

*Conversion to Islam Reconsidered: Multigenerational Religious Drift in Rural French Sudan*

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Note: First, thank you in advance for taking the time to read this paper and for the opportunity to share my research findings with your community. This paper is a distillation of my recently published book, *Islamization from Below: The Making of Muslim Communities in Rural French Sudan, 1880-1960* (New Haven, 2011). I aim to publish the paper as an article. Given the limitations of space I cannot explore the various micro-histories, differences between localities, or particular family or village histories. Instead I have elected to take a more bird's eye view of long-run trends and multi-generational processes.

In this paper, I tell the story of how one important but neglected region in France's vast colonial empire became Muslim over an eighty-year period. As a story that was reproduced in many rural localities across the world, it was one of the grand narratives of the twentieth century, and part of larger transregional processes through which Islam emerged as the religion of the majority.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to the extant literature on Islam in West Africa, which focuses mainly on Muslim elites, precolonial states, trade, jihad movements, and the large Sufi brotherhoods, I examine the grassroots spread of Islam among rural peoples under French colonial rule. Thus, a central premise of this paper is that there are limitations to models that restrict the agency of religious change to elites and states.<sup>2</sup>

In the case of rural southern French Sudan (Mali), as I argue, the expansion of Islam owed its success to the many thousands of former slaves, migrant workers, former soldiers, and farmers who gradually and usually peacefully adopted the new religion. Rather than embracing class-based explanations, however, this paper assesses the various modes of entry of Muslim prayer into communities across the entire social field. I explore the dialectical manner in which processes of Islamization reflected shifting social bases of religious power and authority, and how in turn these transformations undergirded the efforts of chiefs and holy men to influence emergent forms of public religious expression and belonging. Broadly, I emphasize the ways in which the transformation of the

religious *habitus* occurred over several decades and across generations, as individuals and communities adopted new practices and slowly drifted in the direction of Islam.<sup>3</sup> And among formerly decentralized societies, with their fluid, heterodox, and polyvalent cultures of orality, even as Muslim ritual practices and techniques were adopted, “converts” did not necessarily internalize the core values, beliefs, cosmological orientations, and social rules commonly associated with Islam. Such processes were always characterized by a certain mutual assimilation: Islam was indigenized or vernacularized as much as rural communities were Islamized.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, explaining processes of Islamization as “conversion,” in the sense of individuals or whole communities moving unambiguously across clear religious boundaries after carefully weighing doctrinal differences, simplifies a rather multi-stranded, long-term cultural process. The word also reifies the notion that people rationally chose among belief systems without consideration of the social contexts in which these supposed choices were made. For these reasons, and given the paucity of contemporaneous sources on “inner states” of consciousness, I am adopting a more gradualist approach based on practice rather than cosmology.<sup>5</sup> Moving beyond strictly religious history, I am also analyzing religious change from a social historical perspective, situating processes of Islamization within different temporalities and social contexts, such as the aftermath of slavery, changing patterns of mobility, and transformations in rural life. With my primary focus on the colonial era, I examine the impact and unintended consequences of French rule in the rural district of Buguni, while exploring the ambiguous relationship between empire and religious difference.<sup>6</sup>

In its imperial forms and expressions of power, French colonialism did not represent a monolithic crusade against Islam. In West Africa and the Maghreb, the French empire-state fashioned itself as something of a “Muslim power,” cultivating useful alliances with Muslim leaders and building its structures and methods of governance on Muslim institutions.<sup>7</sup> However, in the district of Buguni, and other regions categorized as “fetishist,” the administration often fought hard to prevent, or at least slow,

the expansion of Islam. Although the colonial state pursued more or less pragmatic policies aimed at preventing rebellion and maintaining order, it routinely bolstered the authority and power of “fetishist” chiefs, monitored and arrested Muslim notables, and even demolished unauthorized mosques and Qur’anic schools.<sup>8</sup> In certain ways, such state actions reflected the radical secularism of the French Third Republic, particularly after the separation of church and state in 1905, which unleashed disputes even among colonial administrators and Christian missionaries.<sup>9</sup> However, the fight against the spread of Islam followed rather different political contours and fluctuating sets of imperial interests through phases of conquest, consolidation, retreat, restoration, and decolonization. It also reflected profound discursive continuities. As the French saw it, Pan-Islamism, with its links to reformist Islam and anti-colonial nationalism, represented an imminent threat to the very existence of the empire-state. At the same time, the colonial state initiated shifts in the political economy: ending slavery, imposing taxation and forced labor, conscripting soldiers, establishing the Pax Gallica and thereby facilitating freer circulation and accelerating commercial transactions, instituting forms of Western education, distributing plows, and so forth. These far-reaching changes in tandem with new forms of governance fundamentally reshaped social relations and inadvertently contributed to the spread of Islam.

### *Memory, Orality and Religious Change*

In certain ways, I am working against the grain of normative local understandings of the “coming of Islam” that I encountered during fieldwork in southern Mali. The fact that most informants were at least nominally Muslims meant that in exploring the relationship between old and new, testimonies could be rather value-laden and even teleological. For Muslim elders, Islamization was something to be celebrated. It represented Islam’s superiority and the triumph of God’s will as well as the movement of their community away from the era of *jabiliyya*, or ignorance. In early fieldwork, I identified strong

hagiographical dimensions to local oral traditions and a tendency to reduce Islamization processes to the proselytization efforts of particular rural Sufi saints and charismatic preachers. Furthermore, “the coming of Islam” was read retrospectively: informants referred to local turning points, when it was socially acceptable to pray publicly or when the first village mosque was built. And since most of the villages were not nominally Muslim until after the Second World War, the religious changes anterior to this time were often invisible. Eventually, however, and through repeated interviews, informants provided clues that there was something more to the village just-so stories. During conversations with former migrant workers, farmers, hunters, colonial veterans, the descendants of slaves, and religious specialists, I learned that people had started praying long before mosques were built and public Muslim rituals were performed. Thus, in this paper, I am more concerned with the inchoate social changes and cultural processes that led to these breakthroughs.

In exploring religious dynamics – including Islam and *bamanaya* (indigenous religious practices) within a single frame – I discovered that informants were often reluctant to admit engaging in non-Muslim practices, given the generalized silence and “shame” (*mâlôya*) attached to such subjects. Interestingly, however, running through certain testimonies, I did record rueful counter-discourses of discontent over the spread of Islam, which tumbled out rather obliquely during conversations on farming and drought conditions. Within these contexts, elders gave voice to concerns over the consequences of religious change. They stated that in embracing Islam and neglecting their “old ways” (*ko koru*), they had betrayed local spirits and lost their connection to the vital forces that enable fertility and rain. One elder said: “The abandonment of our ‘old ways’ led to the break up and fragmentation of this region. The people no longer feared. When Islam came, everyone abandoned the ‘old ways’ of our fathers and of our grandfathers. Now we know neither our front nor our back. We have become wanderers.”<sup>10</sup> Reflecting local understandings and perceptions of environmental change, they stated that

recent drought conditions had resulted from communities drifting toward Islam, away from their ancestors. One elderly Muslim woman said:

Before, there was no shortage of rain, not at all. When the drought raged, raged, raged in Tenemakana, the elders went to visit the patriarch ancestor (*cémo*). They decided to go perform a libation ceremony to the ancestor. They stirred his spirit, they stirred his spirit, and then the rains fell. So what has caused this shortage of rain? All of our ‘old ways’ have been abandoned... this shortage of water, it is not caused by the spirits, nor by our ancestors, it has been caused by our own negligence. It is a question of time. When a new reality points its head in that direction, the people follow that without first measuring the advantages and the disadvantages. It is this reality that we live in right now.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, as these divergent views of Islamization suggest, the oral accounts used in this paper do not represent an authentic and unified “African voice.” There are always intra-village, inter-communal, and lineage-based differences and conflicting accounts; oral histories are commonly shot through with competing visions of the past. Village elders debate history, retooling and contesting village foundation narratives. They seek to marshal oral historical evidence and genealogical data in establishing their status as “first comers” or the legitimate holders of particular titles or status. And as we have seen, they are constantly evaluating the merits of community decisions, such as embracing Islam.<sup>12</sup> With these brief methodological caveats in mind, I shift to precolonial history in order to contextualize this story of Islamization.

### *The Political and Religious Landscape in the Nineteenth Century*

In the precolonial era, the cultural gradient reflected particular configurations, as ideas, practices, and information traveled from “cores” to “peripheries” in correlation with state expansion and trade. Muslims in West Africa were concentrated along commercial arteries stretching from the Saharan fringe to the Atlantic coast or near the centers of Islamic states. Outside of Muslim state-spaces and networks most peasants remained adherent to “traditional” religions. Not until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did Islam make much progress in out-of-the-way rural areas, such

as southern Mali (also known as “Wasulu”). Although this region has been characterized as “decentralized,” most villages belonged to nebulous chieftaincies, inter-village confederations, or even so-called states (*kafo* or *jamana*). At one end of the spectrum, there were largely independent villages, which had been formed when lineages subdivided and branched out. In other settings, villages were vassals of powerful neighbors to whom they paid symbolic forms of tribute in exchange for being able to settle or as a result of being conquered. There were also small warlord states, which collected tribute and engaged in forms of predation.<sup>13</sup>

According to oral traditions and village foundation narratives, the region was something of a “zone of refugee,” which had absorbed waves of immigrants.<sup>14</sup> Fittingly, one colonial administrator-ethnographer explained that Buguni had been settled by “refugees fleeing hegemonies in the Sahel or along the Niger, searching in the forests for lands inaccessible to cavalry forces.”<sup>15</sup> French anthropologist Jean-Loup Amselle has similarly called southern Mali a “community of expelled groups,” and a “zone of low political pressure, where an entire series of groups came seeking refuge...[and taking] their place as dominators or dominated, either by creating chiefdoms or by becoming dependants of powerful lineages.”<sup>16</sup> Despite the successive waves of immigration, the region was rather isolated economically until the mid nineteenth century, when it became a leading source of slaves. Muslim traders tended to avoid the “forest of Wasulu” out of fear of purported brigands and infidels. Although there were small market towns, which served local demand for agricultural products, and farmers and weavers produced cotton cloth that was “highly valued” in the market towns of Guinea, the primary focus of the inhabitants was subsistence agriculture, based on shifting cultivation, inter-cropping, and collective labor.<sup>17</sup>

The religious habitus of these societies corresponded to a wide range of non-Muslim practices, which locals called *bamanaya* or the “old ways” (*ko koro*), and whose central concern was the reproduction of agrarian life. There were important hierarchies of ritual specialists in village life with

no clear separation between political and religious power. They included chiefs, blacksmiths, and various religious priests who mediated between visible and invisible domains of religious power, and whose practices were tied to particular power objects (*jò*) and power associations (*keòmò*).<sup>18</sup> Socially, *bamana* societies were typically divided into three main groups, sometimes called “castes”: nobles (*bòròn*), occupational caste groups (*nyamakala*), and slaves (*jòn* or *woloso*).<sup>19</sup>

Although certain Islamic cultural forms had seeped into *bamanaya* over the centuries through trade and immigration, there is little evidence to suggest that rural areas came anywhere near being Muslim, in the sense of people either identifying as Muslims or performing prayer. Furthermore, by the nineteenth century, religious identity was being mobilized as a justification of enslavement, or as a basis of resistance to slave-raiders.<sup>20</sup> For these reasons, rural people in southern Mali refrained from venturing out beyond the locality, out of fear of enslavement; they also typically eschewed Muslim practices. French explorer Rene Caillié reported in 1827: “Far from welcoming Muslims and their amulets with kindness, they reject them, in order to occupy themselves only with the religion of their country.... The inhabitants of Wasulu do little commerce and do not travel, because their idolatry would expose them to the worst slavery.”<sup>21</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, and with the expansion of the internal slave trade in the Western Sudan, incursions of neighboring states and internal wars slowly whittled away at the security and autonomy of these decentralized societies. In 1885, French military commander Joseph Gallieni reported on the plight of Wasulu, “...internal wars have already had the result of multiplying the pillaging of slaves, and one could say that Wasulu has become the principal purveyor of the slave markets in this region.”<sup>22</sup> Eventually, these internecine wars of enslavement culminated in direct occupation by a Muslim state-builder named Samori Touré.

The “wars of Samori,” as informants called them, were imperial in nature, characterized by the seizure of territorial control and widespread predation. As a major historical rupture, they also carved a destructive path across the social and religious landscape. But the most important consequence of the

wars was the enslavement of many thousands of people and the forced displacement of refugees, such that the region was left devastated and depopulated on the eve of colonial conquest.<sup>23</sup> Though far from a monolithic holy warrior, and much less committed to scholarly pursuits than other Muslim state-builders and reformers, Samori took a decisively religious turn. From 1884 to 1888, he implemented a policy of forced conversion to Islam, dispatching soldiers to destroy *bamana* religious sites and objects, enforcing shari'a law, and delegating Quranic teachers to establish schools. In these years, Islam came to represent a powerful basis of authority, as well as an ideology of enslavement.<sup>24</sup> As it happened, the embrace of theocracy coincided with the Samorian incursions into southern Mali. Thus, many of the worst acts of religious violence occurred in this region. The result, whatever Samori's motivations may have been, was that Islam became associated with violence and enslavement, making it a relatively unattractive faith in the early colonial era. But while Islamization "from above" won few lasting converts, many of the region's first Muslims were slaves captured during the Samorian wars.<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, as most trading communities in the West African Sahel and savanna zone were Muslim, many of slaves ended up in Muslim households or working in slave villages controlled by Muslim overlords. And depending on the size of slave-holdings, slaves could be integrated into the household culture. In such circumstances, particularly in cases where they were children, slaves often embraced Islam. Even when masters discouraged slaves from converting to Islam, in order to maintain boundaries of authority and to avoid manumission, slaves appropriated Muslim ideas and practices on their own.<sup>26</sup>

*Reconstructing a Fragmented World, 1893-1905*

In 1893, with French conquest, refugees began returning to their homelands, which had been left in ruins and depopulated. Many refugee families and communities had been in exile for nearly a decade, during which time nature was quick to fill the void left by human absence. Reclaiming once-settled but now inhospitable lands would take years. The rebuilding of communities also involved the reconstitution political authorities, no easy task. Each wave of refugees brought with it competing parties who sought to establish their legitimacy and claims to the refashioned colonial chieftaincy. The old order, already disintegrating on the eve of conquest, had fallen apart and was being reconstituted according to new colonial forms of political rationality.<sup>27</sup>

In the district of Buguni, many peasants initially embraced French rule during this post-conquest era. An informant in Céndugu explained: “It was the French that came and stopped Samori.... The work of Samori had been killing.... That is why we paid homage to the French and stayed behind the French.”<sup>28</sup> But, as the local term for colonialism, *jònyàjùru* (which literally means the “rope” or “debt” of slavery) suggests, people now became the “slaves of the French,” to whom they owed their lives for the defeat of Samori. This “debt of slavery” would be re-paid in taxes, or the appropriately named *nisòngò* (“soul price”). Another informant in Niené noted: “They imposed *nisòngò* on our people. They called it the price of one’s soul because when the French had come and saved us from the other invaders; we owed them our lives.” The debt would also be paid through military service, forced labor, rubber production, and compulsory cash crop production.<sup>29</sup>

After war and years of exile and social mixing, certain markers of identity had lost their meaning. Older distinctions, signified by language, patterns of scarification, and family clan names, were eroded away. But, despite the general social dislocation, returnees sought to revive *bamanaya*.<sup>30</sup> One informant in Fulala summed up as follows: “At the end of conquest, the people regrouped

themselves and as a result *bamanaya* was practiced freely among the populations according to each person's convictions. Those who had been forced by Samori to convert and abandon their power objects readopted them and venerated them as they had before."<sup>31</sup> And with the improved security under French rule, and greater freedom to travel without being exposed to danger, communities and families also invested in translocal religious relationships and sacred sites. One of the most important reconstituted religious institutions was the *kòmò* society, which was instrumental in reestablishing local political order in an unstable era. Aside from this recrudescence of *bamanaya*, Muslim holy men were also slowly expanding their influence; the Pax Gallica enabled Muslim merchants to widen their spheres of economic activity, drawing more villages into regional trade, and triggering greater mobility as displaced peoples tapped into the rubber trade. Itinerant Muslim holy men soon followed in their wake, cultivating new clients seeking healing services. During these years of resettlement, however, their influence would be confined to market towns and roadside villages along the major trade arteries.<sup>32</sup>

In regions such as Buguni, the potential political role of Islam would become a central focus of the colonial administration, even as there was nothing to suggest that an anti-colonial jihad was brewing or that Islam was spreading.<sup>33</sup> Still, the administration sought to buttress the power of "fetishist" chiefs in its political moves against Islam. To this end, village and canton chiefs were enlisted in the struggle to prevent the spread of Islam. In some cases, chiefs intervened directly, preventing *marabouts* (Muslim holy men) from settling in their villages by simply chasing them away. When attempts were made to build Qur'anic schools or mosques, the French *Commandant* would respond by dispatching soldiers to demolish religious edifices. Pursuing a policy of "containment," colonial interventions also included the surveillance of books and written materials in Arabic.<sup>34</sup>

However, even as the state sought to limit processes of Islamization, its own actions contributed to the weakening of indigenous religious authorities. It did so by intervening directly

against *bamana* religious institutions and translocal religious movements, which were viewed as a potential threat to colonial order. In the post-conquest years, reports of local rebellions and rumors kept officials on their toes, chasing chimeras and over-reacting to local religious movements. On occasion, however, regional millenarian and prophetic movements spread rather widely but then quickly disappeared, leaving few traces. For example, one movement began in the spring of 1903, when a prophetic figure “fell from the sky” and called on local religious authorities to make sacrifices at a powerful sacred site. The charismatic holy man, described as “an enigmatic personality who travels a lot,” also advised villagers to take care of the poor and sell their slaves, and promised good harvests, adequate rain, and no locusts. It is unclear whether he was Muslim or not. But, then, as Peel has noted, when such cults moved into new areas, they might take on “new attributes or lose old ones,” depending on the needs of the community. Nevertheless, upon hearing about this holy man’s peregrinations and preaching, the colonial state promptly put an end to the movement. In other cases, officials justified their repression of *kòmò* societies and local religious institutions as condemning the practices of “cannibalism and human sacrifice.” Officials went so far as publicly burning “fetish objects” and imprisoning and even executing the heads of *kòmò* societies.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, the French colonial state sought to domesticate and depoliticize indigenous non-Muslim religious institutions even as it simultaneously tried to preserve them as a bulwark against the spread of Islam. But, by initiating changes in the political economy, the colonial state also enabled itinerant Muslim holy men and traders to expand their networks. These religious transformations would deepen following the French abolition of slavery by decree in 1905, and the subsequent years of emancipation, when tens of thousands of slaves returned to their homes, carrying Muslim “prayer” with them.

*Slave Emancipation and the Expansion of Islam, 1905-1914*

The slave exodus was no fringe social phenomenon. The mass return migrations lasted a decade, from 1905 to 1914, with as many as one million slaves leaving their masters across French West Africa. And, as colonial documents reveal, the district of Buguni was the single largest recipient of former slaves in the French Sudan.<sup>36</sup> Around the time that freed slaves were returning to their homelands, the Lieutenant Governor of the Sudan, Joseph Clozel, predicted that the end of slavery would lead to a weakening of marabouts, and even “regression” of Islam. However, Clozel’s prognostications were ultimately off the mark.<sup>37</sup> Slave emancipation led to a hitherto unparalleled expansion of Islam in southern French Sudan, as freed slaves disseminated Muslim practices into rural areas that had been largely untouched by holy men or traders. In a more capillary manner, freed slaves carried the seeds of Islam to small village clusters and remote farming hamlets, deep in the rural hinterlands.<sup>38</sup>

More broadly, returning freed slaves introduced a diverse set of new ideas and practices into their villages. They had been exposed to different landscapes and crossed ecological boundaries that had once seemed dangerous, and been immersed in different languages and customs. And with emancipation, there was a further erosion of the old hierarchies and ideologies of inegalitarianism based on caste and slave status. In connection with agriculture, freed slaves were responsible for bringing back seeds and pits for different grains and fruit trees. And as more slaves arrived with new crops and knowledge, many families began venturing out to settle new lands.<sup>39</sup> Formerly, villages had maintained their fields close to the village, with all of the inhabitants residing within the protective mud walls to defend against the attacks of slave-raiders. However, people were now able to venture out in smaller groups, clearing land in distant localities and even establishing new hamlets.<sup>40</sup> In 1910, one colonial official commented: “A large number of refugees or freed slaves, having returned to their

villages of origin, have shown a marked tendency to abandon the large centers and to settle themselves, permanently, at noticeable distance from the villages, in the middle of the fields in which they farm.”<sup>41</sup>

Beyond crops and new ideas, one of the most commonly cited innovations carried by freed slaves was Muslim prayer. As first generation Muslims, they represented the initial steps in gradual processes of Islamization. French administrator-ethnographer Paul Marty reported: “In most of the fetishist villages, there were at least one or two natives returning from slavery and performing Muslim prayer. These Muslims certainly are not very fervent, nor very convinced... they are preparing the ground for Islam.”<sup>42</sup> Because many of the first Muslims had been enslaved during childhood, or adolescence, and spent their important formative years in captivity, cut off from the religious practices and structures of their home villages, they discovered alternate forms of ritual and identification in Islam. While in slavery, they were assimilated into the religious habitus of the locality, taught new practices, and inculcated with new ideas and beliefs. Their new Muslim dispositions and identities could not simply be removed through ritual ablation.<sup>43</sup>

Village oral histories are replete with stories of freed slaves “bringing prayer” to their homelands. In the canton of Fulala, one informant recounted: “It was the return of slaves, above all, that gave Islam the force necessary to expand here as it did. After the liberation of the slaves, people reintegrated with their families bringing this new Muslim religion with them.”<sup>44</sup> In the canton of Gwancédugu, another elder explained: “The person who had brought religion (*alasira*) here was our uncle. But there were actually two people... they came back from slavery, bringing prayer with them. One of them had been in slavery in the region of Segu. The other had been in slavery among the Maraka. So these two people were the first people to pray here.”<sup>45</sup> Testimonies of elders in comparative case study sites of Céndugu, Gwancédugu, and Basidibé also suggest that across the district of Buguni many slaves returned to their homelands with prayer.<sup>46</sup>

Those credited with returning from slavery “with prayer” were all men. However, most slaves in the French Sudan were women. Certainly many female slaves did not return to their homelands during the years of exodus; as wives or concubines, they had been easier to assimilate into the households of their masters.<sup>47</sup> But, there were many female slaves who did return to their homes, and colonial court records reveal that numbers of women were nominally Muslim. In other words, there was likely a sizable population of Muslim women alongside their male counterparts, considered the “first Muslims,” who passed rudiments of their faith onto their children. However, due to gender biases in oral accounts, few women are credited with introducing Islamic practices into their villages.<sup>48</sup>

For these first generation Muslims, their religious rituals were rather rudimentary and eclectic. Prayer focused on repetitive chanting of what informants called the *kalima*.<sup>49</sup> Bits of Sufi litanies (*dhikr*) were also chanted. As a simple “recollection” of God’s presence, *dhikr* chanting was ritually integrated with *bamana* music and dance. At this point, Muslims were monolatrous and rather heterodox, as they still maintained beliefs and practices tied to ancestors and sundry local spirits. And from the standpoint of contemporary Muslims, the prayer that these pioneers practiced was not “clear” (*jelen*) or “correct”: they did not know all the proper protocols or ways to pronounce Arabic words. Furthermore, they continued making sacrifices to power objects (*jòn*), while integrating Muslim amulets into their arsenal of religious objects.<sup>50</sup>

These first generation Muslims were forced to hide their prayers, as one informant in Fulala told: “Muslims were not very numerous.... the *kòmò* was widespread in the village. At this time, nobody dared to discuss building a mosque in the village. The followers of Islam were forced to hide themselves when they said their prayers.”<sup>51</sup> When young Muslims tried to perform public prayer, they were often attacked or even arrested by the chief. But eventually the new faith was tolerated on occasional public manifestations, so long as Muslims did not encroach on certain domains of indigenous religious and political life, or challenge the authority of the heads of the power

associations. There was also an expanding everyday space of mutual borrowing and pragmatic appropriations. It was an emergent religious formation, characterized by interdependence between adherents of local religions and Muslims, and facilitated by certain family resemblances in forms of belief, ritual sacrifice, healing, power objects, and an array of other practices.<sup>52</sup>

Despite years of clandestine religious practice, first generation Muslims did not toil in vain. First of all, they sought to break out of isolated village-level communities by investing in translocal social networks. In the process, this generated more territory-wide religious transformations. Many of them also lived to witness the emergence of Islam as the religion of the majority in their communities, when the first mosques were built and when public prayer became routine. Eventually, they served as village imams, holy men, and even canton chiefs, while leading their communities in prayer and helping to reshape the religious habitus. They were also responsible for sending their sons away to Qur'anic schools during the interwar years, thus deepening Islamic religious knowledge and practice in their villages. Subsequent generations of veterans, migrant workers, and returning students would add momentum to these processes of Islamization. However, for many communities, it was the return of freed slaves that had set in motion this multi-generational religious drift.

#### *Soldiers, Functionaries, and Chiefs during the Interwar Years*

On the heels of emancipation, young African men (roughly 180,000) were conscripted in droves to fight for France in the First World War, many of whom were former slaves.<sup>53</sup> In these years, the expansion of Islam was given a boost by wartime mobilization, which necessitated more extensive travel and improved communications. In a way, the French colonial army served as a sort of religious crucible, in which peasants were exposed to Muslims and Islamic practices. In 1916, the Lieutenant Governor of the French Sudan drew attention to African soldiers (*tirailleurs*) “leaving as fetishists from

their villages of origin,” and returning to their families to “announce their conversion to the religion of Muhammad.”<sup>54</sup> Although military service did not necessarily translate to conversion, viewed from the perspective of such districts as Buguni, veterans represented an important social group of returning Muslims, who would also have considerable political influence. Because of their proximity to French rule, and their more instrumental roles in the maintenance of colonial order, veterans were in positions to make claims on canton and village chiefs, and even lobby for appointment as chiefs themselves.<sup>55</sup>

Alongside soldiering, the expansion of French education served as a pipeline for channeling the sons of chiefs and village notables into bureaucratic positions. The commonly noted irony was that in pushing incrementally ahead with its heavily diluted civilizing mission, Western-educated elites, or so-called *évolués*, became the most ardent challengers of colonial authority.<sup>56</sup> A further irony is that this new generation of French-speakers would be overwhelmingly Muslim. As products of French secular schools and military service, Muslim functionaries were becoming more dominant in administrative centers, making Islam the default religion of the bureaucracy. As they filled positions as interpreters, agricultural extension workers, teachers, midwives, district guards, and so forth, the vectors of Islamization were developing within the state apparatus itself. In 1938, one colonial official reported: “We must note the action of the native functionaries who, by their example and sometimes their words, make themselves, in a way under our cover, the propagators of Islam.”<sup>57</sup>

The interwar years also brought important changes in the political economy and rural social life. First of all, in addition to the routine tax burdens, the colonial state embraced regulated forms of forced labor on a wider scale in pursuing its plans for the development of the colonies.<sup>58</sup> Secondly, the colonial administration pursued policies of forced cotton cultivation, to ensure stable supplies of cotton to textile factories in France, and began distributing plows.<sup>59</sup> Canton chiefs, as the sort of “kings of the bush,” played a central role in recruiting forced laborers, collecting taxes, and overseeing compulsory crop production. Chiefs also commonly requisitioned crops and livestock, and

conscripted laborers for their personal fields. Although the chieftaincy had been considerably secularized, chiefs brought *bamanaya* and the *kòmò* society into collaboration with the coercive institutions of the state. Playing a disciplinary role in village life as a police force, the *kòmò* punished young people who refused to obey the rules, and formed local militias for rounding up forced laborers. This close association between the *kòmò* society and the recruitment of forced laborers generated animosities among young men. It also made the possibility of breaking with *bamanaya* more conceivable and attractive.<sup>60</sup>

The result of chiefly exactions and these wider forms of coercion was that chiefs were constantly embattled. By 1926, almost one-third of all villages, or roughly 300, in the district were without chiefs, while in many other villages “command was divided,” as “heads of families refused to obey the true chiefs.”<sup>61</sup> Many peasants resorted to flight, and one of the main causes was the “desire to escape from the harassment of chiefs.”<sup>62</sup> More broadly, struggling to meet the demands of the colonial state during the Depression years, households sold their livestock and even pawned family members to survive. And with limited access to markets and few local opportunities for earning money, labor migration to Senegal, Ivory Coast and Guinea became a crucial way of coping with poverty.<sup>63</sup>

#### *Migrants and Rural Social Change, 1946-1960*

The Second World War represented another major turning point in the history of southern French Sudan, as reforms opened the way to African political involvement. “Politics,” as the more peaceful competition among parties through “ruses” (*kekuya*), replaced the local politics and brute force (*fanga*) of the chieftaincy. But, perhaps more important than party politics, at least in the short term, the reforms of 1946 abolished forced labor and the system of summary native justice, known as the *indigénat*. Bereft of these key institutions, chiefs no longer had their old powers of coercion. At the

same time, the colonial state extended its bureaucracy and development projects further into remote regions, in a sort of “second colonial occupation.” This led to the expansion of plow farming and a general acceleration of market transactions. The tying of peasants into more direct relationships with the state, and the wider mobility of workers, also depended on the building of roads, the spread of automobiles and bicycles, more extensive and frequent census tours and palavers, and more detailed record-keeping.<sup>64</sup>

The postwar era opened the floodgates to labor migration, with Ivory Coast emerging as the main destination. Circular or seasonal migration slowly replaced the longer-term arrangements tied to rainy season peanut farming.<sup>65</sup> And as household heads and chiefs lost control over labor, more young men migrated “unauthorized” by their elders; migration became a sort of rite of passage, as young people left immediately after their circumcisions for “adventure” in Ivory Coast. Not surprisingly, the mobility of young men generated divisions and inter-generational conflicts within households. It also contributed to the emergence of a new ethos of “individualism” (*tako*) and “ownership” (*tigiya*), which had previously been associated with greed, selfishness and even sorcery, but now connoted ideas of independence and freedom.<sup>66</sup> In this way, junior males became more impatient with the constraints and rigidities of tradition, and this led to contestations over the “old ways” (*ke kòrò*). Many of these disputes centered on marriage, which had become one of the last ways in which elders tried to control household labor.<sup>67</sup>

This period also saw the expansion of plow agriculture, which enabled farmers to till larger swaths of land individually, without depending on collective labor. As plow farming slowly spread across the district, local settlement patterns and village social relations shifted. There was a gradual break up of “common fields” (*fòròba*) and the wider proliferation of “private plots” (*jònjòrò*) as young men founded separate households and shirked communal work. Thus, families started to fragment and subdivide; and small groups moved away from their villages to form new hamlets. Furthermore,

less dependence on communal labor and the ritual and productive services of blacksmiths meant a slow reordering of certain religious dimensions of farming.<sup>68</sup>

*Migrants and the Dialectics of "Conversion," 1946-1960*

While these rural social changes were underway, communities were witnessing the public emergence of Islam. Because of the sheer volume of migrant workers, widespread circular migration created a virtual transmission belt for cultural change. As in the case of other large mobile social groups, such as freed slaves and veterans, migrants were the main drivers of Islamization processes in the post-war era. According to canton-level census reports, there was a strong correlation between high rates of return migration and the expansion of Islam. Cantons that were important sending regions in the migrant labor economy reported the highest percentages of Muslims. Conversely, in cantons where migration was not a factor, Muslims were far less numerous. During census tours, colonial officials also commonly reported that migrant workers and veterans were the main agents of Islamization.<sup>69</sup>

Oral accounts also emphasized the centrality of migrant workers in Islamization processes. In the canton of Gwancédugu, Zumana Koné said: "When the people started to migrate, everyone began to pray, one after another."<sup>70</sup> In the Senufo canton of Niene, Sirakoro Traore explained: "Many people went on migration and came back to the village converted to Islam, and they did not abandon Islam when they returned. They were very numerous.... It was these people who provoked conversions to Islam in the village.... These young men were obliged to pray. Otherwise they would not be able to get along with the Muslim population, who gave them employment."<sup>71</sup> Aside from such occupational conversions, migrants embraced Islam in an effort to forge social belonging and religious security. Leaving the local religious spheres of their homelands, and unable to gain admission into the non-

Muslim religious associations of their hosts, many migrants were drawn to Islam for its universality. With a greater plasticity of mind than their elders, young men fluidly adopted new values, dispositions, and ways of seeing the world. They also embraced Islam for what they deemed its moral correctness, ritual purity, and superior power. Still others were drawn to Islam for its prestige, aesthetic attractiveness, and cosmopolitan appeal.<sup>72</sup>

The drift toward Islam among migrants was tied to new forms of commodity consumption. In 1953, a colonial report described Islam in the region as “a question of style” imported into the region “by the young men from the countries they visit as workers or as soldiers.” A centerpiece of this so-called style was the long cotton shirt, commonly referred to as the *boubou*, which replaced the loincloth as the attire of young men.<sup>73</sup> With the acceleration of commercial transactions, as more cash entered local economies, primarily via migrant remittances, peasants were able to buy more fabric. And imported clothes, representing more cosmopolitan coastal styles, often served as stylistic markers of religious difference.<sup>74</sup> Among the many new commodities, bicycles were also important in a more functional way. The new individual transport technology allowed young men to travel more extensively than before. They could visit neighboring villages easily, ride to regional markets, and get news. This local circulation and commuting helped disseminate new cultural styles, ideas, and practices throughout rural areas.<sup>75</sup>

Within local social fields, migrant workers were embracing Islam in an era when Muslims were emerging into public with their faith. French administrator-ethnographer Marcel Cardaire stated: “[The] worker returning to his little village does not dare to pray as long as he is the only ‘believer’.... When two or three young people return from their temporary migration as converts, they unite with the others and all together they perform prayer on Friday. Once they have a dozen, they look to build a mosque.”<sup>76</sup> Thus, whereas former slaves and other early Muslims were forced to hide their practices, migrant workers were eventually able to display their new religious identities publicly. And as the ranks

swelled, social pressures mounted. An informant in the canton of Céndugu similarly explained: “When the migrant workers came back to their villages, they added themselves, and the village became Muslim.... They would try to convince the others in the village: ‘You must recognize that there is one God who created us; you must recognize that God is all-powerful.’ After one or two years, there were thirty people, and then three or four years later, almost the whole village was praying.”<sup>77</sup>

As we have seen, women have been rather invisible in official village histories of Islam. However, according to female informants, as young women migrated and married Muslim men, they too began to pray. Also, women living in trade towns found themselves joining Muslim communities in the marketplace. For those who stayed at home in rural areas, the daughters of Muslims were exchanged with the families of fellow Muslims, and married into Muslim households. Though often uneducated, they exposed their children to the basic rules and practices of the faith. Young Muslim men and women also shaped transformations in marriage mediation practices. As Islamic practices and beliefs moved closer to the discursive center, bride exchange and labor service came to be viewed as “unlawful” (*haramu*).<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, Islam provided the moral language for critiquing a system that had prevented young people from marrying outside their castes. In 1951, one colonial official observed that “a certain flexibility” had emerged with respect to the “imperious rules of marriage that had separated the diverse castes.” He reported: “Islam has something to do with this, but also, without doubt, the fact that a large part of the population was formerly slave, which has thus blurred the differences between the castes.”<sup>79</sup>

Muslims became more dominant and eventually minority traditionalist holdouts were pressured into abandoning their practices; their traditionalist views lost their influence, and they retreated from public view. *Bamanaya* became something shameful; and sacred sites, rituals and institutions, such as the *ƙòmò* and *jò* societies, were shunted aside into secrecy. Namakoro Bamba remembered: “As for us here, we abandoned *jò* due to shame...and left them in their huts along the pathways. Then these huts finally just collapsed on the *jò*.... When the world tips in a certain direction,

if you refuse to go to this side, the people will have no regard for you.”<sup>80</sup> In many communities, people embraced Islam or risked losing their place in society. This meant exclusion from sharing meals or working with others, as one elder recalled: “If you were not Muslim, you were looked down upon by society. If you did not pray, Muslims would say they could not put their hand in the same bowl with you. If you did not pray, they would not work with you in the village in different activities. There were many changes in favor of Muslims at this time.”<sup>81</sup> On rare occasion, religious conflicts erupted, resulting in iconoclastic attacks on sacred sites and inter-communal violence. For example, the renowned preacher Dramane Konaté in the canton of Gwancédugu fought “with force and fire against the fetishes,” until he was arrested by colonial authorities. Then, El Hajj Abdulaye Koné, among a growing number of returnees from Mecca and former al-Azhar students, desecrated *kòmò* society power objects publicly during his preaching. Colonial authorities arrested him as well.<sup>82</sup> But, as Hari Sidibé emphasized, preachers usually depended on the good will of locals and the consent of the village chief. She recalled: “When a foreign marabout came, the local people were more powerful, so if they did anything that did not please them, he could not stay.”<sup>83</sup> Indeed, most often, shifts in religious power relations were marked by quietism and tacit coercion. And in this process, as religious fissures within communities and households emerged, and the younger generation expressed new modalities of religious belonging, elders and lineage heads were increasingly marginalized.<sup>84</sup>

### *Objectifying Religious Change: “Conversion” and the Colonial Census*

These religious divisions within communities became apparent at census time. Thus, an important local public event was the declaration of religious identity during the colonial census, which was both a politicized field of state activity and a power-laden social arena of interaction. The census sharpened the boundaries between religious categories and made people more conscious of where

they were positioned in local social fields.<sup>85</sup> And as census tours became more extensive and intensive after the Second World War, rural peoples began speaking for themselves in matters of religious identification, choosing between “Muslim” and “fetishist.” Incidentally, improvements in census procedures and the data collection process itself also distorted colonial understandings of religious change, such that officials often gave far too much weight to post-war changes.<sup>86</sup>

Beyond the census-takers and their categories, however, the social contexts in which the census was conducted influenced how peasants responded to questions related to religious identity. A former colonial interpreter recalled religious declarations at census time: “[villagers] became aware of how much had changed, and they were ashamed that they did not pray. They were not Muslims, and the people knew. When they said they were Muslims, the young people would laugh at their fathers.”<sup>87</sup> Indeed, people were not asked questions on their religious identity in private, but rather in front of fellow villagers. Thus, the crowd of people gathered at census time and public declarations of faith gave villagers a chance to glimpse the religious relations of force, and the more objectified religious shifts, in the village. Echoing the words of my informant, one census official observed in 1954: “The designation ‘Muslim’ is more often than not a simple formality that they give on the occasion of the census to avoid the mockery and jeers of the audience. But when a notable fetishist declares himself Muslim, the reactions of the audience are just as significant.”<sup>88</sup>

While the census was a rather infrequent event in everyday life, it made villagers more conscious of the religious changes occurring in their villages, and confronted them with a stark choice. The census also nudged villagers in a particular direction. In other words, once the census categories in such settings had been deployed, people “officially” sorted themselves out, and, accordingly, even took on new ways of being; they based their identity assertions not only on who they were and what they had done, but also on whom they might become, thus opening the door to future possibilities of personhood. In this

way, the census could be used as a preemptive way of securing a more accommodating, or historically safer, identity within changing political and social contexts.

*Islam, Chiefs and the Changing Political Order, 1946-1959*

As we have seen, the colonial administration used “fetishist” chiefs as a hedge against the spread of Islam, and many of these chiefs depended on such key *bamana* institutions as the *kòmò* society in maintaining order and discipline within their cantons. Eventually, however, the power of canton chiefs waned, which opened the door for Islam to make inroads into the chieftaincy. Even before the chieftaincy was abolished, the political reforms of 1946 had effectively stripped chiefs of considerable power. Then, following the elections to the Territorial Assembly in 1957, and the rise to power of the anti-colonial US-RDA (*Union Soudanais-Rassemblement Démocratique Africain*), chiefs lost their judicial roles in the Customary Tribunals. Through a series of decrees in 1958, the remaining power of chiefs was whittled away. Finally, in 1959, the pro-administration PSP (*Parti Progressiste Soudanais*) was ousted from the Legislative Assembly, depriving chiefs of their last form of political support.<sup>89</sup>

In this era of rapid political change, it is unclear what role Muslim messages of equality played at a popular level leading up to independence. Certainly, there were Islamic themes to the US-RDA campaigns and activism, and some young people embraced Islam as a kind anti-colonial ideology.<sup>90</sup> But, more locally, as colonial temporal power dissolved, chiefs looked to religion and spiritual bases of authority. In explaining this process and how Islam became central to the chieftaincy in the canton of Fulala, one official reported: “these chieftaincies, who, having lost their former *raison d’être*, which was to maintain the peace and render justice, do not know where to hang their authority, fictive and pure tradition today.”<sup>91</sup> Their temporal power waning, chiefs found themselves fulfilling largely empty ceremonial roles, so they invested in Muslim forms of authority.

Most of the chiefs who were already Muslim when they rose to power had come to Islam gradually – through slavery, migration, soldiering or trade – and later carried their Muslim identities into the chieftaincy. As the products of grassroots Islamization, they were simply bringing to fruition the institutionalization of local Muslim power. And as the colonial period extended, more chiefs entered service as new colonial elites, such as functionaries or former *tirailleurs*, who had converted while in military service or in the colonial bureaucracy. Indeed, as we have seen, in modernizing the chieftaincy, the colonial bureaucracy was itself turning out Muslim chiefs.<sup>92</sup> But not all Muslim chiefs entered service as Muslims. Many sitting canton chiefs changed their religious designations while in power. Marcel Cardaire observed: “How many of these chiefs have said: ‘It is the new religion, it is necessary to adopt it.’ ... [He] wants to free himself from the old obligations and render his command more acceptable. Therefore, he converts to Islam... the chief senses that his authority, undisputed until then, [and] resting on a religious foundation, falters. He knows that ‘only the fear of the elders still holds back the youth... [but] the elders are going to disappear.’”<sup>93</sup> As elders passed on, or were politically and religiously marginalized, chiefs looked increasingly to emergent social bases of legitimacy; they sought to use religious prestige to bolster their sagging authority. By this time, with the expansion of Qur’anic education, mosques and Muslim networks of patronage, new forms of power and authority were being concentrated in the hands of holy men. In communities looking for leadership, the growing authority and power of holy men dovetailed with the demise of the colonial chieftaincy.

*Remaking the Religious Habitus: Qur’anic Schools, Mosques, and Holy Men*

In local understandings, first generation Muslims, whether former slaves, migrant workers, or veterans, are often referred to as “pretenders” (*an yé ka do kè*), or those who manifested only external signs of Islam. However, during the interwar years, these so-called pretenders emerged as

imams and holy men (*mori*) and played central roles in remaking the local religious habitus of their villages. As we have seen, during their formative and childhood years, Muslim environments had shaped certain slaves and migrant workers. Now, many years later, these first generation Muslims were in positions in which they could alter their religious environments, and hence they worked to make their communities conform to certain internal perceptual, attitudinal, and cognitive structures.<sup>94</sup> In terms of the physical religious environment, they organized the building of local mosques and makeshift Qur'anic schools.

Outside of mosques and Qur'anic schools, the roots of Islam were being planted within households through private prayer and the incorporation of Islamic forms and norms into daily life. Sometimes a family member took it upon himself to teach the children in the community. Children also watched their parents praying together and began imitating their behavior. Things characteristically Islamic had begun to permeate the household. Children were growing up surrounded by symbolism in practice and discourse, styles of dress, behavioral interdictions and dietary prohibitions, all of which served to familiarize young people with the world of Islam. A distinctly Muslim habitus was taking form.<sup>95</sup> As Bourdieu succinctly described: "The child imitates not 'models' but other people's actions...children are particularly attentive to the gestures and postures which, in their eyes, express everything that goes to make an accomplished adult, a way of walking, a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and of using implements, always associated with a tone of voice, a style of speech...schemes are able to pass from practice to practice without going through discourse or consciousness."<sup>96</sup> First generation Muslims also invested in forms of Islamic knowledge by sending their children to Qur'anic school. In 1951, one colonial official reported on this multi-generational educational process: "Islamization spreads rapidly and gains in depth... The newly Islamized content themselves with a vague obedience to the new rules, prayer and fasting. But their children go to the Qur'anic school where their religion deepens. The

phenomenon of conversion is not the form of absolute and personal adhesion to a body of moral doctrine.... [Rather] each generation constitutes a new step.”<sup>97</sup>

At first, villagers had to travel far from their homes to receive a Qur’anic education. But by the post-war period, Qur’anic schools within the district of Buguni were expanding, making Qur’an schooling more accessible. Census records show that officially the number of Qur’anic schools in Buguni saw a nine-fold increase over a 25-year period (from seven in 1932 to 67 in 1957). However, these numbers obscure the fact that large numbers of schools were closed each year for improper authorization. In 1953, for example, 28 such schools were shut down. Furthermore, most Qur’anic schools were loosely organized institutions thrown together on an ad hoc and seasonal basis and concealed from the state.<sup>98</sup>

The focus of Qur’anic schools was the memorization of verses and entire *suras* of the Qur’an, which gave students the rudimentary ability to recite portions of the Qur’an. Most of all, they learned the Fatiha (the opening *sura*) and the shorter “Meccan revelations,” but without understanding the meanings of classical Arabic words. In a culture based on orality, the focus was not on acquiring literacy as such, but rather on gaining a certain performative competence in ritual settings. In time, community-building rituals and individual rites of passage would be punctuated by Qur’anic recitations. On an everyday level, key Qur’anic phrases and words found their way into local language use in the form of benedictions and greetings.<sup>99</sup>

Although certain children were given to holy men as pawns, most students had been handed over to Qur’anic teachers as a kind of investment in future cultural and symbolic capital, and as a way of further Islamizing their communities. Once on the teacher’s farm, students performed the kind of work that was virtually the same as that of domestic slaves or pawns. For their parents, who had “suffered for religion” as slaves or migrant workers, such difficulties were to be expected. In fact, within the context of the Qur’anic master’s household, students were viewed and treated as

“slaves.” The Qur’anic student was forced into submission, routinely subjected to corporal punishment, and performed whatever labor the teacher demanded.<sup>100</sup> As one elderly *imam* who had been a Qur’anic student in the 1930s explained: “The Qur’anic student was considered as a slave.... Myself, I spent sixteen years total in my studies and I endured every kind of suffering for my master. But we accepted the suffering in order to gain knowledge. We farmed, pounded millet for the women.... All of the students from this era, they experienced these hardships, from our fathers to us.”<sup>101</sup>

Eventually, these first generation Qur’anic students returned to their home villages, set up Qur’anic schools, and sought to guide their communities even closer to the normative traditions of Islam. As former Qur’anic students, whose rearing environments were even more Muslim, they would push further to reshape the religious habitus. Indeed, the internal mental structures of their generation would differ from those of their parents. In seeking to establish greater internal-external consonance, they sought to create religious environments that were more consistent with their internal values and organizing schemata.<sup>102</sup> Beyond initiating local schooling, and training children to be “good Muslims,” the young teachers (*karamògò*) also started criticizing their fathers for being “bad Muslims.” A former traditionalist explained: “Qur’anic education transformed the elders into people who knew nothing in the eyes of their children.... When [the student] finished and his teacher freed him, he would return to his home and build his own hut next to that of his elders. He would not even live in the same courtyard as them. He had disdain for them, and they became repugnant in his eyes. He became ashamed of them.”<sup>103</sup>

In tandem with the spread of Qur’anic schools, mosques were expanding within the district of Buguni. Most mosques were small edifices, which hardly looked like mosques to French officials. They were made of mud walls and thatched roofing, not unlike *bamana* shrines, or “fetish huts” in colonial parlance.<sup>104</sup> In many cantons, rural thatched-roof mosques were sprouting up too fast for colonial

officials to record their numbers. In the canton of Fulala, a census official reported in 1951: “mosque-huts [cases-mosquées] have been built in the majority of villages but there is only one genuine mosque in Tenemakana.” In places such as Gwanan, Kurulamini, Basidibé and Jallon-Fula, which had important trade towns, mosques were built in most villages. In Tiemala, mosques spread into rural areas, as a census report in 1954 noted that “a bit everywhere mosques are being raised, some of which have a certain cachet.”<sup>105</sup>

Muslim communities forged connections and invested in social networks and patron-client relationships that reached outside the confines of the village. Mobile social groups played important roles in this process, as migrants encountered and appropriated diverse practices. Concomitantly, transregional Sufi currents, carried by itinerant holy men, flowed into the region and intermingled with local religious practices and institutions. In the daily lives of most Muslims, rural holy men (*mori*) filled the roles of healers and magicians by providing heterodox religious services, such as rainmaking or amulet fabrication. They also performed prayer or bestowed blessings in exchange for gifts.<sup>106</sup> One imam recalled: “All of the invocations of God that these *mori* performed would lead to success for the population.... Each time that someone had a problem, if this person came to see them, in most cases, the prayers made by these *mori* preachers were answered and the needs of the population were satisfied.... [On one occasion] we had seeded our fields, but the rain refused to fall.... [The *mori*] chanted the *kalima*.... After the *kalima* was performed again at night, we went to sleep. Before the morning, rain was falling in the village. It rained until places had been inundated.”<sup>107</sup>

Peasants in the district of Buguni embraced religious “big men” rather than the Sufi orders, which were still rather abstract and remote from peoples’ lives. Absent the typical Sufi institutions, and without discriminating between the brotherhoods, there was a popular devotionism attached to renowned Sufi holy men. Informants explained how their diverse intellectual strands were interwoven, or “put in agreement”; practices, litanies and beliefs drawn from the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya were

incorporated into a system of complementary religious practices. Holy men also translated passages from the Qur'an and hadith into local dialects of Bamanankan. Informants referred to this heterodox form of translated Islamic thought and practice as *kankònòla*. As a linguistic and cultural interface between the Islamic world and local communities, *kankònòla* represented the vernacularization of Islam in rural areas.<sup>108</sup>

As we have seen, ordinary people prayed in improvised settings for years before mosques were built, and received informal religious training in the absence of Qur'anic schools. Thus, rather than viewing the emergence of Muslim communities, and changes in the religious habitus, as radiating out of mosques and Qur'anic schools, it might help to see such institutions as the historical products of changing practices, which in turn transformed the reproduction of ritual life. Furthermore, while Muslim holy men were present in the district of Buguni since the early colonial period, they were rarely responsible for "converting" rural peoples. Wider acceptance of their presence and their practices would depend on the establishment of Muslim majorities within villages. And many of these holy men had been former slaves, migrant workers, soldiers and farmers. Local processes of religious change had generated their own homegrown preachers and ritual specialists.

### *Conclusion*

In this brief narrative covering eighty or so years of history, I have explored the ways in which rural communities became Muslim in one corner of the French empire in West Africa. Independence did not mark the emergence of an unambiguous Muslim society. Nor did it preclude the possibility of countercurrents and little eddies in the opposite direction. And as a process, the expansion of Islam was far from smooth, linear, or predictable. Thus, in telling this story I have framed Islamization within multiple local contexts, while emphasizing shifts in colonial power relationships and different

social temporalities. But, my main contention in this paper is that the spread of Islam into rural parts of French West Africa was a multigenerational process which owed much of its dynamism to the mobility of freed slaves, migrant workers, former soldiers, and local holy men. I have tried to show how religious change at the village level stemmed from an accelerated pace of social transactions and exchanges, through which group differences and pressures led to conflicts and challenges to existing practices, beliefs, and norms. Depending on a multitude of factors, such as extra-local links via forms of mobility, communities became Muslim in various ways. Although my research has been limited in geographical scope, the processes examined in this paper transcended national borders and territorial frontiers. According to the wider literature, Islamization in other rural parts of Africa was due not only to the activities of itinerant Sufi holy men, traders, and chiefs, but also more subaltern social actors, such as slaves and migrant workers.<sup>109</sup> Much remains to be done to expand our understanding of Islamization in rural areas, and the roles that ordinary people played in shaping such processes. But, it is hoped that the present paper will be an aid toward that end.

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<sup>1</sup> J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Indiana, 2000), 1-26. This paper is based on colonial documents from archives in Bamako (Mali), Dakar (Senegal), and Aix-en-Provence (France) and fieldwork in southern Mali in 2000, 2001-2002. Within this context, my most intensive fieldwork site was the canton of Fulala, which provided much of my micro-historical data. Outside of Fulala, I also recorded interviews in comparative case study sites, including the cantons of Cédugu, Basidibé, Gwancédugu, and Niéné.

<sup>2</sup> On models, see H. Fisher in "Conversion Reconsidered: Some Historical Aspects of Religious Conversion in Black Africa," *Africa*, 43 (1973); S. Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa* (Oxford, 1959); I. M. Lewis (ed.), *Islam in Tropical Africa* (Oxford, 1966); T. Insoll, *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Cambridge, 2003); N. Levtzion (ed.), *Conversion to Islam* (New York, 1979); R. Launay and B. Soares, "The Formation of an 'Islamic sphere' in French colonial West Africa," *Economy and Society*, 28 (1999), 497-519. I have also found little evidence to support the view that people embraced Islam as an act of anti-colonial resistance, which is an unsubstantiated formulation that some scholars have reproduced without verifying its validity in local settings.

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977), 72-95. For a useful model of Islamization that emphasizes gradual change, see Richard Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760* (Berkeley, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 248-277; on "conversion" as translation, see Lamin Sanneh, "Translatability in Islam and in Christianity in Africa: A Thematic Approach," in T. Blakely, ed., *Religion in Africa: Experience and Expression* (Portsmouth, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> J. Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (Portsmouth, 1995), 134; J. D. Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 3, 216; Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and*

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*Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, Vol. 1 (Chicago, 1992), 248-251; R. Horton, "African Conversion," *Africa*, 41 (1971); Robert Launay, *Beyond the Stream: Islam and Society in a West African Town* (University of California Press, 1992), 22-35.

<sup>6</sup> The district of Buguni comprised 837 villages with a population of 247,189 in 1957. On French maps and in colonial documents, the spelling is Bougouni. However, I have opted for Anglophone renderings of African place-names: Sudan, Wasulu, Buguni, and so forth.

<sup>7</sup> David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880-1920* (Athens, 2000); Christopher Harrison, *France and Islam in West Africa, 1860-1960* (Cambridge, 1988).

<sup>8</sup> David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triaud (eds.), *Le Temps des Marabouts: Itinéraires et stratégies islamiques en Afrique occidentale française* (Paris, 1997).

<sup>9</sup> J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford, 2006); and Joseph-Roger de Benoist, *Eglise et Pouvoir Colonial au Soudan Français* (Paris, 1987).

<sup>10</sup> Interview, Amadou Sidibe, Solona, 10 April 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Interview, Hawa Diallo, Tenemakana, 13 May 2002.

<sup>12</sup> See Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History* (Cambridge, 1992), 11.

<sup>13</sup> Interviews, Nouhou Diakite, Kologo, 4 Oct 2002; Nwaari Suntura, N'Golobala, 26 June 2002; Bangali Koné, Bunjoba, 19 June 2002; See also M. Klein, "Defensive Strategies: Wasulu, Masina, and the Slave Trade," in S.A. Diouf (ed.) *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies* (Athens, 2003). On decentralized societies in the historical literature, Martin Klein, "The Slave Trade and Decentralized Societies," *JAH* 42 (2001), 49-65; Robert Harms, *Games Against Nature: An Eco-Cultural History of the Nunu of Equatorial Africa* (Cambridge, 1987); and Walter Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations along the Guinea-Bissau Coast, 1400-1900* (Portsmouth, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Most village foundation narratives contain stories of "strangers" (usually pastoralists or hunters) fleeing war and conflict, and looking for fertile lands. Interviews, Yusuf Sidibé, Koniba-Barila, 27 March 2002; Doulaye Koné, Kolondieba, 19 November 2002. See also Jean-Loup Amselle, *Les Négociants de la Savane: Histoire et organisation sociale des Kooroko* (Paris, 1977) 25-112.

<sup>15</sup> Renseignements sur l'organisation des communautés africaines. Bougouni, (Oral traditions recorded in 1949-50 by J. Lennon, FOM), FM – Political Affairs, 2188/5, *Archives Nationales de France, Centre des Archives d'Outre Mer* (CAOM).

<sup>16</sup> Amselle, *Mestizo Logics: Anthropology of Identity in Africa and Elsewhere* (Stanford, 1998) 49, 122. In certain ways, southern Mali constituted what James Scott has recently called a "shatter zone." See *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, 2009), 7-32.

<sup>17</sup> Caillié, *Voyage*, 325-354; Interview, Dramane Doumbia, Tenemakana, 21 May 2002.

<sup>18</sup> Interviews, Broulaye Doumbia, Tenemakana, 6 October 2002; and Yacouba Danyoko, Tenemakana, 21-23 June 2002; Germaine Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion Bambara* (Paris, 1951); Patrick R. McNaughton, *The Mande Blacksmiths: Knowledge, Power, and Art in West Africa* (Bloomington, 1988); Viviana Pâques, "Bouffons Sacrés du Cercle de Bougouni (Soudan Français)," *Journal de la Société des Africanistes* (1954), Vol. 24, 1, 63-110.

<sup>19</sup> See Amselle, *Les Négociants de la Savane*, 25-34; George Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers* (Westview, 1993); D. Conrad and B. Frank, eds., *Status and Identity in West Africa: Nyamakalaw of Mande* (Bloomington, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> Interviews, Sirakoro Traore, Moro, 7 April 2002; Ngolo Sanogo, Woblé, 5 April 2002; Amselle, *Mestizo Logics*, 121.

<sup>21</sup> Caillié, *Voyage*, Tome I, 349-350, and Tome II, 85-86.

<sup>22</sup> J. Gallieni, *Voyage au Soudan Français, Haut-Niger et Pays de Ségou, 1879-1881* (Paris, 1885), 597-598.

<sup>23</sup> For more on Samori in southern Mali, see B. Peterson, "History, Memory and the Legacy of Samori in Southern Mali, c. 1882-1898," *Journal of African History* 49, 2008. See also the account of French commander L.-G. Binger, who traveled extensively across the region. *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée par le pays du Kong et de Mossi, 1887-1889* (Paris, 1892), esp. Tome I, 46-255.

<sup>24</sup> L.-G. Binger, *Du Niger*, Tome I, 25-26, 52-59, 150, 220; Yves Person, *Samori: Une Révolution Dyula* (Paris, 1968-1975), Tome II, 810-819; Rapport Vuillemot, 1899, 4E42; Rapport Politique, 1894 IE27, *Archives Nationales du Mali* (ANM) *Fonds Anciens* (FA).

- <sup>25</sup> Interviews, Hari Sidibe, Yanfolila, 9 April 2002; Doulaye Kone, Kolondieba, 19 November 2002; Drissa Diallo, N'Golobala, 18 May 2002; Souleyman Sidibe, Solona, 10 April 2002; El Hajj Sekou Sidibé, Jelifin, 31 March 2002; Almami Sidibé, Balafina, 2 April 2002.
- <sup>26</sup> Paul Marty, *Études sur l'Islam en Côte d'Ivoire* (Paris: 1922), 93, 77-233, 89-101; *L'Islam et les Tribus du Soudan*, Tome 2 (Paris, 1920), 180; John Ralph Willis (ed.), *Slaves and Slavery in Muslim Africa: Islam and the Ideology of Enslavement* (London, 1985); Humphrey Fisher, *Slavery in the History of Muslim Black Africa* (New York, 2001), 48, 64-70.
- <sup>27</sup> RP, May 1896, Feb. and March 1899, Census, March 1894, Feb. 1894, May 1896, Oct. 1903, ANM IE27; L.-G. Binger, *Du Niger*, Tome I, 170; Interviews, M'Bemba Sidibé, Balafina, 3 April 2002; Lamine Diakité, Yanfolila, 14 April 2002; Zumana Koné, Bunjoba, 19 June 2002; Broulaye Doumbia, Tenemakana, 13-14 May 2002.
- <sup>28</sup> Interview, Namakoro Bamba, Kolondieba, 7 July 2002.
- <sup>29</sup> Interview, Solo Sanogo, Woblé, 5 May 2002; RP, June 1895; Letter 24 July 1895; RP, Dec 1895; ANM IE27.
- <sup>30</sup> Interview, Jan-Jan Sidibé, Balafina, 2-3 April 2002; Monographie de Bougouni, 1906, ANM ID37.
- <sup>31</sup> Interview, Drissa Diallo, N'Golobala, 18 May 2002.
- <sup>32</sup> Interview, Musa Sumoaro, Kolondieba, 20 November 2002; Doulaye Koné, Kolondieba, 19 November 2002; Souleyman Sidibé, Solona, 10 April 2002; RP, Feb. and March 1899, May 1896, Sept. & Oct. 1903, ANM IE27; Rapport, 1905, Politique Musulmane, ANM 4E42; Amselle, *Mestizo Logics*, 127-132.
- <sup>33</sup> Colonial reports on the spread of Islam were based on two specific indices: the number and size of Quranic schools and the presence of influential *marabouts* (itinerant Muslim holy men), in other words visibly identifiable leaders and institutional structures. Rapports sur l'Islam et les confréries musulmanes, Bougouni, 1899 and 1905, Politique Musulmane, ANM 4E42; Letter 12 March 1894, ANM IE27; GG circular, 10 Feb 1906, ANS 19G1; Maurice Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal Niger*, (Paris, 1912), Tome III, 186.
- <sup>34</sup> RP, April 1912; August 1912; August 1911, 1913, 1914, ANM IE28; RP, Sikasso, Nov 1911, ANM IE73.
- <sup>35</sup> RP, April 1903, ANM IE27; RP, Sikasso, Feb. 1906, ANM IE73; Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 112; Maurice Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal Niger*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1912), 122-123. See also T. Ranger, "Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa," *ASR* 29, 2 (1986), 1-69.
- <sup>36</sup> RP, April 1906, May 1906, CAOM, 2G6/6. Many slaves fled long before the abolition decree of 1905, often blending in with streams of refugees. Others would return home after the First World War. Most slaves, especially women, would never return. Martin Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa* (Cambridge, 1998), 170-173, 197-198, 203-205, 216-219; R. Roberts, "The End of Slavery in the French Soudan, 1905-1914," in S. Miers and R. Roberts, *The End of Slavery in Africa* (Madison, 1988).
- <sup>37</sup> Rapport sur la situation de l'Islam, 1909, ANM 4E32.
- <sup>38</sup> See B. Peterson, "Slave Emancipation, Trans-local Social Processes and the Spread of Islam in French Colonial Buguni (Southern Mali), 1893-1914," *Journal of African History* 45, 2004.
- <sup>39</sup> Interviews, Bourama Dembele, Tenemakana, 13-14 June 2002; Doulaye Koné, Kolondieba, 19 Nov 2002; Adama Diallo, Niamala, 12 Oct 2002; Bangali Koné, Bunjoba, 24 June 2002; Salimata Diallo, Tenemakana, 15 May 2002; Drissa Diallo, N'Golobala, 10 July 2002; Census, Tiemala, July 1912, ANM IE28.
- <sup>40</sup> Interview, Namakoro Bamba, Kolondieba, 7 July 2002; Monographie de Bougouni, 1906, ANM ID37; RP, 1910 4th, CAOM, 2G10/17; Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule*, 219.
- <sup>41</sup> Rapport sur l'état social des indigènes, Bougouni, 20 Oct 1910, ANM IE28.
- <sup>42</sup> Marty, *Études*, 93. Marty also reported on slave converts in the Sahel regions of the French Sudan. See *L'Islam*, 180.
- <sup>43</sup> Marty, *Études*, 93; Interview, Yusuf Coulibaly, Tenemakana, 16 May 2002. According to colonial census numbers, there were 13,710 Muslims (of the total population of 157,435) in Buguni after the slave exodus. This represented an official increase by roughly 11,000 Muslims in the years after the abolition decree of 1905. Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, Tome I, 165.
- <sup>44</sup> Interview, Drissa Diallo, N'Golobala, 18 May 2002.
- <sup>45</sup> Interview, Zoumana Koné, Tienaga, 15 June 2002.

- <sup>46</sup> Interviews, Adama Diallo, Niamala, 7 October 2002; Nouhou Diakite, Kologo, 5 October 2002; Yusuf Coulibaly, Tenemakana, 16 May 2002; Bakari Diarra, Kolondieba, 28 July 2002; Yusuf Sidibé, Konimba-Barila, 27 March 2002; Moro Sidibé, Yanfolila, 10 March 2002; Mameri Konate, Tusseguela, 7 Oct & 15 Nov. 2002; Fanta Bamba, Tienaga, 25 June 2002.
- <sup>47</sup> Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule*, 197-251.
- <sup>48</sup> Census, Tiemala and Nienandougou, July 1912, ANM IE28; Interviews, Hawa Diallo, Tenemakana, 17 May 2002; Bakary Diarra, Kolondieba, July 28, 2000. Court documents from Tribunal de Province de Bougouni, ANM 2M110; On women in the colonial courts in French Sudan, R. Roberts, *Litigants and Households: African Disputes and Colonial Courts in the French Sudan, 1895-1912* (Portsmouth, 2005) 125-178.
- <sup>49</sup> Also known as the *shabada*, the Muslim declaration of faith: “There is no God but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God.”
- <sup>50</sup> Interviews, Drissa Diallo, N’Golobala, 10 July 2002; Almamy Sidibé, Balanfina, 2 April 2002; Adama Diallo, Niamala, 7 October 2002.
- <sup>51</sup> Interview, Yusuf Coulibaly, Tenemakana, 16 May 2002.
- <sup>52</sup> Interviews, Broulaye Koné, 19 November 2002; Drissa Diallo, N’Golobala, 10 July 2002; Almamy Sidibé, Balanfina, 2 April 2002; Hawa Diallo, Tenemakana, 17 May 2002; Salimata Diallo, Tenemakana, 6 Oct 2002; Bakari Diarra, Kolondieba, 3 January 2002; RP, Nov 1911 ANM IE73; RP, Sep 1903, Nov. 1906, Nov. 1907, ANM IE27 & 28.
- <sup>53</sup> On the First World War, see Marc Michel, *L’Appel à l’Afrique: Contributions et reactions à l’effort de guerre en A.O.F., 1914-1919* (Paris, 1982).
- <sup>54</sup> Lt-Gov to Gov-Gen, March 1916, ANS 4D71. See Gregory Mann, “The Tirailleur Elsewhere: Military Veterans in Colonial and Post-Colonial Mali, 1918-1968,” PhD. dissertation, Northwestern University, 2000, 192-198; G. Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, 2006), 153-171; James Searing, “Conversion to Islam: Military recruitment and generational conflict in a Sereer-Safèn village (Bandia), 1920-38,” *Journal of African History*, 44 (2003), 73-94.
- <sup>55</sup> Interviews, N’waari Suntura, N’Golobala, 24 June 2002; Adama Diallo, N’Golobala, 10 Oct 2002; Sidiki Diallo, N’Golobala, Jan. 2000.
- <sup>56</sup> RP, 1934 & 1935, ANM IE10. See also Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford, 1997).
- <sup>57</sup> RP, 1930s, ANM IE10; Affaires Politiques, Soudan, 1938-1941, (CAOM) FM 603; RP, Sikasso, ANM IE41; Harrison, *France and Islam*, 128.
- <sup>58</sup> RE, 1933 4th trim, 1934 4th trim, ANM IE10; Babacar Fall, *Le Travail Forcé en Afrique occidentale française, 1900-1945* (Paris, 1993) Ch. 2-3, 5-6; Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, 1996), 25-43.
- <sup>59</sup> Rapport Agricole, 1924, 1926, 1928, ANM IR111; Rapport Econ, 1930s, ANM 1Q332; Richard Roberts, *Two Worlds of Cotton: Colonialism and the Regional Economy in the French Sudan, 1800-1946* (Stanford, 1996).
- <sup>60</sup> Fiche de renseignements, ANM 2E12/13/14/15; Interviews, Yusuf Sidibé, Konimba-Barila, 27 March 2002; N’waari Suntura, N’Golobala, 24 June 2002; Tenaiko Bamba, Kolondieba, 12 Oct 2002; Bourama Dembele, Tenemakana, 16 June 2002; H. Brunshwig, *Noirs et Blancs dans l’Afrique Noire Française, ou comment le colonisé devient colonisateur (1870-1914)* (Paris, 1983), 105-147; Launay, *Beyond the Stream*, 64-65.
- <sup>61</sup> RP, 1926 2nd trim; 1935 2nd trim; 1930 4th trim, ANM IE10.
- <sup>62</sup> Rapport, Djallon-Foula, 1928, ANM IE10.
- <sup>63</sup> RP, 1930, 1931 2nd trim, 1937, ANM IE10; RE, 1932, 1933, ANM 1Q332; Census, Guanin, 1923; Rapport, 15 April 1923, ANM S126. See also Philippe David, *Les Navétanes: Histoire des migrants saisonniers de l’arachide en Ségambie* (Dakar, 1980), 31-71, 113-120, 193-96.
- <sup>64</sup> RP, 1946-1955, Annual 1956 and 1957, ANM IE10; Jean-Loup Amselle, *Mestizo Logics*, 157; Tony Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa* (Oxford, 2002), 163-192; Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 424-430; Ruth Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa* (Oxford, 1964); W. J. Foltz, *From French West Africa to the Mali Federation* (New Haven, 1965).
- <sup>65</sup> David, *Les Navétanes*, 297-323; Dennis Cordell, Joel W. Gregory and Victor Piché, *Hoe and Wage: A Social History of a Circular Migration System in West Africa* (Boulder, 1996).

- <sup>66</sup> Interviews, Abou Sidibé, Yanfolila, 14 March 2002, Jan-Jan Sidibé, Balafina, 2 April 2002, Nouhou Diakite, Kologo.
- <sup>67</sup> Interviews, Musa Diallo, Kolondieba, 17 June 2002; Namakoro Bamba, Kolondieba, 7 July 2002; Tenaiko Bamba, Kolondieba, 12 Oct 2002; Nufòn Koné, Woblé, 4 May 2002.
- <sup>68</sup> Interviews, M'Bemba Sidibé, Balafina, 3 April 2002; Souleyman Sidibé, Solona, 10 April 2002; Adama Diallo, N'Golobala, 18 July 2002; Broulaye Doumbia, Tenemakana, 13 May 2002; Sekou Koné, Kolondieba, 23 Nov 2002; Census, Djallon-Foula, 1950, Gouanan, Mar-Dec 1950, ANM IE10. On the colonial expansion of plow farming, see Rapport Econ. 1930s-1950s, ANM 1Q332; and Van Beusekom, *Negotiating Development*, 33-56.
- <sup>69</sup> Census reports from 1950s: Foulala, Gouantiedougou, Tiemala, Siondougou, Kola, Niené, Tiendougou, Siondougou, Kekoro, Bameledougou, Domba, Falani-Ouola, Yorobadougou, Sibirila, Banimomotie, Dialakadougou, Bolou, Gouanan, Basidibé, Zana, Bilatouma, Debelendougou, ANM IE10.
- <sup>70</sup> Interview, Zoumana Koné, Tienaga, 15 June 2002.
- <sup>71</sup> Interview, Sirakoro Traore, Moro, 6 May 2002.
- <sup>72</sup> Interviews, Drissa Balla, Jelifin, 31 March 2002; Yusuf Sidibé, Konima-Barila, 27 March 2002; Balla Kouyate, Balafina, 2 April 2002; Yusuf Coulibaly, 17-19 May 2002; Marcel Cardaire, *L'Islam et le Terroir Africain* (Bamako, 1954), 49-53. See also Danielle Jonckers, "Le temps de prier est venu: Islamisation et pluralité religieuse dans le sud du Mali," *Journal des Africanistes* 68, 1-2 (1998); R. Warms, "Merchants, Muslims, and Wahhabiyya: The Elaboration of Islamic Identity in Sikasso, Mali," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 26, 3 (1992), 485-507; E. Skinner, "Islam in Mossi Society," in I. M. Lewis, (ed.), *Islam in Tropical Africa*, 362.
- <sup>73</sup> Census, Niené, 1953, ANM IE10. On transformations in commodity consumption, and localist vs. cosmopolitan styles, see also Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (California, 1999) 82-122.
- <sup>74</sup> Interviews, Ali Diallo, N'Golobala, 12 June 2002; Sekou Diakite, Balafina, 2 April 2002; Salimata Diallo, Tenemakana, 15 May 2002; Sidiki Koné, Kolondieba, 9 Oct 2002.
- <sup>75</sup> Interviews, Madji Konate, Kolondieba, 23 Nov 2002; Sidiki Diallo, N'Golobala, January 2000; Adama Diallo, N'Golobala, 18 July 2002.
- <sup>76</sup> Cardaire, *Islam*, 51.
- <sup>77</sup> Interview, Musa Diallo, Kolondieba, 17 June 2002.
- <sup>78</sup> Interviews, Madja Traore, Buguni, 9 August 2000; Fatumata Doumbia, Zimpiala 8 Oct 2002; Mariame Koné, Tenemakana 5 Oct 2002; Madji Konate, Kolondieba, 23 Nov 2002. On Islam and gender in West Africa, see Adeline Masquelier, *Women and Islamic Revival in a West African Town* (Indiana, 2010); and Barbara Cooper, *Marriage in Maradi: Gender and Culture in a Hausa Society in Niger, 1900-1989* (Portsmouth, 1997).
- <sup>79</sup> Interviews, Yusuf Coulibaly, Tenemakana, 15 May 2002; Broulaye Koné, Kolondieba, 19 Nov 2002; Hawa Diallo, Tenemakana, 14 May 2002, Bintu Koné, Kolondieba, 10 Oct 2002; Census, Kola, 1947; Census, Foulala, 1951, ANM IE10.
- <sup>80</sup> Interview, Namakoro Bamba, Kolondieba, 1 June 2002.
- <sup>81</sup> Interview, Adama Diallo, Niamala, 12 Oct 2002.
- <sup>82</sup> RP, August 1957; Census, Gouantiedougou, 1956, ANM IE10.
- <sup>83</sup> Interviews, Amadou Sidibé, Solona, 10 April 2002; Yusuf Sidibé, Konimba-Barila, 27 March 2002; Hari Sidibé, Yanfolila, 28 March 2002; El Hajj Sekou Sidibé, Jelifin, 31 March 2002.
- <sup>84</sup> Interviews, Yusuf Coulibaly, 17-19 May 2002; Drissa Diallo, N'Golobala, 18 May and 9 July 2002; El Hajj Sekou Sidibé, Jelifin, 31 March 2002; Imam Bakari Koné, Kolondieba, 7 June 2002; M'Bemba Sidibé, Balafina, 3 April 2002; RP, Annual 1956, ANM IE10.
- <sup>85</sup> Cardaire, *Islam*, 53, fn.1. On this broader issue, see also B. Cohn, "The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia" in idem., *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays* (Chicago, 1987).
- <sup>86</sup> By 1957, officials were stunned to discover that the number of "Muslims" (156,351) had suddenly surpassed that of "fetishists" (90,110) in Buguni. RP, 1957 Annual, ANM IE10.
- <sup>87</sup> Interview, Lamine Diakité, Yanfolila, 14 April 2002.
- <sup>88</sup> Census, Zana, 1954; and Census, Gouantiedougou, 1956, ANM IE10.

- <sup>89</sup> Klaus Ernst, *Tradition and Progress in the African Village: Non-Capitalist Transformation of Rural Communities in Mali* (New York, 1976), 91-100; Amselle, *Mestizo Logics*, 92-93.
- <sup>90</sup> Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 234-238, 276-284; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea, 1939-1958* (Portsmouth, 2005), Ch. 5 and Ch. 6; Jean Suret-Canale, "La fin de la Chefferie en Guinée," *Journal of African History*, 7:3 (1966), 459-493; Lansiné Kaba, *The Wahhabiyya: Islamic Reform and Politics in French West Africa* (Evanston, 1974), 169-252.
- <sup>91</sup> Census, Foulala, 1952, ANM IE10.
- <sup>92</sup> Census, Siondougou 1949 and 1955; Falani-Ouola, 1955, ANM IE10; Fiche de renseignements, ANM 2E12 & 2E14.
- <sup>93</sup> Cardaire, *Islam*, 53-54.
- <sup>94</sup> See Bruce Wexler, *Brain and Culture: Neurobiology, Ideology, and Social Change* (Cambridge, 2008), 4-6, 85-182.
- <sup>95</sup> Interviews, Sekou Diakite, Balafina, 3 April 2002; Hari Sidibé, Yanfolila, 28 March 2002, Yacouba Danyoko, Tenemakana, 23 June 2002.
- <sup>96</sup> Bourdieu, *Outline*, 87.
- <sup>97</sup> RP, 1951 4<sup>th</sup> trim, ANM IE10. On Qur'anic education in the French Sudan, see L. Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power and Schooling in a West African Muslim Society* (Bloomington, 2001); and Etienne Gérard, *La tentation du savoir en Afrique: Politiques, mythes et stratégies d'éducation au Mali* (Paris, 1997)
- <sup>98</sup> RP, 1932 2<sup>nd</sup>; RP, 1953, 1957, ANM IE10.
- <sup>99</sup> Interview, Drissa Diallo, N'Golobala, 9 July 2002. See also Lamin Sanneh, *The Crown and the Turban* (Boulder, 1997), particularly Ch.7; A. Gouilly, *L'Islam dans l'Afrique Occidentale Française* (Paris, 1952), 207-220; Michael Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations* (Ashland, 1999), 1-28, 42-42, 48-157.
- <sup>100</sup> Bulletin politique, 1953 3<sup>rd</sup>, Yanfolila, ANM E10; Interviews, Yusuf Coulibaly, Tenemakana, 21 May 2002; Almamy Sidibé, Balanfina, 3 April 2002; Bakari Koné, Kolondieba, 7 June 2002; Cardaire, *Islam*, 57.
- <sup>101</sup> Interview, Drissa Diallo, N'Golobala, 18 May 2002.
- <sup>102</sup> Wexler, *Brain and Culture*, 4-6, 85-182.
- <sup>103</sup> Interview, Musa Sumoaro, Kolondieba, 20 Nov 2002.
- <sup>104</sup> Census, Foulala, 1951, 1958, Census, Falani Ouola, 1955, ANM IE10; Interview, M'Bemba Sidibé, Balafina, 3 April 2002.
- <sup>105</sup> Census, Foulala 1951, 1958; Census, Tiemala 1954, ANM IE10.
- <sup>106</sup> Interviews, Adama Diallo, Niamala, 12 Oct 2002; El Hajj Sekou Sidibé, Jelifin, 31 March 2002; Bintu Koné, Kolondieba, 10 October 2002. On similar post-colonial practices, see B. Soares, *Islam and the Prayer Economy: History and Authority in a Malian Town* (Ann Arbor, 2005).
- <sup>107</sup> Interview, Almamy Sidibé, Balanfina, 3 April 2002.
- <sup>108</sup> Interviews, Adama Diallo, Niamala, 12 Oct 2002; M'Bemba Sidibé, Balafina, 3 April 2002; Drissa Diallo, N'Golobala, 11 July 2002; Nouhou Diakite, Kologo, 4 and 5 2002. On unaffiliated Sufism, see Launay, *Beyond the Stream*, 179-195.
- <sup>109</sup> Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 191-193, 187-214; see also Patrick Ryan, *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition* (Missoula, 1978), 99-131; Skinner, "Islam in Mossi Society"; Jonckers, "Le temps de prier est venu"; Warms, "Merchants, Muslims, and Wahhabiyya"; Mark, "Urban Migration"; D. Sperling, "The Coastal Hinterland and Interior of East Africa," Nehemia Levtzion and Randall Pouwels (eds.), *The History of Islam in Africa* (Athens, 2000), 273-302; Felicitas Becker, *Becoming Muslim in Mainland Tanzania* (Oxford, 2008), 53-113; S. Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison, 1990), 120-153; Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*, 55-78, 117-145; and Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (New Haven, 1977), 215-217.