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Revelation and Secrecy
Cultural Models of Performance in the Casamance Revolt, Senegal

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Since 1982 a separatist movement has struggled for political independence for the southernmost region of Senegal: Casamance. Most studies of this protracted armed conflict focused on its political dynamics. This paper, however, seeks to provide a cultural understanding for the dynamics of the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC). The MFDC is a political force profoundly rooted in local forms of religious organisation. The paper explores the 'cultural models of performance' that structured the MFDC and its relation towards its constituency. Two cultural models of performance are delineated. The first model, prophecy, has a long tradition in Casamance, especially among the Jola ethnic group. Father Diamacoune Senghor, MFDC's leader, is profoundly influenced by a local prophetess who preached in the 1940s, and he believes that her prophecy (independence) is still relevant today. However, inconsistencies within his messianic discourse led to the loss of popular support and the MFDC 'routinised' into a secret society. The second cultural model of performance on which the MFDC is based, secrecy, is equally well rooted in Jola cultural practices. As a secret society, MFDC has succeeded in exerting pressure on the Senegalese state. The paper concludes that the MFDC has become a channel of communication towards the national regime, constituting an alternative model of state-society mediation in Senegal.

Introduction

In 1997 the struggle for an independent Casamance took an unprecedented violent turn. Guerrillas of the *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance* (MFDC) started using landmines, causing casualties among the civilian population. The autonomously operating members of the MFDC escaped the authority of Father Diamacoune, their secretary-general. On 13 January 1998, Father Diamacoune made

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an attempt to calm down the undisciplined members of the separatist movement. In a public declaration, he stated: "Brothers and sisters of Casamance! Inadmissible things happen in the land of our ancestors. Landmines cause human suffering. They kill men, women, and children, innocent and unarmed citizens [...]. I condemn the perpetrators of these crimes. And I appeal to our traditional ethics to call them to order. Do not rape, do not kill children, women or elders. *Niauw!*". Father Diamacoune thus appealed to traditional ethics. *Niauw* is a Jola term meaning so much as taboo. A traditional interdiction was to prevent the MFDC recruits from displaying unruly behaviour.

Since 1982 the MFDC has demanded political independence for the southernmost region of Senegal. MFDC separatism has been the subject of various studies that generally focus on the political dynamics of the armed conflict.[1] With the exception of an insightful article on MFDC's organisation (Geschiere & Van der Klei, 1988), no study has so far been written that provides a cultural understanding of the MFDC, such as anthropologists have provided for other armed insurgencies in Africa (e.g. Buijtenhuijs, 1982; Lan, 1985; Richards, 1996). The MFDC's discourse was highly charismatic in 1982 and very much attuned towards a local audience. The MFDC is a political force embedded in Casamance society, being profoundly rooted in local forms of religious organisation. In this paper, I want to explore the 'cultural models of performance' that were instrumental in shaping this form of resistance (cf. Zulaika, 1988). I will analyse MFDC's discourse and practices as basically embedded in two cultural models: prophecy and secrecy.[2] The MFDC is a popular mode of political action based on the transformation of these cultural models. My argument is that the MFDC has not succeeded in merging these two inherently contradictory models. More specifically, I will suggest that a 'fatal logic' (Fabian, 1991) in MFDC's prophecy led to the routinisation of the MFDC into a secret society.

Although I favour a cultural approach, I do not suggest that the making of the MFDC is the result of a cultural disposition of the Jola ethnic group. Lambert (1998: 592) correctly states that one of the strongest arguments denouncing Casamance separatism locates Casamance nationalism in Jola culture. The argument reduces the political struggle to another variety of cultural essentialism (cf. Schlichte, 1996: 170). Nor do I suggest that the MFDC unites Catholics and adherents of local traditional cults against Senegal's Muslim population, which is a

[1] An overview of the literature is provided by De Jong (1998b). Studies that provide a general insight in the causes of the conflict are: Geschiere & Van der Klei (1987 and 1988), Diaw & Diouf (1992), Barbier-Wiesser (1994), Marut (1994 and 1996), Schlichte (1996). One of the reasons for widespread discontent with the Senegalese regime was its implementation of the 1964 Loi sur le Domaine nationale, which led to both rural and urban land expropriations in Casamance. This particular aspect of the Casamance conflict is analysed by Van der Klei (1979) and Hesseling (1986, 1990, 1992, and 1994). The protest against the implications of national legislation indicates that state penetration of local society has been a critical trigger of the conflict. However, the MFDC has also accused the Senegalese state of being negligent in promoting the development of the Casamance region. It would therefore be erroneous to consider state-penetration an unambiguous reason for the revolt, a point of view that I subscribed to elsewhere (De Jong, 1998b).

[2] I will not engage myself in the vast debate on distinctions between prophecy, prophetic movements, millenarianism, charismatic movements, and messianism. The terms will be used indiscriminately.

current understanding of the conflict among the Senegalese public. Yet, even if this paper does not explicitly address the political reasons for the making of the conflict, I suggest that a cultural understanding of the MFDC is instructive in explaining the dynamics of the MFDC, notably its relationship to its local constituency.

However weak popular support for the separatist movement may be today, the MFDC initially expressed extensive local discontents with the central government. The MFDC was a political expression *par le bas* (Bayart, 1983 and 1986; Bayart *et al*., 1992). As a popular mode of political action, the MFDC marked a sharp discontinuity with the Senegalese pattern of state-society mediation. The Senegalese Muslim Sufi brotherhoods have played a key role in this mediation ever since French colonisation (Cruise O'Brien, 1971 and 1975; Coulon, 1981; Villalón, 1993, 1995 and 1998). But Sufi brotherhoods never rooted in the egalitarian Jola society and Sufi leaders never functioned as mediators towards the state. It has been argued that the making of the MFDC was a result of the absence of communication between a centralised patrimonial state and local, predominantly segmentary social structures (Darbon, 1988; Friebe, 1996).[3] However, the MFDC has in its own particular way brought about this articulation and monopolised the expression of local discontent (Marut, 1994: 205). We should thus interpret the MFDC as a mode of political engagement with, and within the Senegalese state. The second aim of this paper is, therefore, to compare the MFDC with other forms of Senegalese state-society mediation. I will try to demonstrate that the MFDC rejected both the Senegalese state and the Sufi model as mode of interaction with the state. Thus, this paper tentatively pursues the argument that the MFDC is a culturally embedded mode of political action that - to the extent that it engages with the state - provides an alternative model of interaction with the Senegalese state.

The MFDC constituency

The call for independence by the MFDC was initially supported by a large number of inhabitants of the Casamance region. The government, however, denounced the movement's coherence, suggesting that the whole affair was a conspiracy led by 'a few village elders' who received help from abroad. But it seems very unlikely that the village elders were capable of mobilising a large protest movement. The Senegalese government furthermore denounced the movement by referring to it as an '*affaire diola*'. The movement itself tried to escape accusations of 'tribalism' and insisted on its regional footing (Geschiere & van der Klei, 1988). Although the feeling of neglect expressed in MFDC pamphlets was certainly quite general among the Casamance population, the question is to what extent popular support for the MFDC went beyond

[3] See Bayart (1993: 133-140) for a discussion of the contemporary trajectories of lineage societies within the African state. He remarks that the "particularity of lineage trajectories is revealed in violent or veiled responses to the State. Most of the massive upheavals after the colonial conquest were caused by lineage societies. In addition, just after independence, the African political authorities also had their share of difficulties in creating the intermediary power structures necessary for a government bureaucracy to function in these societies. [...] In a similar way, Dakar Jacobinism is weakened by the autonomist movements of the Diola in Casamance in southern Senegal […]" (Bayart, 1993: 133-134).

the boundaries of the Jola ethnic group? Which categories of the local population belong to the MFDC constituency?

The revolt started in 1982, with a peaceful demonstration that was carefully organised in the sacred groves around Ziguinchor (Geschiere & van der Klei, 1988). The majority of the people arrested after the demonstration were indeed Jola but this may have been the result of the authorities' conviction that the insurgency was a Jola affair. The Jola were considered the principal agents in the revolt and the Senegalese police suspected all members of this ethnic group of being sympathetic to the movement.[4] The repression of the movement by the Senegalese state - a repression that was also felt by passive supporters of the MFDC's claims - resulted in an ever more sharply defined boundary between supporters of the MFDC and those faithful to the government (Makhtar Diouf, 1994: 130).[5] This polarisation came about in a dialectic process of state repression and MFDC activity. After the 1982 demonstration, for instance, some civil servants of Casamance extraction were ready to plead their allegiance to President Diouf in public. The MFDC denounced them as 'traitors of the Casamance Fatherland', thus establishing a clear boundary between friends and enemies. In MFDC tracts published in 1990, the movement brandished Casamance-born bureaucrats and politicians once again as traitors. The boundaries of the MFDC were indeed well defined and cautiously guarded (Glaise, 1990: 84). Yet the MFDC never overtly claimed an ethnic footing.

Probably, the MFDC was from its inception dominated by the Jola.[6] The movement probably enjoyed most of its initial support among the Jola population and expressed feelings of neglect that had also slumbered among other *casamançais* (Balante, Banyun, Manjak, Mancagne). State repression subsequently led to radicalisation; polarisation led people to entrench themselves in irreconcilable positions. Today, the MFDC is dominated by Jola but the movement is certainly not supported by all Jola. Even if the Jola ethnic group does not monolithically support the MFDC, the separatist movement can justifiably be considered an 'ethnic' movement.[7]

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[4] In various tracts, the MFDC stated that the Senegalese police arrested members of various ethnic groups. Those identified as Jola were imprisoned whereas the others (non-Jolas) were released from detention. The MFDC thus claimed a regional multi-ethnic footing for the movement and blamed the Senegalese government for trying to single out one particular ethnic group. There were many other irregularities in the arrests made by the police. Family members of alleged insurgents were arrested without any indication of their involvement with the MFDC. Moreover, many people arrested after the demonstrations were in fact disclosed by neighbours and co-villagers, settling old scores irrelevant to the MFDC's claims. Adherence to one or another faction in the Socialist Party was another reason for imprisonment (Diaw & Diouf, 1992: 10-11).

[5] The assumption that Jola were the principal agents in the revolt - an assumption on which subsequent state repression was founded - has probably contributed to further inscription of Jola identity on the local population (personal communication, Jos van der Klei).

[6] Geschiere & Van der Klei assert that Mandinko and Pular kept apart during the initial demonstrations (1988: 214). Darbon (1984: 125; 1985: 126), Schlichte (1996: 198), and Lambert (1998: 592) also consider the movement a Jola affair. Marut takes a nuanced position: "Not all separatists are Jola and not all Jola are separatists" (Marut, 1996: 80). He correctly argues that the conflict divides the Jola ethnic group along vertical lines (Marut, 1996: 80). Friebe (1996: 190) is the only author arguing that the MFDC is not an ethnic movement. He attributes paramount importance to the lineage elders as organisers of the movement. However, this raises the question of non-Jola elder participation in the movement, a question that he does not address.

[7] I do not suggest that the 'Jola' constitute a primordial social group. Jola identity is a social construct, as much as any other ethnic or national identity (de Jong, 1994).

Among the first demonstrators were practitioners of a wide variety of professions. Peasants represented a majority but educated people and petty bureaucrats also figured among the supporters of the MFDC. Owing to the repression of the movement by the armed forces and their retreat into the forest, the composition of MFDC membership has probably changed over time. The guerrilla activities demanded the participation of permanently available young men. Women certainly contributed their part to the persistence of the guerrilla movement, notably through discretion with regard to the men's actions. But they were not present in *le maquis*. The guerrilla fighters originated from both rural and urban areas. A majority of the guerrilla fighters lived in towns before joining the MFDC. Part of the MFDC leadership consists of former army officers and other state employees who, after the adoption of structural adjustment programmes, were dismissed from office. The limits to the absorption of labour power in the Senegalese economy, as a result of economic stagnation, also left a large number of young urban Jola unemployed. The MFDC gratefully drew its rank and file from this superfluous labour force.

Religious denomination does not seem to have been an important indicator for MFDC membership or support. The guerrilla fighters adhere to various religions: Islam, Christianity, and the local traditional cults. Tracts published in 1990 revealed a thus far not expressed hostile attitude towards Muslim leaders (*marabouts*). This is quite surprising if we take into account that about 80 per cent of the Casamance population adheres to Islam, and that many Muslim Jola are implicated in the insurgency (Schlichte, 1996: 194).[8] The hostile attitude towards the *marabouts* need not be an indication of a true anti-Islamic stance in the movement. The hostilities were probably addressed towards the newly arriving Muslim leaders originating from other parts of Senegal (Glaise, 1990).

A certain fatigue in popular support for the guerrillas could be noticed from 1992 onwards. In March 1993, at the initiative of several youth associations, thousands of young people demonstrated for peace in Ziguinchor. This demonstration and other expressions of dissatisfaction may be taken as a rejection of the MFDC, not only because it instigated the war but also because the guerrillas themselves are known for atrocities committed against the local population.[9] With popular support for the MFDC waning, the insurgents feel less restraint about prising exactions from the local population. Exactions frequently occur. Moreover, MFDC factions have started using land mines, indiscriminately causing casualties among the military and the civilian population. The increasingly hostile behaviour against the local population has caused the movement to lose much of its support.

In short, the MFDC can rightfully be considered a guerrilla movement that initially enjoyed broad popular support, even beyond the boundaries of the Jola ethnic group. The movement had a broad base ranging from peasants and low-rank civil servants to members of the Catholic clergy and other highly educated people, some of

[8] Glaise (1990) suggests that the Jola's observance of Islam is superficial. Especially during the young men's initiation ritual, it becomes clear that the position of the Muslim leaders in Jola communities is quite unstable and that the traditional community leaders (the village elders) are still firmly in charge (Glaise, 1990: 85). Many pre-Islamic practices and beliefs indeed persist, even today, but this is not typical of the Jola ethnic group and can in fact be observed throughout Senegal.

[9] In the same year, the MFDC also executed its first acts of ethnic cleansing, killing dozens of immigrant fishermen, as a cynical affirmation of their being the voice of indigenous casamançais.

them living abroad. Repression of the movement by the Senegalese regime contributed to ethnitisation of the conflict. The Casamance conflict thus united a limited number of Jola in armed opposition to the state.

MFDC's discourse: the revelations of Alinsitowe

The MFDC is an amalgam of various segments of the Casamance population with equally divergent interests. We should not assume that the motives and aspirations of the MFDC insurgents make up a coherent discourse. Their points of view are indeed highly contradictory. The insurgents nevertheless share some convictions that can be attributed to the ideological production by MFDC's leader: Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor.[10] He has authored a series of publications that may be considered the movement's manifest discourse. I rely on these publications to examine MFDC's ideology. The convictions expressed in the texts are at least partially shared by the movement's rank and file.

In 1980 Father Diamacoune Senghor gave a lecture entitled *Message de la reine Alinsitowe Diatta ou hommage à la résistance Casamançaise* (Senghor, 1980). The lecture was given at the Chamber of Commerce in Dakar. Some high-positioned Jola civil servants had invited Diamacoune to speak about the exemplary acts of Jola resistance against French colonisation. However, the lecture contained an (unanticipated) political subtext.[11] A second text, published by *Politique Africaine*, should be considered the movement's manifesto (Anonymous, 1985). The pamphlet is anonymously published but, considering style and content, we may assume that Father Diamacoune was its author, or at least co-author. Finally, we have at our disposal a document written by Father Diamacoune (Senghor, 1995) in response to the *témoignage historique* by the French archivist Jacques Charpy (Charpy, 1994). The documents written by Father Diamacoune do not excel in elegance or composition. The document written in response to Charpy, however, is completely disconnected and consists of 171 pages of loose remarks. I will analyse the contents of these three texts but most attention will be given to the 1980 lecture. This text is Father Diamacoune's most uncompromised message, which has made him the *porte-parole* of the emergent independence movement. The text fully attests to Father Diamacoune's aspiration of being the voice of Casamance, a divinely inspired voice.

Father Diamacoune's lecture deals with a variety of subjects. The lecture is a chronicle of the political history of Lower Casamance under colonial rule. The text focuses on the practices and discourses of some important resistance heroes, notably sacred kings and prophetesses. The lecture is a glorification of the acts of resistance against the colonial administration in one particular part of Lower Casamance: the Casa region where Father Diamacoune himself was born. Furthermore, Diamacoune provides us with an interpretation of the message of one particular prophetess:

[10] Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor is not related to the former Senegalese President Léopold Sédar Senghor.

[11] The lecture contained all elements of MFDC's ideology, even if some of these elements remained somewhat concealed. The lecture is a eulogy on Casamance resistance to the colonial administration (containing an unambiguous yet concealed warning to the post-colonial regime). Lambert (1998: 588-589) wrongly suggests that Father Diamacoune had to wait until 1990 for a first opportunity to present his reading of the history of Casamance.

Alinsitowe Diatta. For the sake of clarity I will briefly recapitulate her role in the history of Casamance.[12]

During the Second World War, the colonial administration in Dakar was confronted with a disrupted trade in foodstuffs.[13] In order to provide the urban populations with food, the administration started to requisition rice and cattle among the Jola in Casamance.[14] In 1942, a Jola prophetess named Alinsitowe Diatta started preaching against this policy of requisitions. In her sermons she also forbade the cultivation of groundnuts and certain varieties of imported rice. Presumably, Alinsitowe furthermore proclaimed that taxes should no longer be paid, nor should young men give in to the compulsory military enrolment. The prophetess acquired a large audience. The situation escalated in 1943 when the alerted French administration arrested the priestess, held responsible for the disciplinary problems in the region. Alinsitowe was accused of stirring disobedience among the population, and condemned to six years of imprisonment. She was deported to Kayes in French Sudan (contemporary Mali). Around sixty of her followers received various prison sentences (Girard, 1969: 214-267).

Charismatic movements, while not seeking direct confrontation, often remain elusive to established regimes. These movements are highly ambiguous popular modes of political action. Yet Alinsitowe's movement attracted the administration's attention. Whether Alinsitowe's message had been unambiguously directed against the French administration still needs to be established. Girard says that Alinsitowe had not stirred disobedience towards the French. The revolt against the requisitions was not led by her, nor stimulated by her. The prophetess herself denied being implicated in the revolt (Girard, 1969: 226-229). But a politicised reading of her activities by the French administration led to Alinsitowe's imprisonment. Her arrest and deportation has contributed to her contemporary status of martyr in Casamance. Today, Alinsitowe is remembered as one of the bravest resistance heroines in Casamance history. Schools, roads, petty commercial enterprises, and the local stadium in Ziguinchor carry her name.

In 1980 the fate of Alinsitowe after her deportation to Kayes was still unknown. In his lecture, Father Diamacoune demanded an investigation by the Senegalese administration into her disappearance and her contemporary place of residence. He furthermore demanded her immediate return, dead or alive (Diamacoune, 1980: 42, 45). This demand was repeated in several MFDC tracts published after 1980. At first the Senegalese regime lent a deaf ear to the MFDC's demand but in the end the regime admitted an investigation into the fate of this prophetess (Darbon, 1988: 136). The commission of investigation reported that Alinsitowe had died shortly after her imprisonment in exile. Today, many people in Casamance reject the result of the investigation, accusing the commission of reporting in the interest of the Senegalese regime. They believe that Alinsitowe is still alive, and readily produce hearsay on her whereabouts. The insurgents in particular cling to

[12] For an evolutionist analysis of prophecy in Casamance, see the study by the French anthropologist Girard (1969).

[13] The colony remained under Vichy rule during the Second World War.

[14] Since the nineteenth century, French colonial rule had encouraged the production of groundnuts for exportation to France. The local production of subsistence food had declined in most parts of Senegal (except for Casamance), and the urban population had become dependent on imported South East Asian rice.

this myth of the living priestess.

Diamacoune's interest in Alinsitowe and the demand for her return to Casamance is inspired by his wish that she be recognised as a Senegalese resistance heroine.[15] But the Father also considers her message of contemporary relevance to the predicament of Casamance. Diamacoune's interpretation of Alinsitowe's message, however controversial, should be considered an important element of MFDC ideology. In the following, I will present Alinsitowe's message such as represented by Father Diamacoune, not necessarily sharing his view on the priestess. Father Diamacoune appreciates Alinsitowe's emphasis on particular values like unity, freedom, and solidarity. According to him, she encouraged people to respect their parents, and to love the land of their ancestors (Diamacoune, 1980: 39). Conduct inspired by these values would contribute to a revival of community life irrespective of distinctions of race, culture, sex, age, and religious denomination. This community revival would be secular, but also spiritual, and extend to all men of good intentions (cf. Anonymous, 1994). Note that this community of unbound love would eventually embrace the entire Casamance nation.

The work Alinsitowe did to provoke the emergence of such a community consisted of animal sacrifices which, in all their modesty, contributed to its immediate realisation: sacrifices implied a redistribution of wealth. In short, the sort of community that Alinsitowe imagined, subsequently re-imagined by Diamacoune, is nothing less but *communitas* Turner (1969).[16] Diamacoune has millenarian expectations of Alinsitowe's revelations.

The political meaning of messianism

Diamacoune considers Alinsitowe's blueprint of society a possible future for Casamance. The priestess' revelations are therefore relevant to our understanding of MFDC's ideology. According to Diamacoune, Alinsitowe summoned a return to 'authentic independence' (Diamacoune, 1980: 44). This demand for independence was voiced by Alinsitowe and prophetesses who claimed to be her successors. Aloendiso, for example, expressed her point of view as such: "Casamance to the

[15] Father Diamacoune claims that Alinsitowe summoned a return to 'authentic' values while simultaneously welcoming all positive foreign influences (Diamacoune, 1980: 37). In that respect, Diamacoune is a clear product of Senegalese history, notably of Senghor's ideology of Ouverture et Enracinement. Diamacoune acknowledges his debt to Senghor, but inverts this intellectual debt by arguing that Alinsitowe, long before Senghor, had stressed the values of authenticité and retour aux sources (ibid.: 38). Diamacoune's discourse thus reflects and subverts the national Senegalese ideology.

[16] Communitas is the state of comradeship that emerges when all social distinctions become irrelevant. Turner defines communitas as opposed to structure: "communitas emerges where social structure is not" (Turner, 1969: 126). And: "Communitas breaks in through the interstices of structure, in liminality; at the edges of structure, in marginality; and from beneath structure, in inferiority" (ibid.: 128). Communitas is an ephemeral phenomenon: "[…] the spontaneity and immediacy of communitas - as opposed to the jural-political character of structure - can seldom be maintained for very long. Communitas itself soon develops a structure, in which free relationships between individuals become converted into norm-governed relationships between social personae" (ibid.: 132). Turner distinguishes three sorts of communitas: existential, normative, and ideological. Diamacoune's discourse belongs to the type of ideological communitas.

casamançais! All strangers out, whites first!" This message is repeated throughout Diamacoune's lecture and alternatively phrased as: "The land belongs to the Jola" (ibid.: 55). In this claim on land ownership we can observe a radical break with Alinsitowe's other revelations, notably with the comprehensive nature of communitas. I assume that the strife for independence and the concomitant need to expel strangers was not so much voiced by Alinsitowe herself, but that it is Diamacoune's particular appropriation of her message.

Diamacoune's chronicle of Casamance resistance has contemporary relevance. He himself also situates the priestess' message in a post-colonial context. Father Diamacoune emphasises that Alinsitowe has in various ways contributed to the development of the Senegalese state, and draws comparisons between her practices and the performance of the independent state. Let us take a close look at these comparisons, for they reveal the range of capacities that Diamacoune attributes to the priestess. Diamacoune recurrently compares Alinsitowe's behaviour to the programs and actions of Senegalese Ministries. The prophetess has in her revelations emphasised the values of courage, patience, wisdom and justice, etc. However apt her message for the education of the nation's youth, the Ministry of Culture, National Education, Youth and Sports has thus far completely ignored Alinsitowe's wisdom (ibid.: 37). Also, Alinsitowe had foreseen the drought that has struck the Sahel region. Despite her apt predictions, the Ministry of Agriculture has completely ignored her message (ibid.: 42). In short, Father Diamacoune argues that Alinsitowe's messages have contemporary relevance, and yet her message is ignored by the government. He concludes that Alinsitowe is not sufficiently reckoned with by the state, and that she is deliberately swept under the carpet of history.

Not only is her message ignored by the Senegalese government, the Senegalese state has even resisted an enquiry into her present fate. Diamacoune knows why she is ignored: Alinsitowe was but a simple Jola. For that reason the Senegalese state has not honoured her, in contrast to other political or religious personalities banned by the French administration (such as Cheikh Amadu Bamba, founder of the Mouride brotherhood). Alinsitowe is also ignored in the national history textbooks, which do not fail to mention resistance heroes from other parts of Senegal (such as the Wolof *damel* Lat Dior). Diamacoune contributes this absence to Senegalese cultural imperialism (ibid.: 60).[17] He beliefs that there is an important reason why the Senegalese regime deliberately silences Alinsitowe's actions. Alinsitowe did not merely reject French rule but was sincerely opposed against any kind of domination of Casamance by strangers. She predicted Casamance's complete independence. Diamacoune asserts that this is the most important reason why the Senegalese regime keeps her hidden from the Casamance people. However, Father Diamacoune knows that her revelation will one day be realised.

A secular reading of the lecture thus reveals the following picture: an a-historical interpretation of Casamance's past. The predictions and resistance of the priestesses are anachronistically represented as preludes to the contemporary strife for Casamance's independence. Practices and discourses of prophetesses and sacred kings have contemporary significance. Father Diamacoune reads in Alinsitowe's message a demand for independence from Senegal. He has forged a history to justify

[17] The selective incorporation of predominantly Wolof elements in the national cultural heritage of Senegal is indeed undeniable.

a contemporaneous ethnic-regionalist strife for independence. A nostalgic longing for a long-lost world inspires Diamacoune to an interpretation of social changes as threats from outside. A cultural purity is to be realised in instant millennium.

However, Father Diamacoune's discourse should not be considered a secular political discourse. His conception of history is profoundly religious, in a syncretic sense. Diamacoune is a Catholic priest and an exponent of the contemporary strife of the Roman Catholic Church in Casamance to incorporate local practices, or at least to tolerate them (cf. Baum, 1990). His interpretation of Alinsitowe's message attests to his syncretistic appropriation of local traditional practices.[18] According to Diamacoune, Alinsitowe was divinely inspired.[19] She prophesised Casamance independence (Diamacoune, 1980: 29). In Diamacoune's religious conception of history, this fulfilment of divine providence does not so much depend on real political possibilities, but on God's will. History is the realisation of Destiny. Independence then becomes the divine destiny of Casamance. If these convictions of Father Diamacoune are shared by the members of the MFDC, then the strife for an independent Casamance equals a holy war. It is no exaggeration to consider Diamacoune's expectations another variety of the Millennium. The millennium can indeed be imagined in many ways, says Cohn, in his study on medieval European millenarianism (Cohn, 1957: xiv). Regional independence, I think, can be considered one of its late twentieth century expressions. This is even better apprehensible if we realise that millenarian expectations are likely to emerge in a society "deprived of its independence and forced into a humiliating subjection" (Cohn, 1957: 313). Diamacoune indeed seems to believe in a divinely sanctioned independence.

While his vocabulary and political symbolics reflect the imprint of a Jola cosmology (cf. Schlichte, 1996: 198-199), and more particularly of a continuous prophetic tradition, it remains to be established whether Diamacoune himself may be considered a prophet. He himself claims descent of a spiritually powerful family. People refer to him as the 'charismatic leader' of the MFDC but they do not, to my knowledge, refer to him as a prophet in Jola terms. And his opponents consider him a madman, which is consistent with how illegitimate prophets are conceived. There is some comparative evidence that suggests that men of outstanding political qualities may be regarded as prophets. One of the political leaders of the anti-colonial Mau Mau movement, the later statesman Jomo Kenyatta, was considered a prophet by his followers, but he himself never professed to be the Messiah (Buijtenhuijs, 1982: 117-123). It seems safe to conclude that Diamacoune's millenarianism is a creative elaboration of the cultural model of prophecy among the Jola.

[18] In his lecture, he draws comparisons between the sacred Flup-Jola kings and various saints in the Old Testament (Diamacoune, 1980: 22-23). He even likens the priests of a particular Jola sanctuary (Diande) to the various Popes of the Roman Catholic Church (ibid.: 51-52). Finally, his syncretism is revealed in his description of Alinsitowe's God. Her God has all the virtues of a Christian God.

[19] She predicted the climatic drought that afflicted the Sahel region in the 1970s (Diamacoune, 1980: 41). She also foresaw the drop in price of groundnuts on the world market, and the resultant deteriorating terms of exchange. In short, according to Diamacoune she predicted all political and economic developments that plague contemporary Senegal (ibid.: 59).

Two Senegalese religious models

Considering Diamacoune's discourse as a prophecy, one can perhaps compare this cultural model of religious messianism with the various Senegalese Sufi brotherhoods that wield such enormous powers in the Senegalese state. A brief reconsideration of Senegalese Islam is therefore in order. Sufi brotherhoods are important forms of social organisation in Senegal (Cruise O'Brien, 1971 and 1975; Coulon, 1981; Villalón, 1993, 1995 and 1998). The Senegalese Muslim brotherhoods are based on a reciprocal relationship between the Muslim saints (*marabouts*) and their subordinate disciples (*talibés*). The saints offer their disciples salvation (*baraka*), in particular access to paradise. The saints themselves have access to this sacred quality through inheritance. All contemporary saints trace descent to the founding father of their brotherhood and most of them are indeed related to the founding marabout. A Sufi brotherhood is thus structured by kinship and ruled by the heirs of the founder. All Senegalese brotherhoods share this organisational model.

The Mouride *tariqa* is undoubtedly the politically most influential Senegalese brotherhood. Founded by Cheikh Amadu Bamba (ca. 1857-1927), it is known for the extreme submissiveness of its disciples. The Mourides were exceptional among the Senegalese brotherhoods in giving the reciprocal relationship between marabout and disciple an economic dimension. Work performed in the service of a marabout was regarded as an offering to God (Cruise O'Brien, 1971: 91).[20] Disciples worked on their marabouts' fields and were rewarded by the assurance of access to paradise afterwards. The organisation of the *talibés* working together in the service of their marabout was the Mouride brotherhood's major organisational innovation. The Mourides soon produced a substantial part of the total Senegalese groundnut produce. This explains why the Mouride marabouts were consistently supported by the French colonial administration. But they could equally use their revenues to subsidise the electoral campaigns of the Senegalese politicians who could intervene on the Muslim leaders' behalf in St Louis, Dakar, or Paris. The Muslim intermediaries were in a position to draw considerable personal or even group advantage from the French administration (Cruise O'Brien, 1971: 74-75; 1975: 106-107).[21]

Since the extension of suffrage to rural Senegal after 1945, the Muslim marabouts started - through their authority - to direct the political behaviour of their clienteles. The marabouts became political agents for the major parties, whose feeble organisations were inadequate to reach the mass of ordinary peasants. Owing to the submissiveness of the disciples, the Mouride marabouts could mobilise their disciples into large voting blocs (Cruise O'Brien, 1971: 262, 265-66). All Senegalese political parties attempted to win the support of at least some marabouts, since it was generally held that no party could win the elections without their help. All parties therefore presented themselves as champions of Islam (Cruise O'Brien, 1971: 272), and the leaders of the brotherhoods have generally preferred giving their clienteles political commands (*ndigals*) to vote for the ruling party.

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[20] Copans' (1988) Marxist analysis interprets the Muslim saints' relationship to their disciples not so much as reciprocal, but as exploitative. Since the disciples do not receive any material rewards (in terms of wage) for their work performed in the service of their saints, the religious relationship enables the Muslims saints to extract a substantial surplus from their disciples' work.

[21] Coulon (1981) rather emphasises the potential threat the Sufi brotherhoods represented to the colonial state. The relatively autonomous social field of Islam embodied a potential contre-pouvoir.

The vertical integration of local societies into the Senegalese state is thus assured in an informal way, in the shadow of formal bureaucratic structures.[22] This model of political integration in which Muslim marabouts mediate between local society and the central government is best studied among the Wolof-dominated Mouride brotherhood, but it is not limited to this brotherhood.[23] According to Villalón (1995), all Senegalese brotherhoods function as channels for popular demands. Some of these brotherhoods even express the concerns of ethnically based clienteles (Villalón 1993). Since the early 1990s the maraboutic model has even lent itself to the expression of overt political protest. The urban youth, disappointed with the Senegalese political system, was reached by the Islamist Dahiratoul Moustarchidina wal Moustarchidaty who channelled their anger into open contestation of the Senegalese regime (Villalón and Kane, 1998). The maraboutic system thus alternatively expresses both accommodation with, and resistance against the political system.

In Casamance, however, such mediation between marabouts and Dakar has never been established. The maraboutic system never took root in Casamance. Hierarchical relations of mediation were incompatible with the egalitarian political system of Jola society. Despite attempts by the Mouride brotherhood to settle in Casamance, and in spite of repeated efforts of the Senegalese regime to reach out to the Jola population through Muslim mediators (Darbon, 1988), the maraboutic system failed among the Jola. Attempts to introduce this 'Senegalese' model of Islam even triggered fierce condemnation and were regarded by many Jola as a form of 'colonisation'.

Cruise O'Brien interprets the Mouride movement as a variety of 'sacred nationalism', an effective reaction to French rule on an ideological level (Cruise O'Brien, 1971: 286). In the late 1970s, the sacred nationalism of Mouridism was to become articulated to Senegalese civil nationalism. Some Mouride proselytisers in Paris started to perceive Cheikh Amadu Bamba as a good nationalist (Cruise O'Brien, 1988: 147).[24] These ideas fell on fertile ground in Senegal, and in the 1980s young Mourides started to celebrate Amadu Bamba as a racial and national hero (ibid.: 151). Amadu Bamba not only represented to them a resistance hero against the West, he allegedly also refused subordination to the Arab world (ibid.: 153). Mouridism thus came to represent black African cultural pride, in particular within the context of Senegalese nationalism.[25]

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[22] See Balans et al. (1975) for other examples of informal mediation between the rural population and the Jacobinian regime.

[23] Since the Senegalese state is formally secular this process of mediation must be informal. The Senegalese constitution stipulates that the brotherhoods are free from state intervention and, vice versa, that the brotherhoods oblige themselves not to mingle with state affairs (Hesseling 1985: 201). The brotherhoods are simply too powerful to be openly confronted, and most Senegalese politicians regularly display their allegiance to at least one brotherhood. It is publicly known to which brotherhoods the politicians themselves adhere.

[24] In addition to the Mouride students' presence in Paris, there exists a vast diaspora of Mouride traders in Europe and beyond (Ebin, 1992 and 1996).

[25] In 1979, Copans suggested that the Mouride brotherhood was the only institute capable of producing a national ideology: "Aujourd'hui, la confrérie apparaît moins comme un médiateur nécessaire à cause de ses fonctions de contrôle et de mobilisation, ce qu'elle était jusqu'à présent, que comme l'un des seuls centres capables de produire une idéologie consubstantielle à l'ensemble des rapports sociaux sénégalais, c'est-à-dire une idéologie nationale" (Copans, 1980: 257).

The intellectuals and youth that found in Mouridism an expression of nationalism, referred to Amadu Bamba as the Man of Refusal.[26] By this they meant his refusal to submit to French rule or Arab finance (in contradistinction with the Mouridist collaboration with the French). Interestingly, Diamacoune's messianism explicitly contradicts Mouridist discourse.[27] Diamacoune depicts Casamance as the Land of Refusal (Anonymous, 1985: 134). It is telling that the hierarchically organised Mourides see the principle of 'refusal' embodied by the founding saint of the brotherhood, while Diamacoune indicates the land (i.e. the population) as the embodiment of refusal. In the contemporary appropriations of historical reactions to French colonialism, the meaning of 'refusal' is inverted or extended by both discourses. Mouride 'refusal' is nowadays at the root of Senegalese nationalism whereas the historically grounded Casamance 'refusal' is presumably continued in resistance against alien (Senegalese) rule.[28] Mouride refusal has become a core symbol of Senegalese nationalism whereas Casamance's refusal is transformed into a counter symbol, in opposition to the dominant nationalist symbolism.

The charismatic movement of Amadu Bamba has gradually been routinised since his death. Mouridism has become overtly nationalist during the 1980s. The Senegalese nation is thus partially grounded in a particular, routinised religious movement. Senegalese nationalism does not embrace the entire Senegalese society but is exclusive within that society. Diamacoune's messianism, as a reaction, is inherently opposed against the exclusivism of the Senegalese state and nation. The nationalisms of MFDC and Mouridism share a common discursive field in which they oppose each other, each of them based in distinct cultural models of performance.

The foundation myth

Nationalism requires a story about the foundation of the nation, and a story of its history ever since. The MFDC, in particular Father Diamacoune has dedicated himself to the imagination of such a story. In pamphlets distributed during and after the 1982 demonstration, a historical and social justification is given for the demands of the separatist movement. The document published by *Politique Africaine* is a diatribe in every respect, for instance in its characterisation of Casamance resistance,

[26] Note that 'to refuse' is a wide-spread political expression in Senegal. The opposition parties that rejected the 1983 election results were united under the banner of Front du Refus.

[27] An opposition between MFDC and Mouride discourses can be traced in their references to the Islamic expansion in medieval Europe. The president of the Mouride students association in Europe declared in 1982: "Although we are neither Arabs nor Arabic-speakers, we will act as a transmission belt between Cheikh Amadu Bamba and Europe, making the same approach as those who were, alas, unable to get beyond Poitiers in the year 732" (cited by Cruise O'Brien, 1988: 148). In contrast, Diamacoune has at various moments compared Casamance resistance to the Spanish Reconquista.

[28] There is a striking resemblance between Jola nationalism and Serb nationalism, such as analysed by Van de Port (1998). Van de Port argues that Serbs assert their 'hidden' Balkan identity (which they themselves associate with cruelty and barbarism) in the violence of their nationalist struggle for a Greater Serbia. In Casamance, Diamacoune reifies former Jola resistance against alien rule. The struggle for independence thus becomes an assertion of a reified rebel identity. In that sense, it is interesting that the semantic connotations of the ethnonym Jola (= the person who seeks revenge) seem to have acquired a practical political meaning.

that "has continued ever since 1645, similar to the Spanish *Reconquista* of 732 to 1492" (Anonymous, 1985: 131). The pamphlet tries to give a historical justification for Casamance's right to independence. Diamacoune represents Casamance as an age-old nation that continually resisted French colonial conquest. Even if Casamance was finally subjected to French rule, some pockets continued to resist their subjection. However, when Senegal acquired independence in 1960 President Senghor withdrew Casamance's right to independence.[29] Diamacoune therefore accuses Senghor of 'betrayal' of the region.

Father Diamacoune anachronistically represents Casamance as a nation with a long history. In reality, Casamance had never been a political entity until the French colonial administration defined the region as one of its territories and drew its geographic boundaries (*cf.* Schlichte, 1996: 196).[30] The emergence of a Casamance identity did not precede the region's incorporation in the French colony: it was one of its consequences. Since Casamance had never been an independent political entity, Diamacoune's foundation myth of the Casamance nation focuses on Casamance resistance to colonial and post-colonial rule. The emergence of a linear history is indeed often part of the making of an ethnic ideology.[31] The publication of a written ethnic history marks the emergence of a historical consciousness, as well as an idea of the rights that can be derived from the course of history. The mobilisation of the Jola was probably one of the aims of these pamphlets. Their past was reified and projected into the future: "Casamance has always been and will remain a country of refusal."[32]

It is altogether remarkable that Diamacoune, in his representation of Casamance history, only draws on the events and lives of priestesses that are specific to one particular group, that of the Flup-Jola. The rest of Casamance's history is simply neglected. Diamacoune has a bias towards the history of his own sub-group. His argument that his treatment of Flup history should be considered a trope, and that this history stands for Casamance history at large, is hardly convincing.[33] Diamacoune's claim of being the voice of Casamance is at odds with his very

[29] Diamacoune wrongly suggests that the political party Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance, founded in 1947, already strove for regional independence. This predecessor of the contemporary MFDC merged with Senghor's BDS in 1954. According to Diamacoune and many of his followers, the MFDC's support for Senghor was given on condition that Casamance would eventually be granted independence (cf. Lambert, 1998: 591).

[30] This was the outcome of an investigation by the French archivist Charpy, who was asked by the French government to establish which judicial status the Casamance region had enjoyed in the former colony (Charpy 1994). From an anthropological and historical angle, he correctly argued that Casamance had never been a political entity before its colonisation. Yet, it seems to me that the legal status of the Casamance region within the AOF was very ambiguous. From a judicial point of view, it might indeed be argued (as MFDC has repetitively done) that Casamance had a particular status. Data that sustain such an argument can be found in Darbon (1988, especially 60-62).

[31] Father Diamacoune contributed to the formulation of an ethnic ideology. It is well known that, under colonialism too, Christian intellectuals have often contributed to the formulation of ethnic ideologies (Vail, 1989). Anthropologists were also, and still are, implicated in the publication of ethnic histories (e.g. Van Binsbergen, 1992).

[32] "La Casamance a été, demeure et restera toujours le pays du refus" (Anonymous, 1985: 134).

[33] The chronicle should then be read thus: Oussouye = Flup = Casa = Jola = Casamance. Every name refers to an ethnic or territorial entity that encompasses the preceding entity. Oussouye is a village located in the home-land of the Flup-Jola; the Flup-Jola are one of the Jola subgroups in the Casa area; Casa in its turn is one of the areas inhabited by Jola; the Jola are one of the ethnic groups in Casamance.

narrowly biased chronicle. Indeed, an academic history of Casamance would be entirely different and reveal the tensions and contradictions between the various villages, sub-regions, and ethnic groups. The bias towards the Flup-Jola is one of the reasons why Diamacoune's message never attracted a wide audience. His focus on the history of some local kings and priestesses may also explain why Diamacoune's charisma eventually faded among the MFDC fighters originating, and operating north of the Casamance River. In 1991 the MFDC split in two factions: *Front Nord* no longer accepted Diamacoune's authority. The narrow basis of his nationalism is part of the fatal logic that led to MFDC's disintegration. Diamacoune's nationalist ideology is an instance of failed nationalism (*cf.* Bank, 1995).

The fatal logic

The MFDC initially was a variety of the messianic movements that prevail in many African countries where a repressive regime forbids formal political expressions. Political resistance is more or less explicitly expressed in such popular modes of political action. The political protest in Casamance probably took this messianic turn because Senegal's constitution does not permit political organisation on the basis of ethnicity or regionalism, and because informal channels of political communication with the central government were never established. The question we will address here is whether Diamacoune's messianic message has adequately reflected the political discontent among the Jola? And to what extent was his messianism incorporated in the practices of the MFDC?

To answer these questions we must first establish Diamacoune's status within the autonomist movement. It is beyond doubt that Diamacoune is the most important leader of the MFDC. He is educated and versed in rhetorical skills, and acts as the movements' spokesman. He is respected by members of the various factions within the MFDC, even though he does not transcend the cleavages among those factions. Even if his authority is *de facto* limited, no member of the MFDC can ignore him or do without him. Diamacoune has always been the central figure within the MFDC and his message was initially charismatic enough to mobilise part of Casamance's population.

The charisma that MFDC's message originally had for its followers, is now lost. People have started to turn away from the separatist movement. A number of causes can be forwarded for this failure. First of all, Father Diamacoune has alternated from spokesman for the MFDC's radical wing to conciliator, and vice versa. He often appeared unsure about the political road to take. Despite the skills that qualify him for messianic leadership (oratory skills, historical knowledge, alleged supernatural powers[34]), Father Diamacoune failed to mobilise mass support. Second,

[34] The MFDC guerrillas are said to wield supernatural powers. The Governor Amadu Dieng, a military who was installed in office in 1990 in order to pacify Casamance, was also attributed supernatural powers. With these powers he would be able to govern Casamance and resist the MFDC's armed assaults. Notions of supernatural power play an important role in the conception of politics in Senegal. For instance, politicians grant favours to marabouts in order to acquire magical power (Cruise O'Brien, 1971: 278). The manipulation of the political struggle by means of supernatural assistance provided by Islamic learned men (maraboutage) is an accepted principle in Senegalese politics, like witchcraft is in Cameroon (Geschiere, 1995).

Diamacoune's ideology is too much biased towards the predicament of the Jola, to the exclusion of other indigenous ethnic groups in Casamance. Third, people started associating him and his movement with the cause of Roman Catholicism, to the detriment of Islam. Fourth, the MFDC failed to invent public rituals. The separatist movement organised demonstrations on the 26th of December in 1982, and on the 18th of December 1983. The MFDC was subsequently repressed by the Senegalese regime and has not been able to create repetitive, binding rituals. The fifth constraint to MFDC's expansion was that the movement's goals were too tangible. The ambition to create an instant millennium is a characteristic of all messianic movements, but MFDC's claim to liberate Casamance has been far too ambitious. The project of an instant independence was not realised and adherents subsequently withdrew from the movement. This objective finally appeared to almost everybody (except MFDC members) as unattainable. In this context it should be noted that the MFDC - apart from its demand for regional independence - has never elaborated a political program (Schlichte, 1996: 199). The MFDC's demand for regional independence was not negotiable because the Senegalese state insisted on its territorial integrity. In the absence of other political objectives, negotiations could only fail. As a matter of course many other, external causes for the failure of the MFDC's messianism can be provided (e.g. the repression by the Senegalese military). However, we are only concerned here with the internal dynamic of its failure, the 'fatal logic' inherent in the movement's discourse.

Particular inconsistencies led to the movement's fatal loss of charisma. The movement subsequently routinised, which is a dynamic frequently observed among millenarian movements. In this respect Turner remarked: "In practice, of course, the impetus soon becomes exhausted, and the 'movement' becomes itself an institution among other institutions - often more fanatical and militant than the rest..." (Turner, 1969: 112).[35] Into what kind of institution the MFDC evolved we will shortly examine.

The MFDC and secrecy

Whereas Diamacoune's discourse is messianic, the MFDC's practices seem to be rooted in an entirely different cultural logic. The MFDC failed as a messianic movement, but as a guerrilla movement the MFDC proved quite successful. The MFDC stands in a long history of resistance against alien rule (cf. Roche, 1985). The segmentary character of Jola society was a major obstacle to administrative penetration (Darbon, 1988). The same segmentary organisation can be traced in the MFDC that seems unable to establish a stable and central structure of command. However, the segmentary organisation of the MFDC - operating in small, largely autonomous units - also appears to be one of its assets: imprisonment of its leaders does not result in the movement's withdrawal. Yet the segmentary organisation of the MFDC also hampers the peace process since cease-fires and other agreements signed by one faction are flatly ignored by other factions.

[35] In 1997, MFDC commandos disturbed a dance night in a village. They maltreated the feasting youths and killed four of them, blaming them for partying "while they were fighting for independence" (Libération, 26/9/1997). I consider this clear evidence for the militancy and fanaticism among the MFDC guerrillas.

If Diamacoune's failed messianism does not account for the persistence of the MFDC, is there perhaps another rationality that explains MFDC's success as a guerrilla movement? And is this rationality embedded in another cultural model of performance? What kind of cultural predisposition might explain why the MFDC has been able to resist the Senegalese army? Secrecy, I think, has played a pivotal role the organisation of the MFDC. From the inception of the movement sacred groves played an important role, for instance in the organisation of the 1982 and 1983 demonstrations. Geschiere and Van der Klei (1987 and 1988) argue that the demonstrations were carefully organised in the sacred groves around Ziguinchor: "It was in these groves that the famous 'secret meetings' were held which kept the movement alive during periods of repression. And it was there that all the action was prepared" (ibid.: 220).[36] This well-protected domain provided excellent opportunities to plan actions. Secrecy pertains to everything that happens in sacred groves, which are only accessible to initiated men (or women). Intellectuals could exercise their own influence within the sacred grove (ibid.: 222). Secrecy enabled the MFDC leadership to elude the regime because it could hide behind a 'traditional' screen. As a popular mode of political action shrouded in secrecy, the MFDC succeeded in organising a co-ordinated action against the state. Secrecy is deeply embedded in Casamance society and many local cultural practices are based on this principle of organisation, especially among the Jola. The young men's initiation is a case in point (Van der Klei, 1989; De Jong, 1998a and 1998c). But the secret is equally crucial in the masquerades that are frequently performed in Jola villages (De Jong, 1999), sometimes as part of the young men's initiation (Mark, De Jong & Chupin, 1998).

Secrecy also enabled the MFDC to define its boundaries. Sacred groves are important locations in the Jola villages, only accessible to the initiated adult men. It is inconceivable that uninitiated men would be tolerated to attend the meetings in the sacred groves around Ziguinchor. In the course of the 1980s, when the MFDC started its guerrilla war, non-Jola were not allowed to join the movement for fear that they would not respect the rules of secrecy.[37] In 1988, Geschiere and Van der Klei suggested that the MFDC's future success would depend on its capacity to overcome ethnic boundaries. Ten years later, it is clear that the movement has not succeeded in overcoming this obstacle. The boundaries of MFDC membership became co-terminous with the boundaries of the Jola ethnic group. Secrecy has been instrumental in creating a strong bond between the members of the MFDC and in closing their ranks to intruders, a feature characteristic of all secret societies (cf. Simmel, 1967: 348). Their kinsmen's discretion about their hiding places has prevented the Senegalese army from effectively combating the separatists. Women in particular have been very discrete supporters to their husbands and sons in the bush.

As a popular mode of political action based on secrecy, the MFDC may be considered a secret society. Secret societies have particular qualities (Blok, 1991; Simmel, 1967: 345-376). For instance, admission to the secret society generally depends on a rite of passage for the initiates. The rite of passage often consists of the swearing of an oath (La Fontaine, 1985: 40). Although the transmission of knowledge

[36] Darbon and Marut suggest that these demonstrations were a spontaneous expression of discontent, rather than a planned and organised action (Darbon, 1984: 124; Marut, 1994: 203). They do not seem to recognise secret meetings in the sacred groves as forms of formal organisation.

[37] Personal communication Jos van der Klei.

with regard to oathing and initiation is secret, there is evidence that oathing has taken place in 1982. One well-informed interlocutor suggested that the insurgents swore an oath on Casamance independence and sacrificed a man to secularise their bond. The MFDC has also created its proper rite of passage for aspiring rebels.[38] There is evidence that young men's initiations in Jola villages have been postponed due to the absence of the young men, enrolled in the MFDC. Van der Klei suggested that the initiation of young men into the MFDC even replaced the young men's initiation in their villages of birth (Van der Klei, 1989: 138-140).[39] The oath taking has perhaps been an important reason for the failure of negotiations between the MFDC and the central government. The oath obliges the insurgents to demand independence whereas the government has always insisted on Senegal's national integrity. It is remarkable that factions of the MFDC that gave up the armed struggle for independence, never overtly renounced to the cause of independence.[40]

Another characteristic of secret societies, slightly contradictory with the observation discussed above, is that secret societies' public programs become irrelevant to their members.[41] Membership is in itself sufficient reason for participation in a secret society's activities. This characteristic can also be noticed in MFDC methods of recruitment. I was told by a young man approached by the MFDC rebels, that no reasons were given why he should join the insurgents. He was told that "he would be instructed afterwards." This method of recruitment suggests that the public objectives of the MFDC are in fact secret. In effect, a former rebel admitted that he had joined MFDC forces "in order to learn about 'independence'", as if this political objective were not transparent in itself. The secret nature of the MFDC makes non-initiates uncertain about its public policy and imparts that they need to be instructed into its essentially secret goals. The young rebels that I met obviously enjoyed being secretive about MFDC's policy and objectives. The MFDC recruits clearly *perform* secrecy (Bellman, 1984).

At this point a comparison with other African cases of armed rebellion may he helpful in understanding the role of initiation and secrecy in African guerrilla movements. One such a movement was the anti-colonial Mau Mau insurgency in Kenya. According to Buijtenhuijs (1982), oath taking was widespread in Mau Mau and it was deliberately meant to be an initiation ceremony. The initiation created a new solidarity which set Mau Mau initiates apart from the community as a whole, thus reinforcing their bond *vis-à-vis* non-initiates (ibid.: 82-85). Since the oath was firmly embedded in Kikuyu culture the organisers of the oathing campaigns had to face an unsolvable dilemma: by multiplying the use of typically Kikuyu symbols, non-Kikuyu tended to be excluded. In effect, Mau Mau was predominantly, almost exclusively, a Kikuyu affair (ibid.: 135-140). Thus, comparison with the Mau Mau

[38] Personal communication Klaus Schlichte, 16/11/1998.

[39] Cf. Buijtenhuijs (1982: 129-132) suggested that the Mau Mau revolt in Kenya took place in a period in which a new Kikuyu age-set was to take over political power. The Mau Mau forest fighters, predominantly of Kikuyu extraction, implicitly assumed political authority by launching their revolt. The insurgency seems to have been cast in a traditional idiom of an age-set system.

[40] The same binding nature of the oath has been observed among the Mau Mau members in Kenya (La Fontaine, 1985: 59).

[41] Simmel has stated that the symbolism of ritual contributes to the secret society becoming a closed unit with a total claim upon the individual (1967: 360). He furthermore remarked that "the passion of secrecy [...] gives the group-form, depending on it, a significance that is far superior to the significance of content" (1967: 363).

revolt reveals some interesting parallels with the MFDC: initiation was important in creating a strong bond among the insurgents, which led, however, to the exclusion of members of other ethnic groups.

A second case for comparison pertains to a post-colonial revolt: the RUF insurgency in Sierra Leone (Richards, 1996). Here, too, initiation appears of paramount importance to the organisation of the RUF. The main idiom of transition from childhood to adulthood in Sierra Leone's forest society, says Richards, is that of initiation comprising instruction in a 'bush school'. The Poro Society 'devil' comes to town to seize young boys from their mothers, and subsequently initiates them. Nowadays, RUF has metaphorically taken on the function of the Poro Society. The RUF 'devil' now seizes the young men. Terrorised in the process of capture they are later treated generously by the rebels and the secrets of the movement are revealed. This process indeed amounts to a type of initiation (Richards, 1996: xix, 30). In adjacent Liberia, a similar process seems to transform youngsters into rebels. Ellis' account (Ellis, 1995) of the Liberian civil war suggests that the Poro Society has been a cultural model for the enactment of violence. Simultaneously, the structure of the Poro Society has in one particular region provided the organisational structure for a system of civil self-defence. The Poro secret society apparently functions as a cultural model of performance for the enactment of violence, as well as an organisational model to prevent violence from being inflicted.

The comparison with three other cases suggests that initiation is commonplace in African armed insurgencies. Forest rebels in both the colonial and post-colonial state, drawing on existing models of initiation, adapt the idiom of initiation so as to make it compatible with their politico-military objectives. It seems safe to conclude that the MFDC's organisation is based on initiation. MFDC's initiation is a transformation of the cultural model of Jola initiation, traditionally shrouded in secrecy. Secrecy has acquired new pragmatics in MFDC's confrontation with the state.

Conclusion

In 17 years of armed struggle moments have passed that MFDC fighters felt that independence was within reach. But the realisation of this objective becomes less and less likely. The political perspective has lost much of its relevance to the guerrillas and the MFDC continues as a secret society - as long as arms can be procured. Whereas its public political objective of regional independence has become obsolete, the MFDC rebels are still motivated by private prospects of war booty. The MFDC members increasingly demand requisitioning among the civilian population and sometimes commit armed robbery. Indeed, the local population has ceased to believe in the cause of regional independence and considers the MFDC an association of armed bandits. The secret society has given up its political goals and dedicates itself to the appropriation of arms, cattle and cash.[42]

[42] Cf. the study on the secret society of Buck-riders (Bokkenrijders, Blok, 1991), operating in the 18th century Low Countries. The secret society's members developed many criminal activities, evidently at odds with the society's professed political project.

The MFDC failed as a messianic movement but operates successfully as a secret society. Diamacoune's messianism was an appropriation of Alinsitowe's revelations. She was turned into a symbol of resistance. Diamacoune furthermore hoped her message to be realised by the MFDC: instant millennium or *communitas*. His messianism is part of a cultural tradition of prophetic movements led by priests or priestesses.[43] These movements formerly attracted large followings in Casamance. In these movements charismatic, self-achieved authority was valued over traditional, ascribed authority. Father Diamacoune's prophetic discourse therefore belongs to an altogether different cultural logic than the logic of secrecy. The practice of secrecy is based on patterns of traditional authority. The officiants of the sacred groves are without exception lineage elders. Strict separation between men's and women's sacred groves is observed. Secrecy reinforces gender categories and gerontocratic hierarchy. The charismatic movements in Casamance often broke away from these principles of authority. Thus, the MFDC was right from the start based on two complementary, but conflictual models of performance. The movement has not been able to incorporate these models into a viable new pattern of action. The exclusionary nature of the secret society stands in opposition to the communitas to be realised by messianism. This explains the contradictions between Diamacoune's discourse (emphasis on communitas) on the one hand and, the practices of the MFDC on the other hand (tracts that ostracise Wolof and *cadres casamançais*, ethnic cleansing, etc.). The MFDC is a popular mode of political action, initially charismatic in appeal, subsequently routinised in practices of secrecy.

The cultural model of secrecy is entirely different than the one that has contributed to the making of a religiously based civil society in other parts of Senegal. In Mouride Sufism, ritual and the notion of salvation *(baraka)* were given new meaning by Mouride leaders and disciples, notably in the organisation of groundnut cultivation, reinforcing the mutual dependency of saint and disciple and their joint leverage towards the Senegalese state. The model of political integration in which the Muslim marabouts mediate between their constituencies and the central government while simultaneously providing the state with legitimacy had its heyday in the 1960s. This 'social contract' has undergone many changes since independence but basically this structure is still at work today, albeit showing signs of decay (Cruise O'Brien, 1992 and 1996: 464). There are, however, indications that Sufi brotherhoods continue to channel popular demands (Villálon and Kane, 1998). According to Villalón, the entire maraboutic system has become a model for the expression of popular demands (Villalón, 1995: 247).

The Senegalese model of state-society relations is based on a co-operation between saints and politicians (bypassing or manipulating the bureaucrats). The popular mode of political action of the MFDC, however, rests on a rejection of both politicians and bureaucrats. A saint (Father Diamacoune) has led the separatist movement against the state. Jola society could be mobilised by a saint, but the separatist movement subsequently routinised into a secret society. In the segmentary Jola society the leverage of saints is weak and power is built on the collective force of men initiated in a secret society. As a secret society, the MFDC confronts the state.

[43] Baum (1999) demonstrates that Alinsitowe, as a female Jola prophetess, was exceptional in a long history of predominantly male prophets. Diamacoune himself also argues that Alinsitowe stood in a long tradition of male spiritual leaders. According to him, she was a spiritual and political successor to the sacred Flup kings Diatta and Diabone (Diamacoune, 1980: 20, 36).

Yet, we should be careful in characterising the MFDC as a popular mode of political action that merely seeks confrontation. The MFDC lost most of its popular support and can no longer be considered a *popular* mode of political action. Moreover, the MFDC not only seeks to confront the state. The MFDC may eventually accommodate to the state's regime. In 1991, the state succeeded in dividing MFDC. One of the factions, *Front Nord*, then settled for a truce. The personnel of this faction were rewarded with material rewards and appointments in EU financed projects (Schlichte, 1996: 202). Today, the MFDC has again engaged itself in negotiations with the Senegalese government. Although negotiations have recurrently failed in the past, the MFDC might this time settle for the carrots offered by the state. We may then interpret the MFDC as a secret society that, once the prize offered is sufficiently enticing, has mediated towards the state.

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