faquino. The Portuguese Guinean farmers had been allowed to do so before, as long as they paid a tax on their rice harvest. But evidently they stopped paying. French colonial officials were trying to figure out how to re-institute the tax and how much to charge. The officials decided they needed to meet with Portuguese representatives to work out any future problems over the border. According to M. Maclaud, the *Administrateur Supérieur*, it would be a simple matter of properly demarcating the border so that local villagers knew what rice fields were in Portuguese Guinea and which ones were in Senegal. Indeed, he noted that the border was, in fact, marked in the area but that it was also in need of an intermediary mark so that people on both sides of the border would know for sure where the border was. Maclaud also noted, however, that there were natural impediments to properly surveying and physically demarcating the border.⁶⁶

Clearly, colonial boundaries played a role in this confrontation. Though Africans could find reasons to fight one another on their own, colonialism often complicated matters. As with the Casamance River, colonial mapping had an effect on the rice field – or at least on the social relations that took place in or around it. And just because a border was clearly marked does not mean that people on either side of the border would necessarily comply with the limitations it implied. Clearly an important factor in the colonial period, land tenure would also become an important factor in the late 1970s in fueling the Casamance conflict, as discussed later.

⁶⁶ ANS 11D1 0224 Affaires politiques et administratives: Casamance, 1914-1924.

That these three processes – Islamization, Mandinkization, and colonization – took place simultaneously in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the Casamance matters because of what they produced together: nationalism. Of these three, colonization was the necessary condition required for nationalism to take root in the Casamance the way it did. As colonial elites studied the histories of European nations in missionary and colonial schools, colonialism changed the meaning of the rice field to represent a particular Casamançais cultural identity in opposition to the recently arrived exogenous forces of Islam, Christianity, and peanut production. As these men increasingly defined a Senegalese and/or Casamançais nation in their own interests, Casamançais women increasingly found themselves pushed out of the village palaver and back into their houses.⁶⁷ Some were pushed there because Mandinka men refused to grow rice when they could sell peanuts to the French and buy rice from the market. Some were pushed there because Mandinka men had turned to producing peanuts for the market, and these men considered growing peanuts as men’s work and growing rice as women’s work. But even for Jola families where both genders still worked the rice fields, men dealt with external markets while women dealt with feeding the family at home. Women found themselves increasingly excluded from politics – until a Jola priestess began praying for rain.

Resurrecting a Prophetess: Aline Sitoé Diatta and the Jola Rebellion of 1942

To construct the postcolonial Rice Field as a place for performing a Casamançais national identity, Diamacoune resurrected a history from the middle of the colonial era regarding colonial rice requisition during World War II. He gave a speech in 1980 at a conference at the Dakar Chamber of Commerce delineating Casamançais grievances against the Senegalese state while

⁶⁷ Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, 81-83.

commemorating the events surrounding the emergence in 1942 of Aline Sitoé Diatta. Diatta was a Jola priestess from Kabrousse – a village in the far southwest corner of the Casamance – who gained a following from Jola all over the Casamance and northwestern Portuguese Guinea for the success of her rain ceremonies following a long period of drought in the early 1940s. After Diatta began her rain ceremonies, the rain began to fall, saving the rice crop that appeared doomed for failure that year. Like many Jola women at the time, she had migrated to Dakar to perform domestic service for a French family. But after receiving a vision directing her back to her native village to become a prophet for a particular shrine, she was struck lame. According to tradition, she was struck lame as punishment for her not returning to the Casamance when divine revelation first directed her to go.⁶⁸ Finally, Diatta returned “home” in 1942 and began to preach for the shrine. A colonial report characterized the essential points of her “doctrine”:

- The rain, without which there will be no abundant harvest, will only fall if you follow my orders.
- I received these orders from God, who I see every night and who struck me with an infirmity because I was afraid for a long time to speak to men in his name. [In a separate footnote to the text of the report: ‘This woman, still young (25 to 30 years old), is lame from an irreparable dislocated right knee, after an accident a few years back. She can only move with the assistance of two canes.’]
- All those who do not obey me will be struck by God to whom I will refer them.⁶⁹

None of these doctrinal aspects bothered colonial officials as much as the particular interpretations of this doctrine. Aline Sitoé claimed that this doctrine implied the following:

Based on the prestige she acquired from obtaining abundant rains, followed by an excellent rice harvest (the preceding year having been dry), she prescribed, along with her following of sorcerers and henchmen, to stop obeying the White Man, to stop providing him with military recruits, to stop providing him with forced rice purchases for the constitution of his reserves, and to stop maintaining the roads so that he can control what’s happening in the region.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Maturin Diatta Senghor, the nephew of Aline Sitoé Diatta, personal interview, Kabrousse, March 2014.

⁶⁹ ANS 2G 42-01 Colonie du Sénégal, Rapport politique annuel 1942, pp. 59-60.

⁷⁰ ANS 2G 42-01 Colonie du Sénégal, Rapport politique annuel 1942, p. 60.

In short, Diatta preached resistance to the regime of colonialism. Before things could tumble too far out of their control, colonial officials sent a detachment of troops to Kabrousse in December 1942 to arrest Diatta and seventeen of her male companions. Diatta was sent to prison at Kayes, in modern Mali.⁷¹ A Senegalese government investigation in 1983 determined that she died in 1944 from scurvy.⁷² In any case, she was never heard from again, transforming her into a martyr for the modern MFDC's burgeoning separatist movement in the late 1970s, detailed by Father Diamacoune at his Chamber of Commerce speech in 1980.

Before explaining the importance of the symbolism of Diatta to what Father Diamacoune referred to at the time as "Casamançais autonomy," he took advantage of the need to place her story "in context" to recount 300 years of a long Casamançais history, starting with the establishment in 1645 of the Portuguese trading post at Ziguinchor.⁷³ Finally, after about twelve pages of this history, Diamacoune gets to the story of Aline Sitoé. He notes that she was called by "the Sky" to transmit a message to "all people, in all places, but especially to her compatriots in the Casamance."⁷⁴ After recounting the story of her message to resist colonial requisitions of men and rice, which led to her arrest and exile, Diamacoune noted other prophetesses that followed in the tradition of Diatta.⁷⁵ He claimed that Aloendisso Bassene, when she was arrested, cried out, "The Casamance for Casamançais! All strangers get out!"⁷⁶ Diamacoune concluded,

⁷¹ ANS 2G 42-01 Colonie du Sénégal, Rapport politique annuel 1942, p. 61; and ANS Casamance Conflit, Abdoulaye Bamba Diallo, "Histoire Aline Sitoé: Mourir à Tomboctou," *Magazine: Jeunesse, Culture et Loisirs* (1983), 11.

⁷² ANS Casamance Conflit, "Aline Sitoé décédée au Mali en 1944," *Le Soleil*, 11 Octobre 1983, p. 2.

⁷³ Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, "...pour mieux situer le Message de la Reine Aline Sitoé Diatta dans son environnement historique...", "Conférence tenue par l'Abbé Augustin Diamacoune Senghor le samedi 23 Aout 1980 à la Chambre de Commerce de Dakar, organisé par le COCARZI (Comité d'organisation pour le Carnaval de la Ville de Ziguinchor), in Bassène, *L'abbé*, 129.

⁷⁴ Diamacoune, "Message de la Reine Aline Sitoé Diatta," in Bassène, *L'abbé*, 141.

⁷⁵ For a comprehensive treatment of these prophetesses, see Baum, *West Africa's Women of God*.

⁷⁶ Diamacoune, "Message de la Reine Aline Sitoé Diatta," in Bassène, *L'abbé*, 142.

With these historical milestones considered, we can see that colonial domination has never been easily exercised in the Casamance. But once that national independence was gained in a Senegalese context, should we assume the sudden death of Casamançais resistance 315 years old? The question remains. History will give us the answer. What I know is that there are awakenings that shake the world.⁷⁷

Thus, Diamacoune sought to equate Aline Sitoé's resistance to the French with MFDC resistance to the Senegalese, intentionally comparing the "colonialism" of France to that of Senegal. He tied the exploitation of Casamançais rice and conscripts in 1942 to, allegedly, that of 1980. As the sacred source of life in the Casamance, Diamacoune wielded *The Rice Field* as a particularly potent symbolic weapon.

But the Senegalese government was not about to surrender Diatta or her memory to the Casamance. Instead, President Abdou Diouf answered Diamacoune's call from the Dakar Chamber of Commerce with an investigation to determine what happened to "the Senegalese Joan of Arc" after she was sent to Kayes, positing her as a heroine for all of Senegal, not just the Casamance.⁷⁸ After all, she waged her resistance against the French colonial state, not against the independent Senegalese state. Diamacoune argued that they were one and the same. But Diouf, in what the editors of *Sud-Weekend* called a "pathetic" attempt to call for peace in 1999 – at the height of the one of the most murderous times of the conflict – quickly realized that history was a field ripe for contestation. If the MFDC could contest Senegalese history, then Senegal could contest Casamançais history – at least as written by the separatists. The editors lamented, "Obviously, the history taught in Senegalese schools up until now has not really contributed to the construction of the nation based on a historical reality accounting for the degree of mixing and of osmosis of populations, which has taken place over the course of centuries in

⁷⁷ Diamacoune, "Message de la Reine Aline Sitoé Diatta," in Bassène, *L'abbé*, 143.

⁷⁸ ANS Casamance Conflit, Diallo, "Histoire Aline Sitoé," 11.

Senegambia.”⁷⁹ The Diouf regime tried to blunt MFDC criticism of Senegalese history for focusing on anti-colonial Muslim leaders from the north at the expense of Casamançais history. Contesting the discourse surrounding Diatta’s arrest and disappearance enabled it to do that. In effect, the Senegalese state and the MFDC contested the symbolism of Diatta’s life.

Whether Diatta was an icon of Senegalese or Casamançais nationalism, to Anne McClintock, such a symbolic role for women is typical. She argues, “Women are typically construed as the symbolic bearers of the nation, but are denied any direct relation to national agency.”⁸⁰ In spite of the historical agency Diatta demonstrated through her anti-colonial resistance to rice requisition and military conscription, Diatta’s death enabled men representing the Senegalese state and the MFDC to squabble over the symbolism of her life. Senegalese (including Casamançais) elite men squabbled over the meaning of her life – and her death. These men were arguing – and later fighting – over the honor of a woman, with virtually no other women in the argument.

Yet, just as they do in rice fields all over the Casamance, women have played important roles in the Casamance conflict, taking up the mantle of Aline Sitoé Diatta to act politically. A women’s association brought about a resolution during the standoff in 1980 between striking students, separatists, and the Senegalese government during a nationwide student strike that led to riots and the death of the young student from Ziguinchor, Idrissa Sagna.⁸¹ Women led the procession – some of them topless to shame their husbands and sons to peaceful action – during the separatist march in Ziguinchor in 1982, pouring cool water on the ground to symbolize their

⁷⁹ ANS Casamance Conflit, “Les faces cachées de l’histoire du Sénégal,” *Sud-Weekend* [an independent daily focusing on news and issues from southern Senegal], 20 March 1999, p. 2.

⁸⁰ McClintock, “Family Feuds,” 62.

⁸¹ For more on this student strike and the death of Idrissa Sagna, see Chap. 3 of this dissertation: “The School.”

allegedly peaceful intentions.⁸² And women like Seynabou Male Cissé have led the push for peace in the Casamance, forming associations like “The Platform of Women for Peace in the Casamance,” as discussed later in this chapter.⁸³

The Rice Field in the Early Republic

1960 was a year of hope all over Africa, as many African nations obtained independence from colonial rule. Senegal was no different. In spite of the short union with Mali in the Mali Federation, Senegalese national leaders chose April 4, 1960 as the date to be remembered for Senegalese independence. Quickly, nationalist leaders had to learn how to govern nations of great diversity and weak national unity. Frederick Cooper wrote that the only thing that changed at independence was that a few black men replaced a few white men in African state houses and presidential palaces. Otherwise, the colonial regime – politically and economically – remained mostly intact.⁸⁴ Senegal, in fact, had largely been operating with great autonomy since the introduction of the Territorial Assembly in the late 1950s.⁸⁵ Thus, it may have seemed perfectly natural for the new, independent Senegalese government to look to the Casamance – and to its rice fields in particular – as its “rice basket,” just as the French had.

Ironically, the Senegalese government contributed to The Rice Field as an icon of the Casamance. Shortly after independence, Mamadou Dia, as the Senegalese Prime Minister, published the “First Plan for the Development of Senegal,” charting a future course for the new

⁸² Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus.” On the subject of female nudity to compel political action in West Africa, see Naminata Diabate, “Re-Imagining West African Women’s Sexuality: Jean Pierre Bekolo’s *Les Saignantes* and the *Mevoungou*,” in *Development, Modernism, and Modernity in Africa*, ed. Augustine Augwuele (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), 166-181.

⁸³ Seynabou Male Cissé, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 11 April 2014.

⁸⁴ For Frederick Cooper’s discussion of the colonial and postcolonial “gatekeeper state” in Africa, see Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, 5-6.

⁸⁵ Roche, *Le Sénégal à la conquête de son indépendance*.

independent Senegalese state, based on the Senegalese version of “African socialism.” He requested 400 million U.S. dollars in foreign assistance from Western leaders like U.S. Vice President Lyndon Baines Johnson, in Dakar in 1961 to mark the first anniversary of Senegalese independence.⁸⁶ Dia, along with President Leopold Senghor, distinguished this “Senegalese socialism” from European socialism by its African identity, depicted as inherently “agrarian.” It was “African, because it will not trample on the spiritual values of Africa (religion holds an important place in African life), and agrarian, because, currently, only the agricultural sector is entirely in the hands of nationalists.”⁸⁷ Rice production was an important aspect of this plan for national consolidation. More than any other crop in Senegal, Casamançais rice production combined the material and the spiritual in a way that resonated with “Senegalese socialism,” derived from Senghor’s philosophy of *négritude*. Senegalese, including Casamançais, fashioned this ideology as “African” and “agrarian.” In fact, the Casamance was eventually fashioned as *le grenier du Sénégal*, or “the rice basket of Senegal.” Even though the Casamance became a rice importer, this image of the Casamance as the principal rice-producing region of Senegal remained.⁸⁸

Postcolonial Casamançais elites like Emile Badiane and Assané Seck supported the construction of this image of the Casamance. To them, it was not a question of Senegalese “exploitation” of Casamançais rice for Senegalese profit. Rather, they seemed pleased to have something to offer for the construction of the Senegalese nation.⁸⁹ While Senghor needed them

⁸⁶ “Senegal Asks Aid for 4-Year Plan: \$400,000,000 Program Set – Premier Sees Johnson Today on Economy,” *The New York Times*, 5 April 1961, p. 3.

⁸⁷ “Les Journées du Développement de la Région de Casamance,” *Afrique Nouvelle*, 1961, p. 4. Parenthetical comment in the original.

⁸⁸ Hassane Dramé, “Organisations paysannes et dynamique de changement en milieu rural Casamançais (Sénégal),” *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines* 39, no. 2 (2005): 253–281.

⁸⁹ Hassane Dramé, “Décentralisation et Enjeux Politiques. L’Exemple Du Conflit Casamançais (Sénégal),” *Bulletin de l’APAD [En Ligne]* 16 (1998), para. 22, mis en ligne le 27 octobre 2006, consulté le 23 décembre 2015, URL : <http://apad.revues.org/538>.

and the votes of Casamançais and other Senegalese from the former *indigénat* to defeat his political rival from the Four Communes, Lamine Guèye, Badiane and Seck needed Senghor to facilitate their own routes to political power.⁹⁰ At the time, this relationship between elites of the different regions of Senegal was considered a mutually beneficial relationship by both sides. There was no question of exploitation. And there was no question of the Casamance not remaining part of Senegal after independence.

But this fact did not stop the MFDC from twisting this history to suit its own purposes in the postcolonial era. Instead, the authors of “La voix de la Casamance” in the 1980s argued that Senegal had “condemned the Casamance to economic death.”⁹¹ Ironically, Diamacoune and other separatist leaders conflated the icon of the Casamançais peasant with the formation of the nationalist elite during the late colonial era. The MFDC’s historical memories of Badiane, in particular, memorialized him as a peasant martyr for the Casamance. Badiane died in 1972 under mysterious circumstances. In fact, the Senegalese state never declared the cause of his death, and it has never appeared in any Senegalese newspapers.⁹² The MFDC nearly elided Badiane’s reputation as one of the most intelligent students in all of French West Africa, leading to his outstanding effectiveness as a Senegalese statesman, by emphasizing his background as a peasant and a rice-grower. Indeed, recent publications continue this trend, though rendering Badiane’s legacy in equal terms of peasant, educator, and man of state.⁹³ But, the MFDC quipped, Badiane’s contributions to the Senegalese nation were only ignored because, after all, “recognizing others is not a Senegalese virtue.”⁹⁴ The MFDC constantly demonized Senegal

⁹⁰ In addition to Chapter 4 of this dissertation, “The School,” see Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014); as well as Christian Roche, *Le Sénégal à la conquête de son indépendance*.

⁹¹ MFDC, “La Voix de la Casamance,” 134.

⁹² ANS, Dossier “Emile Badiane.”

⁹³ Makhily Gassama, ed., *Emile Badiane: Le paysan, l’éducateur, l’homme d’Etat* (Dakar: Abis Editions, 2013).

⁹⁴ MFDC, “La Voix de la Casamance,” 133.

while valorizing only particular Senegalese northerners whose actions seemed agreeable to MFDC purposes.

Thus, in addition to Badiane, the MFDC claimed none other than the first Prime Minister of Senegal, the Muslim Wolof from northern Senegal, Mamadou Dia, as an early sympathizer of Casamançais separatism, in spite of his role campaigning for acceptance and funding of the “First Quadrennial Plan for the Development of Senegal.” The MFDC asserted:

Everyone knows how the important part of the Casamance in the First Plan, developed when Mamadou Dia was president of the council, was sabotaged... The part of the Casamance in the first quadrennial plan has been sabotaged to the point that Mamadou Dia, well placed to know and to say, could speak of ‘the Casamance, a region betrayed.’ The Senegalese pushed this betrayal to the point of cynicism by recruiting some Jola peasants to go and cultivate the rice fields of the Senegal River Valley. So much for the rice fields of the Casamance, which are more spread out and easier to manage.⁹⁵

According to this discourse, the Senegalese were exploiting not only the space of The Rice Field for agricultural production but the bodies that labored therein, stealing them away from the Casamance to produce rice in the Senegal River Valley! That Dia himself was later imprisoned following what Senghor considered an attempted coup made Dia another martyr and an exceptionally effective symbol of “Senegalese betrayal.”⁹⁶ In fact, it is hard to imagine MFDC affinity for Dia without this shared history of “betrayal.”

Thus, the actions of late colonial Senegalese nationalists like Senghor, Badiane, and Dia effectively linked The Rice Field as a symbol of the Casamance in the early colonial period – through Islamization, Mandinkization, and colonization – to separatism for men like Diamacoune and Sané in the postcolonial period. The separatists quickly pounced on the

⁹⁵ Ibid., 134.

⁹⁶ For more on Dia’s alleged attempted “coup,” see Adama Baytir Diop, *Le Sénégal à l'heure de l'indépendance: le projet politique de Mamadou Dia (1957-1962)* (Paris: Harmattan, 2007); Magatte Lô, *Sénégal: l'heure du choix* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1986); Jean-Luc Martineau, “Mamadou Dia, Léopold Sédar Senghor: La rupture du 17 décembre 1962,” M.A. Thesis (Bordeaux 3, 1987).

opportunity to use this symbolic Rice Field to tar the Senegalese nation as “other” and as a nation of “strangers.” They necessarily turned to history to establish this link, as demonstrated by the discourse of grievance formulated in the late 1970s.

1970-1990: Land, Loss and Grievance

The second transformative period in the construction of the Rice Field as a spatial symbol of the Casamance began about ten to fifteen years after Senegalese independence. It resulted from a confluence of factors that emerged from the increasing connectivity of the Casamance to the rest of the world – connections in the making since the precolonial period but which found a new intensity and pace in the early 1970s. If the MFDC fashioned The Rice Field as the place for the demonstration of this peasant identity, then it fashioned the tourist resort hotel as the place of the peasant’s betrayal. Along with the confluence of other factors in the 1970s, a burgeoning tourist trade emerged as Europeans discovered the beautiful white beaches, the lazy marshlands, the verdant rice fields, the tall, striking palm and silk cotton trees, and the welcoming smiles of Casamançais. The Casamance had much to offer European tourists, especially during the long winters in northern Europe. As French historian Christian Roche explained,

The Casamance leaves no one unaffected when it appears for the first time in the eyes of the traveler. Whether one comes to the Casamance for tourism or for professional reasons, it leaves a lasting, indelible impression. Its generous natural beauty, illuminated by a striking sun eight months out of the year, the softness and gentleness of its populations are some of the good things searched for by the man tired of the nefarious aspects of industrial life.⁹⁷

The question was who would profit from helping tired Europeans escape “the nefarious aspects of industrial life.”

⁹⁷ Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*, 7.

To many Casamançais, it should have been them – since it was their climate, their beaches, their land, their river, and their cuisine – on a bed of rice – that the Europeans came to enjoy. Even those with colonial ties believed that those who labored to produce a product should benefit from its production and marketing. In his 1942 exposé explaining the “advantage and necessity” of Casamançais “autonomy,” J. Malbranque quipped, “The riches of the land belong almost solely in the arms of those who cultivate it.”⁹⁸ John Lonsdale later echoed this sentiment in the context of the Kikuyu “moral economy” related to Kenya’s Mau Mau conflict.⁹⁹ Lonsdale argued that “fathers worked for their sons,” building capital in land through hard work to prepare the land for planting. This was also the argument presented by Casamançais separatists, built on the culture of Jola work regimes.¹⁰⁰

For example, a high school English teacher named Ansoumana Bodian took up the cause in the 1970s of the residents of Kadior, a neighborhood near the center of Ziguinchor. A French resort company named Socitour took advantage of Senegalese efforts to enforce the confusing 1964 national domain law, effectively expelling dozens of residents from their homes.¹⁰¹

Bodian, in a letter to the *gendarme* commander of Ziguinchor, protested that this was a “seditious” act effectively “entombing” the residents of Kadior “while living.” He claimed that the alienation of the residents of Kadior from their land was worse than anything experienced under “colonial rule.” He queried, “Why must [Socitour] pull us out of our famous underdevelopment by expropriating us from the fruit of our sweat? Can they not install

⁹⁸ ANS 1Z/0096 Rapport de J. Malbranque sur la Casamance : nécessité et avantage de son autonomie, 1.

⁹⁹ This moral economy was based on “...the subjective criteria of equity and exploitation, honour and shame, identity and alienation on which people act, if within strong structural constraints.” See Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya & Africa* (London: Currey, 1991), 9.

¹⁰⁰ Joanna Davidson, “We Work Hard.”

¹⁰¹ On the “confusing” aspect of Senegalese land tenure law, see Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 184-192.

themselves somewhere else better suited for plantations?”¹⁰² Bodian’s letter epitomizes the kind of documents written by Casamançais separatists forming their discourse of grievance against Senegal: protesting their exploitation, placing all blame on the Senegalese and/or the French, featuring the innocence of the Casamançais involved, and highlighting at all times the colonial nature of the transaction.

But few Casamançais rice peasants in the 1960s and 1970s were well prepared to interact with European tourists from industrialized economies. Traditionally pastoralist traders and merchants from northern Senegal, like the Wolof and Toucouleur, on the other hand – increasingly prevalent in the Casamance because of environmental pressures in the north – were. To many Casamançais, it seemed that northerners were getting all the best jobs in the tourism sector, cheating the Casamançais once again out of something good that should have belonged to them.

Father Diamacoune contributed to this discourse, peppering *Pays du Refus* with accounts of lands seized by “northerners.” Representative of these accounts, for instance, he claimed,

Some lands in and around Ziguinchor have been snatched from their legitimate owners to construct: the entrance to the Emile Badiane Bridge, the SODIZI [the Ziguinchor Industrial Company], the bus station, a wood treatment factory, the Aline Sitoé Diatta Stadium, the Socitour Hotel, and so on, in order to give them to certain Senegalese northerners. ‘They took everything from us!’ revealed the voices of some crying mothers, with all of their modest livelihood, with no compensation – alas, we must state. All of their lands. Often to the profit of Senegalese. Sometimes, the entire landholdings of Casamançais have been seized in order to offer them to newly arrived Senegalese – fields, houses, trees, etc. – all of these without the least compensation.¹⁰³

Statements like these combined with actual conditions on the ground from climate change, desiccation, desertification, and migration to form a discourse pitting “authentic” Casamançais

¹⁰² Ansoumana Bodian, Letter to Commander of *Gendarmerie Nationale* of Ziguinchor regarding “Problème des emmurés vivants de Kadior, Ziguinchor, Casamance,” 25 March 1976.

¹⁰³ Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 70.

against northern Senegalese. The MFDC asserted that life was hard and getting harder for Casamançais, while Senegalese “migrants” grinned on their way to the bank. The separatists pitted Casamançais decline against Senegalese profit. This discourse resonated with many Casamançais.

Thus, leaders of the MFDC quickly made The Rice Field one of the cultural symbols of difference with Senegal and the Senegalese. In his 170-page essay largely devoted to explaining Casamançais identity in opposition to that of Senegal, Father Diamacoune mentioned the word “rice” (*le riz*) or “rice field” (*la rizière*) fifty-two times. The largest chapter in his essay, 103 pages long, is entitled “*Identité Casamançaise*,” or “Casamançais Identity.” The majority of the references to rice or rice fields appear in this chapter. In most instances, Diamacoune referred to The Rice Field to explain how the French or the Senegalese – the MFDC considered them equal colonial partners in the Casamance – had exploited Casamançais rice fields for the benefit of Dakar or Paris or both.¹⁰⁴

There could hardly be a more sacred spatial symbol to Casamançais. For many Casamançais, the rice field held particular importance for their identity, regardless of what Father Diamacoune or any other member of the MFDC said. In other words, this spatial symbol was not entirely the discursive construction of the separatists. Ordinary Casamançais had also forged their own ties to this space-place. For many of them, the rice field was not a male-gendered place for realizing the nation in political terms. Rather, it was a place of social equality as men and women played equally important roles in producing rice for their families. One Casamançais refugee in The Gambia claimed, “The rice fields provide a foundation for what it means to be Casamançais...For me, the rice field is a space of equality for men and women. All

¹⁰⁴ On the MFDC equating the French and Senegalese as “colonizers” in the Casamance, see the MFDC document, “La voix de la Casamance,” especially the section entitled “Le colonialisme Sénégalais,” pp. 130-131.

that we earn together in the rice field we bring home to eat together as a family.”¹⁰⁵ Work together. Eat together. These activities in *The Rice Field* – placed in contrast with life in northern Senegal – provided the communal bonds by which the Casamançais nation could be imagined.

Therefore, the violation of *The Rice Field*, like the alleged violations of *The River* and *The Forest*, was tantamount to sacrilege. Diamacoune explained, “It is important to underline that, among the Casamançais in general and the Jola in particular, the land is inalienable: it cannot be sold.”¹⁰⁶ On a personal level for Diamacoune, this resentment likely began with his interaction as a young boy with colonial troops, who burned his uncle’s beard off in front of the whole village of Senghalen [Diamacoune’s native village, west of Ziguinchor] in 1933. The uncle was the village chief, and the French apparently thought humiliating him in front of the villagers would serve as an example for others who failed to render the prescribed quota of rice for colonial troops.¹⁰⁷ In any case, Diamacoune equated Senegalese “colonialism” with such narratives from the French colonial era.¹⁰⁸

By 1985, the MFDC had published what French scholar Dominique Darbon referred to as “the foundational document of the Casamançais nationalist movement,” an assertion of Casamançais particularity entitled “‘The voice of the Casamance’: a Jola discourse.”¹⁰⁹ The document was likely written by Diamacoune or Sané or both. In a section with the heading, “Senegalese Colonialism,” the MFDC claimed that Senegal was “bent on occupying and

¹⁰⁵ A Jola expatriate from Fogy living in The Gambia, personal interview, Banjul, 14 March 2014.

¹⁰⁶ Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 6. Diamacoune likely employed the term “inalienable,” which is the same word in English and French, from Thomas Jefferson’s “Declaration of Independence,” to assert a degree of similitude to the cause of the American patriots.

¹⁰⁷ Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 21.

¹⁰⁸ Sané, “Témoignage de Mamadou Nkrumah Sané, créateur du mouvement indépendantiste,” in Bassène, *L’abbé*, 106.

¹⁰⁹ MFDC, “La voix de la Casamance,” 125.

destroying the natural and traditional rice fields, which year after year, with an average annual rainfall, have produced rice in sufficient quantities. This self-sufficiency made the Casamançais freer and more independent... the natural rice fields, of which the people have control, will be replaced by dams in the hands of Senegalese masters capable of starving us.”¹¹⁰ Thus, from the earliest foundations of the modern MFDC, separatists posited The Rice Field as a space of contestation and dams like the one at Affiniam as examples of the Senegalese marring the natural landscape of the Casamance.¹¹¹

Separatists countered calls for peace with “evidence” from the Dam of Affiniam. I place the word “evidence” in quotations here because there exists, in fact, very little evidence for the claim that the Senegalese government built the Dam of Affiniam to dry up and destroy Casamançais rice fields, as the MFDC had claimed in its manifesto, “La Voix de la Casamance.” The MFDC portrayed the Dam of Affiniam as the means by which “Senegalese masters capable of starving us” would destroy not only The Rice Field but also the Casamance and, ultimately, Casamançais.¹¹²

But rumors and discourse do not rely on facts. This rumor – that the Senegalese built the Dam of Affiniam to dry up Casamançais rice fields – quickly spread to other parts of the Casamance. It fit nicely with Diamacoune’s discourse of grievance against the Senegalese state. But those with local knowledge of Affiniam knew this part of the discourse of grievance was a lie. They knew it was inaccurate. They knew that Senegalese officials intended the Dam to “play an important role in developing agricultural and hydraulic resources in the region.”¹¹³

¹¹⁰ MFDC, “La Voix de la Casamance,” 130.

¹¹¹ On the distinction between “the modern MFDC” or “the contemporary MFDC” and “the historic MFDC” or “the original MFDC) of the late 1940s and early 1950s, see Chapter 3 of this dissertation, entitled “The School.”

¹¹² MFDC, “La voix de la Casamance,” 134.

¹¹³ “Senegal Receives Chinese-Built Dam,” *XINHUA* (in English), 22 October 1988.

Since its completion in 1988, thanks to financial assistance from the Government of China, the Dam of Affiniam had functioned as planned, with the capacity of holding 23 million cubic meters of water, capable of irrigating about 5,600 hectares of land.¹¹⁴ A Senegalese government document explained:

Senegalese agriculture has known since the 1960s a series of droughts, leading to an accrued desertification marked by agricultural production that has become more and more unstable. The poor character of this rainfall dominated the country's agriculture, rendering it random, and constituting a serious handicap. Great hope emerged for the Casamance, judged capable of producing a surplus of cereal production (principally in rice) thanks to the recuperation and the development of vast areas of salty marshlands. This hope was founded on a series of studies with the principal idea of the construction of anti-saltwater dams and seawalls. These permit as well the total desalinization of protected zones after a few rainy seasons and the retention of fresh water for the irrigation of agricultural fields. The persistent drought since the 1970s has considerably degraded the environment for rice agriculture in the southern zone... In response to the deterioration of these fields, the Senegalese government has constructed the Dam of Affiniam, the fruit of its cooperation with the Democratic Republic of China.¹¹⁵

Casamançais farmers were correct that their fields were drying up, but the Dam of Affiniam had nothing to do with it. [For an example of a desiccated Casamançais rice field, see Fig. 2-2, below.]

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Professional archive of Bilaly Keita, the Director of the Dam of Affiniam, République du Sénégal, Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Équipement Rural, Direction Régionale du Développement Rural de Ziguinchor, Cellule d'Aménagement Hydro-Agricole de la Vallée de Bignona/Barrage d'Affiniam, "Barrage d'Affiniam: Enjeux et Perspectives," Juin 2013, p. 1.



Figure 2-2: A dried-up rice field in Fogny, north of Bignona, photo taken by author on 23 April 2014. To many Casamançais, “dead” rice fields like these constitute evidence of Senegalese tampering with the Casamançais environment, contributing to the Casamançais discourse of grievance against Senegal.

Instead, twentieth century climate change brought decreasing rainfall amounts to the Casamance starting in the late 1970s, concurrent with separatist tensions.¹¹⁶ Average annual rainfall amounts decreased precipitously in the Casamance in the second half of the twentieth century, dropping from 1,522 millimeters for the period 1918-1969 to 1,189 millimeters for the period 1970-2003. In the realm of extremes, years with more than 2,000 millimeters of rainfall were fairly frequent before 1970 but nonexistent since then, while years with less than 1,000

¹¹⁶ The twentieth century was not the first century to display links between climate change and the activities of West Africans. See Chapter 5, “Western Africa, c. 1630-1860: An Era of Droughts, Famines, Warfare, and Slaving,” in George E. Brooks, “Western Africa to c. 1860 A.D.: A Provisional Historical Schema Based on Climate Periods,” African Studies Center, University of Indiana (Bloomington: University of Indiana, 1985). For more on climate change and the cultural identity of the Jola in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, see the works of Joanna Davidson, cited previously in this chapter.

millimeters of rain have steadily climbed since 1970.¹¹⁷ These facts, coupled with the increasing salinization of the Casamance River – again because of climate change – added up to visual evidence in the rice fields that made the separatist claims about the Dam of Affiniam seem credible.

The links between this visual evidence in the environment and the centrality of rice agriculture in Jola identity made the increasing desiccation of Casamançais rice fields appear like an attack on Jola personhood and community. As Joanna Davidson argues, Jola view their rice agriculture “not simply as a means of sustenance, but also as integrally tied to their conceptions of personhood, social relations, ritual obligations, and collective cultural identity.”¹¹⁸ Jola grew rice. Rice gave them life. Forces that hindered their ability to grow rice hindered their ability to live. And to many Jola in the Lower Casamance, the Senegalese state, in one way or another, was behind many of the forces hindering their ability to live. To them, their rice fields were drying up because Senegal wanted to kill them.¹¹⁹

Other evidence for this sentiment came from land seizures in the 1970s, mostly by migrants from northern Senegal. These “strangers” to the Casamance – mostly Wolof, Fula and Toucouleur – were blamed for a host of social ills. One journalist, Peter da Costa, noted progress in 1991, countering claims of Casamançais oppression at the hands of “Senegalese,” by noting, “The government has gone some way towards alleviating the north-south divide. Land transfers to ‘enterprising’ Wolofs and Fulas from the north have been halted. Agricultural investment has

¹¹⁷ Abdoulatif Diop, *Bocandé: l'éternelle légende* (Dakar: Fama Editions, 2012), 25.

¹¹⁸ Davidson, “We Work Hard,” 120.

¹¹⁹ Ansoumana Abba Bodian, personal interview, 19 April 2014, Ziguinchor; Louis Tendeng, personal interview, 25 April 2014, Ziguinchor; Youssouph Coly, personal interview, 25 April 2014, Ziguinchor; Landing Diedhiou and Siaka Diedhiou, personal interviews, Mlomp, 23 April 2014; Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, 1 April 2014, Ziguinchor.

put the region on the road to fulfilling its potential of being the nation's rice bowl..."¹²⁰ That the Casamance failed to be "the nation's rice bowl," according to the MFDC, was not because of climate change, structural adjustment, or international markets; it was only because Senegal was bent on exploiting the Casamance for Senegal's benefit.

But the eyes of Affiniam locals beheld different evidence, pointing to different conclusions about the Dam and the intentions of the Senegalese government. Lolo Badji, the President of the Association of the Parents of the Students of Affiniam asserted:

The Dam works, contrary to what people say. I do not understand why people advance these notions that the Dam doesn't work. If the Dam really didn't work, then people would not be working there, as they are. If you come to the Dam yourself, you will meet these people, including the Director. The increasing salinization and the desiccation of the soil are the reasons for the construction of the Dam of Affiniam. During the 1970s, there was an extensive drought in Senegal that caused enormous damage in Senegal, including the southern region of the Casamance. In order to remedy this damage, the state, after some reflection, decided to construct a new dam to fix the problem caused by the drought. In the area of Fogy [the region north of Bignona], this drought caused the population that cultivates and harvests the rice to see diminished yields. Thus, we had to think of a better policy to remedy the problem, and so the state constructed the Dam of Affiniam to come to the aid of the population of Affiniam. To me, this Dam has really helped the population of Fogy in as much as it helps avoid flooding after heavy rains. Do not believe the lies of the people who think that the Dam does not work; it works just fine.¹²¹

Other villagers from Affiniam – including the former chief of Affiniam, the Director of the Dam, and *pirogue* operators that moved people and goods across the Casamance River between Affiniam and Ziguinchor – provided similar testimonies.¹²² According to those with local knowledge of the matter, the MFDC and its sympathizers were spinning a web of lies. The Dam

¹²⁰ Peter da Costa, "Casamance Under Siege," *West Africa* in English (London), 28 January-3 February 1991, pp. 100-102.

¹²¹ Lolo Badji, President of the Association of the Parents of the Students of Affiniam, personal interview (with André Badji), Affiniam, 10 October 2014.

¹²² Pirogue operators, group interview (with André Badji), Affiniam, 10 October 2014. A *pirogue* is a kind of dugout canoe used for water transportation across the Senegambian region.

of Affiniam worked just fine. It was performing exactly as planned by Senegalese and Chinese officials in the 1970s.¹²³ To these locals, the Dam of Affiniam showed that Senegal works and that the Casamance could benefit from being part of Senegal. And that is exactly why the MFDC spread specious rumors about it. As Da Costa had noted in 1991, “In Dakar, however, the prognosis is bleak. Economists forecast no immediate end to the crisis that is exacerbating unemployment, and bureaucrats in Dakar view the prospect of an independent Casamance as inherently unrealistic.”¹²⁴ In other words, the potential for conflict appeared to be infinite, leading to the current situation often described as “no peace, no war.”¹²⁵

Women Beyond the Rice Field

If there is such a thing as a “power couple” in the Casamance, it would be Nouha and Seynabou Cissé. As the former principal of Lycée Djignabo, founded in 1957 and perhaps the most prestigious *lycée* in the Casamance, and as the long-time president of Casa-Sports, *the* regional soccer club in the Casamance, Nouha Cissé embodied two of the other social spaces I contend were contested terrain for imagining the Casamançais nation: The School and The Stadium. Nouha met Seynabou when they both started teaching at Lycée Djignabo in the 1980s. They were later married. As the Casamance conflict wore on in the 1990s, both became active in trying to find a peaceful solution. Seynabou partnered with three other female teachers at Djignabo in 1997 to form a non-governmental organization (NGO) called USOFORAL (“let’s join hands”), renamed in 2010 (in French) “The Platform of Women for Peace in the

¹²³ “Chinese Technicians Expected Soon,” *Le Soleil* (Dakar – in French), 16 March 1974, p. 3.

¹²⁴ Da Costa, “Casamance Under Siege,” 102.

¹²⁵ In addition to numerous press accounts referring to the current status of the conflict by this phrase, see Marut, “A l’Ouest, quoi de nouveau?”; Vincent Foucher, “On the Matter (and Materiality) of the Nation: Interpreting Casamance’s Unresolved Separatist Struggle,” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 11, no. 1 (2011): 82–103; and Martin Evans, “‘The Suffering Is Too Great’: Urban Internally Displaced Persons in the Casamance Conflict, Senegal,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20, no. 1 (2007): 60–85.

Casamance.”¹²⁶ The organization rallied 210 local civil society organizations advocating dialogue and peaceful resolution of the Casamance conflict. Since its inception, 40,000 women have participated in its marches, rallies, and conferences.¹²⁷ One of the organization’s first acts was to write a letter to the Government of Senegal and the MFDC, which read in part:

The women of Senegal, and of Casamance in particular, always forcefully intervene when the situation seems hopeless... We estimate in effect that no one better than we who have given life understands the price of a life. Every time that a shell falls, it explodes and tears apart the insides of a woman, like the painful contractions of childbirth. Have we given birth to sit aside powerless at its destruction? Don’t you see these families displaced, ravaged, and exploded? To put an end to all this forever, we exhort you to peace.¹²⁸

That Casamançais women forcefully intervened only “when the situation seemed hopeless” reflected some of the gender inequalities in the political life of the Casamance. Women were allowed to help cultivate rice but limited from full participation in the public life of the nation. If they had been allowed to participate more fully, perhaps they could have helped preserve peace before “the situation seemed hopeless,” as demonstrated by the women of The Platform for Peace.

Male Cissé and her friends followed their letter with a campaign to convince Casamançais village women that they could make a difference for peace. Their philosophy was “it begins with me.” If Casamançais women could make peace at the individual level, then perhaps their village could find peace. If their village found peace, then perhaps their sub-region could find peace. And if their sub-region could find peace, then perhaps the entire Casamance could make peace. The challenge for these well-educated elite women who taught at the region’s

¹²⁶ *Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance* (PFPC).

¹²⁷ “Seynabou Male Cissé: Mobilizing Women to Make Peace,” *American Jewish World Service*, “30 at 30 Collection,” accessed on 10 February 2016 at <https://ajws.org/stories/seynabou-male-cisse/>.

¹²⁸ *Archives du Diocèse de Ziguinchor (ADZ)*, Seynabou Male Cissé, Letter to Government of Senegal and the MFDC from *Le comité des femmes pour la paix en Casamance*, date unknown.

most prestigious *lycée* was to reach the mostly illiterate women in the villages. Thus, they decided to ask the village women to draw pictures of their experiences and ideas about the conflict.



Figure 2-3: Casamançais women march for peace in Kolda, 2015.¹²⁹

In one village west of Ziguinchor, a woman drew a picture of a turtle. Male Cissé and her colleagues were puzzled. They looked at the picture and thought that the poor, uneducated village woman misunderstood the assignment or that she was crazy. But then they asked her why she drew a picture of a turtle. The woman responded that when she was a girl, there were turtles all over the Casamance “because turtles like water, peace, and tranquility.” Since the conflict began, all the turtles around her village had disappeared because they do not like loud noises like gunfire and exploding mortar shells. She drew a turtle because she wanted peace so the turtles would come back. Whether the turtles came back to the rice fields of the Casamance,

¹²⁹ Souleymane Sall, “Le gouverneur aux femmes qui marchaient pour la paix en Casamance: ‘Cette paix que vous souhaitez est proche’,” *L’Obs*, 27 avril 2015, accessed 11 February 2016 at <http://www.igfm.sn/le-gouverneur-aux-femmes-qui-marchaient-pour-la-paix-en-casamance-cette-paix-que-vous-souhaitez-est-proche/>.

Male Cissé and her colleagues were humbled and profoundly moved.¹³⁰ This story demonstrates that the power of The Rice Field did not only rest in the ways that the MFDC fashioned it as a symbol of difference and rebellion with Senegal but also in the ways that these women fashioned it as a symbol of peace.

Conclusion

Because of its importance over the last century to the political economy and cultural identity of the Lower Casamance, the MFDC constructed The Rice Field as a flexible symbol to attract various Casamançais to its separatist cause. For many Casamançais – whether man or woman, whether Jola, Mandinka, or Balanta, whether Christian, Muslim or animist – this symbolic icon resonated as a place distinctly Casamançais that was exploited in one fashion or another for the benefit of the Senegalese *nordiste*. The historical factors that came together in the late 1970s to form a swirling vortex of decline – global climate change, developing transportation and communication technology, the end of the Cold War, structural adjustment programs, and migration of northern Senegalese to the Casamance and migration of Casamançais to northern Senegal – had been developing since the late nineteenth century. What is clear is that the region’s material history alone cannot explain the resonance of The Rice Field with various Casamançais. This history is important, but it is incomplete without an account of The Rice Field’s importance to the metaphysical cosmologies of Casamançais. Indeed, as I argue in the case of The Forest as well, it was these cosmologies that made The Rice Field such a flexible and useful symbol for the MFDC. It helped the MFDC link what Casamançais experienced in “reality” – the denigration of Casamançais culture, the exploitation of Casamançais natural

¹³⁰ Seynabou Male Cissé, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 11 April 2014.

resources, the personal and communal insults – all at the hands of “Senegalese,” to the ideological assertion of a peculiar Casamançais identity that pointed to the need for separation from Senegal.

The MFDC construction of The Rice Field in such a manner, however, elided the ways in which the Casamançais relationship with the rice field changed over time, particularly during the period 1850 to 1920 and the period 1970 to 1990. These changes resulted from social and economic processes like Mandinkization and colonization and from environmental processes like climate change and the desertification of northern Senegal. These material processes affected and were informed by the metaphysical cosmologies of Casamançais, which have also changed over time with the economic and cultural exchanges of Atlantic trade, colonialism, and Islamization. The culmination of these processes in the late 1970s allowed separatists to encourage a new kind of national “imagining” for the Casamance, an imagining not as the southern region of Senegal but as the independent nation-state of the Casamance.

Yet, the separatist elites did not entirely succeed in fostering such a national imagination. Ordinary social groups imagined their communities in their own, local ways. For those left relatively unaffected by French or Senegalese designs on their rice fields, it was hard to imagine a community much beyond the local level. For some, even if they were affected by French or Senegalese actions, they were content to live as Jola or Mandinka or Balanta, etc., in the region of the Casamance, in the nation-state of Senegal. The toll exacted by violence in the Casamance conflict – from armed groups and land mines in or near their rice fields – convinced them that the national imagination they could most easily support would be the one that would bring them peace. Then, they could “leave the politics to the politicians” and get back to doing what they loved, what they *had* to do as Casamançais: cultivating their rice fields, tapping their palm trees,

and gathering their families around a large bowl of rice and *yassa poisson*, washed down with some cool palm wine.¹³¹ For quite some time, that scene was what life was all about in the Lower Casamance. The Casamance conflict disturbed it. Thus, Casamançais were eager to imagine the nation in whatever fashion would get them back to that scene as quickly as possible.

¹³¹ *Yassa poisson* is fish yassa. Yassa sauce is a lemon, mustard, and spice based sauce with sautéed onions. It is a favorite dish all over Senegal, and especially in the Casamance. Thus, sometimes it is referred to as *Jola poisson*.

CHAPTER 3

THE SCHOOL

“Another source of frustration: when you go through the history books used in our schools, nowhere will you find a description of the heroic struggle of the people of Casamance. No mention is made of Djignabo, Alioune Sané, Fodé Kaba, and, more recently, Aliin Siitoe Jaata. How can you expect the youth of Casamance, who must draw their spiritual nourishment from history, to understand such prejudice? ... The state media give pride of place to foreign culture, to the detriment of national culture. Those cultures perhaps considered to represent a ‘minority’ in the south are totally ignored. What has been done since independence so that the peoples living in Senegal may get to know each other? What has been done to help to eliminate these prejudices held for a long time by those who were charged with educating and administering the people?”

--Yaya Jaata¹

“History is an eternal new beginning.”

-- Augustin Diamacoune Senghor

The day Idrissa Sagna died began as a typical Friday in the Casamance. The eleventh of January 1980 brought plenty of sunshine for a day of preparations for the quickly approaching rice harvest. Most Muslims put on their best *boubous* to attend worship at their local mosques.² But the approaching rice harvest and religious services did not prevent the students of Lycée Djignabo in Ziguinchor from going to school. Rather, the students kept themselves from class. In other words, they were at school, but they were not in class. The students had been on strike since December 1979 to protest new, stricter regulations imposed by Mr. “London” Sow, a *nordiste*, or “northerner,” and former English teacher who was the Principal of Djignabo.³ Sow

¹ Yaya Jaata, “Casamance: You Said Northern and Southern” (in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) “Debate, Education May Defuse Casamance Split”), *Fagaru* (Dakar), February 1990, p. 5.

² A *boubou* is an outfit – typically consisting of pants and a long tunic – often worn by Senegalese (and other West Africans) of both genders, though women may wear a wraparound skirt instead of the pants.

³ Sow is typically a Wolof family name in Senegal. Casamançais commonly referred to people from northern Senegal by the French term, *les nordistes*, i.e. “the northerners.”

decreed a stricter dress code for the students and faculty amid a shortage of educational resources. This shortage resulted from the financial crisis of the Senegalese state in the late 1970s.⁴ The students, joined by a faction of younger faculty members who sympathized with the students' leftist politics, called for Sow's departure. Some local residents joined the students in demonstrating outside the walled compound of the school, especially in front of its black, iron gate. On that Friday, tensions between the students (and their sympathizers) and the line of Senegalese security forces arrayed outside the gate heated with the rising sun. As the two sides antagonized one another later in the morning, the tensions reached a feverish pitch. Suddenly, a gunshot rang out. The crowd backed away, leaving Sagna lying on the ground, dying in a pool of blood. Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, who would later become the Secretary General of the Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance (MFDC), stood among the crowd.⁵ (See Figure 3-1, below.)

⁴ The international financial institutions made the crisis more acute by imposing new structural adjustment policies in the mid-1970s. See Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 87-91.

⁵ This narrative of events surrounding the 1980 student strike at Lycée Djignabo and the death of Idrissa Sagna taken from Diamacoune, "Pays du Refus," 42; Foucher, "Cheated Pilgrims," 271-273; Awenengo-Dalberto, "Les Joola, la Casamance et l'Etat," 356-359; and Odile Journet, "Demain, les femmes?" in *Comprendre la Casamance: chronique d'une intégration contrastée*, ed. François-George Barbier-Wiesser and Edgard Pisani (Paris: Karthala, 1994), 339-340.



Figure 3-1: The front gate of Lycée Djignabo, where Idrissa Sagna was shot and killed January 11, 1980 during student strike. Photo taken by author in March 2014.

Few of the students at the strike that day were likely thinking of separatism as they confronted school authorities and Senegalese security forces.⁶ That did not stop Diamacoune, however, from seizing the moment to add Sagna’s death to a separatist *discourse of betrayal* against the Senegalese state. This discourse supported the broader *discourse of grievance* so essential to the logic of separatism.⁷ It suggested that the iconic Senegalese merchant trader would trick, cheat, or betray the iconic hard-working Casamançais peasant at every opportunity.

⁶ Indeed, the student strike was caught up in a larger politics, involving the entrenched Mayor of Ziguinchor, Mamadou Abdoulaye Sy, against the leftist teachers’ union sympathetic to the striking students. In fact, three teachers and union members were abducted and beaten by “adversaries of the strike,” most likely men sent by the mayor. Among the teachers abducted was Nouha Cissé, who later became the principal of Lyceé Djignabo and the president of the soccer club, *Casa-Sports*. See Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims,” 271-273.

⁷ Father Diamacoune often referred to this discourse of betrayal as the “*Phénomène de rejet du Sénégalais*,” the “phenomenon of Senegalese rejection.” e.g. Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 17.

And it meant that elites from northern Senegal had betrayed elites from the Casamance.⁸ To the separatists, the discourse was not imagined; it was real. It was historical. And it matched the lived reality of many Casamançais in the late 1970s and early 1980s. These Casamançais felt that the *nordistes* denigrated their culture while using Senegal's 1964 imminent domain law to take away their lands. For them, the distance from the past to the present was negligible. Separatists like Diamacoune and Mamadou "Nkrumah" Sané capitalized on this negligible distance to make their case for Casamançais separatism and independence from Senegal.

Fourteen years after the infamous student strike at Djignabo, Diamacoune claimed that Sagna's death was "the real debut of 'the events of the Casamance.'"⁹ He interpreted the events of that day with a rather one-sided narrative:

11 January 1980 – the student Idrissa Sagna is gunned down in cold blood by an officer of Senegalese origins, not a Jola of the Casamance, but from the repressive forces of the Senegalese power. This young student was an unarmed innocent bystander, peacefully going his way, without committing the least infraction...Everybody was for the students except, obviously, the handful of people we know. The student Idrissa Sagna, a sixth grader, was deliberately, coldly, cynically gunned down...by the forces of invasion, occupation, and repression of President Abdou Diouf, pretender as a champion of human rights. Yes, a poor innocent one. Abdou Diouf was still the Prime Minister. A poor innocent one coldly gunned down while doing nothing wrong, not demonstrating, not stealing, and not destroying anything. Yes, an innocent one. To try to reduce the tension, the crime committed by an officer of Senegalese origins was attributed to a poor Jola boy. But everybody knows that the bullet that killed Idrissa Sagna was not even from the gun carried by the scapegoat, who was Casamançais and Jola.¹⁰

In his account of the killing of Idrissa Sagna, Diamacoune reduced all of the students in the Casamance to the students at Lycée Djignabo. He then reduced the students at Djignabo to

⁸ Bertrand Diamacoune said, "Sometimes, if the Southerners [i.e. Casamançais] win, they [the Senegalese] make rectification by manipulating things so that the Southerners lose." Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 1 April 2014.

⁹ Diamacoune, "Pays du Refus," 27.

¹⁰ Ibid., 27, 42.

Sagna to make Sagna the martyr of a separatist movement that the young man likely never even thought about. Diamacoune claimed Sagna's death marked the beginning of the "events of the Casamance." But the students were joining in a larger movement of student protests all over Senegal at the time. They may have genuinely detested Sow's new dress code, but they also knew they were part of a larger, nationwide protest movement. Likely, they were not thinking of independence for the *Casamançais* nation.¹¹ If anything, they were thinking of the *Senegalese* nation, as they joined students around the country in striking for better treatment in their schools.

To shorten the distance between the past and the present, Diamacoune collapsed history. He tied Sagna's death in 1980 to that of the anti-colonial nationalist Victor Diatta in 1948. Diatta had been considered one of the founders of the "historic MFDC," an earlier version of the MFDC that existed from 1949 to 1954 to represent Casamançais interests against those of the northern, metropolitan *Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière* (SFIO), or in other words, the French Socialist Party. Victor Diatta's death was the first of a handful of mysterious deaths for the original leaders of the movement leading to the foundation of the MFDC. These deaths later became foundational to Diamacoune's discourse of Senegalese betrayal of the Casamance. Linking the deaths of the nationalist generation of the original MFDC to more contemporary "martyrs" like Sagna was key to the discourse of grievance upon which Casamançais separatism rested. Diamacoune claimed, "History is an eternal new beginning. On the 20th of November, 1948, the bullet that killed Victor Sihumehemba Diatta in Dakar was not from the gun carried in the pocket of this accomplished man of letters from French West Africa, alleged to be a suicide.

¹¹ Foucher, "Cheated Pilgrims," 271-273.

Another Casamançais. It was too much.”¹² Through this discourse of betrayal, Diamacoune tied the killing of Sagna in 1980 to the alleged suicide of Diatta in 1948.¹³

It is no coincidence that Diamacoune portrayed these two martyrs as dedicated students, as “men of letters.”¹⁴ Indeed, the well-educated men who in the early 1980s took up the mantle of the historic MFDC to claim independence for the Casamance also took up many of the traditions of *évolués* like Diatta.¹⁵ The French intended to build the colonial state and, eventually, African nations on the human capital of these “evolved” men – men with enough education to run colonial bureaucratic institutions. But in addition to learning French and arithmetic, these young men, and by the time of Sagna, a few young women, learned the history of nations. Did colonial and postcolonial schools create “nations” in the minds of their students? Was it possible to imagine “the nation” without formal education? If so, then how did ordinary Casamançais think of the nation? How did they think about separatism?

Senegalese (including Casamançais) students primarily learned the history of European nations, but they also learned some history of the Africans upon whom the colonizers were establishing African nations. In Senegal – allegedly founded on an “Islam-Wolof model” – that meant learning about the heroic resistance of anti-colonial leaders like Lat Dior, Umar Tall, and Amadou Bamba – all from northern Senegal.¹⁶ To many Casamançais, this history was not their

¹² Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 42.

¹³ No one was ever charged or prosecuted for Diatta’s death, officially ruled as a suicide. Diamacoune claimed that French intelligence agents killed Diatta.

¹⁴ Though in the sixth grade, Idrissa Sagna was little more than a boy.

¹⁵ French colonial officials had dubbed the class of men who benefitted from colonial education and spoke French as “*évolués*,” i.e. “evolved.” I join other scholars of the Casamance in referring to the 1949-1954 MFDC as the “historic MFDC” and the MFDC begun by Mamadou “Nkrumah” Sané in 1982 as the “modern MFDC” or “contemporary MFDC.” More about the choice of this name later in the chapter.

¹⁶ For more on the “Islam-Wolof model” of the Senegalese nation, see Diouf, *Histoire du Sénégal*. For more on these anti-colonial *jihad* leaders, see Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*; David Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tal: The Western Sudan in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1985); David Robinson, “Revolutions in the Western Sudan,” in *The History of Islam in Africa*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall Lee Pouwels (Athens; Oxford; Cape Town: Ohio University Press; James Currey; David Philip, 2000), 131–52; Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad*; Michael Angelo Gomez, *Pragmatism in the Age of*

history; it was “Senegalese,” meant for those north of The Gambia.¹⁷ The teaching of these histories rendered the colonial and postcolonial school a place for imagining and contesting the nation by elites with the good fortune of acquiring formal education. As violent episodes in 1948, 1955, 1980 and subsequent to 1982 demonstrate, this contestation could be deadly.

Though it risks reifying Father Diamacoune’s collapsed history to link the deaths of Diatta and Sagna, I contend that the violent nature of their deaths indicates the high stakes of national imagining in the colonial and postcolonial school. Here, nationalist ideas took root in the minds of the colonial elite, and many of these elites – *évolué* schoolteachers – transmitted these ideas to a new generation of postcolonial nationalists like those in the modern MFDC. In other words, teachers like Diatta taught “national” histories to students like Sagna.

Therefore, I show in this chapter that the *school* constituted a *breeding ground for nationalism* in the minds of its students. *The School*, as a situated space-place for social and cultural formation, produced an educated group of men -- *The Schooled* – ready to imagine and perform the separatist nation.¹⁸ The common experience of the nationalist and separatist elites in this chapter was The School. Formal education made them “elite.” It gave them the knowledge, confidence, and authority to think they could define national identity not only for themselves but for others as well. Thus, formal education catalyzed the violent conflict between elites in the 1950s and in the 1980s. While ordinary Casamançais were not quick to publicly contest these

Jihad: The Precolonial State of Bundu, African Studies Series (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Sean Hanretta, *Islam and Social Change in French West Africa: History of an Emancipatory Community* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁷ To this day, before departing on a trip to Dakar or some other part of northern Senegal, Casamançais often say, “I’m going to Senegal.” Recent Senegalese policy decisions have only reified this notion that the Casamance and Senegal are “foreign” to one another, such as the decision to force air travelers from the Casamance to Dakar International Airport to complete paperwork and pass through immigration, along with foreign travelers. See “Les voyageurs venant de la Casamance sont désormais tenus de remplir des fiches à l’aéroport comme les étrangers,” *Lifixew*, accessed 5 May 2013 at <http://www.lifixew.com/les-voyageurs-venant-de-la-casamance-sont-desormais-tenus-de-remplir-des-fiches-a-laeroport-comme-les-etrangers/>.

¹⁸ For what I mean by “space-place,” see the Introduction and Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

claims, they defined their cultures and their interests at the local level, which did not always support separatist objectives.

To make this argument, I build on the work of scholars like Pierre Englebert, Vincent Foucher, and Mamadou Diouf. Numerous historians have noted the importance of the colonial school to the elite process of imagining nations.¹⁹ As Englebert notes, the Casamance conflict was less a conflict between an elite north and a subaltern south than a conflict between two groups of elites vying for control of the postcolonial state.²⁰ Foucher also points to the pivotal role of education in the formation of these nationalist elites. I examine how that ideological conflict sprouted in the school. Whereas Foucher argues that the “resilient weakness” of the Casamance conflict resulted from a lack of material resources for these elites to fight over, I argue that it also resulted from the elites’ failure to transfer their nationalist imagining from the school to the village.²¹ Thus, I build on Foucher’s materialist argument to show why ideology in the school failed to become material reality in the village. This failure implies that the school constituted not only a space for imagining the nation to support the state but also a place for contesting that imagination.

I bring a focus on space and place to the identities of these elites to see what it can tell us about the school as a place of national imagining. This focus drives me to two conclusions. First,

¹⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals* (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2001); Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims”; Rachel Kantrowitz, “‘So That Tomorrow Would Be Better for Us’: Developing French-Funded Catholic Schools in Dahomey and Senegal, 1946-1975,” PhD Thesis (New York University, 2015); Martha Wilfahrt, “The Historic Origins Of Public Goods: Local Distributional Politics In Rural West Africa, 1880-Present,” PhD Thesis (Cornell University, 2015); Kelly M. Duke Bryant, *Education as Politics: Colonial Schooling and Political Debate in Senegal, 1850s-1914* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2015); Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians*; Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*.

²⁰ Pierre Englebert, *Africa: Unity, Sovereignty, and Sorrow* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), 156-160.

²¹ See Foucher’s chapter, “Senegal: The Resilient Weakness of Casamançais Separatists,” in *African Guerrillas: Raging against the Machine*, ed. Morten Bøås and Kevin C. Dunn (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), 171-198.

the fact that the three primary founders of the original MFDC – Emile Badiane, a Jola from Bignona, Victor Diatta, a Jola from Oussouye, and Ibrahim (a.k.a. “Ibou”) Diallo, a Fulani from Sédhiou – taught school for a living should tell us something about the process of national imagination in the classroom. School teachers possess power and authority to form national citizens for the benefit of the state. In a way, teachers can be thought of as agents of the nation-state. They exert this power in space intended to impose order and, in some ways, hierarchy on the young minds and bodies of future citizens of the nation-state.²² These three men sought to educate and train future citizens of Senegal who were also citizens from the Casamance able to look after regional interests the way they did. In many ways, they sought to create “carbon copies” of themselves. They certainly intended to protect and advance the interests of the Casamance.

But as Foucher, Jean-Claude Marut, Séverine Awenengo-Dalberto and many other scholars of the Casamance conflict have noted, they did not intend to separate politically from Senegal. Whereas Foucher focuses on the role of the Jola “*litterati*,” which included Badiane and Diatta, I consider the multi-ethnic nature of this original version of the MFDC, represented especially by Diallo, of Fulani origins. As Mamadou Diouf has noted, this multi-ethnic history was important to Father Diamacoune’s construction of a multi-ethnic separatist movement to elide what often appeared to be a mostly Jola case of ethnic nationalism.²³ I argue that Lycée Djignabo became a particularly iconic place for the separatist movement not only because of the student strike and the violence that made Idrissa Sagna a martyr but also because it was a space for imagining the nation on multi-ethnic terms.

²² Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*; and Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, among many others.

²³ Diouf, “Between Ethnic Memories & Colonial History in Senegal.”

Second, I argue that the colonial and postcolonial teaching of Senegalese history created a “gap” for the contemporary MFDC to exploit. MFDC leaders like Father Diamacoune and Mamadou Sané formulated their discourse of grievance by exploiting this gap in Casamançais history. The discourse of Senegalese betrayal of the Casamance took root in its post-war political history. The narrative of this history – with subjects who were nationalist elites formed in colonial state and missionary schools – shows that colonial and postcolonial history education meant to serve state interests. While the male, mostly missionary-educated identity of colonial elites initially excluded non-elite social groups from participating in the imagination of the nation, ordinary Casamançais refused to be shut out. Therefore, this chapter shows that, over time, the school became a space for not only imagining the nation but for contesting and performing it as well – and not only by the male elites to whom the colonial state was entrusted at independence.

To make these arguments, I first examine the development of formal education in the Casamance along with the educational backgrounds of the most important nationalist leaders in the late colonial and postcolonial periods to show how their school experience informed their ideas of the nation. In subsequent sections, I analyze the historic discourse constructed by Father Diamacoune and other separatists to exploit a gap in Senegalese national history. This gap often left Casamançais out of the story. The separatists were eager to fill it, explaining why they decided to revive the name of the historic MFDC, laying claim to a cultural heritage displayed in the history of the original MFDC. Thus, in these middle sections, I leave the physical space of *the school* for other political spaces where *the schooled* defined or contested the nation. *But The School is always in the background.* It is where nationalism took root and sprouted in the minds of colonial and postcolonial elites battling over the cultural definition of the nation. It remained

the source of their social capital to engage in nationalism in the ways they did. Even if only in the background, The School is always present in the narratives that follow.

Hence, the second section moves out of the school to examine the division of the historic MFDC by Senghor's creation of the BDS, culminating in the violent clash between the followers of Senghor and Lamine Guèye outside Bignona while each candidate campaigned for the 1955 election to the Territorial Assembly. Third, I analyze the mysterious death of one of the historic MFDC's founders, Emile Badiane, and the power of rumor concerning a "secret agreement" between him and Senghor. Fourth, I consider why one particular school, Lycée Djignabo in Ziguinchor, became the school more than any other where the Casamançais nation was imagined and contested. Taken together, these middle three sections constitute some of the most important elements of the discourse of Senegalese betrayal of the Casamance. The MFDC tried to fill the gap in Senegalese history with this discourse.

In the final section, I note the power taken from formal education by nationalist and separatist elites to think that they possessed the moral claim to build a nation. The nation consisted, however, largely of ordinary Casamançais who often disqualified themselves from "talking about politics" with strangers but were quite willing to define their interests on their own, local terms, whether those terms agreed with those of "the politicians" or not. Ultimately, this chapter reveals that imagining the nation based on a model taken from the school classroom could prove to be a bloody enterprise – whether in the village or in the city.

The School in the Casamance

In the postwar period, apart from Dakar, the Casamance became the most educated region in Senegal.²⁴ Especially if one separates the administrative region of Kolda from that of Ziguinchor (the two administrative regions comprising the Casamance), the Lower Casamance appears to have been one of the most literate regions in the country. In 1995, at the point of some of the heaviest fighting in the Casamance conflict, the Ziguinchor region's literacy rate was 49.74 percent, following Dakar's at 60.39 percent. The Kolda region's literacy rate, however, ranked near the bottom at 22.14 percent. The lower literacy rate for the Middle Casamance may have contributed to Jola leadership of the MFDC, as the Jola were the majority ethnic group in the region of Ziguinchor.²⁵ Religion also seems to have played a factor here, as Catholic missionaries more heavily evangelized the Jola than the Mandinka, who had been Islamized well before the French arrival.²⁶ Thus, Mandinka parents were more likely to send their children to a Koranic school than a Western one, if they considered schooling their children at all. Ziguinchor's relatively high literacy rate resulted from its high schooling rate, as demonstrated by the following figures in Table 3-1:

²⁴ See Foucher, "Cheated Pilgrims," 80-83; and Makhtar Diouf, *Sénégal: Les Ethnies et La Nation* (Genève; Paris: UNRISD; Editions L'Harmattan, 1994), 140-147.

²⁵ Literacy rates taken from figures published by the Republic of Senegal in 1996, cited by Foucher, "Cheated Pilgrims," 82.

²⁶ On the Islamization of the Casamance, see Paul Nugent, "Cyclical History in the Gambia/Casamance Borderlands"; Diouf, *Histoire du Sénégal*; Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*; Charlotte A. Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia; Traditionalism, Islam, and European Expansion* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1972); and Frances Anne Leary, "A Political History of Islam in the Casamance Region of Senegal."

Table 3-1

<u>Region</u>	<u>Rate of education</u>		<u>Number of classes</u>	
	1964/65	1976	1964/65	1976
Dakar	53.4%	71%	1317	2170
Casamance	31.2%	34.1%	759	1001
Diourbel/Louga	14.1%	13.9%	376	486
Senegal River Valley	34.8%	32.9%	578	585
Eastern Senegal	20.2%	22.4%	216	247
Sine-Saloum	24%	23%	789	2508
Thies	30.3	29%	609	923

This trend did not appear to fade in the 1980s, either. In 1987-1988, of the 2,420 primary schools in Senegal, 309 of them – or 12.77 percent – could be found in the Casamance, which only accounted for 5.76% of the population.²⁷ Hence, while the MFDC’s discourse of betrayal claimed that the Casamance had been denied the social goods of the Senegalese state, when it came to education, this discourse was a myth.

During the colonial period, the church or the state furnished Western education to Senegalese subjects.²⁸ Although the Casamance received a disproportionate amount in school investment per capita, the figures above show that no region’s rate of education grew as precipitously between 1964/65 and 1976 as Dakar. Whereas the other regions’ rates remained essentially stagnant, Dakar’s grew by nearly 20 percent. As Foucher claims, this period marked a turning point where “the social compact between the Diola [Jola] and the state was suddenly broken.” The break appeared visually as “the Senegalese state closed the boarding schools upon which so many rural Diola students depended, and drastically reduced the intake in the civil service.” Therefore, Foucher concludes, “school has thus been central in the development of

²⁷ Rate of education figures from Makhtar Diouf, *Sénégal*, 142-143.

²⁸ Foucher notes the “disastrous effect on education in Casamance” of the 1905 law passed by the French Parliament separating the activities of church and state, which required the progressive departure of Christian mission schools from France’s colonies. Colonial officials moved “slowly” to “fill the gap left by the departing missions.” Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims,” 84.

Casamançais nationalism because it was the site around which both its material and its ideological structures could develop.”²⁹ This break left rural students at a disadvantage and simultaneously empowered urban students to define the nation for others. Access to formal education became a marker of power in the Casamance.

Missionaries often built their schools on or near church grounds where they could be easily staffed and managed by clerical personnel. These buildings typically appeared as flat, rather featureless stucco structures with open, grilled windows to allow air to circulate, alleviating a little of the effects of the heat and humidity in the Casamance. There likely would have been a chalkboard at the front of the room but little else in terms of desks, furniture, or notebooks. Smaller schools started in rural villages would have appeared even more rudimentary.³⁰

But larger, urban postcolonial schools like Lycée Djignabo consisted of several buildings spread about a fenced compound, with separate classrooms for different grades. (See Figure 3-2, below.) At a state school like Lycée Djignabo, this compound also included separate buildings for staff offices, a library, archives of the school, and administration. Students dressed in school uniforms and entered the school compound through a blue metal gate on one of Ziguinchor’s busier residential thoroughfares, bordered by upper middle-class homes, businesses, church and NGO offices, and cafés.³¹

²⁹ Foucher, “On the Matter (and Materiality) of the Nation,” 90.

³⁰ From photos of these schools and the author’s personal experiences in them since 2005, admittedly well after the end of colonialism in Senegal.

³¹ Based on the author’s numerous visits to Ziguinchor since 2005.



Figure 3-2: Classrooms and administrative offices inside Lycée Djignabo. The principal’s office is a doorway in the first building to the left in this photo, taken by author, March 2014.

Every nationalist discussed in this chapter received his education from a church or state school, a trend that fit the profile of nationalist leaders across the continent.³² In Francophone Africa, the Church and the state hardly worked together. As Toyin Falola explains, “If the missionaries were interested in evangelization, the French government was interested in secular French culture.”³³ In any case, the state benefitted from literate, disciplined clerks and bureaucrats. Colonial businesses benefitted as well. In school, Africans learned the history of Europeans. In Francophone Africa, this history focused on the development of the French nation

³² Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals*, 3-15.

³³ *Ibid.*, 12.

through its language, history, and cultural achievements.³⁴ After graduation, these students worked in enterprises run or regulated by “the French imperial nation-state.”³⁵ For many members of this new colonial elite, the nation fit nicely into the contours of the state.

The only problem, to them, was that Europeans were steering the “ship of state” instead of them. Basil Davidson nicely sums up the worldview of this nationalist generation in explaining “the black man’s burden” as these nations emerged from colonial rule in the postwar period:

The activists of the 1950s plunged into their chosen road of nationalism, seeing this as the only available guarantee of a route open to progress. They accepted the aim of building nation-states on the British model (or, later, on the French) because, as it seemed to them and as they were strongly advised, there could exist no other useful objective. [Ghanaian independence leader Kwame] Nkrumah’s advice that they should seek the political kingdom, and all would then be added to them, expressed a central maxim of which the truth appeared self-evident: once sovereignty was seized by Africans no matter under what conditions, the road to freedom and development would be theirs to follow. That this acceptance of the postcolonial nation-state meant acceptance of the legacy of the colonial partition, and of the moral and political practices of colonial rule in its institutional dimensions, was a handicap which the more perceptive of the activists well perceived.³⁶

In Senegal, accepting “the legacy of the colonial partition” meant accepting the division of Senegal into a northern half and a southern half, divided by the Anglophone colony of The Gambia. Accepting “the moral and political practices of colonial rule in its institutional dimensions” meant accepting a system of political parties that grew more out of French history than Senegalese history. Thus, when Senegalese nationalists attempted to import the French Socialist Party into the Casamance with the same ideology and practices used in France, the forces that held “colonial rule” in place began to fray. Colonial schools may have taught national

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State*.

³⁶ Davidson, *The Black Man’s Burden*, 162.

histories along state contours, but their choice to mostly ignore African histories left a gap for nationalists to fill with a cultural content of their choosing. The early nationalists failed to fill it in a way that benefitted anybody but them. Separatists like Father Diamacoune were eager to exploit the remaining gap. From where did these nationalists come?

Between 1945 and 1960, there were few educated men more “elite” than Lamine Guèye. Born and raised in Saint-Louis, as an elite Muslim *originaire* in one of the *Quatre Communes*, he emerged after the war as the senior partner in the French Socialist Party along with his *protégé*, Leopold Senghor. Guèye had studied law at the University of Paris, where he wrote his thesis in 1921 on the implications of the separate legal code for *originaires* in the *Quatre Communes* instead of the French civil code. He won some acclaim for representing the families of the *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* – Senegalese riflemen – killed in the revolt at Camp Thiaroye (just outside Dakar) in 1944.³⁷ This revolt – in which Senegalese soldiers not only refused to follow orders but also took hostage the commander of French Forces in West Africa – led to thirty-five Africans dead and hundreds wounded or injured. It also portended the postcolonial future, as the French Republic struggled with the inequalities of the French Empire in the post-war years.³⁸ Guèye was at the forefront in that struggle for equality at almost every step. In 1946, he became known as the architect of the law named after him – the “Lamine Guèye Law” – granting French citizenship to most of the inhabitants, including Senegalese women, of France’s overseas colonies. Elected mayor of Dakar, by 1954, he was running for a seat in the Territorial Assembly, which he and Senghor had helped create as African delegates to the constitutional conventions of France’s Fourth Republic.³⁹

³⁷ Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembène, who grew up in the Casamance, brought this history to the silver screen in the 1988 film *Camp de Thiaroye*.

³⁸ For the casualty figures from the mutiny at Thiaroye, see Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts*, 101.

³⁹ Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, Chapter 1.

Guèye's *protégé*, one of the most brilliant students in French West Africa, became the first President of independent Senegal. Léopold Sédar Senghor attended primary boarding school at Ngasobil, a seminary run by the Holy Ghost Fathers six kilometers north of Senghor's hometown, Joäl.⁴⁰ Senghor might have ended up as a priest like Diamacoune, if not for a run-in with the Father Superior at a seminary in Dakar. (Senghor transferred to the Libermann Seminary in 1922.) He apparently protested a bit too forcefully after the Holy Father insulted his parents as "savages" and "primitives."⁴¹ Senghor later indicated that this insult proved to be the tipping point for him, after enduring a discourse for years on his need for "salvation" and "civilization" that could only come from white people. He wrote: "The 'civilizing mission,' the 'white man's burden,' everyone had spoken to us about them since our childhood: teachers and professors, missionaries and colonial officials..."⁴² A few days later, the Director of the Seminary told Senghor that he "did not have the priestly vocation."⁴³ Senghor left the Seminary to obtain his *baccalauréat* from the public Secondary School of Dakar.⁴⁴ There he was chosen to pursue a university education in Paris, where he fell under the tutelage of his legal guardian, Blaise Diagne, the first black representative to the French Parliament from the Four Communes.⁴⁵ After three years at the *Lycée Louis-le-Grand*, Senghor passed the written entrance exam but failed the orals for the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*.

⁴⁰ Joäl ("zho-ahl") is on the *Petite Cote*, the Senegalese coastline running south of the Cap Vert Peninsula, upon which Dakar is located. For the information on the seminary at Ngasobil, see Jacques Louis Hymans, *Léopold Sédar Senghor: An Intellectual Biography* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), 9; Diamacoune, "Pays du Refus," multiple.

⁴¹ Hymans, *Senghor*, 13.

⁴² Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Liberté* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1964), 87.

⁴³ Hymans, *Senghor*, 13.

⁴⁴ Hymans, *Senghor*, 14. A *baccalauréat* is a diploma from a *lycée*. The Secondary School in Dakar was later named *Lycée Van Vollenhoven* for the former French governor-general.

⁴⁵ Hymans, *Senghor*, 19. The "Four Communes" consisted of the urban centers of Saint-Louis, Dakar, Rufisque, and Gorée Island.

Following his immense disappointment from this setback, along with his experience with French hypocrisy and inequality, Senghor partnered with Caribbean intellectuals Aimé Césaire and Léon Damas to produce the ideology of *négritude*. Senghor defined *négritude* as “Negro-African cultural values,” and it became foundational to many nationalist movements among the African Diaspora, especially those in French West Africa.⁴⁶ With this ideological foundation, Senghor decided to break politically from Guèye to contest election to the Territorial Assembly, but he needed an ally in the Casamance. He found one in Emile Badiane.



Figure 3-3: Prime Minister Lamine Guèye and President Leopold Senghor welcoming Beninese President Hubert Maga to Senegal in 1963. From Getty Images, AFP, accessed on 2 June 2015 at <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/beninese-president-hubert-maga-shakes-hands-to-lamine-Guèye-news-photo/157229108>

Born in Tindième in 1915 to one of the earliest Jola peasants to convert to Catholicism, Emile Badiane impressed his primary school teachers so much that they sent him to attend the prestigious *Ecole Normale William Ponty*. Badiane graduated as valedictorian of his class in

⁴⁶ Louis-Vincent Thomas, “Une idéologie moderne: la négritude, essai de synthèse psycho-sociologique,” *Revue de Psychologie des Peuples* 4 (1963), 394.

1935.⁴⁷ The French established *William Ponty* – named after a former governor-general of French West Africa – in 1913 on Gorée Island.⁴⁸ In 1937, they transferred it to Sebikotane.⁴⁹ This school provided the educational foundation for teachers, doctors, and administrators – including several future nationalist leaders – in French West Africa. Some of its most famous graduates included nationalist leaders like Felix Houphouët-Boigny (Cote d’Ivoire), Modibo Keita (Mali), Mamadou Dia (Senegal), Hubert Maga (Benin), and Hamani Diori (Niger).⁵⁰ The school became so important to nationalists in French West Africa that Benedict Anderson mentioned it in *Imagined Communities*:

In its heyday, the *Ecole Normale William Ponty* in Dakar, though only a secondary school, was still the apex of the colonial educational pyramid in French West Africa. To *William Ponty* came intelligent students from what we know today as Guinea, Mali, the Ivory Coast, Senegal, and so on. We should not be surprised therefore if the pilgrimages of these boys, terminating in Dakar, were initially read in French [West] African terms, of which the paradoxical concept *négritude*—essence of African-ness expressible only in French, language of the *William Ponty* classrooms—is an unforgettable symbol. Yet the apicality of *William Ponty* was accidental and evanescent. As more secondary schools were constructed in French West Africa, it was no longer necessary for bright boys to make so distant a pilgrimage. And in any case the educational centrality of *William Ponty* was never matched by a comparable administrative centrality of Dakar. The interchangeability of French West African boys on the benches of *William Ponty* was not paralleled by their later bureaucratic substitutability in the French West African colonial administration. Hence, the school’s Old Boys went home to become, eventually, Guinean or Malian nationalist leaders, while retaining a ‘West African’ camaraderie and solidary intimacy lost to succeeding generations.⁵¹

The *Ecole William Ponty* may have provided a common print language, ideology, worldview, history, and experience from which these young African boys could eventually do their own national “imagining,” but it also provided various “fields” of competition. While this

⁴⁷ Awenengo-Dalberto, “Les Joola, la Casamance et l’Etat,” 199-200.

⁴⁸ Gorée is a small island near the Port of Dakar. It was one of the *Quatre Communes*, discussed later.

⁴⁹ Sebikotane is about 8 miles east of Rufisque, another of the *Quatre Communes*. See map in Fig. 3-4.

⁵⁰ Gassama, *Emile Badiane*, 34.

⁵¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 123-124.

competition may have provided gel for national formation and cohesion, it also catalyzed jealousies, animosities, and divisions among young men who knew each other, making the rivalries over West African nation-building quite “personal.”⁵²

Despite the competition, Badiane stood out. A classmate of Badiane’s at *William Ponty*, Amadou Clédor Sall, recalled, “Emile asserted himself by way of his grand intelligence and prodigious capacity for imagination. His success was remarkable in many domains, such as French, mathematics, natural sciences, and drawing.”⁵³ If Badiane excelled at history, it was not noted. Besides, studying history in a colonial school implied the memorization of dates, names, and narratives about the French nation and other aspects of Western civilization. It covered little African history, and it certainly did not call for students to interpret historical sources, methodologies, and narratives on their own. That was too dangerous to the colonial dispensation. Nevertheless, Badiane, like Senghor, maintained a fascination with “culture.”⁵⁴ Perhaps this word seemed less threatening to colonial officials. After graduation, Badiane taught school in the region of Podor.⁵⁵ But he was eventually transferred to his native Casamance, where he spent the rest of his teaching career in the communities of Baila, Balingore, Besire, Nyassia, and Sédhiou.⁵⁶ It was in Sédhiou in 1947 that Badiane and more than 120 “literate notables” met to discuss the formation of a new party to represent Casamançais interests.⁵⁷ One of the men

⁵² One of the best examples of this competition took place between Senegal’s Senghor and Cote d’Ivoire’s Houphouët-Boigny. For more, see Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, and Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2015).

⁵³ Amadou Clédor Sall, former minister, “A l’ami qui nous a quittés,” in *Mo-rom*, socioeconomic journal edited by the party of L.S. Senghor, the *Union Progressiste Senegalaise* (UPS), Bignona, special edition “Spécial Emile Badiane,” December 1973, as cited in Gassama et al., *Emile Badiane*.

⁵⁴ According to the testimonies of Mamousse Diagne and Moustapha Niasse (former Prime Minister of Senegal) in *Emile Badiane*, ed. Gassama et al., 18-19.

⁵⁵ Podor is in the Senegal River Valley, on the border with Mauritania. See map of Senegal, Fig. I-1.

⁵⁶ *Le Soleil* (government daily newspaper), 25 December 1980.

⁵⁷ Ibou Diallo, “Un grand acte de foi et de courage: Le mouvement des forces démocratiques de la Casamance,” *Condition Humaine* (BDS newspaper), 28 February 1950; Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims,” Chap. 3; Awenengo Dalberto, “Les Joola, la Casamance et l’Etat,” 201-208; Catherine Boone, *Political Topographies of the African*

allegedly at the meeting was Mathieu Diamacoune, the father of Augustin Diamacoune Senghor.⁵⁸

Almost thirty years after Leopold Senghor left Ngasobil, Father Diamacoune left his home in the Casamance to attend the Catholic boarding school from 1942 to 1947.⁵⁹ Diamacoune later claimed that it was at Ngasobil that Father Albert Lalouse told him and his classmates, as Senghor's postwar political ambitions became clearer, "Today it's us, his priests, who Senghor stabs in the back. Tomorrow, it will be your turn – you, his brothers."⁶⁰ Also like Senghor, Diamacoune left Ngasobil to attend the Libermann Seminary in Dakar.⁶¹ But whereas Senghor had become discouraged by the denigrating discourse of the White Fathers, Diamacoune became more determined to counter it from within the Church. Ordained as a priest in 1956, he received some university education in Belgium from 1964 to 1965, concurrent with the issuance of Vatican II, the council liberalizing the Catholic Church, to include the use of vernacular languages in the liturgy.⁶² After becoming known in the 1970s for his daily children's radio show, "Papa Kulimpi," in which he often criticized "the little Wolof" and "the little Toucouleur" as "foreigners" to the Casamance, Diamacoune received a visitor at his mission in Kafountine (in the northwest Casamance – see Figure 3-4) in 1982.⁶³

The visitor, Mamadou "Nkrumah" Sané, became known as the "founder of the modern MFDC." Sané initiated the idea of reviving the name of the historic MFDC to pursue contemporary separatist objectives. But, living in Paris at the time, Sané needed a local well-

State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 111-112.

⁵⁸ Diamacoune, "Entretien du 13 mai 2005," in Bassène, *L'abbé*, 39-40.

⁵⁹ Diamacoune, "Pays du Refus," 22 and 27. Ngasobil is just a few miles north along the coast from Joâl-Fadiout on map in Fig. 3-2.

⁶⁰ Diamacoune, "Texte de l'abbé Diamacoune date du 8 mai 1998," in Bassène's *L'abbé*, 158.

⁶¹ Diamacoune, "Pays du Refus," 22.

⁶² Diamacoune was ordained in Oussouye, not far from his childhood village. Marut, *Le Conflit de Casamance*, 95.

⁶³ "Kulimpi" means "the bearded man" in Jola. Marut, *Le Conflit de Casamance*, 96-7.

known figurehead or spokesperson in the Casamance. That spokesperson would be Father Diamacoune. Originally from the Islamized area of Boulouf (northwest of Bignona), Sané left the Casamance in 1964 to go to Paris, where he was profoundly affected by communist ideology and the liberal agitation in the streets of Paris in 1968. By 1970, he had become involved with an organization concerned with healthcare for students in France. During the 1970s, Sané's wife told him about the priest calling himself "Papa Kulimpi" on the radio while criticizing Senegalese treatment of the Casamance. Sané had found his life cause. With other Casamançais expatriates living in France, he formed a Jola cultural association called *Esukolal* and began to publish the journal *Kelumak*. He raised money for a trip back to the Casamance. Sané went to Kafountine and met Diamacoune for the first time. He asked Father Diamacoune to lead the new movement, the MFDC. Diamacoune agreed, and the modern MFDC was born.⁶⁴

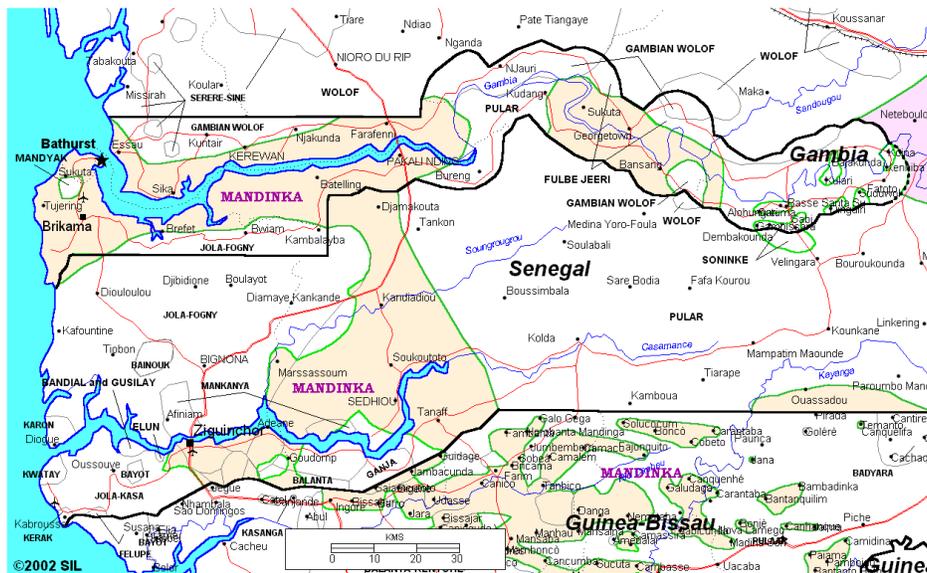


Figure 3-4: Senegambian ethnolinguistic map (2002) showing locations of major Casamançais towns.

It was no accident of history that all four of these men, and others attempting to define the nation in Senegal in the postwar period, were men of letters – men with primary, secondary,

⁶⁴ Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 99. Corroborated in the dissertations of Foucher and Awenengo-Dalberto.

and in many cases, university education. Senghor specifically targeted education as a primary means of building national unity. On the front page of the first edition of the party newspaper he created in 1948, immediately adjacent to the article “Why This New Journal?” Senghor published an article entitled, “The Condition of Our Evolution: Teaching Reform.” He claimed that “evolution” and “reform” involved two aspects of education. The first was “cultural.” This aspect “concerned the ability of each individual to develop his or her personhood, to maximize the individual’s virtues, in intellectual and artistic terms as much as moral and physical.”⁶⁵ The second aspect was “social” but not “political,” according to Senghor. This aspect was “a question of preparing each person in society to take the place designated according to the person’s natural abilities.”⁶⁶ That such a statement could be considered merely “social” and not “political” seems shocking. But at the time, Senghor was still a member of the SFIO; perhaps he did not yet want to estrange himself from the party.⁶⁷ He may have wanted to be careful not to alarm French colonial authorities too much as well, for after explaining these two aspects, he also proposed transferring not the “political control” of education – which could remain under the French as far as Senghor was concerned – but the “cultural control” of Senegalese education from the Ministry of the Colonies to a “Ministry of National Education.”⁶⁸

This article decodes what Senghor and the nationalist generation thought of as the purpose of education. Especially for a socialist newspaper, one notes less a focus on developing technical skills for the *proletarian revolution* than concern with defining the cultural aspects of the nation. Perhaps for Senghor and other nationalists, citizens would develop technical skills in

⁶⁵ Léopold Sédar Senghor, “La Condition de Notre Evolution: Réforme de l’Enseignement,” *La Condition Humaine*, 11 February 1948.

⁶⁶ Senghor, “Réforme de l’Enseignement.”

⁶⁷ Senghor would, however, leave the SFIO to form his own party before 1948 ended. For some of the best academic, historical treatments of this period in Casamançais political history, see Roche, *Le Sénégal à la conquête de son indépendance*; Awenengo-Dalberto, “Les Joola”; and Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims.”

⁶⁸ Senghor, “Réforme de l’Enseignement.”

accordance with their proper “place,” as dictated by their “natural” abilities. One notices some rather Darwinian, diffusionist principles here, likely the result of Senghor’s colonial education.⁶⁹ This education, coupled with his strong intellectual capacity, prepared him to lead his nation into independence.

To have the opportunity to do that, though, Senghor needed the Casamance. And it appears that, for the most part, and certainly from about 1950 to 1980, Casamançais were glad to have him on their side. For many Casamançais, Senghor seemed preferable to Guèye, a putatively distant member of the Four Communes. For them, Guèye’s relationship to the urban centers of northern Senegal made him almost as foreign as French colonial officials. For Casamançais leaders like Emile Badiane, their background as men of letters gave them something to talk about with Senghor. The School had provided them with a cultural link to power.

MFDC to the Rescue (of Senghor)

The contemporary MFDC’s discourse of Senegalese betrayal of the Casamance begins with Senghor, the “father of the nation,” and the original MFDC, formally active from 1949 to 1954. The modern MFDC rooted this discourse in late colonial Senegalese political history, as Senghor vied with Guèye for a seat in the Territorial Assembly in 1954 and 1955.⁷⁰ Guèye, the Mayor of Dakar and the undisputed leader of the SFIO, expected to easily win a seat in the

⁶⁹ For what I mean by “diffusionist,” see W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960): 1-16, and George Basalla, “The Spread of Western Science,” *Science* 156 (1967): 611-622.

⁷⁰ In addition to Christian Roche’s book, *Le Sénégal à la conquête de son indépendance*, the best accounts of late colonial Casamançais political history can be found in the dissertations of Séverine Awenengo-Dalberto and Vincent Foucher. See Awenengo-Dalberto, “Les Joola,” and Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims.” Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 26. Father Diamacoune would later claim, “For the Casamance propelled the Deputy Senghor into power, but President Senghor forgot about the Casamance. He even stabbed it in the back.”

Territorial Assembly in 1955. Senghor was his protégé whose time had not yet arrived. Shortly after starting his own newspaper in 1948, however, Senghor split from Guèye's SFIO to create his own party, the *Bloc démocratique sénégalais* (BDS).⁷¹ Guèye felt betrayed.⁷² The relationship between the two men quickly degraded – publicly – until Senghor finally decided to vie for Guèye's seat in the Assembly.⁷³ Senghor aimed to capitalize on Guèye's weakness in areas of Senegal outside the Four Communes.

The area of Senghor's focus coincided with the *indigénat* under French rule. The *indigénat* was the area of French West Africa beyond Senegal's Four Communes. The French regarded the population of the *indigénat* as colonial "subjects" – as relatively uneducated and unprepared to assume the responsibilities of citizenship. In the Communes, however, the French extended the rights of "citizens" – providing education and the right to vote, hold property, and promote business.⁷⁴ Indeed, to speak of a colonial Senegalese elite initially meant to speak of people from the Communes. In many ways, the split of Senegalese political power between Guèye and Senghor mapped onto these French colonial categories of the Four Communes and the *indigénat*. Guèye was strongest in the Communes, Senghor in the *indigénat*, which included the Casamance.

The clash between the partisans of Guèye and Senghor divided and destroyed the original MFDC in 1954 and 1955. This clash of well-schooled elites foreshadowed the clash of well-schooled elites in 1982. The original members of the MFDC, however, did not imagine the Casamance apart from Senegal. Rather, they were keen to represent their regional interests in the

⁷¹ "Devant les renoncements de la SFIO, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Député du Sénégal, démissionne," *La Condition Humaine*, 5 October 1948.

⁷² Roche, *Le Sénégal à la conquête de son indépendance*, 105-106.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 113-114.

⁷⁴ For more on the distinction between "citizen" and "subject" in colonial Africa, see Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

newly forming Senegalese nation. In their letter to the French Governor of Senegal dated 14 April 1949 declaring the creation of the original MFDC, Emile Badiane and Ibou Diallo expressed their intention to “create in Senegal, in the district of the Casamance, a movement called the M.F.D.C. (*Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance*) to group together and unite all of the positions of the Casamance in view of the realization of a political program of rational democratization...and the improvement of the standard of living.”⁷⁵ In an article justifying the formation of the new political party along regional lines, Diallo wrote, “It is therefore false, very false, to think or to say that the M.F.D.C. plays to a dangerous sectarianism when it sounds the alarm for Casamançais to come together to prepare themselves to work for the best interests of the country without handicapping either another region or Senegal in its entirety.”⁷⁶ Clearly, the original MFDC worked for Casamançais interests *within* an emerging independent Senegal, *not apart* from it. But it would be difficult to overstate the importance of regional tensions to Senegalese politics leading up to independence.

Hence, the MFDC was pulled into the conflict between Guèye and Senghor. Because of Senghor’s strong alliance with the MFDC, Guèye pursued a Casamançais ally. He found one in Assane Seck, a professor at the University of Dakar. Seck formed the *Mouvement Autonome Casamançais* (MAC), or the Movement for Casamançais Autonomy, in 1954.⁷⁷ The son of a Jola mother and a Wolof father who had served in the colonial administration, Seck’s *Casamançité* (Casamance-ness) was called into question by his opponents (and certainly by the modern MFDC in the 1980s). His father was the *chef de canton*, or cantonal chief, of Adéane, a town on

⁷⁵ Statute of the MFDC, Letter from Emile Badiane and Ibrahim Diallo to the Governor of Senegal, 14 April 1949, signed in Sédhiou. ANS 11 D1/0309, Affaires politiques et administratives: situation administrative du cercle et activités de la population; correspondance du commandant de cercle; rapports politiques et tournées; affaires domaniales, Statuts du MFDC.

⁷⁶ Ibou Diallo, “Un grande acte de foi et de courage: le Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance,” *La Condition Humaine*, 28 February 1950.

⁷⁷ Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 25.

the south bank of the Casamance River thirty kilometers east of Ziguinchor. But Seck had spent most of his adult life in France or among the *nordistes* in Dakar.⁷⁸ That expatriate experience, for many Casamançais – as if his Wolof family name were not suspect enough – called into question his fidelity to the interests and values of the Casamance. If he was an ally of the SFIO and Lamine Guèye, he was a relatively weak one.⁷⁹ But he was the best ally Guèye could find under the circumstances.

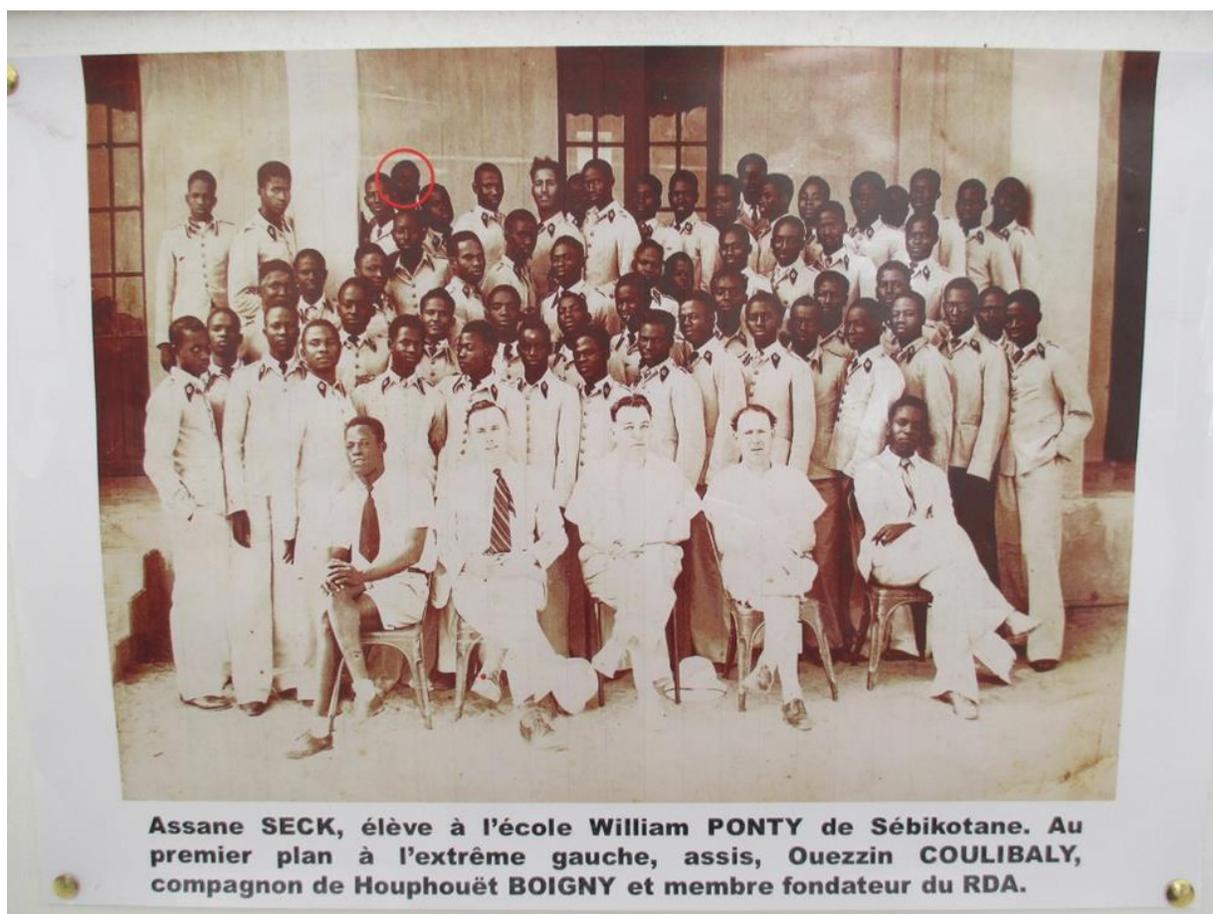


Figure 3-5: Assane Seck (red circle), founder of the *Mouvement Autonome Casamançais* (MAC), the SFIO-allied Casamançais opposition to the early MFDC in the 1950s, among his class at the *Ecole William Ponty*. From the Library at the *Université d'Assane Seck* at Ziguinchor (UASZ). The collection notes the seated position on the left of the front row of Ouezzin Coulibaly, a founding member of the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA) who later became the political ally of Cote d'Ivoire's Felix Houphouët-Boigny.

⁷⁸ Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State*, 113.

⁷⁹ Seck eventually reconciled with Senghor, though, and served as a minister in the regimes of Senghor and Diouf.

By the time of the 1954 campaign for the Territorial Assembly, religion and ethnicity had been mapped onto political space in the Casamance. Most Catholic and animist Jola – found primarily around Bignona and Oussouye – supported the MFDC or the BDS. Most Muslims, including Jola Muslims centered on the Boulouf area, supported the SFIO.⁸⁰ As it became clearer that Senghor’s supporters were splitting between the MFDC and the BDS, Emile Badiane agreed to leave the MFDC to join the BDS. Badiane’s exit left a leadership vacuum that effectively disbanded the original MFDC. Senghor needed all the help he could get to defeat Guèye’s formidable political machine, constructed over several years from the security of the Four Communes while enjoying some sympathy from colonial officials.⁸¹ But Senghor’s growing power among former MFDC partisans in the Casamance threatened the inevitability of Guèye’s political ascendancy. Guèye needed to reach out to the few remaining pockets of Socialist Party influence in the Casamance. Thus, he planned a campaign trip to tour the region in early 1955. After landing at the Ziguinchor airport on January 22nd and spending the night with Socialist Party supporters, Guèye’s convoy began winding its way north to Kagnobon, a small village twenty-four kilometers northwest of Bignona.⁸² But first, it had to pass through Bignona.

The Ambush at Bignona

The hair must have stood up on the back of J. Larrue’s neck on Sunday evening, January 23, 1955, as he drove his Land Rover at the head of a convoy for Senegal’s most prominent

⁸⁰ J. Larrue, the *Chef de Subdivision* of Bignona, to the *Commandant de Cercle*, Ziguinchor, in his report entitled, “Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955,” p. 15, ANS, 11D1/0188 Affaires politiques – incidents politiques sanglants du 23 janvier 1955 sur la route de Bignona – Conséquence politique guérilla SFIO-BDS.

⁸¹ Larrue’s report on the events of 23 January 1955 – not to mention the state assets made available to Gueye’s campaign for his visit to the Casamance – make this sympathy clear. See Larrue, “Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955,” ANS, 11D1/0188.

⁸² Bourgeois, Commander of Senegalese Gendarmes for Gueye’s visit to the Casamance, “Rapport du Chef d’Escadron Bourgeois, Commandant la Compagnie de Gendarmerie du Sénégal sur les incidents des 22-23 et 24 Janvier 1955 à Ziguinchor et Bignona,” pp. 1-2, ANS, 11D1/0188.

politician, Lamine Guèye. The convoy consisted of twenty-four vehicles, including three that carried *gendarmes* for security. Nevertheless, Larrue had the uneasy feeling that somebody was watching him from the shadows of the forest as he drove down the road. As the leading French colonial official in Bignona, Larrue had decided to accompany Guèye's convoy as it passed by Bignona on the way to Kagnobon. Bignona was home to a large Catholic population that did not look favorably on the Muslim politician's visit. After barely escaping a BDS roadblock on the bridge leaving Bignona with the help of *gendarmes* earlier that afternoon, Guèye had spent the rest of the day with supporters in Kagnobon. Meanwhile, BDS partisans burned and looted the homes of SFIO officials in Bignona, partly as a response to an assault by SFIO supporters on the father of Emile Badiane.⁸³

As dusk approached, it was time for Guèye to return to the comfort and security of Ziguinchor. Larrue had received intelligence that BDS partisans in Bignona were waiting for Guèye's return. They had prepared another roadblock on the bridge, but the number of partisans to enforce it had nearly doubled from the afternoon, to almost 1,200 people.⁸⁴ One informant had told Larrue that he heard a BDS partisan say, "Today, it's a war of the Catholics against the Muslims, and we're going to kill them all."⁸⁵ Larrue knew the Catholic BDS partisans in Bignona had easily organized to threaten Guèye and his Socialist supporters in the area after leaving Mass that morning. But they would return to their homes and go about their business on Monday morning. Thus, Larrue had pled with Guèye to spend the night in Kagnobon. But Guèye refused. He wanted to return to the safety and comfort of supporters in Ziguinchor.⁸⁶

⁸³ Larrue, "Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955," p. 8, *ANS*, 11D1/0188. Hilaire Badiane and his son, Emile, hailed from Tindième, a village eight kilometers northwest of Bignona, and the next village down the road from Couthenger, a village just across the bridge from Bignona spanning the marshy rice fields of Bignona.

⁸⁴ Bourgeois, "Rapport du Chef d'Escadron Bourgeois," p. 2, *ANS*, 11D1/0188.

⁸⁵ Larrue, "Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955," p. 10, *ANS*, 11D1/0188.

⁸⁶ Larrue, "Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955," p. 10-11, *ANS*, 11D1/0188.

The security of the return route seemed precarious at best. Larrue sent the detachment of *gendarmes* escorting the convoy ahead to scout the route to Bignona. It did not return before the convoy reached the entrance to the bridge at Couthenger, just on the other side of the bridge from Bignona. After the *gendarmes* left those in the convoy, Larrue “felt some invisible presences” watching them from the forest, making “the fever of the convoy rise.”⁸⁷ But these “presences” took no action along the route. As the convoy continued on the route, Larrue did not just have a feeling someone was watching him; he knew it. He began to see individuals scamper away from the trees bordering the route. Some appeared armed with bows, spears, clubs, rocks, and artisanal rifles as they ran away from the road, deeper into the darkness of the forest.⁸⁸ Where were they going?

Finally, as sunset loomed around 6:40 in the evening, the convoy approached the bridge to Bignona at Couthenger. The bridge was surrounded by rice fields bordering the northern edge of Bignona. A large tree trunk barred the route across the bridge. The trunk and the sides of the route were surrounded by BDS supporters from Bignona, Couthenger, and several neighboring villages. Larrue noted a man carrying an artisanal rifle. He pressed the gas pedal to the floor of the Land Rover to rush ahead to the obstacle. He deposited a few *gendarmes* to clear the trunk from the road, and then he backed up to direct the rest of the convoy across the obstacle. Larrue later reported,

My intention was to protect the passage of the convoy, with the rice field of Bignona proving a major inconvenience at the moment. I must add that the truck of *gendarmes* from Ziguinchor [which had been sent ahead earlier to scout the route] was not at the rendezvous. I later learned that the Chief Adjutant... was worried that he did not have enough forces to control the crowd at the bridge, so he had departed to request reinforcements from Commander Bourgeois [the commanding officer on scene in Bignona].⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Larrue, “Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955,” p. 11, ANS, 11D1/0188.

⁸⁸ Larrue, “Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955,” p. 10, ANS, 11D1/0188.

⁸⁹ Larrue, “Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955,” p. 11, ANS, 11D1/0188.

But Bourgeois was already worried that he did not have enough forces massed in Bignona to face the crowd, as he had dispatched other *gendarme* elements to accompany BDS sections with Emile Badiane and Edouard Diatta campaigning near Sédhiou.⁹⁰ Noting that “all of the men and most of the women were armed with clubs and stones prepared in advance,” Commander Bourgeois later wrote, “It appeared clearly that, given the weakness of the forces at our disposition, the only possible tactic was to maintain pressure on the crowd with the two platoons of *gendarmes* available and to contain the crowd in place so that it could not threaten another point on the convoy’s route.”⁹¹ In other words, the menacing crowd assembled at the bridge had the upper hand and was dictating the terms of the engagement. Bourgeois knew it and could do little about it.

Back at the bridge, as Larrue tried to organize the convoy behind him to pass through the obstacle, a gunshot cracked through the air. Someone opened fire on Lamine Guèye’s vehicle. Suddenly, all hell broke loose. The convoy began to take fire from people in the surrounding forest. Those in the convoy returned fire with weapons of their own. The air was filled with bullets, arrows, spears, rocks, and clubs “flying in all directions.”⁹² Larrue sped back to Guèye’s vehicle. Miraculously, the politician was still alive, though he had suffered a minor flesh wound. Larrue parked his Land Rover parallel to Guèye’s car and flung open the door so that Guèye could transfer into the Land Rover while being shielded by both vehicles. A rock struck Larrue above his left eyebrow, drawing blood. But Larrue was too focused on evacuating Guèye to treat the injury. The *gendarmes* remaining with the convoy deployed from their vehicles with billy

⁹⁰ On Bourgeois’ fear that he did not have enough force to control the crowd in Bignona, see Bourgeois, “Rapport du Chef d’Escadron Bourgeois,” p. 2, *ANS*, 11D1/0188.

⁹¹ Bourgeois, “Rapport du Chef d’Escadron Bourgeois,” p. 2, *ANS*, 11D1/0188.

⁹² Larrue, “Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955,” p. 12, *ANS*, 11D1/0188.

clubs to try to repel the crowd near the bridge. Eventually, they cleared the tree trunk and other debris from the bridge. Finally, a route into Bignona was opened, and Larrue sped ahead with Guèye as one of his passengers. He drove straight to Commander Bourgeois at *gendarme* headquarters, where Guèye was transferred to another vehicle for the rest of the return trip. With the forces he could muster, Bourgeois provided Guèye another *gendarme* escort to “assure his protection” and to “prevent his lynching” until he cleared Bignona on the highway headed back to Ziguinchor.⁹³

Back in the attack zone by the bridge, however, four men lay dead, dozens wounded, and a few of the vehicles were immobilized. One of the dead, Ibrahim Fall, was Guèye’s chauffeur. Another, Bourama Camara, was a *marabout* from Dakar traveling with Guèye. The third corpse belonged to Doudou Marone, a court clerk from Ziguinchor traveling with Guèye, who was killed by “the introduction of a stake into the throat.”⁹⁴ Finally, Maodo Diop, the chauffeur for a local merchant, was killed when he drove, by chance, onto the scene at the time of the attack. The merchant escaped, but his chauffeur was clubbed to death.⁹⁵ By 7:20 p.m., “shortly before sunset, order was restored, the demonstrators contained or repelled to their neighborhoods.”⁹⁶ Bourgeois claimed, “The attackers fled toward the neighboring villages.”⁹⁷ Eventually, forty-eight people wounded in the attack were sent to hospitals in Bignona and Ziguinchor.⁹⁸

⁹³ Larrue, “Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955,” p. 13, *ANS*, 11D1/0188.

⁹⁴ Photo enclosures, *ANS*, 11D1/0188

⁹⁵ Larrue, “Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955,” p. 13, *ANS*, 11D1/0188.

⁹⁶ Larrue, “Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955,” p. 13, *ANS*, 11D1/0188.

⁹⁷ Bourgeois, “Rapport du Chef d’Escadron Bourgeois,” p. 3, *ANS*, 11D1/0188.

⁹⁸ Larrue, “Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955,” p. 13, *ANS*, 11D1/0188.

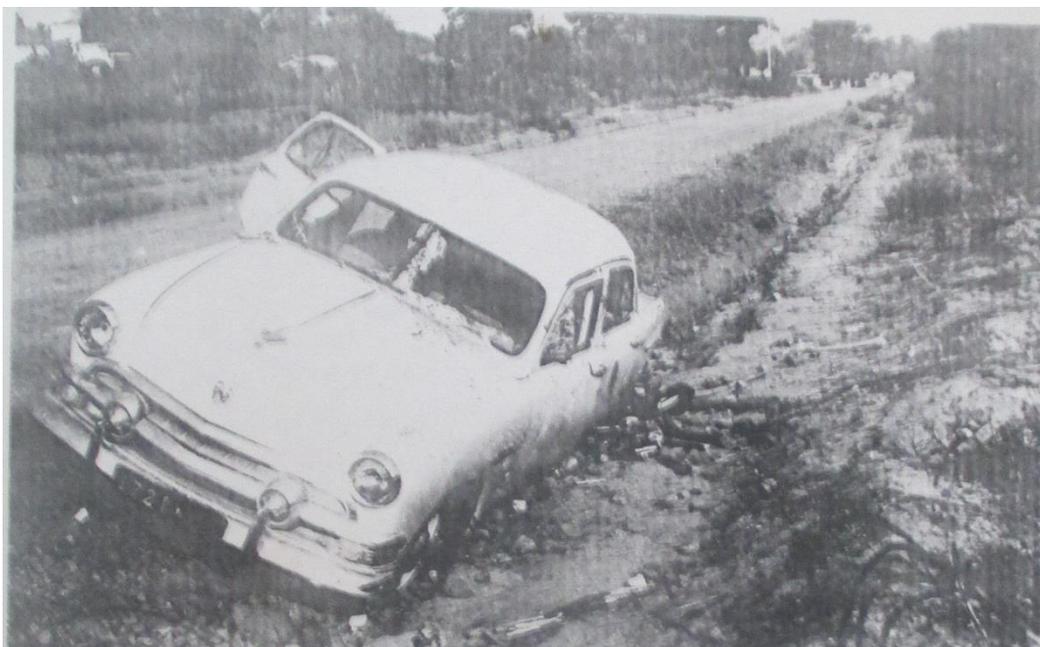


Figure 3-6: The car of a Bignona merchant after the attack outside Bignona on January 23, 1955. Maodo Diop drove as chauffeur for this car until he was killed by the enraged crowd. From ANS 11D1/0188 Affaires politiques – incidents sanglants du 23 janvier 1955 sur la route de Bignona – Conséquence politique guérilla SFIO-BDS. Photos of the corpses of the deceased following the attack were also included in this dossier.

In his colonial after-action report on the attack, Larrue played historian, demonstrating the veracity of Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s blurring of the lines between “historical actor” and “historical narrator.” Larrue appears careful to render a complete, detailed, factual account of the ambush, but he was also careful to protect his own professional reputation. As Larrue – a mid-ranking, civilian colonial bureaucrat – had variously played the roles of *gendarme* commander (much to the chagrin of Bourgeois), politician, anthropologist, and chauffeur earlier in the incident, he quickly assumed the role of historian after the fact. After relaying the chronology of events in his report to the *Commandant de Cercle* at Ziguinchor, he labeled the next section of his report “Origins of the Incident.” If The School had fingerprints, they would have been all over this section of Larrue’s report.

Larrue began by noting the “sinister” influence of the local Casamançais press, especially that of *La Casamance*, the new journal of the BDS-MFDC alliance after Badiane’s decision in 1954 to join the BDS. Larrue noted the challenge presented to Guèye by an anonymous author

over the honor of Casamançais women working in Dakar.⁹⁹ The author implies that Guèye had somehow defiled these women's sexual honor. The author concludes by claiming that "we understand that the Mayor of Dakar owes us an explanation, and we expect him to set foot in Ziguinchor to do it."¹⁰⁰

It is doubtful that Guèye gave a second thought to humoring this rather sexist, sophomoric challenge to his campaign in the Casamance. But a notable thing is the literary capabilities of the *évolués*, also referred to as "the Jola literati" or the "*Casamançais Cadres*" by Foucher and others. These *évolués* wrote and published *La Casamance*, as well as the journal of the MFDC, known as *La Voix de la Casamance*.¹⁰¹ These men had been virtually denied any chance of entering commerce, controlled for centuries by Wolof and Fulani merchants in Senegal, so they did the best they could with what they had: they went to school, and then they farmed, taught, or helped manage the state.¹⁰² More than any other social space for imagining the nation, The School appears to support Anderson's argument about "print-capitalism" because of the creation of this group of "literate notables." This group was not only literate but quite prolific as well, producing numerous journal and newspaper articles, tracts, poems, proverbs, and plays supporting Casamançais nationalism.¹⁰³

Perhaps more than Larrue, the two most important leaders of the BDS-MFDC alliance – Leopold Senghor and Emile Badiane – demonstrated eagerness to deposit a particular historical narrative of the attack on Lamine Guèye, one that favored their cause. Indeed, the schoolteacher-cum-politician Badiane published an account, even though he was not present for the attack, in

⁹⁹ See the first chapter of Foucher's dissertation on Casamançais migration to Dakar in "Cheated Pilgrims."

¹⁰⁰ Journal "*La Casamance*" No. 2, p. 8, attached to ANS, 11D1/0188.

¹⁰¹ The Voice of the Casamance.

¹⁰² Foucher, "Cheated Pilgrims," 110-117.

¹⁰³ For more on the role of theater groups in Casamançais separatism, see Foucher, "Cheated Pilgrims," 110-114.

La Casamance. Badiane wrote that “anyone who knows the Casamance” could see the “Machiavellian manipulation” of Guèye’s itinerary to pass through Bignona at eleven o’clock, the same hour that Bignona’s Catholics would be returning home from Sunday morning Mass. Thus, Badiane saw Guèye’s visit as pure provocation. He claimed, “The SFIO knew it, and saw it as a unique opportunity to avoid responsibility [for the predictable violence].”¹⁰⁴ Thus, even though Badiane was in Sédhiou at the time of the attack, he had the authority – or at least the self-confidence – to publish an account of the attack within weeks of its occurrence. This self-confidence partly resulted from Badiane’s education, especially the prestige of graduating as the valedictorian of his class at *Ecole William-Ponty*. As I discuss in the final two sections of this chapter, those with formal education possessed the confidence to narrate national histories. Those without education did not.

In the same issue of *La Casamance*, Leopold Senghor published a response to the 23 January attacks, in which he directly tied education to politics.¹⁰⁵ In fact, for him, there was no separation between the two: education was inherently political. He congratulated the Casamançais for having created “an organ of political education, which awaits all Casamançais of good will.”¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, he asserted,

Some will accuse you of being the servants of Senghor while others will accuse Senghor of being the servant of the Casamançais. This contradictory accusation makes good sense. It shows that you have integrated the Casamance into the Senegalese union on an equal basis. And it shows that Senghor has placed himself at the service of the Casamance.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Emile Badiane, Conseiller de Bignona, Directeur Politique des Sections MFDC-BDS de Casamance, “Les Bagarres de Bignona,” *La Casamance* No. 3 (February 1955), 3.

¹⁰⁵ In the article, Senghor claims to be writing from Paris. See “Lettre de L.S. Senghor, Député du Sénégal à un ami,” Paris, 27 January 1955, *La Casamance* No. 3 (February 1955), p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ Léopold S. Senghor, “Lettre de L.S. Senghor,” 27 January 1955, p. 7.

¹⁰⁷ Senghor, “Lettre de L.S. Senghor,” 27 January 1955.

Clearly, Badiane and Senghor were not about to let colonial officials like Larrue, a known Socialist Party sympathizer, have the final word on the attack. They also demonstrated a keen awareness that they were fashioning nations out of what would be the colonial remains.¹⁰⁸ While the remains – in the form of what Davidson called “the colonial partition” – would define the state, the cultural content defining the “nation” was up for grabs.¹⁰⁹ Like Larrue, Senghor and Badiane rushed to take hold of it for their interests.

Women were prevalent at the bridge before and during the attack on Guèye. They were important historical actors in this drama. Commander Bourgeois’s after-action report mentions the inability of the MFDC “to control its partisans,” which had been whipped into a frenzy by “the large number of women proving to be particularly violent.”¹¹⁰ Larrue, in his report, also notes “the veritable hysteria of the crowd,” though he places more of the blame on “the Catholics” than on women.¹¹¹ He wryly notes, “the leaders have been, like always, surpassed by their followers: they [the leaders] said without a doubt, ‘Break their jaws’ without thinking that it would come to this.”¹¹² As human historical subjects, the women at the bridge of Bignona demonstrated the capacity for violence along with the men. Their role appears to have been critical in whipping up anti-Guèye sentiment among the crowd.

This is not to say that women were treated as equals by the nationalists on either side. One notes in these late colonial political articles a near paranoia over the sexual honor of Casamançais women, who were seldom referred to by name as individual human beings. This paranoia is not surprising since the nationalist, anti-colonial generation in Africa was mostly

¹⁰⁸ For more on the “possibilities” of the postcolonial nation-state in the former French West Africa, see Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, Chaps. 1 and 2, as well as Cooper, “Possibility and Constraint.”

¹⁰⁹ Davidson, *Black Man’s Burden*, 162.

¹¹⁰ Bourgeois, “Rapport du Chef d’Escadron Bourgeois,” p. 2, ANS, 11D1/0188.

¹¹¹ Larrue, “Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955,” p. 15, ANS, 11D1/0188.

¹¹² Larrue, “Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955,” p. 16, ANS, 11D1/0188.

male, missionary-educated, and widely influenced by colonial ideas regarding gender roles and relations.¹¹³ Cheikh Mamadou Coly, a Muslim MFDC member, wrote an article in the MFDC's journal, *La Voix de la Casamance*. Cheikh wrote in response to his cousin, Catholic leader Paul Ignace Coly, the author of an earlier article in *La Casamance*. Paul Coly had allegedly written, "It escapes no one in this territory that the young Catholic women are constantly gazed upon, pursued, and turned toward the young Muslim 'évolués' who do not 'spit in their glasses,' demonstrating the fact that drinking for them is a sign of evolution as well as a means of attaining and seizing their prey."¹¹⁴ In response, Cheikh mocked his cousin:

Let's be serious, Ignace! How have we young Muslims, in spite of these demure young women, been able to gaze at them, pursue them, and turn them toward us?...Let us speak seriously. All of the youth of Bignona are hardly surprised by the *brilliant results* of the education that you give to the Christian youth. Haven't we said: *One teaches what one is*. What is going on in Bignona? Where are the five young mothers? Is it the work of our young Muslim men? Respond, sir, to these horrific ideas. Before the eyes of everyone, the eloquent results prove that in your spirits the only goal of the [Catholic] Foyer is to attract to yourselves the young Catholic women who fled you, in order to enjoy their profound charm.¹¹⁵

Adult consternation over the morals of young people is not new to politics. But just as these men imagined the nation on European terms, based on European histories and cultures, they seemed to have thought of women in the same way, an aspect of gender relations wrought by colonialism.¹¹⁶ Though Anne McClintock tells us to expect such a symbolic role for women, claiming that women typically "are denied any direct relation to national agency," by the

¹¹³ See Carina E. Ray, *Crossing the Color Line: Race, Sex, and the Contested Politics of Colonialism in Ghana* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2015); Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals*.

¹¹⁴ Ignace Paul Coly, as quoted by Cheikh Mamadou Coly in "Autour d'un article publié dans le journal 'La Casamance' No. 2, intitulé 'Un foyer à Bignona' et signé du 'Prêtre' Ignace Paul Coly," *La Voix de la Casamance* 53 (21 January 1955), p. 7.

¹¹⁵ Cheikh Mamadou Coly, "Autour d'un article," 21 January 1955, p. 7, emphasis in the original.

¹¹⁶ Mark, *Basse Casamance since 1500*, 81-83.

postcolonial era, as I show in the final two sections of this chapter, it had begun to change, as more girls went to school and began to imagine the nation in their own ways.¹¹⁷

What begins to stand out in this narrative of elite contestation for command of the nation is the common educational backgrounds of these men. They were men of letters, and most were sons of men of letters.¹¹⁸ They spoke French and were deeply conversant in European history. But they were less conversant in African history, including important aspects of Senegalese and Casamançais history. Father Diamacoune was quick to exploit this historical gap.

Some Senegalese believe that Father Diamacoune organized the crowd at the bridge for the assault on Lamine Guèye on 23 January 1955.¹¹⁹ It certainly would have made it clear why he so quickly tied the student strike of 1980 to the original MFDC and this era of late colonial Senegalese politics. But this is merely a case of mistaken homonymy, as Diamacoune did not receive his ordination until 1956.¹²⁰ The confusion results from the colonial reports on the attack. Bourgeois reported “behind the crowd of Catholics the presence of a European father and an African brother.”¹²¹ Larrue, in his section on “Those Responsible,” alluded to a French priest, Father R.P. Goetz, and “Father Senghor, specialist in the Catholic youth movement, who seemed to bear some responsibility” for the angry crowd, given his “grand religious intolerance.”¹²² In “Pays du Refus,” Diamacoune claims that the “Father Senghor” at the bridge was not him but rather Father Pierre-Marie Senghor, an older member of Bignona’s Catholic clergy.

¹¹⁷ McClintock, “Family Feuds,” 62.

¹¹⁸ As Foucher notes in “Cheated Pilgrims” (p. 145), a few came from more subaltern backgrounds. But the majority came from families already holding significant social capital in precolonial societies.

¹¹⁹ Mid-ranking Senegalese government official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 26 March 2014. Also, as Foucher notes, Marut cites in his dissertation an article by Moussa Paye, in *Sud Quotidien*, 1 March 1994, making the same assertion. See Jean-Claude Marut, “La question de Casamance (Sénégal). Une analyse géopolitique,” PhD Thesis (Université Paris 8, 1999).

¹²⁰ Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims,” 122.

¹²¹ Bourgeois, “Rapport du Chef d’Escadron Bourgeois,” p. 3, ANS, 11D1/0188.

¹²² Larrue, “Incidents du 23 Janvier 1955,” p. 17, ANS, 11D1/0188.

Nevertheless, through The School, Father Diamacoune still claimed a connection to the attack, asserting that he knew Larrue from his tenure at the seminary at Ngasobil. Diamacoune and his schoolmates derisively nicknamed Larrue “the baby of Mbour” because “fresh out of the *Ecole Nationale de la France d’Outre-Mer*” in 1946, the twenty-three year old bureaucrat was named the Chief of the Subdivision of Mbour, the regional capital of Ngasobil.¹²³ Diamacoune claimed that Larrue bore a grudge against the Catholic Church and that this grudge was the reason Larrue blamed the Catholic clergy for the attack on Guèye. Diamacoune explained, “In addition to his young age, Administrator Laurent Larue [sic] was noted for his strong socialist and anti-clerical leanings. In order to not have to pass in front of the Catholic Mission at Ngasobil, in full view and knowledge of the priests, he began a road construction project to avoid the priests by altering the highway from Mbour to Joäl.”¹²⁴ Diamacoune argued that this was only one action reflecting on the poor character of Larrue. He claimed that Goetz and Senghor could not have assisted the crowd in the attack on Guèye because, at the time of the attack, “Father Goetz was calmly meeting with catechists while Father Senghor was simply proceeding to baptize some newborns.”¹²⁵ Therefore, according to Diamacoune, “Larue [sic] remains in our memories for his militant, sectarian, and fanatical socialism, as well as his notoriously irritating, antiquated, ridiculous anti-clericalism.”¹²⁶ But more importantly to Diamacoune, Larrue constituted one more link in the chain of colonial subjugation of the Casamance – first by the French and then by the Senegalese.

This historical construction was absolutely essential to colonial hegemony over the Casamance, starting with “historical actors” like Larrue acting as “historical narrators” to

¹²³ Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 151.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 152.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

formulate an empirical narrative to be taught in colonial schools.¹²⁷ In that narrative, foundational to the “civilizing mission” meant to justify the force and violence of colonialism, French colonizers – as the original inheritors of the Enlightenment – bestowed that Enlightenment on the “backward” masses of West Africa. But Diamacoune “wrote back” against this colonizing narrative, whether from the French or the Senegalese. He wrote: “How to write the history of the Casamance? It has to be lived first. And above all, never forget that in the current Department of Bignona, like everywhere else in the Casamance, it is the colonial administration – once French, today Senegalese – that most often played the religious and ethnic cards, in order to divide and conquer the population.”¹²⁸ The political consciousness developed from a personal connection to these late colonial events may have made it easier for Diamacoune to link 1980 to 1955. But he needed other “silences” in this past to make his case for Casamançais separatism. The death of Emile Badiane provided one.



Figure 3-7: Assane Seck (left) and Emile Badiane (right), date unknown. From the Library at the *Université d'Assane Seck* at Ziguinchor (UASZ).

¹²⁷ On the distinctions between “historical actors” and “historical narrators,” see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 2 and 23.

¹²⁸ Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 152.

Another Mysterious Death

Emile Badiane was the political star of the Casamance who died, like Victor Diatta, before his time. It is hard to say for sure because, like Diatta, Badiane died under mysterious circumstances. These circumstances became fodder for Father Diamacoune and the separatists. The circumstances came to constitute one more element in the discourse of Senegalese betrayal of the Casamance. To be clear, Diamacoune had next to nothing as evidence for some of the most powerful claims of this discourse. But perhaps that was why the claims became so powerful. They could only exist in the imagination, in the shadows of *what might have happened* in Senegalese history. As Luise White has shown, there is immense power in rumor and innuendo.¹²⁹ Diamacoune dealt expertly in both. This section examines three mysterious events, though there is little evidence that any of them occurred: first, that the Senegalese state secretly assassinated Badiane, one of Senghor's closest political allies; second, that it then destroyed a secret agreement between Senghor and Badiane promising the delayed independence of the Casamance; and third, that the state furthermore destroyed a large archive of documents on Casamançais history.

From the time Badiane joined the BDS in 1954 until he died in 1972, there seemed to be few political partnerships – indeed, friendships – stronger than his with Senghor. After Senghor won the territorial election against Guèye and later became the first president of an independent Senegal, he appointed Badiane to three ministerial posts, including the Ministry of Information (1959-1960, under the short-lived Mali Federation), the Ministry of Education (1960-1970), and

¹²⁹ White, *Speaking with Vampires*. For a good analysis of the scholarly discussion catalyzed by White's book, see Gregory Mann, "An Africanist's Apostasy: On Luise White's 'Speaking with Vampires,'" *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 41:1 (January 1, 2008): 117–21.

the Ministry of Cooperation (1970-1972).¹³⁰ In spite of this ministerial reshuffling typical of African one-party states at the time, Badiane was “[a] companion to Senghor from the earliest moments of the struggle [who] never quit him until his death.”¹³¹

Yet, it does not appear that Badiane acted as a “yes man,” performing like a robot at the will of his master, Senghor. Indeed, Badiane expressed the opinion that political debate was healthy, important for a modern democratic state. In a 1965 speech to the National Assembly, Badiane noted that he had enjoyed the opportunity, while traveling the country as Minister of Education, to meet numerous representatives to the Assembly. Then he claimed:

Thanks to these meetings, for the majority of us, we are no longer strangers to one another. Often, if we do not agree with one another in relation to certain questions, we do not hang on to these disagreements but remind one another of the honest preoccupations that animate us. And that’s the essential thing: to work together, each in his sphere, for the same cause, with faith and courage. I hope that my service in this region sees our collaboration reinforced and maintained, to the profit of the major interests of the Casamance.¹³²

Badiane’s words here demonstrate how he and other elites were imagining the nation, if we accept Benedict Anderson’s assertion that nationalism enables people who do not know each other personally to imagine themselves part of a community defined by a common culture.¹³³ As symbolized by this excerpt, there is no document written by Badiane and no press account indicating that he thought of the Casamance in any way separate from Senegal. While he and other Casamançais leaders certainly referred to “the Casamance” as a political entity, they only did so in reference to their region of Senegal. To the extent that they imagined a Casamançais

¹³⁰ Pape Sow, “Le Chef de l’Etat demain à Bignona pour l’Anniversaire de la Mort d’Emile Badiane,” *Le Soleil* 21 December 1973; “Emile Badiane: 1972-1980, huit ans déjà,” *Le Soleil*, 25 December 1980, both articles from *ANS*, “Personnalités: Emile Badiane”; Gassama, *Emile Badiane*, 87. What I have translated and shortened to “the Ministry of Education” was, in French, *le Ministère d’Enseignement technique et de la Formation des Cadres*.

¹³¹ “Emile Badiane: 1972-1980, huit ans déjà,” *Le Soleil*, 25 December 1980. *ANS*, “Personnalités: Emile Badiane.”

¹³² Emile Badiane, Speech to the Senegalese National Assembly, 1966, *ANS*, “Personnalités: Emile Badiane.”

¹³³ Anderson argued that the nation is “an imagined political community” because “...the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

“nation,” they did so as a part of the larger Senegalese nation. But that does not stop contemporary Casamançais from claiming that they “had a nation before Senegal did,” and in some ways this notion may be true.¹³⁴ Regardless, it did not inherently divorce the Casamance from Senegal.

That Senghor’s conception of a French-speaking, West African federation of states crumbled to, first, the short-lived Mali Federation, and then, to Senegal showed why he was keen to guard the territory considered part of “Senegal” under the colonial state.¹³⁵ While he certainly cared about African culture vis-à-vis *négritude*, he seemed less concerned with the cultural content of “Senegal” and more concerned with the state, as the state would not only make Senegalese “modern” but facilitate the Senegalese contribution to the “civilization of the universal.”¹³⁶ At the dawn of independence, Senghor argued, “We have said that the state is the expression of the Nation; it is primarily a means of realizing the Nation. Political history teaches that the lack of organization of the State is a weakness that fatally engenders the disintegration of the Nation.”¹³⁷ Clearly, Senghor knew that to have a state after 1945, one needed a nation, whether that meant “bundling” together a number of ethnic groups or regions.¹³⁸ He had already lost the postcolonial French West African federation to nationalist rivalries with men like Houphouët-Boigny and Guinea’s Ahmed Sekou Touré.¹³⁹ He was not about to lose what remained of Senegal. By 1960, whether or not Casamançais nationalism was more developed

¹³⁴ Casamançais member of civil society working in peace process, personal interview, Dakar, 3 June 2012.

¹³⁵ Senghor, *Nationhood and the African Road to Socialism*; and Fred Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, 40-49.

¹³⁶ Senghor, *Nationhood and the African Road to Socialism*, 63-69. For scholarship on the link made by early African nationalists between the precolonial African state and modernity, see Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals*.

¹³⁷ Senghor, *Nationhood and the African Road to Socialism*, 41.

¹³⁸ On the formation of African nations through the “bundling” of ethnic groups, see Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, 270.

¹³⁹ Cooper, *Africa since 1940*; Davidson, *Black Man’s Burden*; Martin Meredith, *The Fate of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), Chap. 4.

than Senegalese nationalism, Senghor needed the Casamance; therefore, he needed the MFDC. To get it, he needed Badiane. Whether through a secret agreement or not, he got him.

So why did the modern MFDC assume the name of this late colonial regional party? In part, there seemed to be something suspicious about Badiane's death. Badiane died on 22 December 1972, a few months after returning from a trip to Zaire as the Minister of Cooperation.¹⁴⁰ But one does not find any cause of death listed in the reporting following Badiane's death. Instead, one reads that he "disappeared" in the early morning hours at the Principal Hospital of Dakar. Others simply note that "he died." One press account refers to his death as "the brutal disappearance during the night of Thursday to Friday of our Minister of Cooperation."¹⁴¹ Brutal for whom? Badiane or the people of Senegal? The reporting is not clear. The Senegalese state commemorated Badiane's death on an annual basis, placing a bust of him in Bignona. Later, a large statue of Badiane was constructed in the middle of Bignona's large traffic circle on the north side of the town, leading to Tindieme, Badiane's village. Roads, streets, and bridges in Ziguinchor and other Casamançais towns were also named after Badiane. But rather than give the state credit for these efforts to honor the memory of this Casamançais political hero, separatists considered them paltry efforts to distract attention from the state's assassination of Badiane. The modern MFDC has seized upon this ambiguity surrounding the cause and the means of Badiane's death to argue that Badiane was killed by Senegalese intelligence agents. It is not clear what the means of assassinating Badiane would have been, but the fact that no cause of death was given facilitated these rumors.

¹⁴⁰ Emile Badiane, Speech to the President and Government of Zaire, 1972, Kinshasa; Aly Kheury N'Daw, "Funérailles nationales ce matin pour Emile Badiane: sa dernière interview," *Le Soleil*, 23-24 December 1972, ANS, "Personnalités: Emile Badiane."

¹⁴¹ "Emile Badiane: Le Dernier Hommage," *Le Soleil*, 26 December 1972, ANS, "Personnalités: Emile Badiane."

Moreover, the separatists claim that Senghor ordered Badiane assassinated so that he would not have to honor a “secret agreement” he made with Badiane in 1954 to entice Badiane to join the BDS. The agreement between Senghor and Badiane allegedly stipulated that the Casamance would get its independence after twenty years of union with Senegal if the MFDC would throw its support to the BDS to carry Senegal into independence. Why such an agreement would need to remain “secret” is not clear. But that is the story that the modern MFDC told. Diamacoune and Sané claimed that the Senegalese made the agreement disappear, quipping, “We fell asleep as Casamançais and woke up to find ourselves Senegalese.”¹⁴² To these separatists, they had been cheated by the iconic conniving Senegalese *commerçant* once again.

As if murdering Badiane and ripping up the alleged “secret agreement” were not enough, separatists also claimed that the Senegalese state “silenced the past” by destroying archives related to Casamançais history.¹⁴³ Diamacoune’s biographer, René Capain Bassene, asked Diamacoune directly if he had any evidence for this claim. He had none. Instead, he parried:

The history of the Casamance has been hidden from you. You have not learned the real history of the Casamance. I only want for proof that at the beginning of Senegalese independence, the Senegalese administration requested... from certain prefectures of the Casamance to send them some documents, some of the archives of the Casamance. One of [these bureaucrats] told me: ‘I don’t know, I’m not sure what will happen with our Senegalese brothers. Each day, send us this document, send us that document. The documents leave but never come back. And these are not just any documents! These are the treaties of peace, friendship, and protectorate that our grandparents signed with the colonizers, above all those of the French.’ So, after the war of liberation, these documents were placed under embargo. One could not consult them. After the war of liberation for Portuguese Guinea (contemporary Guinea-Bissau) [1963-1974], when they sent some Senegalese army officers here to act as prefects, they were ordered to burn all the archives of the Casamance. They burned them at Oussouye, which had inherited some archives from Carabane, the first point of French penetration in the Casamance. They burned them in Ziguinchor, in Sédhiou, in Kolda, and in Velingara. When the people of Kolda protested, they attributed these cases to the

¹⁴² As quoted in Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 41-42.

¹⁴³ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*. To be clear, “silencing the past” refers to Trouillot’s words, not those of the separatists. But their meaning is the same for both.

agitations of the opposition, of those who were not of Senghor's party [i.e. the BDS]. However, that's not true: it was the administration that ordered the archives to be burned!¹⁴⁴

Thus, into the mysterious silence surrounding the deaths of Victor Diatta and Emile Badiane, into the silence of Casamançais history – which was not taught to students in Senegalese schools but passed on to Casamançais children in their homes and villages – Diamacoune threw these historical claims. While there was little evidence to support his claims, there was also little evidence to refute them. Hence, Diamacoune seized the opportunity to fill this lacuna in Casamançais history with a narrative benefitting the MFDC. He told his biographer, “Senegal first of all must restore to the Casamance its history. You have seen that there is no history of the Casamance. They have done everything in their power to render us a people without history.”¹⁴⁵ Once this discourse of betrayal was established by 1980, it took the death of a young Casamançais sixth grade boy, a life full of so much promise snuffed out by “betrayal,” to fan the flames of conflict.

Making Lycée Djignabo Casamançais

No school became more symbolic of Casamançais particularism than Lycée Djignabo. It served as a nexus for various spatial vectors in this dissertation – from the student strike where Idrissa Sagna was killed at The School to the city politics over land tenure in The Rice Field that helped catalyze the student strike and to the students supporting *Casa-Sports* in The Stadium. I argue that Djignabo became a nexus for these vectors because it was a space for imagining and contesting the nation. Since Diamacoune insisted that “the events of the Casamance” began with

¹⁴⁴ Diamacoune Senghor, interview with Bassene, *L'abbé*, 36-37.

¹⁴⁵ Diamacoune Senghor, interview with Bassene, *L'abbé*, 68. The phrase “people without history” harkens some of the European characterizations of African histories emerging from the colonial era, such as Hegel in *The Philosophy of History* and Trevor-Roper, *The Rise of Christian Europe*.

Sagna's death, it may be tempting to believe that the history of the Casamance conflict began there in 1980. Indeed, 1980 was a pivotal year in the history of the Casamance conflict. Many of the key events described in this dissertation took place during that year. First, in January, Idrissa Sagna was killed at the student strike outside Djignabo. Second, in early August, the soccer club *Casa-Sports* lost the final of the Senegalese Cup over a controversial call to northern rival, *Jeanne d'Arc*. Rioting and violence followed the match. Third, in late August, Father Diamacoune began filling the historical gap with an inflammatory speech on the significance of Aline Sitoe Diatta's resistance to foreign domination at the Dakar Chamber of Commerce. But Djignabo entered the national consciousness before 1980.

Even before the student strike, a French principal of the school, Christian Roche, wrote a history of the colonial conquest in the Casamance for his doctoral dissertation at the University of Paris. Published in 1975, the research for *Conquête et résistance des peuples de Casamance, 1850-1920* depended somewhat on Roche's position as principal of Djignabo.¹⁴⁶ By 1985, Roche had converted his dissertation into a book entitled *Histoire de la Casamance: Conquête et Résistance, 1850-1920*.¹⁴⁷ Where previous French scholarship had focused on ethnography, Roche's book provided a "national history" of sorts where there had been none.¹⁴⁸ Suddenly, the Casamance had a history written by a professional historian highlighting Casamançais "resistance" to colonialism. Separatists were quick to claim this heritage of Casamançais sovereignty and resistance to foreign domination of all kinds, claiming that it also stretched to resistance of "the Senegalese." They essentialized the Casamançais as naturally more rebellious

¹⁴⁶ "The Conquest and Resistance of the Peoples of the Casamance, 1850-1920." Roche, "Conquête et résistance des peuples de Casamance, 1850-1920."

¹⁴⁷ "The History of the Casamance: Conquest and Resistance, 1850-1920." Christian Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*.

¹⁴⁸ This previous French scholarship included works focused on the Jola by Louis-Vincent Thomas and Jean Girard. See, for example, Thomas, *Les Diola*, and Girard, *Genèse du pouvoir charismatique en Basse Casamance*.

than Senegalese. Separatists became aware of Roche's work in the 1970s, after his dissertation was published in 1975 and reached Dakar in 1976. The book's appearance in 1985 came after separatist sentiments began to harden among the Casamançais population following the 1982 separatist march and the 1983 encounter that killed four Senegalese *gendarmes*. Many more important factors intensified the conflict in 1990, but several Casamançais and outside observers believe that the publication of Roche's book constituted an important ingredient for the "recipe" of Casamançais nationalism and separatism.¹⁴⁹ Jean-Claude Marut asserts that the book "provided the body of dates and events that would constitute this discourse."¹⁵⁰ Indeed, as Trouillot explains, Roche – like Larrue before him – blurred the lines between *historical actors* and *historical narrators*, inhabiting both roles at various times.¹⁵¹

Lycée Djignabo was named for an anti-colonial Jola warrior named Djignabo Bassène whose practically suicidal resistance to French military force in the village of Séléki made his story the stuff of Casamançais legend. Séléki earned a reputation for especially "ferocious resistance" to French colonial conquest, requiring aerial bombardment before the people finally submitted to colonial force. Roche wrote that Djignabo was born around 1875 to 1880. But little is known of his life before his death, except that Djignabo had been known as a "particularly dreaded and famous fetish priest, as well as a great warrior."¹⁵² The mysticism of Djignabo was believed to be so powerful that bullets bounced off his skin when the Europeans shot at him. This mysticism failed to protect Djignabo the night of 17 May 1906, though, when French soldiers shot and killed him.¹⁵³ In any case, Lycée Djignabo has maintained institutional links to

¹⁴⁹ On "the recipe" for Casamançais nationalism, see Séverine Awenengo Dalberto, "Usages de l'histoire et mémoires de la colonie dans le récit indépendantiste casamançais," *Outre-mers : revue d'histoire* 98 :368 (2010): 137-157.

¹⁵⁰ Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 96.

¹⁵¹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 2 and 23.

¹⁵² "Djignabo Bassène, le capitaine des Séléki," *Le Soleil*, 20 March 1999.

¹⁵³ "Djignabo Bassène, le capitaine des Séléki," *Le Soleil*, 20 March 1999.

the village of Séléki and to the descendants of Djignabo, the school's namesake, as demonstrated by a display inside the Principal's office. (See Figure 3-8, below.)



Figure 3-8: Photo board of “Seleky, the village of our godfather, Djignabo,” above photos of “the family of our godfather.” Photo taken by author, inside the Principal’s office, Lycée Djignabo, March 2014.

Roche’s positionality as a professional historian seemed important to the separatists, even though his oral sources were similar to those passed on in homes and villages across the Casamance for years. Roche asserted that none of Djignabo’s story would be known if it were left to the colonial and national archives. Rather, he discovered Djignabo’s story from oral testimonies provided by Pierre Lambin, the French colonial administrator in 1906, and Tété Diadhiou, the Jola interpreter for several French administrators of the Casamance, especially during the early colonial period.¹⁵⁴ In any case, Roche dug up the history of Bassène just in time for a separatist movement hungry for historical examples of timeless Casamançais resistance to foreign domination. Along with this discourse of resistance, Father Diamacone asserted,

¹⁵⁴ “Djignabo Bassène, le capitaine des Séléki,” *Le Soleil*, 20 March 1999.

“Casamance for the Casamançais...all foreigners get out!”¹⁵⁵ posing a stark contrast to the tradition of Casamançais hospitality in a borderland known as a crossroads for centuries during the precolonial era.¹⁵⁶ Roche’s history portrayed the Casamance not as a borderland for the mixing and mingling of goods and cultures but as a country of refusal, or a “Pays du Refus,” the title of Diamacoune’s 170-page opus during the 1993 ceasefire.



Figure 3-9: Map of the Casamance, with list of the principals of Djignabo to the left, inside the office of the Principal of Lycée Djignabo. Photo taken by author in March 2014, but the map appears to have been in place for quite some time.

Lycée Djignabo brought together young men (and eventually women) from all over the Casamance who thought of themselves in local, ethnic terms and compelled them to think of themselves in national terms – as Casamançais and, for some, as Senegalese. Young Jola, Mandinka, and Balanta enrolled there and became Casamançais. At Djignabo, named for a symbol of Casamançais resistance, they learned a national history and had their concepts of space and time realigned to fit those of the nation. The School imposed its order and discipline.

¹⁵⁵ Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 23.

¹⁵⁶ Peter Mark, “Portuguese” style and Luso-African Identity; Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*; and Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*.

Their schedules were no longer dictated by an agricultural calendar – by the weather and the environment – but by the ring of the bell, compelling them to move to the next class to become good citizens of “Senegal.”¹⁵⁷ But by the student strike of 1980, this order had begun to break down. Liberal students and faculty began to contest this order. And then one day, Senegalese forces killed Idrissa Sagna.

Those “Better Placed” to Define the Nation...

Among the nationalist and separatist generation in the Casamance, Bertrand Diamacoune was unique because he did not go to school. Instead, he relied on his father’s teaching in the village and his brother’s historical interpretations outside of it.¹⁵⁸ Bertrand was able to tag along with his older brother and educate him on “traditional things” because Father Diamacoune never went through *bukut*, the sacred forest initiation so central to the identities of Jola men.¹⁵⁹ But Bertrand was also unique because he did not disqualify himself from participating in politics, as so many disinherited social classes, especially those without formal education, often did. Father Diamacoune claimed to raise his voice for “those without a voice.”¹⁶⁰ But he often seemed to be engaging in a conversation with other educated elites in some sort of echo chamber where they could only hear each other’s voices.

¹⁵⁷ On schools imposing order and discipline on students, see Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*; and Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

¹⁵⁸ But Bertrand Diamacoune claimed that his older brother looked to him for instruction on “traditional” matters in the village, the things that determined whether one was a “true Jola.” Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014. Bertrand died on 22 July 2014. « Bertrand Diamacoune est mort, » *Seneweb.com* (22 July 2014), accessed 23 July 2014 at http://www.seneweb.com/news/Necrologie/bertrand-diamacoune-est-mort_n_131171.html.

¹⁵⁹ *Bukut* is the Jola-Fogny (i.e. north of Bignona) word to describe the once-in-a-generation, weeks-long male circumcision ritual that takes place in a “sacred forest” to initiate Jola boys into manhood. For more on these “sacred forest” rituals, see Chapter 4.

¹⁶⁰ Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus”; Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 34.

So many of my village informants – especially women – automatically disqualified themselves from talking to me about Casamançais history and politics. They often told me something like, “Oh, that’s just politics,” or “That’s just for politicians,” or “I don’t know about politics...you should talk to (insert name of the most prominent man who had attained the highest degree of education in the village). He knows about those things.”¹⁶¹ Thus, I was struck by the power formal education had granted to men especially – but increasingly women as well – to engage in politics. Gayatri Spivak wondered whether the subaltern could speak.¹⁶² I wondered whether the subaltern would speak. But in less formal situations among villagers, I did hear them speak. They spoke about their families, their communities, the quality of the last rice harvest, which prized child did well in school or married another prized child of the village. Though I seldom heard them speak about separatism – unless I asked – I did hear them speak about politics. So, it seems that the subaltern can and does speak but perhaps not on the same stage as nationalist elites.¹⁶³

Villagers lacking formal education in the Casamance may disqualify themselves from speaking to strangers about history or politics. But that does not mean that they do not think or speak about these things in the intimacy of their own homes. Yet the fact that they will not – perhaps cannot – engage political ground beyond the local indicates why nationalism has been perceived as a contest between elites defined by their educational experiences. The role of

¹⁶¹ Dorothy and Jean-Claude Sambou, personal interview, Youtou, 31 March 2014; Saly Diatta, personal interview, Thionk-Essyl, 24 April 2014; Malamine Badji, personal interview, Niankite, 3 April 2014; Landing and Siaka Diedhiou, personal interview, Thionk-Essyl, 24 April 2014; Basse and Mame Tendeng, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 April 2014; Aroky Diedhiou, personal interview, Mlomp, 23 April 2014; Alice Manga, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 18 April 2014.

¹⁶² Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, ed. Bill Ashcroft et al. (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 24–28.

¹⁶³ For more on the capacity of peasant, subaltern, or ordinary actors to exert power in meaningful ways, see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); as well as Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

education in seeding a common ground of similar identities can hardly be overstated. In the Casamance, it not only provided the common “vernacular” language for imagining the nation; it also provided a common cosmology.¹⁶⁴ This cosmology was not shaped by religion per se, though Islam, Catholicism, and “sacred forests” clearly played important roles.

Rather, it was a cosmology shaped by modern secularism, for even in missionary schools, Christian priests and nuns taught students the histories of nations. In spite of the French state’s often contentious relationship with the Church, these histories rendered ultimate sovereignty not to the God of the Bible or the Quran but to the secular nation. The principal actor in these histories was the nation-state, not the Church.¹⁶⁵ As demonstrated by Nkrumah’s admonition to “seek first the political kingdom,” all roads led to the nation-state as the ultimate destination of modernity.¹⁶⁶ The histories taught in Senegalese schools may have been “big man” histories, but they were big men with something in common: a role in defining “the nation.” In this light, it does not seem quite so odd that a Catholic priest spoke and wrote as the mouthpiece for a separatist movement demanding ultimate loyalty not to the Christian god but to the nation defined by multiple gods and ancestors in sacred forests all over the Casamance. Thus, scholars have remembered Diamacoune for urging separatists to pursue the nation-state more than God.

The enrollment books at Lycée Djignabo demonstrate a demographic shift in who has been equipped to imagine or contest the nation on these terms. Whereas the nationalist generation was typically male and missionary-educated, the new generation of politically conscious Senegalese includes almost as many women as men. This fact can be seen not only in

¹⁶⁴ On the need for a “vernacular language” and ultimate sovereignty to the nation and not to the Church for imagining the nation, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 83-111.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ On Nkrumah’s “seek ye first the political kingdom...,” see Ali Mazrui et al., *Africa since 1935* (London; Berkeley: Heinemann Educational Books; University of California Press, 1993), 105-126.

the logbooks at Djignabo but also in the streets of Dakar during the *Y en a marre* demonstrations of 2012, preventing Abdoulaye Wade from changing the Senegalese constitution to run for a third presidential term.¹⁶⁷ The gender of those imagining and performing the nation in the public sphere has changed. The amount of their formal education, however, has not. At this point in Senegalese history, imagining the nation still begins in a classroom.

Conclusion

The modern school is a very political space, but so is the “traditional” school – the home or the village palaver – for those in the village lacking formal education. Nations are not imagined in these informal educational settings in the village, however. In the Casamance, The School proved to be a necessary space for imagining and contesting the nation. The narratives of violence between late colonial educated elites in the Casamance and the postcolonial educated elites at Lycée Djignabo demonstrate the high stakes over this space. Yet, even though the modern MFDC collapsed history to tie the student strike of 1980 to the late colonial political divisions immanent in the Casamance in 1954 and 1955, one would be mistaken to think that nothing had changed in The School. Whereas the colonial school produced a struggle for the right to imagine the nation among male, missionary-educated elites, the postcolonial school has gradually become more democratic, as girls and young women have become educated in larger and larger numbers. Since “monocausal explanations are *ipso facto* wrong,” one should not directly trace the relatively higher level of education in the Casamance since independence to the

¹⁶⁷ *Y en a marre* means “fed up” or “we’ve had enough.” See “The movement ‘Y en a marre’: ‘we’ve had enough,’” United Nations Regional Information Center (UNRIC) for Western Europe, accessed 4 June 2015 at <http://www.unric.org/en/right-to-participation/28099-the-movement-yen-a-marre--weve-had-enough>

genesis of the separatist movement.¹⁶⁸ Yet I would be remiss to leave it unaccounted for as one of the factors that help us to understand the development of political consciousness – or national consciousness – in the Casamance.

I have concluded this chapter with the narrative of Casamançais in the villages because even though they may represent the “subaltern” or “disinherited,” Casamançais separatism ultimately rested on them. This is not to belittle the sacrifices made by villagers who believed in the cause of Casamançais nationalism. But to the degree that separatism stalled in the Casamance, it stalled because it failed to fire the imaginations of these villagers. Most of the chapter dealt with the divisions, disagreements, and fights among colonial and postcolonial elites. Yet it was these ordinary Casamançais out in the villages who refused to “imagine their communities” beyond the local – who considered matters like nationalism and separatism “just politics” that had little bearing on their lives. Whether these were “uncaptured peasants” or ordinary people simply living their lives while perfecting “the art of not being governed,” they demonstrated that educated elites could argue all they wanted in their urban political echo chamber.¹⁶⁹ This echo chamber was shaped by The School, but separatism would not work without the agreement of the people, often educated by “traditional” means, in the village.

¹⁶⁸ John Lonsdale, “States and Social Processes in Africa: A Historiographical Survey,” *African Studies Review*, Vol. 24, No. 2/3, Social Science and Humanistic Research on Africa: An Assessment (Jun.-Sep., 1981), 140.

¹⁶⁹ Göran Hydén, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); and Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

CHAPTER 4

THE FOREST

Introduction

Ansoumana Abba Bodian remembered the night he became a rebel. It was December 25, 1982. On that Christmas night, he met other separatists in a “sacred forest” near Diabir, on the southwest edge of Ziguinchor. After being expelled from other public spaces in the city by Senegalese security forces, the separatists met to discuss their grievances against the Senegalese state and what actions they might take to gain their independence. They took oaths near a spirit shrine to gain independence for the Casamance or to die trying.¹ The forest provided cover from the surveillance of Senegalese security forces, but more importantly, it attached moral and spiritual authority to their undertaking. On the morning of December 26th, the rebels began their fateful march into Ziguinchor to lower the Senegalese flags flying in front of government buildings across the city, an action met by force from Senegalese police and *gendarmes*. In front of the Governor’s Office, Bodian walked toward a group of policemen with his hands up. One fired his weapon and removed part of Bodian’s hand.²

That this act of rebellion originated in a forest has often been noted in accounts of the Casamance conflict. That the conflict continued in the same forest a year later when separatists murdered and mutilated five Senegalese *gendarmes* sent to prevent another meeting in the same place has also been noted. The same goes for the fact that the separatists rallied with their

¹ Ansoumana Abba Bodian, personal interview, 19 April 2014, Ziguinchor; senior MFDC official, personal interview, 25 April 2014, Ziguinchor. On Senegalese security forces infiltrating and threatening separatist meetings in Ziguinchor in the early 1980s, see Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

² Ibid.

weapons a few days later in a forest south of Ziguinchor to begin their resistance and retribution for the violence and imprisonments that followed the Senegalese crackdown. Besides explaining much of the Casamançais landscape, how did the forest become such an important place to the MFDC?

Except for one detailed ethnography published in 1969 by Jean Girard, one sees relatively few references to “sacred forests” or “the sacred forest” until the start of the conflict.³ In the 1980s, Christian Roche, often citing the work of Girard, occasionally referred to “the Sacred Forest” while becoming the first scholar to treat the Casamance as its own polity. In 1987, however, Jos van der Klei became the first to focus on the role of Casamançais sacred forests as forms of “popular political action” enabling the MFDC to counter state “hegemony.”⁴ Since then, more and more of the contemporary analysis of the Casamance conflict has alluded to “sacred forests” or “sacred groves” thought by numerous academics, journalists, and politicians to represent Casamançais identity and particularity. Though the Senegalese government has participated in the discourse as well, this discourse has largely echoed that of the separatist movement.⁵ What explains the symbolism behind this discourse and the timing of its development?

In this chapter, I argue that separatists constructed The Forest as the most potent spatial symbol of Casamançais nationalism because of its prevalence in the Casamançais landscape vis-à-vis the rest of Senegal and because of its reference to flexible polytheistic beliefs. As with the other spatial symbols studied in this dissertation, colonialism contributed much to the

³ Girard, *Genèse du pouvoir charismatique en Basse Casamance*, 89-105.

⁴ Roche’s *Histoire de la Casamance* became quite popular with the Casamançais nationalist elite. Oral interview, Bertrand Diamacoune, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014; Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims,” 231.

⁵ A former senior Senegalese government official, who was also a Jola from the Lower Casamance, said that to understand the separatist movement, “one must understand what takes place in the Sacred Forest.” Personal interview, Bignona, April 2006.

construction of The Forest as a symbol of separatism. In many ways, the mapping of the Casamançais nation began with the actions of the colonial state. As colonial Senegal, and then postcolonial Senegal, sought to “see like a state,” it imposed new spatial regimes on the landscape of the Casamance. This imposition made The Forest an especially ripe field for harvesting separatism from the grievances of Casamançais.



Figure 4-1: The “sacred forest” near Diabir where separatists met on Christmas night, 1982, to begin their march into Ziguinchor the next morning. Photo taken by author in March 2014.

“Seeing Like a State” in the Casamance: The French Colonial State

As with their other colonies, French colonial officials viewed the Casamance region of Senegal with an eye toward what they could take out of it – what they could extract from it for the profit of businesses in France. In this regard, the French differed little from the other colonial powers around the world at the end of the nineteenth century.⁶ This extraction required colonial control – fixing and regulating – of Casamançais bodies and resources in space. James C. Scott

⁶ Thaddeus Sunseri, “World War II and the Transformation of the Tanzanian Forests,” in *Africa and World War II*, ed. Judith A. Byfield et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 240.

has referred to this requirement for fixing and control as “legibility.” In *Seeing Like A State*, Scott asserts that legibility has historically been the “central problem in statecraft.” Thus, state officials:

...took exceptionally complex, illegible, and local social practices, such as land tenure customs or naming customs, and created a standard grid whereby it could be centrally recorded and monitored. The organization of the natural world was no exception. Agriculture is, after all, a radical reorganization and simplification of flora to suit man’s goals. Whatever their other purposes, the designs of scientific forestry and agriculture and the layouts of plantations, collective farms, ujamaa villages, and strategic hamlets all seemed calculated to make the terrain, its products, and its workforce more legible – and hence manipulable – from above and from the center.⁷

A similar process played out in the Casamance.

French colonizers created the Casamance and then made it legible in a certain order: first, they created *juridical space* through numerous treaties with local rulers and other European powers; second, they created *secure space* (“secure” depending on whom you were) by “pacifying” it through military conquest in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century; and finally, they made *productive space* for industries in the metropole.⁸ Like secure space, productive space may be closely aligned with components of juridical space, such as a state. But productive space may extend beyond or across juridical space as well. And while juridical space may be strengthened by the existence of the other two kinds of space within its borders, it is not a prerequisite of the other two. Secure space and productive space may exist before and exterior to juridical space. Accomplishing the first task – establishing the juridical

⁷ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 2. For more on state “fixing,” see Craib, *Cartographic Mexico*.

⁸ I place the words “secure” and “pacify” in quotes here because the colonial conquest was not very secure or peaceful for those being pacified. For a few Senegambian examples, see Martin A. Klein, *Islam and Imperialism in Senegal: Sine-Saloum, 1847-1914* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1968), Chapter VII; Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*; Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, Chapter 3; and in the Algerian context, Benjamin Claude Brower, *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France’s Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844-1902* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). On European colonizers “creating” the Casamance, see Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

space of Senegal and the Casamance – implied establishing not only international borders but regional borders – districts – for internal governance. Thus, the creation of Senegal required the acquisition and patching together of indigenous territories and the fixing of borders to form a juridical Senegalese space.

As they became aware of the natural resources to be found in the Casamance, colonial (and post-colonial) officials sought to transform the Casamance into productive space. In the same vein, Louis-Vincent Thomas noted the colonial need for three types of “order” for rendering Casamançais space legible.⁹ These order types in turn enabled the “knowing” of the indigenous other, his or her culture, and his or her environment. In addition to “geographic order” and “ethnographic order,” Thomas considered the importance of “administrative order”:

The French authority had to deal with some significant challenges in accomplishing this task [the “pacification” of the territory]. –In the first place **geographic order** [bold print in the original]. The Lower Casamance being a long corridor between two foreign colonies [Portuguese Guinea and British Gambia], it is possible to traffic arms with impunity. Moreover, the forests, the mangroves, the multitude of small streams renders the penetration of this territory quite difficult, especially during the rainy season. –Then **ethnographic order**. The Diola [Jola] are strong, courageous, and independent but proud and begrudging, capable, when excited, of extreme hatred, the most violent anger, and treachery. They lived, during this era, in a state of anarchy, and their villages went to war with one another under the most futile pretexts. –Finally **administrative order**. For a long time, France has had no clear plan for governing the Casamance. The government in St. Louis, whether because of insufficient means or because of a lack of understanding, seemed disinterested in this new territory [the Casamance].¹⁰

The imposition of each of these three “orders” eventually brought *disorder* to the Casamance.

As I hope to show in this dissertation, each of them helped to produce the contemporary conflict in the Casamance. The primary concern for colonial officials, however, was facilitating economic activity in the region –activity they could control and from which they could benefit.

⁹ For more on the need for colonial order, see Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*.

¹⁰ Thomas, *Les Diola*, 21.

Thus, rendering the colonies “legible” meant establishing infrastructure and transportation links to facilitate commerce. But the French and the British could not begin to exploit productive space in the Casamance until they dealt with the lingering challenges to secure space by anti-colonial forces like those of Lat Dior or Djignabo Bassène.¹¹ Therefore, they secured space, turned it into productive space, and converted formerly rebellious bodies into productive bodies – bodies that could provide labor for colonial companies.

Classifying forests and agricultural lands helped them do that. Like the other colonial powers at the time, the French introduced “scientific forestry” in their colonies, “which, they believed, was necessary for resource control and social engineering.”¹² Thaddeus Sunseri explains the implications of “scientific forestry” to the colonized:

Scientific forestry meant claiming tropical forests and woodlands for the state, making them into protected reserves, evicting their peasant and pastoral populations, and imposing managed exploitation of trees and resources. Ideally this meant transforming the tropical landscapes according to a European model, whereby intensive agriculture would be layered with intensive plantation forestry, replacing slow-growing tropical hardwoods with fast-growing exotic softwoods, especially pines and eucalyptus. Peasants evicted from forests would be transformed into forest workers, producing the timber and wood fuel necessary for colonial development, cutting firebreaks around forests, and planting and tending trees on plantations. At the same time, African subsistence agriculture would be transformed into intensive cash crop farming. Colonial foresters saw the ... African landscape as devastated by generations of African misuse, and thus regarded fire-using peasants and pastoralists as the chief enemy of scientific forestry.¹³

¹¹ Lat Dior fought the French colonial conquest in northern Senegal while Djignabo Bassène did so in the Casamance. In addition to Chapter 3 of this dissertation, see Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*.

¹² Sunseri, “World War II and the Transformation of the Tanzanian Forests,” 240.

¹³ *Ibid.*

In French West Africa, “scientific forestry” began when the Governor-General issued a “general order” on 12 April 1921 creating regional agricultural inspectors charged with “controlling the concessions given in agricultural and forest domains.”¹⁴

To help the regional agricultural inspectors, the French classified forests as a part of this process of fixing and regulating Senegalese space. Since forests covered a majority of the Lower Casamance, the French designated much of the Casamance as *forêt classée*, or “classified forest.” In some ways, this classification system resembled the twentieth century national park system in the United States. Designating a forest as a *forêt classée* bounded the forest and designated who could gain access to it and the activities they could perform there. Colonial officials and businesses targeted the Casamançais forest for the production of rubber, timber, cashews, palm kernels, palm oil, palm wine, African locust beans, and various kinds of fruit.¹⁵

A former colonial official living in the Casamance, J. Malbranque, could barely contain his excitement at the possibilities of this “newborn” colony. In 1939, he noted that the possibilities for development in the Casamance made it “advantageous” to have its “autonomy” vis-à-vis the rest of Senegal, asserting: “The Casamance, in spite of its age, is a newborn, who has awakened to a new active life. One must take care of the newborn with love, aligning all action with its development, which shows considerable potential.”¹⁶ While the colonial state set aside land for preservation, it also set aside land for exploitation. In other words, the ultimate object of the preservation was exploitation.

¹⁴ ANS 10D4 0018 Correspondance divers 1922-1944, Note au sujet de la réorganisation du service de l’Agriculture au Sénégal, Note #280, 15 December 1927.

¹⁵ ANS 11D1 0360 Affaires économiques – rapports forestiers ; for a few examples, see “Inspection Forestière de Casamance,” Rapport Annuel 1943, signed by Inspecteur Adjoint des Eaux, Forêts et Chasses and Chef de l’Inspection forestière de la Casamance, Pierre Grosmaire ; also note dated 16 April 1960 from Grosmaire to the Ministre de l’Economie Rurale et la Coopération, on the subject of “Caoutchouc de Lianes de Casamance.”

¹⁶ ANS 1Z 0096 Rapport de J. Malbranque sur la Casamance : “Développement de la Casamance, lié à son autonomie,” p. 19.

The word “exploitation” can take on a sinister moral value, but I do not use it here necessarily to suggest a moral value to this process. I use it to show that the goal of classifying and preserving land was to benefit businesses in France. I also use it because that is the term colonial officials themselves used.¹⁷ It is not my term; it was their term.

For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. In response to the colonial government’s efforts to “see like a state” in the Casamance, individual Casamançais contested these efforts in their own, local ways. For this reason, Scott’s thesis on seeing like a state is incomplete without his follow-on book, *The Art of Not Being Governed*. In some ways, the Jola people of the Lower Casamance were like the mountain people of Zomia in Scott’s book in that they remained relatively untouched by the modern state until the early twentieth century. Like the history of Zomia, Jola history was a “history of deliberate and reactive statelessness.”¹⁸ Scott claims, “This is the history of those who got away, and state-making cannot be understood apart from it.”¹⁹ As the French began to impose their colonial regime on the Casamance, which included the classification of forest land, the forest began to appear as a terrain of “friction” and as “a refuge for state-fleeing people, including guerrillas.”²⁰ The state may have classified the forest, but Casamançais *knew* the forest. To them, it was not a bounded *space* for regulation and control; it was a *place* of familiarity and belonging.

¹⁷ For example, see “Inspection Forestière de Casamance,” Rapport Annuel 1942 and Rapport Annuel 1953, as well as a memorandum dated 16 March 1937 from the Governor of Senegal to the Administrateur Supérieur de la Casamance et al. concerning “Réglementation forestière,” in ANS 11D1 0360 Affaires économiques – rapports forestiers.

¹⁸ Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, x. Many other scholars of the Casamance have noted the acephalous nature or the absence of states in precolonial Jola society. See Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*; Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*; and Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*.

¹⁹ Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, x.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, xi.

This chapter of Casamançais history also demonstrates that deforestation in the Casamance goes back further than the 1970s.²¹ It has a longer history, dating from at least the beginning of the colonial period (i.e. 1885). Yet, colonial forces were not alone in bringing it about. In fact, colonial officials viewed forest classification as a means of *reforestation* rather than *deforestation*. They made reforestation part of the “civilizing mission” in Senegal. They made bounding, regulating, and preserving the forest part of what it meant to be “modern” in the Casamance. Many Casamançais agreed with the principles behind the new ways. Others found such limitations inconvenient if not violent to their way of life.

Nevertheless, Africans demonstrated their own agency in acting upon their environment. They used the forest for their own purposes. From the forest, they claimed firewood, wild game, various kinds of fruit, and perhaps most importantly for the cultural identity of the Jola, palm wine. Rice farmers typically enjoyed palm wine at the end of a day in the rice fields, but palm wine went with various social and religious occasions as well.²² In any case, Casamançais often consumed palm wine in the social spaces examined in this dissertation, especially the forest and the rice field. A former *Administrateur Supérieur* of the Casamance wrote in 1922, “From November to July, one can say that the Lower Casamance is almost entirely and continuously under the influence of palm wine.”²³ Another colonial official later commented on this statement, arguing,

That’s a huge exaggeration. At all times, palm wine is considered sacred; it is consumed at all shrine ceremonies. But one must admit that even though this wine is absorbed before complete fermentation, it is a sugary drink with an agreeable taste. (The dregs are very nuanced.) Preventing its consumption is a problem impossible to resolve, but the subsequent interruptions by drunks full of palm wine arriving in Ziguinchor every morning is a significant problem.²⁴

²¹ See the sections on climate change and “The Dam of Affiniam” in Chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation.

²² Daniel Jatta, personal interview, Banjul, 4 March 2014.

²³ ANS 11D1 0360 Affaires économiques – rapports forestiers.

²⁴ Ibid.

The consumption of palm wine was – throughout the period under consideration in this dissertation – and remains an important cultural marker of Casamançais society, especially in relation to the teetotaling Muslims from northern Senegal. “Casamançais” drink palm wine; “Senegalese” do not.

People showing up in Ziguinchor every morning drunk on palm wine was a relatively small problem, however, in relation to forest cutting that impinged on colonial exploitation of the forest. In 1935, the Governor of the Colonies published a *circulaire* to put in place measures to “fight against the effects of deforestation in Senegal and...to make the cultivators understand the dangers posed by further deforestation of their country.”²⁵ In 1938, the Governor-General of French West Africa argued for the collective punishment of indigenous persons who set forest fires, law allegedly in effect since the establishment of the *indigénat*.²⁶ After all, the French were merely enforcing “customary law” on the matter, reporting that indigenous Casamançais communities themselves punished the setting of forest fires since they endangered the entire community.²⁷ Customary law became fuzzier concerning cutting, though, as Casamançais used the forest timber for various purposes – from heating fuel and weapons to ceremonial objects.

All of this cutting meant that the forest continued to regress throughout the colonial period. Pierre Grosmaire, the Chief of Forest Inspections in the Casamance, hopefully declared in 1942 that “the regulation of Casamançais forests is a sustainable activity.”²⁸ Nevertheless, he noted that “[f]or several years now, the forests continue to burn and regress.”²⁹ Therefore, he

²⁵ Ibid., Circulaire dated 23 May 1935, from Le Gouverneur des Colonies to Monsieur l’Administrateur Supérieur de la Casamance et al. on the subject of “Mesures à prendre en vue de prévenir le déboisement du Sénégal.”

²⁶ Ibid., Circulaire dated 31 August 1938, from the Gouverneur General de l’A.O.F. to Monsieur le Gouverneur des Colonies du Groupe regarding “Responsabilité pénale des collectivités indigènes en matière forestière.”

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., Rapport Annuel 1942.

²⁹ Ibid.

argued, “These forest fires must be prevented at any cost – at least for the *forêts classées*, which must become the definitive forests of the future since the rest have been designated for agriculture.”³⁰ The French classified Casamançais forests as “the definitive forests of the future,” glossing over the fact that forest classification brought a larger profit to French businessmen than Casamançais.

Hence, Grosmaire wrote of a French future more than a Casamançais future, or at least a mixed future where dominant French interests defined “modernity.” Grosmaire further argued,

For the future, with the aim of guiding the orientation and control of the exploitation of the forest riches of the country, it is indispensable to multiply the means of action of the Service of Waters, Forests, and Hunting in personnel and materiel... We would like to see the Service of Waters, Forests, and Hunting receive the place it deserves in a country where the forest is the greatest of all riches and it covers seven-tenths of the surface.³¹

Grosmaire requested more resources for the Ministry of Water and Forests at a time of great uncertainty in the French Empire, as the French state had come under control of the Vichy regime. It was also a time that portended more uncertainty ahead as African and French elites after the war negotiated the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in the French Union. Nevertheless, Senegalese political leaders like Lamine Guèye and Leopold Senghor did not necessarily demand a stop to French regulation and control of Senegalese forests as much as a share of the profit. They demanded the right to have an equal say in the dispensation of their natural resources, as citizens of a French-speaking “Negro-African civilization” that maintained some sort of political connection to France.³² Senegalese nationalists viewed the Casamançais

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid. Grosmaire refers to the forest covering seven-tenths of the surface in the “country” of the Casamance, not Senegal overall.

³² For more on these intense debates that produced the nation-states of West and Central Africa, as well as Southeast Asia and the Caribbean, see Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*; Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State*; Roche, *Le Sénégal à la conquête de son indépendance*; and Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*.

forest in ways quite similar to their French counterparts: space to be regulated and controlled, for the good of “the nation,” though great uncertainty remained as to how that nation would be defined.

Seeing Like a Senegalese State

While they debated the best form for postcolonial governance – whether to remain part of a federated French Union, for example – certainly no nationalist from 1945 to 1960 thought of a postcolonial future for the Casamance as an independent nation-state. Not Guèye, not Senghor, and, most importantly, not Emile Badiane, Victor Diatta, nor Ibou Diallo, the three primary founders in 1949 of the original MFDC.³³ Though they sought their own autonomy in social, political, and economic affairs, they did not completely reject French culture or institutions. And they carried on the idea that French “technocracy” could provide the best “modern” solution to the problems of Senegalese governance.³⁴ They applied this technocratic approach to governance of Senegalese forests as well.

First, however, they marked the transition to political independence by planting trees. Senegal and Mali emerged from the colonial era as the only remaining partners of the French Union in the former French West Africa. Guinea’s Sékou Touré and the Ivory Coast’s Felix Houphouët-Boigny had already peeled away from Senghor’s vision for a French-speaking black African national federation based on the political structure of French West Africa.³⁵ To mark the

³³ Awenengo-Dalberto’s dissertation focused on these events during this time period. See Awenengo-Dalberto, “Les Joola, la Casamance et l’État.”

³⁴ I thank Jacob Krell for this reference to the French belief in “technocracy” in the period following the Second World War, especially after the events of May 1968 in the streets of Paris. See his forthcoming dissertation on the subject from Cornell University. For more on the history of “technocracy” in France, see Richard F. Kuisel, *Ernest Mercier: French Technocrat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); and Gabrielle Hecht, *The Radiance of France: Nuclear Power and National Identity after World War II* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1998).

³⁵ Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, Introduction and Chapter 8.

negotiated independence of the new Mali Federation, consisting of Mali and Senegal, on 20 June, the new Minister of the Rural Economy and Cooperation, Joseph M'Baye, declared that "each Senegalese should plant a tree of Independence."³⁶ This new campaign would expand a similar campaign begun in 1959, designating "a day of urban planting (of *cassia* and *neem* trees) and "a day of village plantings."³⁷ The new Senegalese government designated the planting of trees of independence as not only a right but as a duty for each "citizen." M'Baye asserted that each Senegalese citizen was "morally bound to plant on this occasion a 'tree of Independence.'" And he advised Senegalese officials that it was "desirable" that government officials "set the example for everybody else by planting their tree in their neighborhood."³⁸ M'Baye and other Senegalese officials intended the planting of trees to symbolize "the faith of the country in its destiny and the importance of the tree in its economy."³⁹ The new government became quite concerned with measuring the progress of this initiative. The *Commandant de Cercle* in Ziguinchor later reported that of 260 plantings of *neem* and *cassia* trees in the streets of Ziguinchor, 180 were still living.⁴⁰ While planting trees to mark independence surely made symbolic reference to the planting and new growth of independent African nations, it also addressed the practical need to halt the deforestation of Senegal by starting its reforestation.

To that end, the urban planting campaign would be followed by "forest weeks" in the countryside. Whereas individual tree planting had been aimed primarily at citizens in urban areas like Ziguinchor, the "forest weeks" would integrate the rural countryside into the national

³⁶ ANS 11D1 0360, Ministère de l'Information de la Radiodiffusion, Circulaire (No. 337) à Tous les Responsables des Centres Régionaux d'Information, Objet: Arbre de l'Indépendance, 14 Juin 1960.

³⁷ ANS 11D1 0360, No. 3910 dated 10 June 1960, Le Ministre de l'Economie Rurale et de la Coopération aux Gouverneurs, Chefs de Région, Commandants de Cercle, et Les Maires, Objet: Semaines Forestières, p. 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ ANS 11D1 0360, Report from G. de Santerre, le Commandant de Cercle de Ziguinchor to le Ministre de l'Enseignement Technique dated 22 June 1960.

celebration with “village forests of Independence, reforestation camps, [plantings in] avenues and neighborhoods in the towns, and plantings in the villages.”⁴¹ Reforestation camps would be established all over Senegal, with Sédhiou designated to host the camp for the Casamance. The “life of the camp, from the first to the fifteenth of August, [would] be centered on the tree and on the forest” and would be managed by a “committee of reforestation.”⁴² M’Baye charged this local committee with “organizing the work and later assuring the continuity of the indispensable maintenance and protection required for the nurturing of the trees.”⁴³ Officials like M’Baye thus tied reforestation to nation-building.

Senegalese officials began to view the forest in other ways, often resembling the “imperial gaze” of the former colonial power.⁴⁴ Shortly after independence, they embarked on a new campaign of classification and declassification of the “forest domain.”⁴⁵ M’Baye explained the imperative for classification and declassification: “Forest classification is essentially a juridical regime that imposes on a topographically defined parcel of land certain regulations from the regulatory police for particular objectives.”⁴⁶ M’Baye wrote that classification and declassification of rural spaces “should permit the country to engage a path of modern and adapted rural development, permitting the integral and judicious use of the resources of our soil, following the proper utilization of our lands...and the plans that must promote in the Senegalese countryside a new, expansive, and dynamic economy.”⁴⁷ M’Baye claimed that the objectives of this classification were:

⁴¹ ANS 11D1 0360, No. 3910 dated 10 June 1960, p. 1.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 2-3.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁴ On the “imperial gaze,” see Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*; Akerman (ed.), *The Imperial Map*; Burnett, *Masters of All They Surveyed*; Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*.

⁴⁵ ANS 11D1 0360, Circulaire dated 16 June 1960, Le Ministre de l’Economie Rurale et de la Coopération aux Gouverneurs, Objet : “Classement et Déclassement du Domaine Forestier,” p. 1.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

⁴⁷ ANS 11D1 0360, Circulaire dated 16 June 1960, p. 2.

- Either directly utilitarian:
 - a) forests of timber production for artisanal and combustible purposes, production of wood charcoal for heating;
 - b) forested pastoral pasturage;
 - c) high-yield plantations: teak, filaos, etc.
- Or, for protection – forming a perimeter of restoration – the preservation of live dunes or of zones of intense erosion...the conservation of non-arable lands.
- Or, for particular ends – National Parks – Integral or Partial Reserves, etc. ...

The classification is, to continue, a discipline that the inhabitants of a country impose on themselves for the joy of collective rural well-being, to the benefit of all.⁴⁸

Such classification surely made perfect sense to well-educated bureaucrats like M'Baye, as well as elite Senegalese politicians like Senghor, Diouf, and Dia. Ordinary Senegalese viewed it differently, however, as I discuss below.

Senegalese officials intended forest classification and development to benefit the new, independent Senegalese nation-state by further integrating the “fragments” of the Senegalese nation while providing a profit for parastatal, neo-colonial businesses.⁴⁹ These officials viewed Senegalese forests as potential resource depots for such development. Thus, they revived the idea of producing rubber from Casamançais forests. Doing so was not a new idea. The French made a serious attempt at extracting rubber from the Casamance from about 1890 to 1905, with little to show for their efforts.⁵⁰ The rubber to be found in the Casamance came from “wild rubber” vines called *lianes* hanging on larger trees like the silkcotton (the *fromager* in French).

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 2-3. All ellipses in this quotation are in the original.

⁴⁹ On the “fragments” of the nation, see Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁵⁰ Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*. Mark confirms what Robert Harms had claimed: that the African rubber market crashed following the entry into the world market of rubber plantations in South America and Southeast Asia. See Harms, *Games against Nature*, 181-184, along with Thaddeus Sunseri, “World War II and the Transformation of the Tanzanian Forests,” 249, as well as J. Forbes Munro, “British rubber companies in East Africa before the First World War,” *Journal of African History* 24 (1983), 369-79.



Figure 4-2: Silkcotton (*fromager*) tree near the “sacred forest” of Diabir. Photo taken in March 2014.

French merchants eventually found this rubber, while not of insignificant value, inferior in quality and quantity to that found in other parts of West and Central Africa, such as Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, and the Congo. Throughout the rest of the colonial period, a few colonial officials had floated the idea of reviving rubber production in the Casamance, but these calls largely fell on deaf ears.⁵¹

By 1960, however, the new Senegalese state was ready to try again. Grosmaire wrote to M’Baye to encourage the Senegalese state to invest in the development of rubber production in

⁵¹ See, for example, the arguments of J. Malbranque in ANS 1Z 0096, especially pp. 4-5.

the Casamance to supplement its peanut production. Grosmaire quoted a report from the *Commandant de Cercle* in Bignona, who claimed during a tour of Kartiack (a village west of Bignona) that he “came across a shareholding peasant farmer with 300 kilograms of rubber, one of the incontestable riches of the Casamance.” Grosmaire claimed that the rubber trade never grew because it had been displaced “by the commercialization of peanuts at the same time and the unsuitability of the furnished material [i.e. the rubber].” He urged, “If it truly was unsuitable, with the technology of today, it seems that the problem can be resolved.”⁵² Thus, argued Grosmaire, the quality would be as good as rubber traded in Conakry and on the rest of the Upper Guinea Coast.⁵³ More importantly, he continued, the interruption of rubber production from Southeast Asia under the control of Imperial Japan between 1940 and 1946 made rubber production elsewhere in the French Empire a strategic imperative.⁵⁴ Grosmaire calculated that given current (1960) market conditions, the Casamançais peasant could expect to earn about 50 or 60 CFA *francs* from participating in the production of rubber.⁵⁵ He noted, “This price certainly does not assure him of a fortune, but earning 60 *francs* in a village is better than earning nothing.”⁵⁶ He admitted that the quality was not as good as rubber from Nigeria, “but the prices are not the same,” as Nigerian rubber earned 185 CFA *francs* per kilo at the Port of Dakar. Clearly, Grosmaire considered Casamançais rubber a niche product for a niche market. He

⁵² ANS 11D1 0360, Note Verbale date stamped 16 April 1960 from P. Grosmaire, Conservateur des Eaux et Forêts to the Ministre de l’Economie Rurale et de la Coopération du Sénégal, subject: “Caoutchouc de Lianes de Casamance,” p. 1.

⁵³ Firestone Rubber Corporation of Akron, Ohio extracted rubber from the forests of Liberia. See Adell Patton, “Civil Rights in America’s African Diaspora: Firestone Rubber and Segregation in Liberia,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des études Africaines* 49, no. 2 (May 4, 2015): 319–38. doi:[10.1080/00083968.2015.1024438](https://doi.org/10.1080/00083968.2015.1024438).

⁵⁴ One must remember, however, that Senegal at the time was Vichy. Thus, Grosmaire’s argument appears to crumble. I thank Peter Mark for this insight.

⁵⁵ CFA stands for *Communauté Financière Africaine*, a currency guaranteed by the French *franc* that was introduced in French Equatorial Africa and French West Africa during the colonial era and continues to be used by the independent Francophone countries.

⁵⁶ ANS 11D1 0360, Note Verbale date stamped 16 April 1960, p. 2.

concluded, “By this distinction, the rubber of Casamance has a chance. The contacted company BATA is interested in the product and envisages buying *all* of the possible production in the Casamance.”⁵⁷ Business appeared to be booming for certain postcolonial companies, most with ties to France. Few Casamançais rubber farmers, however, became as rich.

What remains rather opaque, therefore, to the historian is how ordinary Casamançais received the classification of their forests. It certainly is not clear that the inhabitants of the Casamance imposed forest regulation “on themselves for the joy of collective rural well-being.” (See quote from M’Baye above.) And some may have found it ironic that M’Baye claimed that the state intended forest regulation for “the benefit of all” when they did not see much benefit from it. In fact, many likely found themselves dispossessed of natural resources they thought were theirs.⁵⁸ Rather, from the complaints of colonial and postcolonial officials regarding the wanton burning of the forest by Casamançais, some did not follow the regulations concerning proper forest usage. To further his point, M’Baye appealed to Senegal’s “forest patrimony” and threatened those who might endanger it: “This Forest Domain is a collective national treasure,

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 3. Emphasis in the original. Also ANS 11D1 0360, Letter from the Ministre de l’Economie Rurale et de la Coopération du Sénégal to the Directeur de la Société BATA date stamped 27 April 1960, Objet: Commercialisation du Caoutchouc de Casamance.

⁵⁸ Emmanuel Kreike notes, “...colonial conservation measures – for example, establishing national parks and forest and game reserves – sought not only to remove people from an environment but also to safeguard conservation areas from human encroachment.” Emmanuel Kreike, *Re-Creating Eden: Land Use, Environment, and Society in Southern Angola and Northern Namibia* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2004), 1. For more on colonial attempts to exclude human beings – especially indigenous human beings – from particular environmental spaces, see Jane Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1995); Richard Grove, “Colonial Conservation, Ecological Hegemony, and Popular Resistance: Toward a Global Synthesis,” in *Imperialism and the Natural World*, ed. John M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 15-50; John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation, and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); Roderick P. Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). For a similar argument in relation to indigenous people in North America, see Karl S. Hele, ed., *The Nature of Empires and the Empires of Nature: Indigenous Peoples and the Great Lakes Environment* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013).

and no Senegalese citizen conscious of his responsibilities could possibly consider dismembering it or dissipating its value only to satisfy his individual appetites of the moment.”⁵⁹

Such language, along with the planting of trees to mark the birth of the new nation, made the forest a very moral space in the Casamance. This moral and cultural character could therefore be mapped onto Senegalese state territory. Such mapping resulted in some parts of Senegal gaining more attention from the newly independent Senegalese state than others. This difference in turn led to different perceptions of the benefits of participation in the Senegalese nation-state.⁶⁰

M’Baye also cautioned against the unequal distribution of development assistance in the immediate postcolonial future, claiming that it had created a real “interior frontier cutting Senegal in half from the northwest to the southeast.” He found this situation quite “worrying because it pits different ethnic groups against each other.” And it portended a future “internal agricultural colonization” by the valley regions with “their good lands apt for agriculture.”⁶¹ M’Baye specifically mentioned the southern region of the Casamance: “In the case of an agricultural colonization of the Southern Senegalese by modern mechanical methods, one is led to a particular form of peasantry. Here, the sloped fields will result from the classified forests inserted in the river plain by intensive mechanized agriculture.”⁶² Like French colonial officials before him, M’Baye took up the discourse of less “evolved” people and regions of Senegal in

⁵⁹ ANS 11D1 0360, Circulaire dated 16 June 1960, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Göran Hydén argued that the failure of postcolonial African states to “capture” their peasantry led to cracks in national social cohesion and consequently to weakened state structures. See Hydén, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania*.

⁶¹ ANS 11D1 0360, Circulaire dated 16 June 1960, p. 6.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

need of “modern” agricultural methods and forest management. Missionaries and colonial officials had often referred to the Casamance as the least “evolved” region of Senegal.⁶³

Awareness of these “internal colonizations” motivated Prosper Michel Akanni in 1961 to write of “a new scourge: regionalism” in the newspaper *Afrique Nouvelle* (New Africa):

The fact that one comes from the north or from the south is not proof of superiority or inferiority; and, like racism, regionalism is a sort of complex supported by mediocre spirits with questionable arguments. The African ‘regionalist’ is most of the time a troubled, jealous, or ambitious individual who thinks, before his neighbor better placed than him who comes from afar, that it would be preferable for each individual to stay home and mind his own business... What a huge mistake! Because the well-being and the liberty of the African people is based on their fraternal traditions... The prejudiced regionalist is a leaven of division. Yet division is a permanent factor of domination and domination represents insecurity and a constant threat to world peace.⁶⁴

Thus, the classification and development of Casamançais forests led to the thorny question of representation. Who would get to represent the interests of the Casamance in these matters? Who would get to represent the local communities in these matters? Why? The new Senegalese state was placing its faith in modern approaches and techniques for agricultural development. But M’Baye acknowledged that the real sticking point would not come over “modern” or “traditional” forms of agriculture but rather in “designating the representatives of the interested collectivities.”⁶⁵ M’Baye believed that more was at stake than present interests:

On the threshold of our independence and masters of our destinies, we are accountable for our national forest heritage, not only vis-à-vis our fellow citizens but also vis-à-vis the generations to follow... The Law and the forest regulations must be the sovereign expression of the general will. They must not in any case be instruments of propaganda, of division, of agitation, and of outbidding. But they must be for maintaining rural peace and in the interest of the public, they must

⁶³ Fox, *A Brief History of the Wesleyan Missions on the Western Coast of Africa*. On the discourse surrounding the “evolution” needed for people from the *indigénat* to assume the rights and responsibilities of citizens, see Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, Chapter 1.

⁶⁴ Prosper Michel Akanni, “Racisme et Régionalisme : Sont à Extirper de l’Afrique Noire,” *Afrique Nouvelle* 40, 25 January 1961, pp. 1, 9.

⁶⁵ ANS 11D1 0360, Circulaire dated 16 June 1960, p. 8.

always be considered as the law supreme which is imposed on the Government as well as the Citizens.⁶⁶

Such egalitarianism sounded good to most Senegalese, especially those outside the former *Quatre Communes* who formed the center of Senghor's political bloc.⁶⁷ Actually bringing that equality about, however, presented difficult challenges, especially for a culturally distinct region with elites looking to express their disappointment with the postcolonial dispensation.

Constructing the Sacred Forest: From the Forêt Classée to the Forêt Sacrée

In response to all this fixing and classifying, the contemporary MFDC two decades later contested the “exploitation” of Casamançais resources by constructing “the Sacred Forest” as a place of Casamançais particularity and resistance. It changed the meaning of “the forest” in the Casamance from a utilitarian rendering of uniform space full of trees for production and state control – the *forêt classée* – to a culturally charged “place” – the *Forêt Sacrée*, or Sacred Forest – where Casamançais particularity emerged against “Senegal.” It emerged against the Islamo-Wolof version of “Senegal,” a model of national identity Senghor called “*Sénégalité*” and Mamadou Diouf describes as ethnically Wolof and religiously Muslim.⁶⁸ I argue that it did so, in spite of the Islam practiced by many in the MFDC, because it provided an incredibly flexible religious and ethnic symbol for linking Casamançais culture to the separatist movement.

As the Casamance conflict developed in the 1980s and intensified in the 1990s, Diamacoune and other Casamançais nationalists made “the Sacred Forest” a central component of the array of cultural symbols intended to “map” the Casamance, to create a sense of cultural

⁶⁶ ANS 11D1 0360, Circulaire dated 16 June 1960, p. 10.

⁶⁷ Alioune Badara M'Bengue, “Le B.D.S. et les régions déshéritées,” *La Condition Humaine*, 30 December 1955, pp. 1, 3-4 ; Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, Chapter 1.

⁶⁸ Diouf, *Histoire du Sénégal*.

belonging against the Senegalese “other.” The Forest constituted a particularly apt spatial symbol for the nationalist project, as “historically, a settlement’s political independence was established by the erection of an initiation shrine in a male sacred forest.”⁶⁹ Thus, in 1990, when the conflict intensified along with a wave of post-Cold War civil conflicts across Africa, Diamacoune claimed, “I do not totally pardon those from Casamance who were [Leopold] Senghor’s companions from the first. They put too much trust in Leopold and the Senegalese. They simply forgot that those Senegalese have not passed through the same sacred forests as we of Casamance have.”⁷⁰ At one point, Diamacoune even suggested that the Forest could provide agents of a divine project to achieve independence for the Casamance: “Even if you kill every Casamançais, God will raise up the stones and the trees, and they will wrest Casamance’s independence from Senegal.”⁷¹ Though hyperbole, this statement expressed the spiritual, nationalistic attachment to the Casamance that Diamacoune hoped to achieve through repeated references to the Sacred Forest. The MFDC partially staked its claim to cultural difference with Senegal on the distinctness of the Sacred Forest in the Senegalese landscape.

It also claimed that this moral character buttressed its claims in national and international law. In their plans for independence, Mamadou “Nkrumah” Sané and other separatist leaders agreed, “The Casamançais forest must remain a national patrimony...it should no longer be considered as only a source for the provision of wood for the consumption of energy or for the needs of the artisan or industrialist...” Rather, they proposed to create an institution that could assure the “good integrated management and good planning of the forest” in order to “limit its

⁶⁹ De Jong, *Masquerades of Modernity*, 34.

⁷⁰ “Casamance independence demanded, reaction,” *Sud Hebdo*, 1 February 1990.

⁷¹ Interview with Diamacoune, *Sud Hebdo*, 1 February 1990.

exploitation to strictly domestic, artisanal, industrial and leisure needs.”⁷² Sané and company also wrote that the Sacred Forest not only “protected” the environment but also formed the moral foundation upon which would rest Casamançais commitments to the international community once independence was achieved. They claimed, “The existence and the relatively important number of ‘sacred’ forests and places, beyond the mystical character attributed to them, play a large role in the protection of the environment of the Casamance.” Based on this heritage, the separatists wanted to create a new “Casamançais Environmental Charter” to assure a “harmonious ecological image.”⁷³

This discourse demonstrates how separatist leaders like Diamacoune and Sané made The Forest into the most important, most sacred, most distinctly Casamançais spatio-cultural symbol to map the Casamance against Senegal. Though it did not hold the same meaning, northern Senegal also had rivers (the Senegal and Saloum rivers, for example), rice fields (in the Senegal River valley, especially near Rosso), schools (Dakar and Saint-Louis especially), and stadiums (especially near Dakar). But it did not have forests. In Senegal, the forest was and remains a uniquely Casamançais space. Discursively, then, the Sacred Forest allowed the MFDC to posit the Casamance as a place of nostalgia, a *place* where “true Casamançais” belonged and Senegalese “strangers” did not.

The Sacred Forest leant metaphysical support to the ambiguous MFDC material, territorial claim, which lacked a detailed map staking out exactly what the claim was. Thinking of the Casamance as “sacred” made Casamançais nationalism not only “in the head” but “in the

⁷² Mamadou Sané et al., *Casamance Kunda: ce que nous attendons de la Casamance indépendante* (C. de Ramaix, 1995), 42.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 53. Sané et al. wrote, “The existence and the relatively large number of ‘sacred’ forests and places, beyond the mystical character attributed to them, play an important role in protecting the environment in the Casamance. Our country, once independent, will have to ensure, by law or regulation, a quality of life founded on a development policy integrating, in a harmonious fashion, an ecological dimension we learned, of course, from the Ancestors but also conforming to the commitments we intend to make to the International Community.”

heart, in the soul.” The Casamance became not just a *space* made “legible” by allegedly arbitrary colonial borders or exploited for its natural resources by modern, impersonal, juridical states like France and Senegal.⁷⁴ Instead, it became a “fatherland,” a sacred place to which the extensive Jola diaspora returned to reconnect with family, the natural environment of *la verte Casamance*, and the ancestors.⁷⁵ Whether consciously or not, nationalists depend on this dialectic between “space” and “place” to make territorial claims.

For example, Diamacoune tied the symbolism of the Sacred Forest to the green landscape of the Casamance. He focused on different types of trees in northern and southern Senegal as “natural” symbols of Casamançais difference.⁷⁶ He contrasted the imagery of the *Senegalese baobab* with the *Casamançais palm tree*. The first is a stark image of a gray, crooked tree on a dusty brown, barren, Sahelian landscape. The second is that of a tall, straight, fruitful tree in a verdant, lush forest landscape. The moral analogy was intentional. Diamacoune associated deforestation and desertification with the alleged “inequality and violence” of the Senegalese state in contrast with the “harmonious symbiosis of the land’s rich hummus and the fertile wind of the open sea” as well as “the forest, the solidity, and the rituals and initiations of sacred forest shrines through which the Senegalese did not pass.” The contrasting imagery distinguished “Senegalese inequality” from “Casamançais democracy and egalitarianism.”⁷⁷ Diamacoune utilized this imagery to distinguish between what he claimed were polar opposite national characters.

⁷⁴ On the process of colonial border-making between Senegal and the Gambia, see Paul Nugent, “Cyclical History in the Gambia/Casamance Borderlands.”

⁷⁵ On the gendered “fatherland,” see Leopold Senghor, *Nationhood and the African Road to Socialism*, 23. *La verte Casamance* means “the green Casamance.” It is a common expression in the Casamance to distinguish the green landscape of the Casamance from the rest of Senegal.

⁷⁶ Jeremy Foster illustrates the power of this move in the South African colonial context in *Washed with Sun: Landscape and the Making of White South Africa* (Pittsburgh, 2008).

⁷⁷ Diamacoune, as cited by Diouf, “Between Ethnic Memories and Colonial History in Senegal,” 223. See Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 62.

With such contrasting images, Diamacoune attempted to establish who belonged in the Casamance and who did not. He tried to construct spatial symbols that would resonate with ethnic groups from southern Senegal but not with those from northern Senegal. Diamacoune posited the Casamance as exclusionary to ethnic groups from northern Senegal but inclusionary of others such as the Mandinka and Fulani – the two primary ethnic groups he needed to patch together *la Grande Casamance* from Upper (Fulani), Middle (Mandinka), and Lower (Jola) Casamance – to avoid charges of Jola “tribalism.”⁷⁸ Diamacoune made reference to “natural” frontiers accentuated by culture to try to elide ethnic difference between the Jola and other ethnic groups. He kept these frontiers somewhat fuzzy to glue together different ethnic “fragments of the nation.”⁷⁹ But he also referred to the structural developmental frontiers described by M’Baye in 1960. It was just such a “frontier” of “internal colonization” that Diamacoune later referred to when attempting to justify the separatism of the contemporary MFDC.⁸⁰

Diamacoune thus characterized the Casamance as a transient space of mobility at the same time that he essentialized it as sacred, spiritual, and naturally separate from Senegal. While the paucity of maps clearly defining the territorial ambitions of the separatist movement contributed to an ambiguity facilitating the discursive mapping of the Casamance, Diamacoune also insisted on the multicultural character of the Casamance without displacing the Jola from their position of primacy as the majority ethnic group of the Lower Casamance. Diamacoune referred to the Casamance as “an intermediate zone between the Sahelian and the Guinean zone... a great crossroads where different migratory waves meet, mingle and mix... a hospitable

⁷⁸ Diamacoune needed these three primary ethnic groups to patch together *la Grande Casamance* “from the Atlantic to the Falémé.” See Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” multiple references, starting with p. 2; Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 40.

⁷⁹ Again, on the “fragments of the nation,” see Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*.

⁸⁰ See, for example, Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 2-3.

land.”⁸¹ Thus, the MFDC constructed the Casamance as distinct but also hybrid. It made the Sacred Forest an important symbol for achieving the right national blend.

This symbol, this icon, became an incredibly flexible means of linking local realities to the religious identity of the larger Casamançais nation. As defined by a Catholic priest, religion may have been the most counterintuitive component of Casamançais nationalism. When Diamacoune asserted a unique Casamançais identity, he referred not to Catholicism but rather to the “sacred forest shrines through which the Senegalese did not pass.”⁸² While the Catholic Church may have contributed to the construction of a separate Casamançais identity, Diamacoune built the Casamançais nation on local polytheism.⁸³ Why would a Catholic priest make such a seemingly contradictory choice?

Scholars of nationalism in Africa seem to concur that religion has played a prominent role in national imaginings.⁸⁴ Like ethnicity, religion both enabled and limited nationalism. Few Africanists have contested the definition of “the colonial elite” in part as “missionary-educated.” Christianity, especially Protestantism, bore the potential for the kind of secularism that Benedict Anderson posited as a prerequisite of nationalism.⁸⁵ Indeed, the fusion of Christianity with education produced an elite that could be influenced by “print-capitalism” in a vernacular

⁸¹ Diamacoune, as cited by Diouf, “Between Ethnic Memories and Colonial History in Senegal,” 223.

⁸² Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 62.

⁸³ Baum, Marut, and Foucher have done excellent work on the role of the Catholic Church and Casamançais identity. In his doctoral thesis, Marut shows how the Catholic Diocese of Ziguinchor contributed to Diamacoune’s geography of the Casamance “from the Atlantic to the Falémé.” See Marut, “La question de Casamance (Sénégal)”; Baum, “The Emergence of a Diola Christianity”; and Vincent Foucher, “Church and Nation: The Catholic Contribution to War and Peace in Casamance (Senegal),” *Le Fait Missionnaire: Missions et Sciences Sociales* 13 (2003), 11–40.

⁸⁴ Thomas Hodgkin notes that religious leaders were particularly well-suited to lead nationalist movements: “... the prophets have awakened men’s minds to the fact that change can occur; and the ablest of them, like their European prototypes, have shown themselves wholly capable of constructing a myth, a literature and an organisation.” Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (New York: New York University Press, 1957), 114.

⁸⁵ I am not asserting an innate quality of Protestantism here. Rather, I refer to the earlier vernacularization of the liturgical language as a result of the Reformation and the consequent Protestant tradition of scriptural exegesis allowing adherents of the faith to read, question, interpret, and test scripture and church dogma on their own.

language the way that Anderson explained.⁸⁶ But the nineteenth and early twentieth century masses could not imagine the nation through “print-capitalism,” for most of them were illiterate. Thus, they had to imagine the nation via other means, often in terms not devoid of religion but full of it.

For the masses, separating the nation from their cosmologies was nonsense.⁸⁷ As John Lonsdale’s model of the Kikuyu “moral economy” illustrates, the nation was only real in so much as it complied with their worldview.⁸⁸ On this point, African nationalisms and Western nationalisms agree. Indeed, Anderson’s argument that the nation, inherently of Western origins to him, was “sovereign” – demanding loyalty above all other loyalties – was only possible with a secular worldview.⁸⁹ Thus, the question for all nationalists, Western or non-Western, has been the means of fitting the nation into their worldview.

Adrian Hastings adds needed texture to Anderson’s argument. He concedes that in contexts like late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Africa, “the impact of a vernacular literature in shaping the consciousness of communities hitherto untouched by printing... could be enormous.”⁹⁰ But he contends that this enormous impact had nothing to do with how many people could read. In fact, he asserts that the social impact might have been greater among people who could not read. Rather, “[w]hat can be so decisive in such circumstances is the mediation of the authority of the written text across certain privileged forms of orality.”⁹¹

⁸⁶ On the role of “print-capitalism” in imagining nations via vernacular languages, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, especially Chap. 3: “The Origins of National Consciousness.”

⁸⁷ Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses*, 3; and Kelly Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

⁸⁸ Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, 270.

⁸⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7. Anderson asserts, “It [the nation] is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm.”

⁹⁰ Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 23.

⁹¹ Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood*, 23.

Hastings suggests that Christianity provided a jolt to African nationalisms not because it made the colonial elite literate and enabled them to imagine the nation through print-capitalism but because it catalyzed a reaction to biblical claims of authority over African lives.

The reactions of African nationalists varied. A few rejected Christianity entirely and turned to local, polytheistic beliefs to define an “authentic” version of an African nation. Some co-opted Christian ideology and turned it around, using it against colonial oppression.⁹² But most followed a combined path, advocating some degree of “syncretism” in the search for an “authentic,” “African” faith. Religious “syncretism” was not an indicator of old vestiges of “traditional religion,” the refusal of Africans to fully convert to Christianity or Islam. Rather, it demonstrated the continued relevance – even if contested – of the polytheistic worldview, with its links to ancestors and local pasts.⁹³

In the Casamance, there were at least three advantages to defining the religious identity of the nation by such syncretism, anchored to the Sacred Forest. First, it provided a more flexible means of connecting the local to the national – of connecting nationalist imagination to local worldviews. Second, it avoided dividing the people of the Casamance between Islam and Christianity. Finally, it helped facilitate the localized “Africanization” of the Catholic faith, identified by Senghor and other post-colonial leaders as an essential step in breaking free from the chains of imperial history. In short, the Sacred Forest was an effective, flexible tool to define the Casamance in religious terms in a way that countered the Islamo-Wolof model of Senegalese nationhood while avoiding divisions between Muslim and Christian Casamançais.

⁹² Daniel Magaziner, *The Law and the Prophets: Black Consciousness in South Africa, 1968-1977* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2010).

⁹³ On this point, among others, see Mark, *Wild Bull*; Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*; and Greene, *Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter*.

My first argument about the religious identity of The Forest – as demonstrated by Mark, Baum, and De Jong – is that it provided a more flexible identity to link local, particular worldviews to the wider nation. Because of its greater flexibility in matching local conditions, polytheism demonstrated greater flexibility than the “world religions” of Christianity and Islam for nationalists hoping to counter hegemonic national models based on either one of these faiths. Of course, some of the localized differences in polytheism led to conflict in other parts of the Continent, but it also allowed a “live-and-let-live” mentality that resembled the qualities Anderson claimed for Western secularism. In explaining the need for Kenyan nationalists to go beyond the “bundling” of ethnicities, Lonsdale notes, “Tribesmen worshipped only local gods, venerated only their own ancestors.”⁹⁴ But polytheism also provided a powerful means of countering a denigrating, hegemonic discourse often tied to missionary zeal and some version of a “civilizing mission.” More importantly for Casamançais nationalists, the Sacred Forest allowed local believers to worship local gods while tying them to the larger nation. Traditional religion was not “swept away” by Islam and Christianity; instead, it was utilized – especially by the MFDC – to unite the Casamançais nation and to forge a Casamançais response to the Islamo-Wolofization of *Sénégalité*.⁹⁵ Therefore, instead of asserting an identity that would divide its partisans, the MFDC referred to what they had in common: the Sacred Forest.

My second argument about the religious identity of The Forest is that localized polytheism was the one religious identity that would not divide MFDC partisans. It would not have been a stretch to imagine a Catholic priest in a ninety-four percent Muslim country asserting a cultural distinctness from Senegal by assigning Catholicism as the key religious

⁹⁴ Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, 270.

⁹⁵ On the inability of Islam and Christianity to sweep away traditional religions in the Casamance, see Baum, “The Emergence of a Diola Christianity,” 370.

component of Casamançais nationalism – especially to counter the religious identity of the Islamo-Wolof model. However, at the time of the 1993 ceasefire, sixty percent of the Jola were Muslim.⁹⁶ Thus, while the Catholic Church saw more success among the Jola than in the rest of Senegal, Islam was still the majority religion in the Lower Casamance. Asserting a Catholic identity for the Casamançais nation would have exacerbated Casamançais divisions and excluded more than half of the population from the movement.⁹⁷

At the same time, Diamacoune’s central role as the *de facto* political leader of the MFDC until his death indicates that the Catholic Church played no small part in defining the borders of the Casamance “from the Atlantic to the Falémé.”⁹⁸ If French colonial officials intended to make France a “Muslim power,”⁹⁹ many French Catholics and secularists did not concur. While French missionaries acknowledged Islam’s strength in every other area of Senegal, they considered Jola-land (the Lower Casamance) and Serer-land (the *Petite Cote* near Joal) largely animist and therefore available for evangelization.¹⁰⁰ Many Jola thus converted to Christianity for protection from colonial power.¹⁰¹ Some particularly welcomed Christianity where missionaries allowed for some accommodation with local religion.¹⁰² Of course, what “some accommodation” meant varied with location, but some form of polytheism, often practiced in or near a “sacred forest,” generally formed part of the equation. The MFDC lumped these sacred forests together to form a

⁹⁶ Foucher, “La guerre des dieux,” 364.

⁹⁷ These divisions became more than apparent during the 1955 visit of Lamine Gueye to the area around Bignona during the election campaign for the Territorial Assembly. See *ANS 11D1/0188 Affaires politiques – incidents politiques sanglants du 23 janvier 1955 sur la route de Bignona – Conséquence politique guérilla SFIO-BDS* and Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

⁹⁸ Foucher, “La guerre des dieux,” 372; and Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 59-60.

⁹⁹ See Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, 6-7.

¹⁰⁰ Foucher, “La guerre des dieux,” 370.

¹⁰¹ Baum, “The Emergence of a Diola Christianity,” 374.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

monolithic version of *the* Sacred Forest – a forest space to which all Casamançais could relate while distinguishing Casamançais culture from Senegalese culture.

Finally, by referring to the Sacred Forest, Diamacoune and other Casamançais Catholics “Africanized” and localized their faith in a “universal” religion like Christianity or Islam. Diamacoune’s emphasis on a “traditional” religious identity for the Casamance echoed the words of Senghor and other early postcolonial intellectuals who were eager to disentangle African religions from discussions of “modernity” and “progress.” In the early 1960s, Senghor wrote that Islamic external *jihad* (as opposed to an internal struggle for purity and piety) did violence to Africa’s material values while Christianity did violence to its moral values through a discourse that painted the African as animist, traditional, backward, and violent.¹⁰³

Catholic clergy in Senegal were slowly coming around to the idea that some sort of “Africanization” would be necessary for the future of their faith on the Continent, just a few years before the Second Vatican Council.¹⁰⁴ A writer known as “the Clerk,” Mary Lonbe, claimed that the Church should not be blamed for the materialism of the new postcolonial African elite. Instead, she blamed “the colonizers” for bringing an “atheistic” anti-clericalism to Africa:

...at the same time that they brought us rolls of cloth, tons of cement, thousands of sheets, and thousands of kilometers of iron concrete, they were also conveying a certain materialist philosophy, of which we other Africans, have no need. At the same time they were constructing roads, fixing the railroads, and throwing bridges together, they were digging into our spirits and into our souls a canal to make flow the venom of anti-clericalism. This anti-clericalism was the supposedly superior product of a race and its intellectuals, who since the days of the authors

¹⁰³ On the difference between the internal “*jihad of the nafs*” and the external *jihad* “of the sword” in the colonial Senegalese context, see Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad*, 4-5.

¹⁰⁴ This Vatican Council, convened by Pope John XXIII in 1962 and running until 1965, became known for liberalizing and modernizing the Catholic religion, e.g. authorizing the conduct of Mass in vernacular languages instead of Latin. For its influence on Casamançais nationalism, see Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 60 and 95. For its influence on other African nationalisms, see Magaziner, *The Law and the Prophets*, 81 and 83-84.

of the Encyclopedias until the Marxists of our day, have perpetrated the act of passing themselves off as scientists while no more scientific than you and me.¹⁰⁵

Thus, Lonbe sought to tie Western materialism with atheism and to match Africanness with Christian “believers.” Though Western colonial histories denigrated African religions as “non-modern” and the “people of the book” as “modern” and “attuned to the present age,” Senghor elucidated his famous dictum “*Assimiler, ne pas être assimilé!*”¹⁰⁶ when he asserted, “It is our task, once we have chosen them, to adapt these religions to our historical and sociological conditions: it is our task to Negrofy them.”¹⁰⁷ If the Sacred Forest lent a degree of African authenticity to the “colonial faith,” its link to local cosmologies was more important than some innate, essentialized “Africanness.”

Partha Chatterjee argues that the imperative for the colonized to become “modern” only according to an Andersonian “modular model” left nothing for the colonized themselves to “imagine.”¹⁰⁸ To Casamançais separatists viewing the Senegalese as “colonizers,” the Islamo-Wolof model of Senegal left Casamançais without the possibility of imagining the nation. It left them to define the nation in response to a “modernity” already defined by the Senegalese state. As Diouf indicates, finding an alternative to Senghor’s *Sénégalité* meant finding not an alternative to modernity but an alternative modernity. That alternative modernity, ironically, became firmly rooted in the Sacred Forest. Thus, separatists “modernized” religion in the Casamance by making it more “traditional.”

¹⁰⁵ Mary Lonbe, “Palabres avec le Greffier No. 8: Non! Ma religion ne me désafricanise pas !” *Afrique Nouvelle*, 4 January 1961. In 1961, *le Greffier* (“the Clerk”), Mary Lonbe published a series of interviews with young Senegalese men in *Afrique Nouvelle*, an “Hebdomadaire de l’Afrique francophone” and a publication favorable to the church, on the meaning of independence. This was one article in the series.

¹⁰⁶ “Assimilate! Don’t be assimilated!” In other words, Africans needed to assimilate on their own terms and in their own interests...not those of the colonizer.

¹⁰⁷ Senghor, *Nationhood and the African Road to Socialism*, 107.

¹⁰⁸ Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 5.

The Many Meanings of the Forest

Though occasionally portrayed as places for the practice of “traditional religion,” recent scholarship has shown the Sacred Forest to be a rather modern deployment of power serving the interests of those invoking it – whether they subscribed to its spiritual beliefs or not.¹⁰⁹ Since the conflict began in 1982, Peter Mark, Robert Baum, and Ferdinand De Jong have done the most extensive work in English on religions in the Casamance, focused mostly on the Jola.¹¹⁰ What emerges from this scholarship is not *the* Sacred Forest as a particular geographical space that can be delineated and controlled as state, private, or communal property but a sacred “place” tied to a religious shrine or shrines, often but not always in the forest. These shrines took various forms. Many were as simple as a large stick planted upright in the ground near a large tree or building. Others were placed inside the hollowed-out trunk of a large silkcotton tree, found all over the Lower Casamance.¹¹¹ Others, however, were “far more elaborate, and [occupied] their own small building.” These were often covered by “a small thatched roof.”¹¹² Different shrines were dedicated to different gods or spirits. One shrine may have been used by a family, a ward, or a village. The forms and meanings of these shrines were as diverse as the contexts in which they were used. Thus, they became incredibly flexible symbols for “Casamançais” identity.

¹⁰⁹ On “traditional religion,” see Michael Lambert, “Violence and the War of Words: Ethnicity v. Nationalism in the Casamance,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 68, no. 4 (1998): 585–602; and Foucher, “Church and Nation.”

¹¹⁰ Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*; Mark, *Wild Bull*; Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*; Baum, *West Africa’s Women of God*; De Jong, *Masquerades of Modernity*. Joanna Davidson has made the most recent contribution to this literature with her book on religion and rice among the Jola of Guinea-Bissau. See Davidson, *Sacred Rice*.

¹¹¹ De Jong, *Masquerades of Modernity*, 34. For a literary example of sacred beliefs related to silk cotton trees from another part of West Africa, see Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), Chapter 6.

¹¹² Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, 79-80. Mark’s description of spirit shrines in the Buluf area of the Casamance is in line with the author’s own observations of spirit shrines in the Fogny and Kassa areas. Again, the key is not their uniformity but rather the diversity of the forms these shrines take.

Like Mark, Baum demonstrates the mobile, flexible nature of these precolonial shrines. He notes that the earliest known inhabitants of the area he studies – the Koonjaen, in the vicinity of Esulalu, several kilometers west of Ziguinchor (i.e. what I have referred to as “Kassa”) – established a shrine in a “sacred grove... where men would gather to pray for rain, peace, and the general well-being of the community.”¹¹³ As the community spread, they “carried the... shrine with them... where they established new sacred forests.”¹¹⁴ When the Jola migrated into the Lower Casamance during the seventeenth century, they brought some of the palm wine, sacrificial blood, and soil comprising the shrines “to attract the power of the shrine’s spirit and the collective power of the shrine’s prior congregations.”¹¹⁵ In short, these shrines were as mobile and diverse as the Jola themselves, who have never existed as a fixed, unified ethno-linguistic group.¹¹⁶

Some sacred forests were used exclusively by men and others exclusively by women. Some were used by both genders.¹¹⁷ What made these forests so important in cultural terms was the practice of conducting circumcision initiation rituals in them. Jola on the north shore of the

¹¹³ Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*, 71.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*, 73. Lacking clues from a *griot* tradition like that of the Mandinka, Casamançais appear divided over whether the Jola migrated into the Lower Casamance from the Upper Guinea Coast to the south or from the Kingdom of Gabu, a Mande province to the southeast, generally the eastern part of modern Guinea-Bissau. See Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*, 30-2; Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, 31; and Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*, 71-2.

¹¹⁶ For example, the Jola spoken in Fogny (generally north of Bignona) is hardly intelligible to the Jola spoken in Kassa (generally west of Ziguinchor), just 30 to 40 miles to the southwest. The historical trend has been toward greater unity of language groups in the region, away from a history of greater linguistic diversity. Thus, one can surmise that if Jola from Fogny and Kassa find it difficult to communicate now, they probably did in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well. Peasant woman working as cook/maid, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 10 April 2014. Also, see Thomas’s Foreword to Mark, *Wild Bull and the Sacred Forest*, ix, where Thomas asserts, “One cannot speak of the Jola except in the plural... Each [group] has appreciable sociocultural and linguistic differences, as well as obvious antagonisms. But all of them, conscious of belonging to a common group, know how to close ranks and present a unified front to foreign aggressors.”

¹¹⁷ Alice Manga, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 18 April 2014; Ousmane Karifa Diatta, personal interview, Diembereng, 5 April 2014; and two anonymous informants, Ziguinchor, 21 April 2014. Other scholars have compiled the details on these ceremonies. I am more concerned with the ways separatists used these ceremonies to construct a monolithic version of the Sacred Forest to which all Casamançais could relate.

Casamance refer to these ceremonies as *bukut*. South shore Jola refer to them as *kahat*.¹¹⁸ In either case, Jola believe that this ceremony makes boys into men – both individually and generationally.¹¹⁹ It “represents the promotion of an entire generation of men to adult status.” It also granted to older men the power to regulate marriage and socially-sanctioned sexual relationships, as a Jola man was not really “a man” until he had been circumcised in the Sacred Forest. And he could not marry until passing through *bukut*. Thus, by postponing the next *bukut*, “the elders in a community could temporarily extend their monopoly over marriageable women.”¹²⁰ The *bukut* ceremony normally lasts a matter of weeks and occurs only once in a generation, i.e. once every twenty or twenty-five years. The entire community takes part in the ceremony. Besides circumcision, elders conduct a type of social training in the forest based on the traditions of their ancestors. Louis-Vincent Thomas in 1965 predicted that a ceremony he had attended in the village of Nioumoun, in the area of Blis-Karon (northwest Casamance), might be the last *bukut* celebrated there because by 1990, when the next *bukut* would likely occur, all of the villagers would profess either Islam or Christianity.¹²¹ That was clearly not the case in 1990, when the separatist conflict took a turn for the worst. Thomas could not have foreseen the effects of the MFDC reducing Casamançais identity to “the Sacred Forest,” whether Christian or Muslim. But the conflict only reinforced the importance of traditional religion in the Casamance. It certainly did not diminish it.

¹¹⁸ For more on these ceremonies and their distinctions, see Thomas, Girard, Mark, Baum, and De Jong.

¹¹⁹ Daniel Jatta, personal interview, 4 March 2014, Banjul; Jola refugee in The Gambia, personal interview, 14 March 2014, Banjul; Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, 4 April 2014, Kande; The Notables of Sindian, group interview, 6 April 2014, Sindian; Maturin Diatta Senghor, personal interview, 11 April 2014, Kabrousse; Ansoumana Abba Bodian, personal interview, 19 April 2014, Ziguinchor.

¹²⁰ Mark, *Wild Bull and the Sacred Forest*, 55.

¹²¹ Louis-Vincent Thomas, “Bukut chez les Diola-Nioumoun,” *Notes Africaines* 108 (October 1965), 97. A journal published by the University of Dakar and the *Institut Français d’Afrique Noire* (IFAN). Peter Mark describes the same ceremony – same place and same time – in *The Wild Bull and the Sacred Forest*, 36-37.

Not only have the forms of Casamançais sacred forest shrines changed over the years, but the symbols and practices associated with them have changed as well. Mark argues that because *bukut* “figures prominently in Jola narratives,” one can trace the “major ritual changes that the ceremony has undergone during the past 150 years.”¹²² In addition to these oral sources, Mark traces these changes through material sources such as ceremonial horned masks worn by the leaders of the *bukut*. Similarities among Jola and Mandinka horned masks indicate cultural interaction of these communities in the past. Mark also asserts that the Jola “now rely heavily” on *bukut* “to establish their identity as Jola in a modern multicultural state.”¹²³ Thus, the similarities between *bukut* and the Mandinka ceremony of *kankaran* reveal the possibility of grouping together a national identity through different yet similar religious beliefs and practices.¹²⁴ This reduction of diverse identities into one Casamançais identity demonstrates the flexibility of sacred forest symbols and practices. That flexibility explains why the Sacred Forest became such a valuable symbol of Casamançais nationalism – whether Christian or Muslim, Jola or Mandinka, rich or poor, and whether man or woman.

Because of the importance of the Sacred Forest to men, women in many Jola communities developed their own sacred forests. Many *ukin* [pl. for “shrine,” s. *boekin*] were dedicated to female fertility and rain, reflecting “the central importance of both matters in an agricultural society where drought was a constant concern and where disease caused a very high infant mortality.”¹²⁵ Jola women established “female sacred forests” initially to pray for the safe return of their sons, recruited by the colonial state to fight for France in the Second World

¹²² Mark, *Wild Bull and the Sacred Forest*, 3-4.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹²⁴ Mark, *Wild Bull and the Sacred Forest*; De Jong, *Masquerades of Modernity*.

¹²⁵ Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, 80.

War.¹²⁶ This timing coincides with Baum's claim that "women prophets" with spiritual authority over communities of women *and* men emerged in the wake of the colonial conquest. Baum points to a marked change, however, in terms of women's religious leadership in the public sphere in Jola communities.¹²⁷ Such leadership surely helped support their claims to participation in *the nation*. But regardless of the opportunities for religious leadership, that they practiced their religion in sacred forests reinforced the mapping of "the Casamance" in "the Sacred Forest." It made the Sacred Forest a place to which men and women could relate to distinguish the Casamance from the rest of Senegal.

Clearly, the meanings of The Forest, as are those of the nation, were gendered. Men's control of the Sacred Forest until the early twentieth century, weakened by their failure to stop the colonial conquest, literally placed women on the margins of the Forest – where they stand today with the rest of the uninitiated in attendance as young initiates enter and exit the Sacred Forest for *bukut*.¹²⁸ Only women prophets – exceptions for Jola women rather than the rule – have played leadership roles in Jola communities. The majority are left on the margins "until the situation is hopeless."¹²⁹ At that point – one of hopelessness – women have been welcome to intervene and correct the men. But at that point, it has often been too late. At the same time, Casamançais women have largely been the best at bringing about peace. Their spiritual capital – the basis of their influence with their sons and brothers – provided their political capital.

¹²⁶ Ousmane Karifa Diatta, personal interview, 5 April 2014, Diembereng. To be clear, the French also recruited Senegalese men to fight in the First World War as well as in colonial wars all over the French Empire, such as Algeria and Vietnam. But Jola women did not establish their own sacred forests until the 1940s. See De Jong, *Masquerades of Modernity*, 47.

¹²⁷ Baum, *West Africa's Women of God*, 12-15.

¹²⁸ On the inability of Jola men to stop the colonial conquest, see Baum, *West Africa's Women of God*, 60, where Baum writes, "Male elders and priests of war shrines, and shrines associated with township or quarter associations proved unable to contain or repel the foreign presence."

¹²⁹ ADZ, Seynabou Male Cissé, Letter to Government of Senegal and the MFDC from *Le comité des femmes pour la paix en Casamance*, date unknown.

Casamançais men of the future would do well to take advantage of that capital before the situation is hopeless – for the good of the community, for the good of the nation...Casamançais as well as Senegalese.

Conclusion

The transformation of the *forêt classée* to the *forêt sacrée* in the Casamance reveals a number of important things about the ways that nationalists use cultural symbols to discursively map the nation to advance their interests. Through their discourse of grievance, separatist elites from the MFDC like Diamacoune and Sané “counter-mapped” the Casamance against an Islamo-Wolof model of the Senegalese nation that encompassed the Casamance at the same time that it rendered it “peripheral.” The separatists referred Casamançais to the Sacred Forest because of its unique power to compel their identification with an incredibly local, flexible, and “Casamançais” place. But that localness, that flexibility also presented challenges to the nationalist project of the separatists.

Hence, this transformation reveals the ways that ordinary people targeted by the nationalist message counter-mapped in their own ways, not just against “Senegal” but against the MFDC as well. These ordinary Casamançais displayed another level of counter-mapping – their own counter-mapping against “those politicians” from both the MFDC and the Senegalese state. Certainly, there were plenty for whom the separatist counter-mapping absolutely made sense. They never felt more Casamançais than when in or near a sacred forest. For others, the same was true near the forest in general, whether it was a “sacred forest” or not. But as we have seen with the other spatial symbols discussed in this dissertation, there were plenty of other Casamançais who did not consider *their* sacred forest a symbol of rebellion. Even if the separatist discourse of

grievance resonated with them in other Casamançais places – like The River or The Rice Field – many refused to turn over a place like the Sacred Forest, so sacred, so vital to their worldview, to “politicians” who only “talk politics” that do not seem to matter to the local, everyday lives of ordinary Casamançais.

CHAPTER 5

THE STADIUM

Introduction: The Kick Felt 'Round the Nation

It was the kick that made star striker Jules-François Bocandé a symbol of rebellion. But he did not kick a soccer ball; instead, he kicked the referee...in the groin. For the second year in a row, Bocandé's team, *Casa-Sports*, had advanced to the final match of the Senegalese Premier League championship on 3 August 1980. *Casa-Sports* faced rival *Jeanne d'Arc* in Dakar's Demba Diop Stadium for the twentieth edition of the Senegalese Cup. Bocandé and *Casa-Sports* hailed from the southern Senegalese region of the Casamance, geographically separated from the rest of Senegal by the tiny nation-state of The Gambia. *Jeanne d'Arc* hailed from Dakar, in northern Senegal. Near the end of the game, referee Bakary Sarr – from Dakar – whistled a penalty against *Casa-Sports* inside the penalty box, giving *Jeanne d'Arc* a free kick in front of the *Casa-Sports* goal. Nearly everyone else in the stadium could see that the foul occurred outside the penalty box. In any case, Baba Touré, the *Jeanne d'Arc* kicker, missed the penalty kick. It seemed that *Casa-Sports* had escaped injustice. But Sarr stopped play again, claiming that Touré had rushed the penalty shot before Sarr blew his whistle to re-start play, indicating that all the players were set. Thus, the players lined up again, and Touré received a second chance. This time, the ball sailed into the back of the net. Shortly after, time expired. *Jeanne d'Arc* 1, *Casa-Sports* 0. Before Sarr could exit the field, Bocandé kicked him in the groin. Players and coaches restrained Sarr and Bocandé, but riots erupted in other parts of the field, in the stands, and outside the stadium. Fans attacked each other with clubs, knives, and machetes.

A few days later, the Senegalese Soccer Federation sanctioned Bocandé “for life.”¹ It ruled that Bocandé was never to play soccer on Senegalese soil again while another *Casa-Sports* player who struck Sarr received a five-year ban. A Federation official explained that the second player “was treated lightly because he had expressed regret.”² Apparently, Bocandé did not show the same remorse.



Figure 5-1: Demba Diop Stadium preparing for a wrestling match in 2015. Accessed 3 January 2017 from http://www.xibar.net/La-liste-des-produits-interdits-aux-lutteurs-au-stade-Demba-Diop_a54457.html.

Separatists quickly seized the occasion to tie the fortunes of Bocandé and *Casa-Sports* to the entire Casamance region. Bertrand Diamacoune claimed that the FSF sanction against Bocandé constituted “a sanction against the entire Casamance.”³ Twenty days after the fateful match, Bertrand’s older brother, Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, a Catholic priest who later

¹ Childhood friend of Bocandé, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 March 2014; MFDC Bignona Chapter, group interview, Bignona, 24 April 2014; MFDC official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 April 2014; Laye Diaw, personal interview, Dakar, 1 May 2014; Abdou Latif Diop, *Bocandé: l'éternelle légende* (Dakar: Fama Editions, 2012), 33-5. For the rest of the article, I refer to the Senegalese Soccer Federation (*Fédération Sénégalaise de Football*) by its French abbreviation, FSF.

² “Morning Briefing: The Phillies’ Victory Was the Answer to a Prayer,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 14, 1980; p. D2 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers).

³ Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, 14 March 2014, Ziguinchor. Bertrand was involved with the MFDC in various ways but most recently as Chair of the MFDC Contact Group, until his death in 2014. Like other scholars of the Casamance, I refer to Augustin Diamacoune Senghor as “Diamacoune” instead of “Senghor” to avoid confusion with Leopold Sedar Senghor, the first president of Senegal. To distinguish between Bertrand Diamacoune and his older brother, I normally use the title and name “Father Diamacoune” when referring to Augustin, the priest.

became the Secretary-General of the Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance (MFDC), gave a defiant speech at a conference honoring Aline Sitoé Diatta at the Dakar Chamber of Commerce. Diatta was a Jola priestess from Kabrousse who led a rebellion in 1942 against French military recruitment and rice requisitions.⁴ For creating such an interruption to colonial production, French soldiers arrested Diatta, along with seventeen of her “co-conspirators” and sent them to a prison in Kayes (in modern Mali).⁵ After being moved to another prison in Timbuktu, Diatta died most likely of scurvy.⁶ In any case, she was never heard from again.

At the Chamber of Commerce on 23 August 1980, Father Diamacoune capitalized on the tension following the violence of the Senegalese Cup final to summarize the 300 years of “Casamançais history” preceding Diatta’s disappearance, asserting Senegalese betrayal of the Casamance at every opportunity.⁷ Diamacoune linked the fact that Diatta’s body was never returned to her family to a Senegalese and French conspiracy to deny the family closure and to ignore the heroic history of Casamançais resistance to foreign domination. Though Diamacoune stopped short of directly calling for Casamançais independence, he hinted, “I am exposing historical facts...it is the hour of the Casamance...the Casamance will always constitute, whether one likes it or not...‘an exception and an anachronism.’” If these are synonyms for national

⁴ The Jola are the majority ethnic group of the Lower Casamance, defined roughly as the stretch of the Casamance between the Atlantic Ocean and the city of Sedhiou, on the Soungrougrou River. See Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*, 16. Kabrousse is a village in the far southwest corner of the Casamance, adjacent to the Senegalese border with Guinea-Bissau.

⁵ ANS, 2G 42-01 Rapport politique annuel, Colonie du Sénégal (Année 1942), 61; ANS 11D1/226 Floups rébellion et l’affaire Aline Sitoé Diatta.

⁶ ANS, Personnalités – Aline Sitoé Diatta, “Aline Sitoé décédée au Mali en 1944,” *Le Soleil*, 11 October 1983, p. 2; “La Jeanne d’Arc de l’Afrique,” *Le Soleil*, 11 October 1983, p. 2. Also see Toliver-Diallo, “The woman who was more than a man,” 346; Baum, “Prophetess,” 50.

⁷ There was no such thing, however, as “the Casamance” in 1645, from where Diamacoune began his historical narrative. See *Archives of the Dakar Chamber of Commerce*, Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, “Le Message de la reine Alinsitoë,” Conférence tenue par l’abbé Augustin Diamacoune Senghor le samedi, 23 août 1980, à la Chambre de Commerce de Dakar, organisée par le Cocarzi (Comité d’organisation pour le Carnaval de la Ville de Ziguinchor).

independence, I am absolutely in agreement.”⁸ Diamacoune suggested that the cultural differences manifested in Casamançais and Senegalese histories demonstrated that the Casamance had never been and could never be a part of Senegal.

The appearance of this separatist discourse twenty days after the controversy and violence of the Senegalese Cup final match was no coincidence. Rather, it emerged from a longer history, illustrating the complex nexus of sports and politics and, in this particular case, of sports and nationalism. While others have noted this nexus in the context of African sports (especially soccer), I show *how* the sports stadium over time became a place for “imagining” the Casamance.⁹ As such, this chapter contributes to the growing literature on ways of imagining the nation other than Benedict Anderson’s “print-capitalism”—especially in areas of the formerly colonized world with low literacy rates.¹⁰ These alternate means of imagining the nation suggest the engagement of ordinary social groups in corroborating, contesting, or ignoring elite construction of the ties between sports and separatism. While demonstrating change in the sports stadium *over time* through the links between soccer, wrestling, and the separatist movement, I also show how various Casamançais in the stadium imagined the nation in different ways *at the same time*. Thus, I trace the contours of “space” and “place” to argue that while the separatist movement attempted to construct a monolithic version of “The Stadium” as a place for the symbolic performance of the Casamançais nation, some Casamançais refused to follow the

⁸ Diamacoune, “Le Message de la reine Alinsitoë.”

⁹ A few of the Africanists noting the nexus of soccer and politics include Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001); Peter Alegi, *African Soccerescapes: How a Continent Changed the World’s Game* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010); and Susann Baller, “Urban Football Performances: Playing for the Neighbourhood in Senegal, 1950s–2000s,” *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute* 84-1 (2014), 17–35.

¹⁰ Some of these scholars include Moorman, *Intonations*; Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians*; Byfield, *The Bluest Hands*; Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses*; and Mike McGovern, *Unmasking the State: Making Guinea Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

separatists' lead, instead imagining the Casamance not as a separate nation but as the southern region of Senegal.¹¹

To trace these contours, I examine the ties between the early supporters of *Casa-Sports* and the early supporters of separatism in the late 1970s. Early separatist meetings held on white plastic chairs in the middle of the soccer pitch demonstrated the connection between soccer and the performance of the nation in The Stadium by separatists themselves. This narrative demonstrates the ways that the soccer stadium became a place for imagining and performing the Casamançais nation separate from Senegal. But as I alternate between the soccer stadium and the wrestling stadium, I show how Casamançais also participated in and performed the Senegalese nation while maintaining a separate Casamançais identity. As an “odd case” will show, some Casamançais refused to support *Casa-Sports* in every game and some *Casa-Sports* supporters refused to link their soccer club to separatism, just as Casamançais wrestlers refused to link their victories in the wrestling stadium to separatism. In the end, I show why Bocandé's kick at the conclusion of the 1980 Senegalese Cup reverberated beyond the stadium, beyond *Casa-Sports*, and beyond sports to shake the Senegalese nation to its core.

The Colonial Stadium

On one hand, French colonizers brought the stadium as a built environment for the performance of social relations to the Casamance in the first half of the twentieth century, along with colonial sports like soccer and boxing. European sports often required, to some extent, not

¹¹ I capitalize “The Stadium” here – as elsewhere throughout this chapter – to denote separatist attempts to construct a monolithic, homogenized place where the Casamançais nation was defined by reference to particular cultural values, memories, and histories. For an illuminating discussion of landscape, history, and memory in relation to West African space and place, see Greene, *Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter*.

only the imperative for entertainment and the leisure time to go with it but some sort of built facility in which or on which to play. Missionaries and colonial officials viewed sports as a way of cultivating Western values and practices through physical exercise, teamwork, and discipline. This social training was to take place in space controlled by colonial elites or their surrogates – typically educated men with ties to missionary organizations or the colonial state.¹² Ultimately, colonial armed forces, *gendarmes*, or police insured the control of this social space by the force of arms.¹³

On the other hand, precolonial Africans had been playing and performing sports such as wrestling, martial arts, canoe-racing, and competitive dancing well before the arrival of Europeans.¹⁴ These sports were valued in agricultural societies with the requirement for self-defense. In the Casamance, for example, youth wrestled – boys against boys and girls against girls – in matches often for the pride of the whole village or a collection of villages.¹⁵ Precolonial sports required their own constructed spaces, but these spaces were not focused on containing and controlling a crowd as much as the stadiums constructed by Europeans. Like Europeans, Africans played sports for fitness, status, wealth, the performance of identity, and

¹² Before explaining why the Casamance needed stadiums to take up some of its “free space,” former colonial official J. Malbranque appealed to the urban planning philosophies of *Le Corbusier*, the famous French intellectual considered by James C. Scott to be one of the earliest authors of “seeing like a state.” In addition to Scott’s *Seeing Like a State*, see ANS, 1Z 0096, “Rapport de J. Malbranque sur la Casamance: nécessité et avantage de son autonomie,” (Dakar, 1939), 12. *Casa-Sports’* opponent in the 1980 Senegalese Cup final, *Jeanne d’Arc*, was a club started by French missionaries in Dakar in 1921. Diouf, *Sénégal, Les Ethnies et La Nation*, 119.

¹³ On the force of arms ultimately guaranteeing the entire colonial project, see Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 129.

¹⁴ Alegi, *African Soccerscapes*, 1.

¹⁵ Robert Baum claims that “wrestling could be considered a means of socialization of Diola youth into the ways of the warrior.” See Baum’s “Shrines, Medicines, and the Strength of the Head: The Way of the Warrior among the Diola of Senegambia,” *Numen* 40-3 (1 September 1993), 277. Girls and young women wrestled primarily in Kassa – the area of the Casamance centered on Oussouye, west of Ziguinchor to the Atlantic coast. Casamançais wrestling champion, personal interview, 12 April 2014; MFDC Bignona chapter, group interview, Bignona, 24 April 2014; MFDC official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 April 2014. For more on the changes that colonialism brought to precolonial wrestling in Africa, see Matt Carotenuto, “Crafting Sport History Behind Bars: Wrestling with State Patronage and Colonial Confinement,” along with his earlier “Grappling with the Past: Wrestling and Performative Identity in Kenya,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30-16 (2013), 1889-1902.

power in one form or another.¹⁶ Africans often linked athletic performances to community festivals based on the agricultural calendar, with “rituals of spectatorship” facilitated by *griot* storytelling and other verbal performances honoring the athletes’ physical prowess.¹⁷ Thus, Africans defined and performed social relations through athletics well before the arrival of Europeans. They were therefore poised to participate in colonial sports, though Africans quickly made these sports their own.¹⁸

Shortly after demarcating the colonial borders that created the Casamance, fighting the First World War, and defeating the anti-colonial resistance that lasted longer in the Casamance than in any other part of Senegal, French colonial officials posited the building of bodies and the building of infrastructure as prime components of the “civilizing mission.”¹⁹ Former colonial official J. Malbranque asserted that building a municipal stadium in Ziguinchor was “one of the most interesting and important social projects” in the Casamance “for the training of the body and for the perfecting of the morals and nature of man.”²⁰ Performing athletic exercise in stadiums would “spare the youth from laziness and life on the street.”²¹ It would also facilitate, according to Malbranque, the improvement of “the races of color to the development of all humanity.”²² By asserting the need to build urban stadiums in what was otherwise a colonial

¹⁶ Alegi, *Soccerscapes*, 1-2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸ For an excellent summary of this evolution and Africa’s unique contributions to the sport of soccer, see the first two chapters of Alegi, *Soccerscapes*.

¹⁹ The French-British agreement of August 10, 1889 and the French-Portuguese Convention of May 12, 1886 delineated the northern and southern borders of the Casamance, with the Atlantic Ocean serving as the western limit. The eastern border of the Casamance, however, has never been so clear. Most scholars define it by the north-south course of the Gambia River, which defines the eastern end of the strip of Senegal separated from the rest of the country by the Gambia. For more on the early colonial “pacification” – an ironic term since it was seldom peaceful – of the Casamance, see Christian Roche, *Histoire de la Casamance*.

²⁰ ANS, 1Z 0096, Malbranque, 15. On the title page of this document, Malbranque claimed that he was an “Academy Officer” who was the “Former Inspector for the Ministry of Labor” as well as a “Former Special Advisor in French West Africa.”

²¹ ANS, 1Z 0096, Malbranque, 15.

²² *Ibid.*

economic report, Malbranque suggested the benefit (to France) of these disciplined bodies participating in the colonial economy as producers and consumers. He thus tied the pursuit of colonial economic interests to the rhetoric of the “civilizing mission.”

Whether intentionally or not, he also implied that this “civilizing” should be carried out in enclosed spaces like stadiums, spaces easily controlled by colonial police and military forces. Colonial officials seemed to fear well-trained African bodies less than well-educated African minds.²³ But just in case, the police or the *gendarmes* were not far away. After all, as Laura Fair argues in the case of colonial Zanzibar, “the governing of sports was no game.”²⁴ In other words, colonial officials treated the administration of colonial sports clubs, leagues, and stadiums as seriously as any other part of the colony. Malbranque’s call for the construction of stadiums for the improvement of youthful vigor in the Casamance demonstrated this seriousness.²⁵ Clearly, colonial officials wanted to keep urban African youth *busy*, and they were willing to pay to do it. Thus, stadiums quickly became physical manifestations of the colonial presence in port cities along the West African coast.

By the late colonial period, they also became sites for the manifestation of national identity. Peter Alegi explains that “while European colonizers intended for sport to prop up their self-proclaimed ‘civilizing mission’ in Africa, they unwittingly created new opportunities for various forms of African resistance, not only against colonialism but also against social

²³ This, at least, was the notion implied by colonialists like Malbranque and by nationalists like Senghor and Guinean leader Sekou Touré. Touré contended that “...colonialism [betrayed] its intentions in the organization and nature of the education which it claims to dispense in the name of some humanism or other...it had to satisfy its needs for junior staff, clerks, book-keepers, typists, messengers, etc. The elementary character of the education dispensed bears sufficiently eloquent witness to the object in view, for the colonial power took great care, for example, not to set up real administrative colleges for young Africans which might have trained genuine executives, or to teach the real history of Africa and so forth.” See Sékou Touré, “The Political Leader Considered as the Representative of a Culture,” in *Ideologies of liberation in Black Africa, 1856-1970: documents on modern African political thought from colonial times to the present*, ed. J. Ayodele Langley (London: R. Collings, 1979), 605-6.

²⁴ Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, 240.

²⁵ On the seriousness with which colonial officials viewed sports, see Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, 240.

inequalities within African communities.”²⁶ While colonizers intended for sports and other cultural projects of the “civilizing mission” to build African nations that benefitted colonial interests, Africans took these cultural forms in their own directions. Thus, Senegalese wrestlers modified their style of wrestling to incorporate the styles of not only other Senegalese ethnic groups but also aspects of boxing, a sport brought to Africa by European powers. African soccer clubs, which “occasionally expressed opposition to colonial power and authority,” eventually expressed opposition to postcolonial power and authority, as became the case with *Casa-Sports*.²⁷ By the postcolonial era, therefore, stadiums had been transformed into carefully staged spaces for performing “the nation,” but not always in ways intended by colonial and postcolonial elites.

“Traditional” Wrestling in the Colonial Stadium

If there were an indigenous “national” sport in Senegal, it was wrestling, not soccer. Soccer only arrived with colonialism. But people in what is now Senegal, as in other cultures around the world, had been wrestling for centuries to note stages of the agricultural cycle and gender rites of passage. They often held matches to mark the end of harvest (rice harvest in the Casamance and Senegal River valleys, groundnut harvest in the rest of the country) and male and female circumcision and initiation.²⁸ Occasionally, fishers and farmers with fish and crops to spare would wager them on the outcome of a friendly village match.²⁹ The contemporary form of “traditional” wrestling, *laamb*, seen in wrestling arenas around Dakar, began as a form of

²⁶ Alegi, *Soccerscapes*, 22.

²⁷ Quote from Alegi, *Soccerscapes*, 22.

²⁸ Ousseynou Faye, “Sport, Argent et Politique: La Lutte Libre à Dakar (1800-2000),” in *Le Sénégal Contemporain*, ed. Momar-Coumba Diop (Paris: Karthala, 2002), 311-312. Female circumcision has not been universal in the Casamance, but it has been performed in the past and remains common in isolated areas.

²⁹ Nicholas Loomis, “Pro Wrestling, Senegal Style,” *The New York Times*, 25 May 2012, B9.

freestyle wrestling (*la lutte libre* in French sources) known as “*mbapat*” among the Lebu ethnic group.³⁰ It typically involved “taking down” one’s opponent (*terrasser* in French), so that his head, back, or both hands and his knees touched the ground.³¹ Since the Lebu were the indigenous people where the French established Dakar on the Cap-Vert Peninsula, colonial sports organizers adopted Lebu rules and traditions to establish and regulate the sport in the increasingly diverse (in ethnic terms) and urban area around Dakar.³²

As the sport migrated from the village to the city, it began to change. But these changes took time. During the colonial period, each ethnic group, while modifying its rules to match those of other ethnic groups, often established its own wrestling arena. As they had with soccer, the Jola adopted (after independence) Robert Delmas Stadium in Dakar as their “home field.” They later re-named it after Emile Badiane, the nationalist hero of the original MFDC.³³ With greater media exposure and commercialization of the sport after independence, however, other ethnic groups in the Dakar area modified their wrestling styles to match the *laamb* of the Lebu, Wolof and Serer of the Cap-Vert Peninsula.

The most important rule change came with the introduction of *la frappe* (the punch) after 1945. Punching became intertwined with the sport from its exposure to colonial boxing.³⁴ Eventually, fight promoters had to determine whether matches would be conducted *avec frappe*

³⁰ I continue to place the word “traditional” within quotes when it precedes the word “wrestling” in reference to contemporary wrestling in Senegal because, as this chapter shows, it has changed significantly over the course of the colonial and postcolonial periods. Thus, Senegalese wrestling today is quite different from that practiced before the colonial period. It might be more accurate to call it “modern Senegalese wrestling.” But most observers continue to refer to as “traditional wrestling.” As noted above, Matt Carotenuto makes the same argument for contemporary wrestling in Kenya. See Carotenuto, “Crafting Sport History Behind Bars” and “Grappling with the Past.”

³¹ J. V. Faye, “La lutte traditionnelle: son importance, sa signification en fonction des éthos et des habitus ethniques au Sénégal,” *Mémoire de maîtrise, Sciences et techniques de l’activité physique et du sport (STAPS)*, Dakar, Institut national supérieur de l’Education populaire et du Sport (INSEPS); Faye, “Sport, Argent et Politique,” 312; Loomis, “Pro Wrestling, Senegal Style.”

³² Faye, “Sport, Argent et Politique,” 311-312.

³³ Serigne Mour Diop, *La lutte sénégalaise* (Dakar: Editions Vives Voix, 2014), 10-11. For more on Emile Badiane and the rest of the nationalist generation in Senegal (including the Casamance), see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

³⁴ Diop, *La lutte sénégalaise*, 8.

(with punching) or *sans frappe* (without punching). After the Second World War, the sport became increasingly commercialized. Thus, wrestlers and promoters gave the crowds (and advertisers) what they wanted: predictably, they wanted more punching.

“Grown-Ups on White Plastic Chairs”: Separatists in the Stadium

At about the same time, Senegalese soccer officials were trying to keep punching *out* of the soccer stadium. Soccer and separatism grew together with the increasing prominence of *Casa-Sports* in the Senegalese Premier League in the late 1970s. Many of the early separatists and early supporters of *Casa-Sports* were, in fact, the same people. Thus, perhaps it should come as no surprise that when the fledgling separatist movement needed a somewhat secure but public space in which to meet, a few of the separatists first thought of Néma Stadium, where *Casa-Sports* played its home matches in Ziguinchor, the regional capital. Created in 1969 to represent the Casamance in the Senegalese Premier League, *Casa-Sports* resulted from the combination of ancestors *Foyer-Casamance*, *Galéa FC*, and one other Casamançais club.³⁵ By the late 1970s, separatists began holding meetings in Néma Stadium because it was a public space large enough to hold all the participants while avoiding detection (so they thought) by Senegalese security services.³⁶

These meetings brought politics to the stadium, in white plastic chairs. Louise Badiane grew up in Ziguinchor.³⁷ She remembers as a young girl seeing “grown-ups sitting on white

³⁵ Nouha Cissé, the President of *Casa-Sports*, personal interview (with the author), Ziguinchor, 1 April 2014; Nouha Cissé, personal interview (with Jean-Claude Marut), Ziguinchor, 26 February 2015.

³⁶ Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014; Ansoumana Bodian, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 19 April 2014; MFDC chapter, Bignona, group interview, Bignona, 24 April 2014; MFDC official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 April 2014.

³⁷ Louise Badiane is now Associate Professor of Anthropology and Coordinator of African Studies at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts.

plastic chairs at the stadium out by the airport, talking about something important.”³⁸ She later discovered those grown-ups at Néma Stadium were discussing separatism; they were discussing sedition. But for Badiane, that realization came later. At the time, she knew those adults were probably talking about more than soccer, even though most of them were known supporters of *Casa-Sports*. But at the time, she only noted “grown-ups on white plastic chairs discussing something important.” That image in a young girl’s mind speaks volumes about the MFDC’s instrumentalization of *Casa-Sports* and its stadium for separatist purposes. Whether the club’s players and officials agreed with it or not, it linked *Casa-Sports*, at the time, to politics in a way that many cheered and others ignored. It made any stadium in which *Casa-Sports* played during the late 1970s and early 1980s into a contested space for the imagination and performance of Casamançais and Senegalese identities.

The separatists’ “secret” stadium meetings could not continue indefinitely, of course. Since colonial and postcolonial officials had depended on the sports stadium to impart values of citizenship and sportsmanship and to impose a degree of social control, little could be performed in a stadium in secret. The stadium was designed, after all, to feature the action taking place at center pitch. Thus, once Senegalese intelligence agents began infiltrating their meetings, separatists moved their gatherings to Diabir, a village on the southern edge of Ziguinchor. After a meeting near Diabir in December 1982, the separatists began their fateful march into Ziguinchor to take down the Senegalese flags flying in front of government buildings, leading to the first mass violence of the Casamance conflict when Senegalese troops responded to this assault on Senegalese sovereignty.³⁹

³⁸ Louise Badiane, phone interview, 6 April 2011.

³⁹ Ansoumana Bodian, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 19 April 2014; MFDC leader, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 April 2014. I provide more detail on the 1982 march later in this chapter. Vincent Foucher and Paul Diedhiou also note the separatists’ move from the soccer stadium to Diabir. See Foucher, “La guerre des dieux?”

Before the violence began and before being chased out of the stadium, however, separatists and their sympathizers in the late 1970s set up white plastic chairs in a circle on the soccer pitch. They aired their grievances against the Senegalese state. Many protested the recent implementation of an imminent domain law passed in 1964.⁴⁰ They accused “northerners” of exploiting obscure Senegalese land tenure laws to steal land belonging for generations to Casamançais.⁴¹ When northerners were not directly involved in such disputes, the separatists blamed the Senegalese government for siding with the other party.⁴² In general, they demonized Senegal and equated Senegalese with colonizing Frenchmen – bent on exploiting Casamançais bodies, labor, and resources.⁴³

Ansoumana Bodian, for example, a high school English teacher, represented forty-six families of the Ziguinchor neighborhood of Kadior who were “expelled” from land seized by Socitour, a French company building a resort hotel on the property. Bodian first took his complaint to Socitour officials. After receiving little response, he wrote to the Senegalese government – starting with the *gendarmerie* and police and eventually addressing letters to the Minister of Education and two Senegalese presidents, Leopold Senghor and Abdou Diouf.⁴⁴

376; and Diedhiou, *L'identité joola en question: La bataille idéologique du MFDC pour l'indépendance* (Paris: Karthala, 2011), 330.

⁴⁰ Ansoumana Bodian, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 19 April 2014; MFDC leader, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 April 2014; along with Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims,” 263.

⁴¹ Northerners were referred to as “*nordistes*” in the Lower Casamance. On the complexity and ambiguity of Senegalese land tenure laws, see Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*, 189, as well as Linda J. Beck, *Brokering Democracy in Africa: The Rise of Clientelist Democracy in Senegal* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 182-6. Jola claims to land held allegedly for generations were problematic, at best. See Nugent, “Cyclical History in the Gambia/Casamance Borderlands.”

⁴² Ansoumana Abba Bodian, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 19 April 2014.

⁴³ In his 170-page response to the testimony of French historian Jacques Charpy during the 1993 ceasefire, Diamacoune wrote, “France wants to integrate by force this beautiful and rebel Casamance into a colonial and neocolonial Senegal, which was the right hand of the colonizer shown to be more colonial than the white colonizer...” See Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 155.

⁴⁴ Personal archives, Ansoumana Abba Bodian, Ziguinchor. In particular, see Letter from Bodian to the Commander of the *Gendarmerie Nationale* in Ziguinchor on the subject of “Problème des Emmurées vivant de Kadior, Ziguinchor, Casamance,” dated 25 March 1976; Letter from Assane Diabate, Bodian’s attorney, on the subject of “Population de Kadior c. Socitour,” dated 15 April 1978; Letter from Bodian to the Minister of Education, on the subject of “Demande de remboursement pour mes droits suspendues depuis le 03/01/1983,” dated 27

None of these authorities responded to Bodian's letters, and none provided satisfaction, according to Bodian, to the forty-six Kadior families. Thus, Bodian and other separatists considered the French and the Senegalese equal colonial partners in exploiting the Casamance for its natural resources with no consideration for local ownership rights.⁴⁵ Whether Senegalese commercial traders were better prepared than Casamançais rice peasants for jobs in the booming tourist economy, it appeared to Bodian and a lot of other Casamançais that outsiders, "strangers to the Casamance," were profiting from the beautiful white beaches, the lush green landscape, and the rich cultural heritage of the Casamance while ignoring or excluding its people. The stadium meetings provided Bodian and others the opportunity to air these grievances, constructing a justification for separatism.

By 1980, separatists had begun to use the stadium for potentially subversive purposes. Those attending the stadium meetings sensed that they were headed for an eventual showdown with the Senegalese state. Some encouraged the confrontation; others appealed for peace. According to one eyewitness, Father Diamacoune made an appearance at one of these meetings to appeal for peace. Abdou Elinkine Diatta was a high school student in Ziguinchor who attended one of these early stadium meetings, where he heard a speech by Father Diamacoune. He later explained:

...I went with certain student leaders who had been called together to a meeting by a priest named Diamacoune...and the priest met with us at the municipal stadium Pedro Gomis in Ziguinchor. Once we were seated, he commenced giving a speech about peace, asking us to renounce violence and to return to our studies. It was the first time that I had the occasion to see Father Diamacoune. I didn't even know him, and I had never heard anyone speak of him. In 1981, there were

November 1995; and finally, Letter from Bodian to the Minister of Education, Kalidou Diallo, 7 July 2008, on the subject of Bodian's "suspended rights." For his MFDC activities, the Senegalese government sentenced Bodian to five years of prison on 3 January 1983. Bodian, who lost a fingertip to a Senegalese bullet during the fateful march that began the Casamance conflict, also appears in Father Diamacoune's "Pays du Refus," 54, 71.

⁴⁵ Ansoumana Bodian, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 19 April 2014; MFDC official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 April 2014.

some people who started to meet and speak of independence for the Casamance. One day, one of my friends told me that there was going to be a meeting during the night at the municipal stadium of Néma. I went, and there it was decided, for reasons of security and discretion, to hold the next meeting in the neighborhood of Diabir, in Ziguinchor... And it was at that meeting [in Diabir] that the decision was made to organize a march to demand independence for the Casamance from Senegal.⁴⁶

As events unfolded, Casamançais nationalists began to fuse together the athletic and political performances in the stadium to make a broader appeal to the Casamançais masses, most of whom were more likely to listen to a *Casa-Sports* game on the radio than to read a separatist tract or listen to a political speech at a separatist rally. The Stadium provided a public yet somewhat secluded space for the separatists to express their frustration with the Senegalese state, define their goals, and debate proposals.

Separatists from the large Casamançais expatriate community in Dakar also used meetings of the local committee of *Casa-Sports* supporters to hold discussions of separatist objectives.⁴⁷ They met in Dakar's Robert Delmas Stadium.⁴⁸ Like the meetings in Ziguinchor, some of the *Casa-Sports* supporters called for blood while others called for dialogue. But these supporters also had to be mindful of where they were – in the capital of “Senegal.”⁴⁹ Senegalese security services began targeting the meetings for intelligence on separatist plans and activities, recruiting a few *Casa-Sports* members to provide information for the government. Rumors began to circulate, and fear and suspicion increasingly gripped the meetings.⁵⁰ But these

⁴⁶ Abdou Elinkine Diatta, to Bassène, in *L'abbé*, 98-99.

⁴⁷ For an excellent analysis of this expatriate Casamançais community in Dakar and its ties to the separatist movement, see Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims.”

⁴⁸ Former *Casa-Sports* committee member in Dakar, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 20 March 2014.

⁴⁹ Travelers from the Casamance and other parts of the Senegalese “periphery” often assert they are traveling to “Senegal” when they depart for the Dakar-St. Louis-Diourbel triangle, perceived by many as the Islamo-Wolof “center” of Senegal. For more on the “Islam-Wolofization” of the Senegalese nation, see Mamadou Diouf, *Histoire du Sénégal*; Diouf, “Between Ethnic Memories & Colonial History in Senegal”; and Etienne Smith, “La nationalisation par le bas: un nationalisme banal? Le cas de la wolofisation au Sénégal,” *Raisons politiques* 37-1 (2010): 65–78.

⁵⁰ Former *Casa-Sports* official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 20 March 2014.

meetings did not automatically transform the stadium from a space of social training, control, and surveillance into a space of subversion. Even within *Casa-Sports*, there were those who preferred to keep politics out of soccer. Some *Casa-Sports* supporters felt uncomfortable mixing soccer and separatism, believing such a mix could become a dangerous concoction.⁵¹ But they waged a losing battle to keep the two separate.

Game Time for the Nation

The growing ties between the fans of *Casa-Sports* and the separatist movement became clearer at *Casa-Sports* matches. During these matches, of course, the white plastic chairs disappeared from the field, but the conflation of soccer and separatism in the stadium remained – transferred into the stands. *Casa-Sports* fans began to attend soccer matches armed with clubs and machetes.⁵² Similar to what British sports fans would see from soccer “hooligans” in the following decade, *Casa-Sports* soccer matches became known for action in the stands as much as action on the field. To *Casa-Sports* fans, the games became occasions for demonstrating more than pride in one’s soccer club; they were occasions for demonstrating pride in one’s regional identity as well as Casamançais dissatisfaction with the postcolonial dispensation.⁵³

Casamançais distinguished themselves at the games from the Muslim teetotalers of northern Senegal by dressing in palm wine tapping costumes.⁵⁴ They heralded *Casa-Sports* and its

⁵¹ Former *Casa-Sports* official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 20 March 2014; Sindian notables, group interview, 6 April 2014.

⁵² Former *Casa-Sports* official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 20 March 2014; MFDC official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 April 2014.

⁵³ For an introduction to the immense literature on British soccer hooliganism, one could start with Tom Gibbons et al., “‘The way it was’: an account of soccer violence in the 1980s,” *Soccer and Society* 9-1 (January 2008), 28-41.

⁵⁴ Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims,” 250. Though the majority of the Lower Casamance is Muslim, the Casamance is known for its palm wine libations drunk mostly by Catholics and animists and used in various ritual ceremonies. For more on the Islamization of the Casamance, see Leary, “A Political History of Islam in the Casamance”; Peter Mark, “Economic and Religious Change among the Diola of Boulouf”; and Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*.

players in song, referring in Jola, for example, to “Bocandé, the Panther.”⁵⁵ Separatists went to the games to distribute copies of the separatist magazine, *Kelumak*.⁵⁶ The *Casa-Sports* section of the stadium became known as “*la tribune Katanga*,” in reference to the separatist region of the Congo in the 1960s.⁵⁷ Some of the more militant *Casa-Sports* fans began to refer to their club as not only their regional but as their “national” team as well.⁵⁸ They claimed that the tension at *Casa-Sports* matches demonstrated that the Casamance was not really a part of Senegal.

The tension began to peak when *Casa-Sports* won the Senegalese Cup for the first time in 1979. Until then, northern teams had dominated the championship. But in August of 1979, *Casa-Sports* fans flocked to Dakar’s Demba Diop Stadium from all over “the Casamance,” from Cap Skirring to Kolda and Kédougou to Matam.⁵⁹ They walked and rode buses. They took “*car rapides*,” bush taxis, *pirogues*, and motorbikes.⁶⁰ *Casa-Sports* organized large convoys of buses transporting supporters from Ziguinchor and other Senegalese cities to Dakar. *Casa-Sports*’ Dakar organizing committee helped arrange transportation and lodging in Dakar.⁶¹ President Senghor, the “father of the nation,” attended the match, likely expecting a fairly easy victory by the northern Senegalese club, *Jaraaf*.⁶² After all, teams from Dakar or Saint Louis had won the Senegalese Cup every year since its inception in 1961. But 1979 would be different. That year,

⁵⁵ On a cassette tape of *Casa-Sports* fans’ songs, Bocandé was referred to as “Bocandé Esamay,” likening the striker to a panther in Jola. Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims,” 250.

⁵⁶ *Kelumak* was the creation of Mamadou “Nkrumah” Sané, the founder, along with Father Diamacoune, of the MFDC. See Foucher, “Cheated Pilgrims,” 247.

⁵⁷ Diop, *Bocandé*, 30.

⁵⁸ Bignona Chapter of the MFDC, group interview, 24 April 2014.

⁵⁹ Bignona Chapter of the MFDC, group interview, 24 April 2014; MFDC official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 April 2014; Ansoumana Bodian, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 19 April 2014; Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 29 March 2014; and Thérèse Senghor, in Diop, *Bocandé*, 31. Many residents of Matam would likely find it amusing that they were considered a part of “the Casamance,” but several MFDC members claimed it was.

⁶⁰ *Car rapides* are usually old “bread trucks” in poor condition, often painted various colors, with ties to one of Senegal’s Sufi Muslim orders, and typically not all that rapid. *Pirogues* are canoe-like watercraft, often painted in a similar fashion to the *car rapides*.

⁶¹ Former *Casa-Sports* official, Ziguinchor, 20 March 2014.

⁶² *Jaraaf* means “royal representative” in Wolof.

Casa-Sports beat *Jaraaf* by a score of 2-0. For the first time, a Casamançais club – or to many Senegalese, *the* Casamançais club – won the Senegalese Cup. When presenting the Trophy Cup to Demba Ramata Ndiaye, the Wolof captain of *Casa-Sports*, Senghor allegedly remarked, “I really like this *Casa-Sports* team. What I like the most about it is that there are not only Jola on the team but Wolof, Peul [Pular or Fulani], Toucouleur, and Serer. That is Senegal...long live Senegal!”⁶³ Radio and television journalist Laye Diaw explains, “That’s why the Casamance is the most Senegalese region of Senegal: it best represents Senegalese diversity. After all, the *Casa-Sports* player who scored the two goals against *Jaraaf* in 1979 was Tanor Ndiaye, a Wolof.”⁶⁴ Ndiaye’s contribution to the-Casamance-as-Senegalese, however, seemed all but forgotten after the Senegalese Cup final the following year. According to the MFDC, Senegalese government officials wanted to ensure that such a victory for the Casamance never occurred again.⁶⁵

For many Casamançais, even if they did not consider themselves “separatists,” the 1980 Senegalese Cup constituted the *ras-le-bol* moment.⁶⁶ The controversial penalty against *Casa-Sports* late in the game represented another case of Senegal cheating the Casamance out of something good, something that belonged to the Casamance. Many did not need to be convinced by separatists that the result of the match was another case of Senegalese trickery at the expense

⁶³ Laye Diaw, personal interview, Dakar, 1 May 2014. Father Diamacoune, as children’s radio personality “Papa Kulimpi” in the 1970s, particularly targeted the “little Wolof” and the “little Toucouleur” as “northerners” and “strangers” who did not belong in the Casamance. See Marut, *Le Conflit de Casamance*, 95-96. Diamacoune also asserted, “... ‘Wolof’ is often synonymous with Senegalese and ‘Jola’ with Casamançais.” Diamacoune, “Pays du Refus,” 41.

⁶⁴ Laye Diaw, personal interview, Dakar, 1 May 2014.

⁶⁵ Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 1 April 2014; MFDC, Bignona Chapter, group interview, Bignona, 24 April 2014; and Diop, *Bocandé*, 30.

⁶⁶ Childhood friend of Bocandé, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 March 2014. Father Diamacoune often used the French expression *ras-le-bol* to express the feeling of being “fed up with” or “tired of” northern Senegalese domination. See, for example, “Pays du Refus,” starting p. 27. Literally, the phrase describes a bowl so flush with liquid that one more drop will spill over the edge, so it signifies a tipping point of sorts. Also, see Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 79.

of hard-working Casamançais. Some questioned what President Senghor meant when he allegedly stated after the game, “I prefer regionalism to tribalism.”⁶⁷ Many Casamançais found this reference to “tribalism” jolting.⁶⁸ The Jola were the majority among the separatists, but other ethnic groups – Mandinka, Manjak, Mancagne, Bainouk, for example – were involved, too. Had the President attempted to discredit separatist claims to land lost and jobs not awarded by slyly accusing the separatists of “tribalism?” Even Senghor, a “cousin” Serer, seemed to be attempting to dupe them.⁶⁹ To the separatists, fueled by Father Diamacone’s separatist rhetoric after the 1980 Chamber of Commerce speech, it was time to respond to Senegalese treachery in the stadium and other Casamançais spaces.

Thus, after meeting near Diabir – just south of Ziguinchor – on Christmas Night, 1982, the separatists marched into Ziguinchor the next morning, following a group of women pouring cool water on the ground to symbolize their “peaceful” intentions. They marched to the Governor’s Office, lowered the Senegalese flag flying in front of the building, and ran up a white flag. They repeated this act at other government buildings around town, including the *gendarme* headquarters. The *gendarmes* and police finally mustered a response, beating marchers with billy clubs and occasionally firing their weapons above the marchers’ heads. No separatists were killed that first violent day, but dozens were wounded, bruised, and bloodied. Mass arrests and torture followed.⁷⁰ When *gendarmes* in 1983 tried to break up a similar meeting in Diabir near the one-year anniversary of the separatist march, separatists attacked – killing three and

⁶⁷ Childhood friend of Bocandé, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 25 March 2014.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Serer and Jola consider themselves “cousin” ethnic groups, based on the common myth of a split between two sisters migrating from the precolonial Mande empire in modern Mali. For more on this *cousinage*, see Ferdinand de Jong, “A Joking Nation: Conflict Resolution in Senegal,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 39:2 (2005), 389-413; and Etienne Smith, “La nation ‘par le côté’: Le récit des cousinages au Sénégal,” *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines* 184 (2006), 907-65.

⁷⁰ Amnesty International, “Senegal: Climate of Terror in Casamance” (New York: Amnesty International, 1998).

wounding four of the *gendarmes* and then mutilating the corpses of the dead.⁷¹ A “major soccer match” in Ziguinchor between *Casa-Sports* and another Senegalese team was cancelled as a “precautionary measure,” though *Casa-Sports* later played a team from the Senegalese Armed Forces in Dakar “without incident.”⁷² Soccer could go on, but many of the separatists exited the stadium for the forest, where they took up arms and kicked off a conflict leading to more than 5,000 people dead, 60,000 displaced, 90,000 affected by land mines,⁷³ and 700,000 living in a state of insecurity.⁷⁴ What started several years before as only a discussion between “grown-ups on white plastic chairs” was suddenly manifest in bullets, billy clubs, and blood.

The Postcolonial Wrestling Stadium

As I argue throughout this dissertation, this violence did not come from nowhere. Rather, it emerged from particular social spaces where the nation had been “mapped” in particular ways. At stadiums like Robert Delmas, while soccer players played “games” (*les jeux*), wrestlers did “combat.” This distinction was perhaps fitting because, as with soccer, participants contested various forms of identity in the wrestling arena. But none of these identities had anything to do with nationalism until the MFDC began its cultural mapping in social spaces like The Stadium. As a national symbol, however, the identity of The Stadium was also up for contestation, especially after 1969, when President Leopold Senghor created the Ministry of Youth and Sports for the effective and just management of *laamb*, soccer, and other sports.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Jacques Lacotte, “‘Serious Violence’ Reported in Casamance,” *Agence France-Presse* (AFP), Paris, 19 December 1983.

⁷² Lacotte, “Serious Violence.”

⁷³ UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), “Senegal: Finding Incentives for Peace in Casamance,” 25 Jun 08, allAfrica.com, accessed 19 Jan 09, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806251043.html>

⁷⁴ De Jong and Gasser, “Contested Casamance,” 213.

⁷⁵ Diop, *La lutte sénégalaise*, 12.

In other words, Casamançais separatists coded aspects of *la lutte* as “Senegalese” and others as “Casamançais.” The fact that *mbapat* came from a common Wolof and Serer word⁷⁶ and that it grew into *laamb* with colonial collusion along with fame and fortune in the Wolof and Serer heartlands likely made it somewhat corrupt to the separatists.⁷⁷ Indeed, it seemed like one more cultural aspect of the “Islam-Wolofization” of Senegal for separatists to contest.⁷⁸ Not every Casamançais, however, and certainly not every Senegalese, agreed with these definitions of the national pastime.

For example, separatists tried to map a separatist identity on to the wrestling stadium. They argued that the Casamançais version of freestyle wrestling was more “pure” than the Senegalese *laamb*. Nothing demonstrated this assertion better than the *frappe*, or punch, that had become associated with Senegalese wrestling. Although allowing the punch had to be agreed upon before the match on a case-by-case basis by both wrestlers, separatists claimed that this punching represented Senegalese “cheating” and “trickery.”⁷⁹ They also suggested that the exorbitant sums of money circulating around Senegalese *laamb* matches made them “corrupt.” These claims added up to another contribution to the discourse of grievance against Senegal: Senegalese wrestlers punched because they were cheaters hungry for profit at the expense of “pure,” hard-working Casamançais.

⁷⁶ Faye, “Sport, Argent et Politique,” 312.

⁷⁷ For more detail on the origins and etymology of *mbapat* and *laamb*, see Faye, “Sport, Argent et Politique,” especially 312 and 318.

⁷⁸ For more on the “Islam-Wolofization” of the Senegalese nation, see Diouf, *Histoire du Sénégal*, and Etienne Smith, “Le cas de la wolofisation au Senegal.”

⁷⁹ Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, 4 April 2014, Ziguinchor; representatives from Bignona Chapter of MFDC, group interview, 24 April 2014, Bignona; senior MFDC official, personal interview, 25 April 2014, Ziguinchor. These separatists claimed that instead of referring to *laamb* as “*la lutte libre*,” it should be called “*la lutte truquée*,” literally translated as “tricked wrestling” but suggesting what one might call in English a “thrown” or “fixed” match. This term also used by Ngoumbane Khoulé, the “champion of Thiès,” protesting “Mafioso-like” practices (*les pratiques mafieuses*) of certain *laamb* wrestlers and their agents in 1958. See Koulé, *Paris-Dakar*, 6691, 20 janvier 1958: 2, as cited by Faye, “Argent, Sport et Politique,” 321-323.

But this assertion was another case of selective memory. After all, one of the greatest Senegalese *laamb* wrestlers of all time was a Casamançais named Mamadou Lamine Sakho, who went by the stage name of “Double Less” in the 1970s. It was during this decade – concurrent with structural adjustment, increasing desertification, economic crisis, and a budding separatist discourse – that more *laamb* challengers began to come from outside Dakar. In addition to Double Less, these challengers included Robert Diouf (from the *Petite Côte*), Ibou Senghor and Moussa Diamé (from the Peanut Basin, i.e. the vicinity of Touba and Diourbel), and Ousmane Ngom (from Waalo). The new challengers arrived in part because the prizes available from wrestling continued to climb. It was “with this generation of very gifted and charismatic wrestlers” that wrestlers’ fees reached and then exceeded the mark of one million *francs* CFA.⁸⁰ Thus, in addition to being a decade of want and crisis, the 1970s – for Senegalese wrestling – became known as “the Era of Fat Prizes.”⁸¹ And it was during this era that Double Less became known as the “*Seigneur des Arènes*” (Lord of the Arena). This Casamançais participation in the Senegalese wrestling stadium seemed to benefit at least a few Casamançais.

Consequently, as Vincent Foucher has argued in relation to other cultural aspects of the Casamance, the problem for the separatists was not that Senegal kept them at a distance. Rather, the separatists were so close to Senegal that they believed they had a viable claim to a postcolonial dispensation – especially in economic terms – that never materialized.⁸² But the success of Double Less in the *laamb* stadium demonstrated the possibilities of Casamançais

⁸⁰ CFA stands for *Communauté Financière d’Afrique* (Financial Community of Africa). Since the independence of most Francophone African countries, it has been tied to the French *franc*. Representatives at the Bretton Woods Conference created the CFA franc on 26 December 1945 “in order to cushion the colonies from a strong devaluation of the *franc*.” For more details, see “A Brief History of the CFA Franc,” *African Business Magazine* (February 19, 2012), accessed 2 January 2017 at <http://africanbusinessmagazine.com/uncategorised/a-brief-history-of-the-cfa-franc/>.

⁸¹ Diop, *La lutte sénégalaise*, 12.

⁸² Foucher, “Senegal: The Resilient Weakness of Casamançais Separatists,” 171–197.

performance and participation in the Senegalese nation. The success of Double Less suggested that Casamançais could “wrestle” with the Senegalese all they wanted. But in the end, they could not leave *The Senegalese Stadium*. This essentially became the position of the Senegalese government in negotiations with the MFDC throughout the Casamance conflict. As Ousseynou Faye explains, it was “by this *place* of conversion and distribution”⁸³ of “the discharge of physical violence” that Senegalese society “de-dramatized the violence and secured it within acceptable limits.”⁸⁴ Some Casamançais accepted this limitation and social regulation, preferring the violence of The Stadium to the violence of the battlefield. The separatists, however, rejected it.

Space and Place in the Stadium

This history demonstrates that the stadium was a political space. As such, spatial theory can help show how and why it became so political – even before separatists began setting up those white plastic chairs on the soccer pitch and Double Less became Lord of the Arena. The co-constitutive histories of *Casa-Sports*, Double Less, and Casamançais separatism seem to validate Henri Lefebvre’s observation that “there is a politics of space because space is political.”⁸⁵ As a space for performing social relations and imagining the nation, the Senegalese soccer stadium took on elements of space and place. I define “space” as a physical domain of three dimensions for human action. But Lefebvre warns against assigning neutrality and objectivity to space. He insists, “Space is not a *scientific object* removed from ideology or

⁸³ Author’s emphasis, i.e. not in the original.

⁸⁴ Faye, “Sport, Argent et Politique,” 315.

⁸⁵ Lefebvre, *State, Space, World*, 168. For more on spatial theory in African history, see Allen M. Howard and Richard M. Shain (eds.), *The Spatial Factor in African History: The Relationship of the Social, Material, and Perceptual* (Boston: Brill, 2005), especially Howard’s comprehensive chapter, “Nodes, Networks, Landscapes, and Regions: Reading the Social History of Tropical Africa 1700s-1920,” 21-141.

politics; it has always been political and strategic.”⁸⁶ Furthermore, it has always been “historical” because it has “already been occupied and planned, already the focus of past strategies, of which we cannot always find traces.”⁸⁷ Thus, Lefebvre argues, space is “a product literally populated with ideologies,” just as various Casamançais “populated” the stadium with “ideologies” of their own.⁸⁸ These ideologies occasionally matched those of the MFDC; at other times, they did not. Hence, one might add a fourth dimension to space: that of ideology, or of the imagination, to borrow Anderson’s language.

But whenever this fourth dimension was in play, the “space” of the stadium began to look and feel more like “place.” If we define “place” as “space to which meaning has been ascribed and endowed with value,” then space and place are co-constitutive and always in tension.⁸⁹ Nationalists depend on this tension to construct “the nation” against some kind of “other.” The MFDC attempted to construct the Casamance in the stadium against Senegal. Much to its chagrin, however, space is not always transformed into place in a linear, irreversible process over time. In fact, space and place can co-exist in different ways for different people.

Hence, I build on Doreen Massey’s conception of “envelopes of space-time” to propose diachronic *space-place*, acting as a dialectical, bi-directional continuum between space and place over time for the imagination and performance of the nation. I concur with Massey that space is inherently multiple – that space and “multiplicity” are “co-constitutive.” Massey asserts, “Without space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space.”⁹⁰ Because of this relationship, Massey contends that space is “...always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never

⁸⁶ Lefebvre, *State, Space, World*, 170. Emphasis in the original.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 171.

⁸⁹ Craib, *Cartographic Mexico*, 4.

⁹⁰ Massey, *For Space*, 9.

closed.”⁹¹ This open-endedness makes space political.⁹² It allows for a range of connections between “the imagination of the spatial” and “the imagination of the political.”⁹³ While Lefebvre finds that space is always historical, Massey finds it is always futuristic. Clearly, it is both. But it is too easy to think of space as one thing and place as another along this continuum, especially if we focus, as historians do, on change over time.

Thus, though it may seem unnatural for a historian, I hyphenate “space-place” to suggest the possibility of the *simultaneous* operation of identity on this continuum. Negotiators in the Casamance peace process depended on this simultaneous multiplicity – whether they knew it or not – to make their case that several cultural identities could co-exist in Senegal.⁹⁴ While the MFDC insisted on a particular definition of certain spaces like The Stadium as “places” representative of the nation, various Casamançais imagined the nation in those spaces on their own terms. Multiple imaginings of the stadium in Senegal ensured that the MFDC never successfully reduced this space to a monolithic Casamançais place – The Stadium. What at first seemed like an “odd case” drew my attention to this diversity. But I eventually discovered that it was not so “odd” after all.

The Odd Case and the Stadium: A Space-Place of Diverse Imaginings

Because of the links between The Stadium and Casamançais nationalism, I expand Susann Baller’s window of analysis for the performance of social relations through soccer from the neighborhood to the nation. Baller argues that Senegalese neighborhood *navétanes* (youth

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., and Lefebvre, *State, Space, World*, 170.

⁹³ Massey, *For Space*, 9-10.

⁹⁴ Since the Casamance conflict intensified in 1990, the Senegalese government and the MFDC have signed numerous ceasefires but no definitive peace accord. In addition to these two parties to the conflict, Senegalese civil society and international state and non-state actors have tried to broker peace, with no permanent success.

soccer) teams played on soccer pitches around Dakar that became spaces for performing local identities, as urban youth felt increasingly estranged from the state. She claims their *navétanes* league play constituted “performative acts” serving “the formation of and identification with the neighbourhood as a social space.”⁹⁵ In the Casamance, many of these youth also felt increasingly estranged from the nation, as state weaknesses became symbolic of the cracks in the cultural identity of what Senghor referred to as “*Sénégalité*” – a Senegalese cultural identity religiously Muslim and ethnically Wolof. Baller claims that the *navétanes*, in a context of “rapid urbanization” and “(often forced) removals,” granted marginalized urban youth “an opportunity to have an impact on urban space and imbue it with meaning.”⁹⁶ A similar process played out in a different fashion in the Casamance, where urban youth tied the activities of their soccer club to the natural surroundings in the lush, green countryside of *la verte Casamance*.⁹⁷ While most Casamançais tied the green jerseys of *Casa-Sports* to the green countryside of the Casamance, a few did not. These few performed the nation in other ways, in other spaces, with other symbols – effectively contesting or ignoring MFDC nationalist discourse. An odd case drew my attention to this diversity in the stadium.

This odd case – an oral history from a man in a village near Ziguinchor – was intriguing because it was so different from the others in terms of the politics of The Stadium. During three years of work and research in Senegal, most informants told me that there had been strong links between *Casa-Sports* supporters and the separatists of the early 1980s. But this informant refuted this claim and denied there was any connection between soccer and politics. He was an official with *Casa-Sports*’ Dakar organizing committee when the controversial Senegalese Cup

⁹⁵ Baller, “Urban Football Performances,” 18.

⁹⁶ Baller, “Urban Football Performances,” 22. For the reference to “rapid urbanization” and “often forced” removals,” see Baller, 23.

⁹⁷ “The Green Casamance.”

final was played in 1980. He was also Jola, born and raised in the Lower Casamance. Of the infamous 1980 final match, he recalled, “The foul clearly took place outside of the penalty box, but the referee is a human being, just like the rest of us. He made a mistake; that’s all. He was not trying to incite violence. I wish the match had not ended that way, but it’s just a game, and there has to be a winner and a loser.”⁹⁸ The informant’s assertion that there was no link between soccer and separatism seemed to falter because he also claimed that Senegalese intelligence services targeted *Casa-Sports* meetings in Dakar for intelligence collection. How could one say there was no link between politics and soccer if the Senegalese intelligence services were targeting *Casa-Sports* meetings? Does that targeting not show that one (soccer, i.e. *Casa-Sports*) was influenced by the other (politics, i.e. the Senegalese *gendarmerie*)?

Nevertheless, as I posed these questions to other informants, I began to hear similar assertions for the first time. Suddenly, the consensus I thought I saw on the links between soccer and separatism were not so clear. For one reason or another, some Casamançais were not as devoted or as interested in *Casa-Sports*. Or, if they were *Casa-Sports* fans, they had no interest in separatism; they had no interest in seeing themselves with a national identity other than Senegalese. My “odd case” showed that where some saw a connection between sports and politics, others saw only sports in the stadium and politics outside it. Another informant believed that soccer was an Anglophone sport for which Francophone Casamançais cared very little. This informant suggested that soccer’s foreign, colonial origins made it suspect. A real Casamançais, on the other hand, loved wrestling.⁹⁹ Indeed, numerous informants confirmed the idea that wrestling was more “Casamançais” than soccer. Others tied the entire matter of separatism to

⁹⁸ Former *Casa-Sports* official in Dakar, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 20 March 2014.

⁹⁹ Anonymous informant, personal interview, Diembereng, 5 April 2014.

the region of Kassa, the area west of Ziguinchor centered on the town of Oussouye.¹⁰⁰ While they supported *Casa-Sports* because they were Casamançais, they did not feel that this support made them separatists. They claimed to have been “Senegalese from the region of the Casamance.” To them, their support for *Casa-Sports* said nothing about their national affiliation. As evidence, they suggested looking at their Senegalese national identification cards.¹⁰¹ Separatists could try to essentialize The Stadium into a monolithic national icon all they wanted, but Casamançais had their own minds on the matter.

Consequently, the “odd case” on diverse national imaginations in the stadium began to appear not so “odd” after all. None less than Father Diamacoune, the Secretary-General of the MFDC for much of its existence, shared the view that supporting separatism did not equate to supporting *Casa-Sports*. Diamacoune’s refusal to make this link was especially noteworthy because he readily claimed difference with Senegal at every other opportunity. It also showed the simultaneous multiplicity of identities that could transform the space-place of *The Stadium* into a *stadium* like any other. Diamacoune claimed to support – ironically – *Jeanne d’Arc*, *Casa-Sports*’ opponent in the controversial 1980 Senegalese Cup. He told his biographer in 2005, “I wrestled in the village when I was younger, and I played soccer until the 1970s... my favorite Senegalese soccer team is not *Casa-Sports* of Ziguinchor, though I support them very well, but rather *Jeanne d’Arc* of Dakar, because they bear the name of my personal role model.”¹⁰² At first glance, it may seem that Diamacoune’s identity as a priest overrode his identity as a nationalist. But the story of Joan of Arc’s resistance to the English invasion of France in the fifteenth century also served as a strong role model for MFDC resistance against

¹⁰⁰ Villagers in Fogy blamed Salif Sadio for bringing the conflict to them in 2006.

¹⁰¹ Sindian Notables, group interview, Sindian, 6 April 2014.

¹⁰² Diamacoune to Bassène, 13 May 2005, Ziguinchor, in Bassène, *L’abbé*, 72.

Senegalese rule in the Casamance. Knowing this history, however, would likely require formal education – something the nationalist elite like Diamacoune received but many Casamançais, especially those in rural areas, did not.¹⁰³

Ambiguous Hero of an Ambiguous Nation

As much as Diamacoune, Jules-François Bocandé, the “emblem of the Casamance,” exemplified the often ambiguous relationship between soccer and separatism.¹⁰⁴ This ambiguity was apparent at Bocandé’s “state funeral” in 2012.¹⁰⁵ Bocandé died at the age of fifty-four on 7 May 2012, in Metz, France, from complications following surgery for a stroke. Eight days later, with Macky Sall, the President of Senegal, in attendance along with Bocandé’s family and former and current players, coaches, and fans, Laye Diaw, with his famous baritone voice, attempted to explain the various identities competing for Bocandé’s loyalty throughout his life. For years, Diaw had brought play-by-play coverage of Senegalese sports to listeners on *Radiotélévision Sénégal* (RTS). He spoke from the podium in Demba Diop in a black suit, his eyes covered by dark sunglasses. He recited the chronology of Bocandé’s contributions to the Senegalese national team during the 1980s and 1990s. Diaw’s voice boomed near the end of a crescendo concluding the lineup of the Senegalese side for the 1985 Africa Cup of Nations (CAF) tournament. After listing the names of players from northern Senegal like Cheikh Seck, Pape Fall, Amadou Diop, and Cheikh Tidiane Fall, Diaw shouted, “. . .and at middle striker, JULES FRAN-ÇOIS BER-TRAND BO-CAN-DÉ!”¹⁰⁶ Diaw drew out the syllables of

¹⁰³ Father Diamacoune attended seminary at Ngasobil, on the *Petite Côte* of Senegal (between Rufisque and the Saloum River), established by the Holy Ghost Fathers. President Senghor had attended the same seminary. Each man also studied in Europe – Senghor in France and Diamacoune in Belgium. See “Pays du Refus,” 22, 25, and 27.

¹⁰⁴ On Bocandé as “the emblem of the Casamance,” see Diop, *Bocandé*, 25, 31.

¹⁰⁵ Laye Diaw referred to Bocandé as *un homme d’état*, “a man of the state.” Laye Diaw, personal interview, Dakar, 1 May 2014.

¹⁰⁶ The state funeral for Jules-François Bocandé in Demba Diop Stadium, 15 May 2012.

Bocandé's name. The crowd roared. Former players and coaches – as well as politicians eager to associate themselves with the Bocandé legacy – followed Diaw onto the podium.¹⁰⁷ All hailed Bocandé as a hero of the Senegalese nation while noting his Casamançais roots.



Figure 5-2: Jules-François Bertrand Bocandé playing for FC Nice in France in the mid-1980s. [Source: “Un lion est mort,” *Senemag*, 8 May 2012, accessed 26 February 2015 at <http://senemag.free.fr/spip.php?article1013>]

Bocandé reflected the hybrid nature of identity formation in Senegal and particularly in the Casamance.¹⁰⁸ Bocandé's cultural identity – and therefore the cultural legacy defined in part by his achievements – was complicated. Bocandé began his career as an icon of the Casamançais nation after kicking the referee at the end of the controversial 1980 match. He finished as an icon of the Senegalese nation, with a Senegalese flag draped over his coffin.

¹⁰⁷ On politicians currying favor with soccer players, coaches, fans, and officials, see Baller, “Urban Football Performances,” 32.

¹⁰⁸ Bocandé personified a mixed, ambiguous cultural identity in many ways. He came from mixed parentage, incorporating ethnicities from Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Senegal, including Jola. His paternal grandfather came from the region of Nantes in France, where Bocandé is a common surname, which may have expedited his acquisition of a visa to play in Europe following the FSF sanction in 1980. See Diop, *Bocandé*, 15. Emmanuel Bertrand-Bocandé, France's colonial administrator in the Casamance in the mid-nineteenth century, has been credited with spreading French influence in the Casamance over that of the Portuguese. See Mark, *The Basse Casamance since 1500*, as well as Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade*.

Along the way, he scored goals – lots of them – winning games and championships not just for *Casa-Sports* but, after his FSF suspension, for FC Seraing (Belgium), FC Metz, Paris Saint-Germain, Nice, and Lens (all in France). After scoring twenty-five goals for Metz during the 1985-1986 campaign, he was named the French Premier League’s “Striker of the Year.”¹⁰⁹ The FSF rescinded the lifetime ban that year so that Bocandé could captain the Senegalese national team during its CAF appearances in the second half of the decade.

Though many pointed to the conclusion of the 1980 soccer match as the catalyst that transformed the *ras-le-bol* sentiment of many Casamançais into separatist violence, Bocandé spent the rest of his life trying to escape the legacy of that controversial match. Bocandé was a proud man. He was proudly Senegalese, Casamançais, and Jola – all at the same time. It is tempting to say he found a new Senegalese identity when he came back to captain the 1985 Senegalese CAF squad. But in fact, Bocandé never stopped being Senegalese. When the FSF rescinded the ban and asked Bocandé to captain the national team, Bocandé, while playing for Metz, purposely and grievously fouled an opposing player for a red card so that he would be available to his national team during the CAF tournament.¹¹⁰ Bocandé was known for being equally comfortable sipping palm wine with rebels in the forest or marching for peace in the streets of Ziguinchor.¹¹¹ He was well-respected by the rebels. They considered him one of their own. But so did the Senegalese soccer community. Bocandé returned to the Senegalese national

¹⁰⁹ Bocandé’s biographer, Abou Latif Diop, and various news sources put the number at 23 goals for Bocandé’s award-winning season in the French *Ligue 1*. But FC Metz’s website profile puts the number at 25. See Diop, *Bocandé*, 14, as well as the FC Metz Club website at <http://www.fcmetz.com/joueur/fiche/jules-bocande.html>, accessed 11 November 2014.

¹¹⁰ Diop, *Bocandé*, 59; Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 28 March 2014; Bignona MFDC, group interview, 24 April 2014.

¹¹¹ “Le 22, Bocandé jouera sa partition,” *Le Soleil*, 21 December 1995 ; Jacques Moundour Diouf, “Méga Concert pour la Paix à Ziguinchor : Les Cœurs seront en fête ce soir,” *Le Soleil*, 28 December 1995. Bocandé organized this “concert for peace” in *Casa-Sports*’ home stadium of Aline Sitoé Diatta, demonstrating the multiple identities possibly imagined in the stadium.

team for the 2002 World Cup, when Senegal famously beat the former colonial power and reigning World Cup champion, France. World Cup players like El-Hadj Diouf credited Bocandé with mentoring them and guiding them to Senegal’s best World Cup performance ever, advancing to the quarter finals of the knockout stage. After his state funeral in Dakar, Bocandé was fittingly laid to rest in the middle of a mixed Muslim-Christian cemetery in his hometown of Ziguinchor. The man who dug his grave, Mamadou Camara, claimed to have once played for *Foyer-Casamance*, an ancestor of *Casa-Sports*. Because vandals had stolen a golden-plated soccer cleat from the top of Bocandé’s tomb, Camara stood guard next to the tomb to secure the legacy of this “emblem of the Casamance” who was also a Senegalese soccer hero.¹¹² The Casamançais soccer rebel of 1980 ended his journey on earth as not only an “emblem of the Casamance” but as an “emblem of Senegal,” too.



Figure 5-3: The entrance to Néma Stadium, where the separatists used to meet in the 1970s, renamed “Jules-François Bertrand Bocandé Stadium” after Bocandé’s death in 2012.

¹¹² Kéba Coma and Modou Camara, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 24 March 2014. Camara and Coma were guarding Bocandé’s grave throughout my research visit in Spring 2014.

Struggling for the Nation: Social Performance in the Wrestling Stadium

Today, a single Senegalese *laamb* match generates hundreds of thousands of dollars for wrestlers, promoters, advertisers, shamans, clerics, musicians, and of course, politicians. In 2012, the “king of the arena” was Omar Sakho, known as “Balla Gaye 2.” He is the son of Mamadou Sakho, i.e. Double Less. The Senegalese media have often referred to his Casamançais origins to demonstrate his participation, like his father’s, in the Senegalese national pastime. This participation has been a source of pride not only for Balla Gaye 2 but for many Casamançais eager to put the violence of the Casamance conflict behind them and to move ahead into a more peaceful future. From his marquee “combat” on April 22, 2012 against Yahya Diop, whose stage name was “Yékini,” Gaye, like Yékini, expected to take home around \$300,000, in addition to the \$100,000 prize expected from top-tier matches.¹¹³ Wrestling prize money had come a long way since Mbehr Ndiaye, the champion of Rufisque in 1937, won the relatively large sum of 200 *francs*.¹¹⁴ With half the Senegalese population living below the poverty line, it was understandable why many young Senegalese men dreamt of becoming wrestling stars. Other recent Senegalese wrestling champions have gone by names like “Mohamed Aly,” “Tyson,” and “Bombardier.”¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Loomis, “Pro Wrestling, Senegal Style.”

¹¹⁴ Faye, “Sport, Argent et Politique,” 320.

¹¹⁵ Tyson was known to enter the arena in a robe made of material from an American flag while his supporters around the stadium waved American flags and held up posters of his spiritual guide, Baye Niass, of the majority Tijaniyya (a Sufi Muslim order). See Diop, *La lutte sénégalaise*, 20-21, 26.



Figure 5-4: Balla Gaye 2 before his championship match against Yékini, April 22, 2012. [Photo by Joe Penny for *The New York Times*.]

Senegalese believed that Gaye’s strength came from his mystical power as much as his physical prowess. For hours before the wrestlers actually matched up toe-to-toe in the arena, they armed themselves with mystical power from songs, dances, *gris-gris* pouches (containing shredded verses from the Koran provided by their *marabouts*) tied around their limbs, and various liquids poured out over their bodies for protection from evil spirits and around the sandy wrestling ring as libations to the spirits. “The *gris-gris* and baths are just for protection against negative tongues and eyes,” said Mbaye Gueye Dieng, one of the Sufi *marabouts* attending the match.¹¹⁶ Senegalese wrestlers believed that mystic powers from *marabouts* in the Casamance, The Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau had proven to be the most powerful in the ring. Thus, as a Casamançais, Balla Gaye 2, it was believed, enjoyed exceptional access to these powers.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Loomis, “Pro Wrestling, Senegal Style.”

¹¹⁷ Faye, “Sport, Argent et Politique,” 331. Confirmed by numerous oral informants in the Casamance and in other parts of Senegal, including Bertrand Diamacoune, personal interview, 28 March 2014, Ziguinchor; The Notables of Sindian, group interview, 6 April 2014, Sindian; senior MFDC official, personal interview, 25 April 2014, Ziguinchor.



Figure 5-5: On April 22, 2012, this championship match *avec frappe* between Balla Gaye 2 and Yekini lasted 2 minutes, 6 seconds. Photo by Joe Penny for *The New York Times*.

As with soccer, the wrestling stadium became an important space for the performance of social relations in the Casamance, as in the rest of Senegal. Different actors inhabited the wrestling stadium for different purposes. The wrestlers – mostly young men – entered the stadium to prove their manhood, seeking fame and fortune. The older men entered the stadium to organize the matches – professional promoters in the case of *laamb* matches in Dakar but young-to middle-aged men in the case of a large neighborhood tournament or of a meeting within a village or between two or more villages. Women entered the stadium to sing and cheer for their wrestlers, lauding their strong, lithe bodies and championship prowess. Though young girls have wrestled in the Casamance, few have continued into adulthood, as the demands of life as wives and mothers began to limit their opportunities for practice and competition. But during village

matches, if not wrestling themselves, the women’s singing and dancing make them the most prominent spectators in the crowd.¹¹⁸



Figure 5-6: A village wrestling match between two young boys organized by older men in the village of Diembering, April 2014, for the “Festival of the Rice Field.” Spectators from all over the Lower Casamance lined the field of “combat.” Photo by author.



Figure 5-7: Girls also wrestled at the Festival of the Rice Field in Diembering, April 2014.

Thus, gender and age have comprised the most conspicuous categories of social performance in the wrestling stadium. At the village level in the Casamance, every younger man

¹¹⁸ These observations based on field work during the *Festival des Rizières* (Festival of the Rice Fields) in Kabrousse, March 2014. Asked whether young boys could opt out of wrestling during the festival, numerous informants replied, “That is unimaginable.”

was expected to participate in the wrestling. He would bring dishonor to his family and village if he chose not to wrestle. His manhood would also be questioned.¹¹⁹ The older men asserted their social power and control while organizing the matches and regulating the amount of acceptable violence. If tempers flared in the heat of competition, the older men quickly stepped in to limit or redirect the anger. The women cheered and sang, urging on their sons, brothers, and other favorite wrestlers to victory while literally singing their praises.¹²⁰

Though these contemporary social performances can be traced far back into the distant past, as demonstrated by Robert Baum, they also changed with colonialism and urbanization.¹²¹ After 1945, political and economic entrepreneurs invested in Senegalese wrestling. Their investment benefited the state but also the nation. The combination of political, religious, ethnic, and gender identity performances in the wrestling stadium made it a particularly dynamic *space-place* for the performance of the nation.¹²² Indeed, Faye credits *laamb* with an important contribution to the construction of the Senegalese nation-state:

Erected as a ‘place of memory’ for the nation-state under construction, this space sheltered its operation of seduction of consumers and of ‘citizens’ that animates the different spectators of *laamb*. The circulation of money, of the discourses and practices between these elites and the wrestlers, emerged on the construction of a familiar society in which people know one another. The evidence of its utility was solely based on its defining satisfaction of the need to broaden the social reach of the dominant order.¹²³

In other words, as the political economy of wrestling in Senegal helped make the state, it also helped make the nation, as it gave many different Senegalese from many different walks of life a

¹¹⁹ Dodou Diop, personal interview, 12 April 2014, Ziguinchor; two mid-level MFDC officials, personal interview, 1 April 2014, Ziguinchor; young Jola man, personal interview, 23 April 2014, Mlomp.

¹²⁰ From the author’s observations as a spectator at wrestling matches in Kabrousse during the Festival of the Rice Field, 11 April 2014.

¹²¹ On the links between the present and the distant past, see Baum, “Shrines, Medicines, and the Strength of the Head.”

¹²² For more on what I mean by the term “space-place,” see the introduction to this dissertation.

¹²³ Faye, “Sport, Argent et Politique,” 337.

reason to show up to the stadium to enjoy the spectacle of *la lutte* – which can also mean “struggle” – together. In a way, as the wrestlers and the spectators struggled together, they made the nation.



Figure 5-8: Champion wrestler, followed by his supporters, at the 2014 Festival of the Rice Field in Kabrousse, challenging wrestlers from eight other villages to wrestle him. Few wrestlers from other villages took up the champion’s challenge. The few who did came to regret it.

Conclusion: Performing the Nation in the Stadium of the Present

This ambiguous national identity can still be seen at Senegalese international soccer matches. Senegalese spectators at home matches in Léopold Sédar Senghor National Stadium outside of Dakar wear various assortments of the national team’s colors: red, green, and yellow. But since the 1970s, there has been a large section of solid green at each game, indicating the presence of the fans of *Casa-Sports*.¹²⁴ These fans demonstrate more than allegiance to their

¹²⁴ Former *Casa-Sports* official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 20 March 2014; André Badji, e-mail dated 27 October 2014.

club by wearing their green *Casa-Sports* jerseys to a Senegalese international soccer match; they express their allegiance to their “other” national identity: “*la Verte Casamance*.” Yet by their overt presence in the national stadium of Senegal, they also demonstrate their allegiance to Senegal. They participate in and perform the Senegalese nation at the same time that they proclaim their pride in their Casamançais identity, effectively contesting or ignoring MFDC assertions that Casamançais cultural identity has always been so different from Senegalese identity that the Casamance could not possibly remain politically with Senegal. Like Bocandé, *Casa-Sports* seems to have undergone a transformation, at least in terms of its public image, but also in terms of its image with the Senegalese government. It went from being targeted by Senegalese intelligence and security services for harboring rebel activity in the early 1980s to taking its place in the national stadium of Senegal in the present.¹²⁵ The simultaneous panoply of identities in the space-place of the stadium demonstrates that Casamançais have imagined the nation in their own ways, often refusing to perform the nation in the same way as the separatists.

The twin histories of soccer and separatism in the Casamance confirms Lefebvre’s claim that space and place are historically produced because the stadium was “occupied and planned, already the focus of past strategies,” whether we can find their “traces” or not.¹²⁶ At the same time, in spite of colonial and postcolonial intentions to control bodies and minds in The Stadium, contemporary Casamançais have refused to be shackled to a particular interpretation of the nation in the stadium. In fact, while some Casamançais corroborated separatist interpretations of this history, others contested or ignored it, leaving open the possibility of multiple imaginings in the stadium.

¹²⁵ Former *Casa-Sports* official, personal interview, Ziguinchor, 20 March 2014.

¹²⁶ Lefebvre, *State, Space, World*, 170.

If the sports stadium in the Casamance was, in fact, a space-place for multiple, simultaneous national imaginings, then that means the stadium also produced multiple trajectories of change over time because at the end of the game, people went home. They lived their lives. And regardless of what the MFDC or the Senegalese state told them to think about “the nation,” they had to figure out how to live with their neighbors and raise their families. Some found that the separatist movement helped them live together with dignity. Others found the opposite. As much as the Senegalese sports stadium became a space of division in the past, it has shown the potential to be a place of unity in the present and in the future.



Figure 5-9: The two sports heroes of the Casamance: Portrait of Jules-François Bocané, with his dreadlocks, surrounded by posters of Balla Gaye 2 in a boutique near the Senegal-Gambia border at Digante, April 2014.

CONCLUSION

On May 1, 2014, Salif Sadio declared a unilateral ceasefire on the part of his faction of the MFDC. Thus ended months of secret peace negotiations between Sadio and Senegalese President Macky Sall. The negotiations took place under the auspices of the Italian Saint Egidio community of the Catholic Church in Rome. In spite of the broken ceasefire agreements in 1991, 1992, 1993, 1999, and 2004, the people of Senegal – including many Casamançais – dared to hope that this time would be different. Their hope was not unfounded.

It was not unfounded primarily for two reasons. First, ordinary Casamançais, those who would comprise a separate Casamançais nation, have grown weary of the conflict. On several occasions during my research in the Casamance, I heard the statement from Casamançais: “*On est fatigué.*”¹ For many of these Casamançais, even though they were also tired of perceived slights and denigration from “Senegalese,” i.e. people from northern Senegal, they were more tired of the problems created by the war: poverty, land mines, conflict-related banditry, government surveillance, and lost economic opportunities. They no longer cared, if they ever did, whether their ID cards said they were Senegalese or Casamançais. They just wanted to be left alone. And most of the people with whom I spoke said they were content to think of themselves – and to be considered by others – as Senegalese citizens from the Casamance. They were content to be Casamançais and Senegalese at the same time.

Second, these accommodations to being Senegalese have appeared increasingly prevalent as the older generation of separatists die. Some of these leaders became the victims of fratricidal MFDC violence, such as Léopold Sagna, leader of *Atika*'s Southern Front, who was captured and

¹ “We are tired of this.” Also in Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 347-348.

executed by Sadio in 2001. Sidy Badji, founder of *Atika* and Commander of the Northern Front after Sagna split from his forces, died in 2003. Father Diamacoune died in 2007. His younger brother Bertrand died in 2014. Of the first generation of separatists, Mamadou Sané and Sadio have worked to keep the separatist movement alive, occasionally competing to take up the mantle of Father Diamacoune as the MFDC's spokesman. But even Sadio, portrayed in the mid 2000s after killing Sagna as the hardest of the hardliners, has recently appeared ready for peace.² In any case, those working for peace in the Casamance knew that waiting for the leaders of the MFDC to die off – while perhaps not the most effective short-term strategy – was becoming increasingly realistic in the long term.

Thus, one hopes that Senegalese will increasingly think of the social spaces and places analyzed in this project as spaces and places of peace, not as those of division, as they have appeared in the past. One hopes that more ordinary Casamançais will continue to counter-map the Casamance against all forms of mapping that instigate violence. One hopes that the seemingly interminable situation of “no peace, no war” will be transformed into a situation where Casamançais children have no experience of war...ever.

Space, Place Nationalism, and History

This dissertation has demonstrated that spaces, places, and nationalisms are diverse and that they change over time. Long before the arrival of formal colonialism in the late nineteenth century, long distance traders, slave raiders, missionaries, and warriors fashioned the Casamance into a dynamic environment for the trans-Atlantic exchange of persons, commodities, and cultures. But as Europeans began to map rivers like the Casamance, the Gambia, and the Cacheu,

² Sadio's forces arrested and then executed Sagna in 2001. For more details on Sagna's biography, see Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 397.

they attempted to fix bodies and resources in space for colonial extraction. Colonial interests fashioned the borders of the Casamance; indeed, they brought “the Casamance” into being. But the people like Foday Syllah and Aline Sitoé Diatta who found themselves living in this new polity did not easily acquiesce to colonial mapping. Rather, they counter-mapped their own interests at the local level along The River and in The Rice Field, The School, The Forest, and The Stadium. When separatists tried to tell these Casamançais they were no longer part of Senegal, some agreed. But some of them counter-mapped against the separatists as well, refusing to be corralled into a Casamançais nation as much as they refused to be corralled into Senegal.

This multi-direction array of identity vectors did not emerge from the primordial mists of some version of “Merrie Africa.” Rather, it emerged from the changes that took place over time in the Casamance. In spite of the Casamançais reputation for fierce resistance to outside domination, Casamançais resistance has ebbed and flowed over the centuries. It ebbed and flowed with the captives sent across the Atlantic throughout the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. It ebbed and flowed with varying degrees of success resisting the colonial conquest in the late nineteenth century. And it ebbed and flowed with the folding together and tearing apart of the postcolonial Senegalese social fabric. The contested changes that took place on the river, in the rice field, in the school, in the forest, and in the stadium gave birth to a separatist movement also riven apart by the contested meanings of identity in each of these space-places.

If the five social space-places analyzed in this project became spaces of contestation over the identity of the Casamance, what can we learn from them that might contribute to peace? In a broader sense, what can we learn from looking at the history of nationalism through a spatial lens? First, while every human conflict stems, in part, from competing versions of history (i.e. Who did what to whom? Why?), we learn that history appeared as a battlefield in a particular

fashion for Casamançais national identity. Father Diamacoune fashioned himself as a historian. He based his discourse of grievance against Senegal on a particular interpretation of Senegambian history. He labeled French and Senegalese histories of the region as “colonial” and insisted on alternative histories that benefitted his version of the “authentic Casamançais,” an iconic rice peasant. But Diamacoune and other separatist elites were not peasants. Far from it, they were the peasants’ self-appointed spokesmen. Thus, these urban elites did not have the cultural cachet to convince the rural peasants to let the elites represent them. The elites could write what histories they wanted in MFDC literature. The histories that mattered to the peasants were those told from their village elders’ memories around steaming pots of rice and fish.

Moreover, the Senegalese state did not cede the field of Casamançais history to the separatists. Rather, it wrote Casamançais history as Senegalese, as when it fashioned Casamançais anti-colonial heroes like Diatta as heroes of Senegal, not just the Casamance. Or when it built and named public infrastructure after Casamançais heroes, like the Dakar-Ziguinchor ferry named after Diatta. Or the stadium named after Jules-Francois Bocandé. Or the streets in Ziguinchor and Bignona named after Emile Badiane. The state demonstrated its power to influence not just bodies and resources in space but the collective memory of those bodies and resources as well – to transform space into place in new ways.

The second thing we learn about nationalism from looking through a spatial lens is that space itself can serve as a means of national imagination. As I discussed in the Introduction, space and place can work as some of the “cultural artefacts” that Anderson posits as requirements for imagining the nation:

My point of departure is that nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word’s multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their

meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy.³

In this dissertation, I have sought to demonstrate how the historical meanings of The River, The Rice Field, The School, The Forest, and The Stadium came into being for the MFDC, changed over time, and commanded “such profound emotional legitimacy.” I have tried to piece together this array of spatial symbols as a “discourse of grievance” against the Senegalese state, “discursively mapping” – or rather counter-mapping – the Casamance against Senegal. But I have tried to take this argument further.

Cultural geographers will not be surprised to find that social space held “profound emotional legitimacy” for particular types of identity. But they may be surprised that ordinary people took these identities in different directions, often counter-mapping against the forces of nationalism, religion, ethnicity, and elite influence. They may find it useful, as I have, to think of different levels and directions of counter-mapping, such as the counter-mapping of ordinary Casamançais... against the counter-mapping of the MFDC’s separatist elites... against the mapping of the Senegalese state. For those looking for avenues to explore for achieving peace, the diversity of mappings and counter-mappings between the various actors in the Casamance conflict may hold untapped potential. They may discover that diverse mappings related to diverse identities produced diverse possibilities for peace.

What still needs to be done?

Apart from the questions about war and peace, what still needs to be done? What are the limitations of this project or of its approach? Research possibilities are nearly endless, but I see a few potential trails of research worth mentioning. One trailhead may be found near other social

³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 4.

spaces where Casamançais nationalism formed. In other words, in addition to the five spaces analyzed in this project, what were the other sites of separatist imagining?

One potential site rests with the monuments and public spaces created and maintained around Senegal, particularly in the Casamance. How do history and memory operate in these public spaces? How do the approaches of state and non-state actors to commemoration of “the nation” in these spaces differ? Why? Carola Lentz and her team of researchers have established a solid foundation for investigation of these questions with their analysis of recent fifty-year Jubilee celebrations across Africa.⁴ Lentz argues that “tombs of the unknown soldier” or, in French, the “*monuments aux morts*,” have provided capacious and flexible symbolism for mapping diverse identities onto the nation. In the Casamance, therefore, what are the meanings and what are the debates surrounding Ziguinchor’s *Monument aux Morts*, constructed after the Second World War to commemorate Casamançais casualties and veterans of the colonial *Tirailleurs Sénégalais*?⁵ Father Diamacoune posited this monument as another site of contestation with the Senegalese state. Thus, monuments to the dead – whether dead colonial riflemen or the martyred heroine Aline Sitoué Diatta – became sites for contesting the meanings of history and the nation.

A second trailhead can be found around the means of imagining the nation. This trail fundamentally builds on Anderson’s assertion that nations have been constructed through “print-capitalism.” Like numerous other scholars of nationalism, I have argued that this aspect of

⁴ Lentz, “The 2010 Independence Jubilees.”

⁵ “*Tirailleurs Sénégalais*” means “Senegalese Riflemen,” and in spite of the name, French colonial authorities recruited them from all over French West Africa. For more on these colonial troops and their families, see Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts*; Jean-Yves Le Naour, *La honte noire: l’Allemagne et les troupes coloniales françaises, 1914-1945* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2003); Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); and Sarah Zimmerman, “Mesdames Tirailleurs and Indirect Clients: West African Women and the French Colonial Army, 1908-1918,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 44, no. 2 (2011): 299–322.

Anderson's argument ignores the histories of nations where non-print means – non-print “cultural artefacts” – became more important to national imagining. While Judith Byfield argues that Nigerians imagined the nation through particular styles of dress and Ziad Fahmy argues that Egyptians imagined the nation through various oral/aural media forms in colloquial Egyptian, I argue that Casamançais imagined the nation through space and place.⁶ But what other non-print means of imagining the nation affected the formation, execution, and results of nationalist movements in Africa? In the rest of the postcolonial world? Why were these non-print means of imagining the nation so powerful? Discovering these alternative means of imagining the nation has become exceedingly important because the power of nationalism does not seem to be diminishing with modernity. If anything, nationalism appears to be growing stronger as global inequality has increased along with increasing connectivity, thanks to neo-liberalism and the Information Revolution.

As more people divide themselves from others by “nation,” they must imagine the nation by these non-print means, especially in areas of the world with lower literacy rates. Given that the majority of human beings on the planet live more like West Africans than like Western Europeans (especially in terms of health, wealth, and access to formal education), finding these non-print means of imagining the nation will become increasingly important.

A new frame for “living together”

Discovering these other means of national imagination may provide new approaches to peace. The time is right to do so, to allow Casamançais to find new ways for *vivre ensemble*

⁶ Byfield, *The Bluest Hands*; Byfield, “‘Unwrapping’ Nationalism”; Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians*.

(living together).⁷ As Marut argues, “the MFDC has (without doubt) lost the war,”⁸ but up to the present, “the Senegalese state has not yet won the peace.”⁹ There can be little doubt the Senegalese state must have an important role, if not the principal role, in pursuing real and lasting peace. But other states – The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau especially – must also work to return refugees to the Casamance and to incorporate their respective Jola populations into the nation while also avoiding the temptation to meddle in the Casamance. But while state action is necessary, it is not sufficient.

The people of the Casamance must also want and pursue peace. The largest burdens of the conflict have fallen on their shoulders. They – especially women and children – have suffered the worst atrocities and the most stinging injustices. In spite of their occasional mockery for the notion of Senegalese *Téranga*, they have had to find a way to live with this conflict.¹⁰ They have provided space, place, and sustenance for the rebels and for Senegalese soldiers, depending on the context. As they have found ways to “live together” near The River, The Rice Field, The School, The Forest, and The Stadium, they have found ways of being that incorporate multiple identities. Perhaps the best way to achieve a true and lasting peace will be to harness their spatial power – their ideas, practices, and cultures – to map a Senegalese nation at peace with itself.

⁷ Marut, *Conflit de Casamance*, 30.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 347.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 351.

¹⁰ *Téranga* means “hospitality” in Wolof.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

1446	Portuguese explorer Alvaro Fernandez leads first European mission to the Casamance
1500s	Floup (Jola) migration to the Lower Casamance, displacing the Bainouk
1645	The Portuguese establish a trading post at Ziguinchor
29 March 1828	French Navy sends mission to survey the possibilities of commerce along the Casamance River
22 January 1836	Cession of the island of Carabane to the French for a trading post on the Casamance River
24 March 1837	Cession of trading post at Sédhiou to the French
December 1849	Emmanuel Bertrand-Bocandé establishes French colonial presence on the Casamance as first <i>Résident</i> at Carabane
1850	“Mandinkization” of Jola communities in Lower Casamance begins
1877-1893	Maraboutic Wars led by Fodé Kaba and Foday Syllah ravage northern Casamance
1884-1885	Imperial representatives meet from November to February at Berlin Conference and agree on colonial borders of Africa
12 May 1886	The French-Portuguese Convention delineates the southern border of the Casamance with Portuguese Guinea; the Portuguese cede Ziguinchor to the French
10 August 1889	The French-British Agreement delineates the northern border of the Casamance with The Gambia
1890	Joint Anglo-French Boundary Commission begins demarcating the northern border of the Casamance with The Gambia, occasionally harassed by Foday Syllah’s forces; the French establish a colonial administration for the territorial entity called “the Casamance”
17 May 1906	French forces kill Jola rebel, Djignabo Bassène, at Séléki
1914	Blaise Diagne begins recruiting Casamançais (and many other West Africans) for service in the <i>Tirailleurs Sénégalais</i> during First World War

- 1921 French missionaries establish soccer club, *Jeanne d'Arc*, in Dakar; Lamine Guèye graduates from University of Paris; French create colonial forestry management service
- 1935 Emile Badiane graduates as valedictorian of his class at *Ecole Normale William Ponty*
- 1942 Jola rebellion in Kabrousse led by priestess Aline Sitoé Diatta; Diatta arrested and eventually imprisoned in Timbuktu, where she dies
- 1942-1947 Augustin Diamacoune Senghor attends boarding school at Ngasobil
- 1944 Revolt of *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* at Camp Thiaroye
- 1946 Passage of “Lamine Guèye Law” granting French citizenship to people in most of France’s overseas colonies
- 1947 Meeting of 120 “literate notables” in Sédhiou to discuss the formation of new political party to represent the interests of the Casamance
- 1948 Leopold Senghor breaks from the SFIO to found his own party, the BDS
- 20 November 1948 Casamançais nationalist Victor Diatta found dead on beach in Dakar
- 14 April 1949 Emile Badiane and Ibou Diallo and other “literate notables” found the original MFDC to represent Casamançais interests
- 1954 Lamine Guèye elected Mayor of Dakar; Emile Badiane abandons the MFDC to join Senghor’s BDS, original MFDC dissolves
- 23 January 1955 Lamine Guèye visits supporters in the Casamance, where his convoy ambushed during campaign for Territorial Assembly; 4 dead, dozens injured
- 1956 Augustin Diamacoune Senghor ordained as a priest in the Catholic Church
- 1957 *Lycée Djignabo* founded in Ziguinchor
- 4 April 1960 Senegal and Mali obtain independence from France as Mali Federation
- 20 August 1960 Senegal and Mali separate into two nation-states; Mali Federation dissolved; Leopold Senghor becomes President of independent Senegal
- 1961 Soccer club *Casa-Sports* established from combination of colonial predecessors

- 1964 Mamadou Sané departs Senegal for Paris; Father Diamacoune departs for seminary in Belgium; Senegalese national domain law passes
- 1967 Diamacoune begins broadcasting children’s radio program as “Papa Kulimpi” on *Radiotélévision Sénégal* (RTS)
- 1968 Sané participates in demonstrations in streets of Paris
- 1969 President Senghor creates Ministry of Youth and Sports; *Casa-Sports* founded from combination of smaller soccer clubs in the Casamance
- 22 December 1972 Emile Badiane dies in Dakar under mysterious circumstances
- 1975 Structural Adjustment Programs begin at about the same time as decreasing rainfall amounts across the region
- August 1979 *Casa-Sports* wins the *Coupe du Sénégal* against *Jaraaf*
- December 1979 Student strike begins across Senegal
- January 1980 In Paris, Mamadou Sané publishes first issue of separatist magazine, *Kelumak*
- 11 January 1980 Student Idrissa Sagna shot by Senegalese security forces outside Lycée Djignabo
- 3 August 1980 *Casa-Sports* loses the controversial final match of the *Coupe du Sénégal* to *Jeanne d’Arc*; riots follow the match; Jules-Francois Bocandé banned from Senegalese soccer
- 23 August 1980 Father Diamacoune gives controversial speech at Dakar Chamber of Commerce, suggesting that the legacy of Aline Sitoé Diatta called for Casamançais “independence”
- 1 January 1981 Abdou Diouf becomes President of Senegal
- 8 April 1982 First meeting of Mamadou Sané and Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor at Kafountine; Diamacoune agrees to serve as spokesman for a contemporary version of the MFDC
- 23 December 1982 Arrest of Father Diamacoune
- 26 December 1982 MFDC supporters march on Ziguinchor, lower Senegalese flags from Senegalese government buildings, followed by mass arrests

- 1983 GoS investigation into the fate of Aline Sitoé Diatta determines that she died of scurvy in Timbuktu in 1944
- 6 December 1983 Three Senegalese *gendarmes* murdered near Diabir
- 1984 GoS administrative reforms remove the name “Casamance” from the official administrative map of Senegal and divide the region into two administrative regions, Ziguinchor and Kolda
- 1985 Christian Roche publishes *Histoire de la Casamance: Conquête et Résistance, 1850-1920*, based on his PhD Thesis completed in 1975; Bocandé returns from soccer ban to lead Senegalese team in Africa Cup of Nations tournament
- 2 January 1988 Father Diamacoune released from prison
- February 1990 Diamacoune declares the independence of the Casamance
- 14 June 1990 Diamacoune arrested again
- 31 May 1991 Ceasefire signed between Government of Senegal (GoS) and MFDC at Bissau (Guinea-Bissau); later that year, fighting resumes
- 17 April 1992 Ceasefire signed at Cacheu (Guinea-Bissau)
- 12 August 1992 Father Diamacoune released from prison
- 1 September 1992 Fighting resumes
- 8 July 1993 Ceasefire; ceasefire broken three days later; the MFDC and GoS agree to arbitration of historical and legal questions by Jacques Charpy surrounding the colonial origins of the Casamance
- 22 July 1994 Army lieutenant Yaya Jammeh seizes power in The Gambia
- 1995 Father Diamacoune publishes “Casamance: Pays du Refus” in response to Charpy’s findings
- 1997 The GoS publishes booklet entitled “The Truth about Casamance”; Senabou Male Cissé and other Casamançais women found women’s peace movement
- 1998 Senegalese Armed Forces intervene in Guinea-Bissau civil war to cut off links between the forces of rebel general Ansoumana Mané and the MFDC

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

- 1999 Ceasefire signed between GoS and MFDC in Banjul; fighting resumes
- 2002 Senegal defeats France, the reigning World Cup champions, in the first round of the World Cup soccer championship, with J-F Bocandé as assistant coach
- 30 December 2004 Ceasefire signed between GoS and MFDC in Ziguinchor
- March 2006 Ceasefire broken as SAF attacks MFDC positions in Guinea-Bissau
- 1 May 2014 Ceasefire signed between GoS and MFDC faction led by Salif Sadio

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