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(Mafeje 1971: 254)

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Conscientious Achievements of the Dangme before the Atlantic Contact: Insights from Archaeological and Ethnohistorical Investigations at Sega and Kpone, Greater Accra Region, Ghana

Fritz Biveridge*

Abstract

This article summarizes results of archaeological research conducted at Sega and Kpone, two ancient Dangme settlements located along the Gulf of Guinea in Ghana. Ethno-historical narratives and written records constituted other data sources used. The objective of the study was to utilize data from the above sources to deepen and enhance our understanding of ancient cultural life-ways of the settlers of the two sites before their encounter with Europeans. The combined evidence indicated that the settlement population was relatively large and sophisticated, attested by the extensive occupational areas and the existence of several specialist vocations. Another significant development was that the indigenous populations were engaged in complex intra-regional exchanges with neighbouring polities which impacted positively on the local economy and appears to have facilitated urbanization and state formation processes.

Keywords: Cultural life-ways, Dangme, Ethnohistorical traditions, Subsistence practices, Intra regional exchanges, Cultural material remains

Résumé

Cet article résume les résultats de recherches archéologiques menées à Sega et à Kpone, deux anciennes colonies de Dangme situées sur le golfe de Guinée au Ghana. Les récits ethno-historiques et les documents écrits constituent des sources de données également utilisées. L'objectif de l'étude était, à partir des données et sources susmentionnées, d'approfondir et améliorer notre compréhension des modes de vie culturels anciens des colons des deux sites

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avant leur rencontre avec les Européens. Les preuves combinées ont indiqué que la population était relativement importante et sophistiquée, comme en atteste les vastes zones de travail et l'existence de plusieurs professions spécialisées. Un autre développement significatif est que les populations autochtones se sont engagées dans des échanges intra-régionaux complexes avec les administrations voisines, échanges qui ont eu un impact positif sur l'économie locale et qui semblent avoir facilité les processus d'urbanisation et de formation d'État.

Mots-clés : Modes de vie culturels, Dangme, Traditions ethnohistoriques, Pratiques de subsistance, Echanges intra-régionaux, Restes de matériel culturel

Introduction

This article presents results of archaeological investigations conducted at Sega and Kpone. The two settlements lie about 500 metres away from each other along the Gulf of Guinea, Greater Accra Region, Ghana (Figure 1). The study constituted Phase 2 of the Coastal Dangme land Archaeological Research Project initiated in March 2015 by the author. The goal of the project is to reconstruct cultural life-ways of the Dangme populations that settled in the eastern coastal belt prior to the advent of Europeans, using principally material remains retrieved from archaeological investigations. Other notable pre-Atlantic Dangme settlements along the belt which the author plans to investigate include Ladoku, Shai Hills, Kpone West, Kpoete, Prampram, Adwuku, Ningo and Ada. In view of the broad and very extensive nature of the area which extends about 95 kilometres east to west and to facilitate the collection and analysis of data, the investigations are being undertaken in phases, each focusing on one of the above-named towns.



Figure 1: Map of ancient Dangme settlements

Under Phase 1, Laloi East, a Late Stone Age site along the banks of the Laloi Lagoon with over thirty scatters of calcified shell middens, was investigated and the results published in *Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift* (56 (1/2), 2015).

Early European writers referred to Sega variously as *Chinke*, *Chiabra* and *Sinka* (Marees 1601; Barbot 1732; Meredith 1812; Pereira 1967). Sega lies on a ridge 18–40 metres above sea level and overlooks the Gao Lagoon to the north and the sea to the south. The site is large, spanning approximately 0.8 km by 0.5 km (Survey Dept. Sheet No. 0500A3 2000). This guesstimate was determined by measuring the extent of surface artifact scatter across the occupation area. Predominant artifacts unique to the site included veritable quanta of shards of local manufacture, stone grinders and thousands of what appeared to be solid hand-cut square and rectangular stones believed to have been utilised as floor tiles, building blocks and buttresses to support house foundations. The broad unbroken expanse of the Sega site suggests that the population in ancient times was significant. The site is currently desolate and derelict.

Like Sega, European traders also called Kpone by several names with *Ponnie*, *Poni* and *Ponny* predominating (Bosman 1705; Barbot 1732). It is presently a sprawling coastal industrial township, lying on a ridge 15–22 metres above sea level (Survey Dept. Sheet No. 0500A3 2000). Kpone can be divided broadly into two suburbs by chronological affiliation: an ancient settlement quarter which gradually slopes and merges with the sea to the south, and the modern settlement quarter which lies to the north. All eleven clans, which are the major sub-divisions of the Kpone state, are located in the former quarter. Various families make up a clan which are traditionally called *We* (plural *Wei*), with households constituting the smallest family unit. The following constitute the clans of Kpone: *Appia We*, *Adzeman We*, *Bediako We*, *Kojo We*, *Antieye We*, *Sanchi We*, *Nii Dune We*, *Osono We*, *Nueteytse We*, *Ofosu We* and *Sackey We*. Three of the above, namely *Sanchi*, *Bediako* and *Kojo Wei* comprise the reigning houses and are the direct descendants of the three sons of Dortei, the first chief of Kpone. Succession to the throne is by rotation and requires the consent of the remaining clans.

Data for the study can be classified broadly as field and library research. The former involved ethnohistorical and archaeological investigations. The collection of ethnohistorical data was derived from elders and family heads of *Appia* and *Bediako Wei* clans over a one-month period, while surface surveys and excavations constituted the main methods used to derive the archaeological data. The latter involved the examination of historical and archival records at Balme and the Institute of African Studies (IAS) libraries,

University of Ghana, Legon. The majority of these documents comprised old letters and correspondence between European mariners and trade representatives of the various national charter companies that operated on the Guinea Coast on the one hand and their parent companies in Europe on the other hand. The companies included the Guinea Company (Denmark), the Committee of Merchants Trading to Africa (England), the Royal Africa Company (England) and the Dutch West India Company (The Netherlands). The bulk of these documents spanned circa 1520–1680. Recourse to the use of early European records as source materials for this study was necessary because one of the primary limitations of ethnohistorical data is the tendency of narrators to over-emphasise and sometimes exaggerate aspects of their culture which portray them in good standing while being silent on aspects which denigrate their ethnic group. It was thus important to examine and integrate European sources to ascertain, verify and complement the ethnohistorical data.

There is currently a paucity of information on the cultural past of the coastal Dangme. A few aspects relating to ethnomedical practices and traditional religion are documented in folklore and *Klama* songs which by custom are the exclusive preserve of traditional priests and priestesses and are unknown to a significant proportion of the general populace. A few aspects relating to ancient subsistence strategies and intra-regional exchanges can also be glimpsed from early European records, the majority of which were documented by interloper captains, traders and explorers who visited the region and interacted with the indigenous population. The available data is thus patchy and obscure.

Historical background of the Segha and Kpone people

Kpone is inhabited by the Dangme who share close linguistic and cultural affiliations with the Ga who live west of them. The language of the Dangme is also called Dangme and belongs to the Kwa group of languages which is a sub-group of the Niger-Congo family group (Kropp-Dakubu 1976: 37). Lexico-statistical studies by Collins Painter, published in 1966, indicate that the Ga and Dangme languages separated from each other about a thousand years ago, from their precursor proto Ga-Dangme which itself diverged from Akan a thousand years earlier.

The indigenous population of Kpone constituted one of several Dangme groups that occupied the eastern coastal belt and atop parts of the Akuapem-Togo Range. Their ethnohistorical traditions posit that Ife in Nigeria was their ancestral homeland before their sojourn at Segha. However, what necessitated their migration and when it occurred are not divulged in these

traditions. Lolovo was their first major encampment before settling in Segá, previously called *Larkweitey*, after the chief who masterminded and led the exodus. According to the narrative, their westward journey was characterised by bitter in-fighting, regular hostilities and conflicts with ethnic populations settled along the migratory route. Segá itself was later abandoned because of a protracted chieftaincy dispute between two sons of Nanor, the ninth chief of Segá, after his demise. The sons named in the narratives are Akpeng, the eldest, and Angmo Keteku his junior sibling. Akpeng prevailed in the subsequent civil war which followed the violent acrimony, splitting the population into two groups with each supporting one party. The larger party, led by Akpeng, abandoned Segá and resettled at a new location which they named Kpone near the Dzorkor Stream (Certificate of Authentication. No. 000372 1972; Kpone Traditional Affairs C.S.O. 21/22/1421 1985). According to Field (1961: 18, 78), the choice of settling near the Dzorkor Stream was informed by the fact that it flowed all year round, a situation which guaranteed migrants regular availability of water.

Local traditions intimate that the name Segá was derived from a statement made in Dangme by Angmo Keteku at the shrine of *Nyan Komfre* (one of several state deities) after the desertion by the Akpeng-led group that '*emi Angme Keteku iwo see see gaa*'. Literally translated, this meant 'I, Angmo Keteku have given a bad advice.' It was the words '*see see gaa*' uttered in this statement that were corrupted to Segá (KPNA/CSO 21/22/142). The assertion that the Dangme migrated from external origins has been challenged by several scholars, notably Boahen (1977), Quaye (1972) and Kropp-Dakubu (1976). Boahen (1977: 94), for example, contends that the Dangme evolved in Ghana in the region of the Lower Volta Basin and that the claim of external origins are distortions of a fifteenth to sixteenth century West African coastal trade network between the peoples who occupied the area between Elmina and the eastern coast of Nigeria.

The various lineage groups (*Wei*) making up the Kpone state affirm in their oral traditions that the Kpone state was initially a theocracy headed by a *Wolomo*. Field (1961: 4), Anquandah (1982: 124) and Omenyo (2001: 10) point out that in ancient times, the office of the *Wolomo* was not only highly revered and profoundly venerated by the populace, but was also extended deferential honour. Field (1961) also noted, among other things that there existed another more powerful spiritual body called the *Agbafó* who unlike the *Wolomo* were not directly involved in state governance. She asserted:

This was a band of seven "medicine men" famous as curers of sicknesses, as masters of magic, and interpreters of the supernatural. Their reputation for knowing all about the supernatural is so great that their standing exceeds that

of the *Wolomo*. Indeed, the Head of the *Agbafo* (*Agbafoatse*) occupies in effect the position which in their towns is held by the Head *Wolomo* and the rest of the seven positions of lesser *Wolomo*. The *Agbafo* hold in their palm the power of all the gods. They are more powerful than the *Wolomei*. A *Wolomo* can only pray, the *Agbafo* can work wonders themselves. In short, the *Agbafo* can command where the *Wolomo* can only request (Field 1961: 36, 79).

Odotei (1976: 106) and Anquandah (1982: 124–5) contend that the theocratic system of governance changed with the coming of Europeans and development of coastal trade in the early sixteenth century. This was primarily because subsequent socio-economic and political exigencies arising from the coastal trade made it increasingly difficult for the *Wolomo* to competently combine administration of the secular affairs of the state with his spiritual and religious obligations. For example, custom forbade him to be regularly seen in public, wear sandals or travel afar. This situation necessitated the creation of a new state office which was designated *Mantse* (state ‘father’). The main duties of the *Mantse* were administration of the secular affairs of the state, promulgation of non-religious codes and laws, and dispensation of justice. Other primal duties included the institution and collection of taxes, supervision of coastal trade, and administration of state lands which he held in trust for the people (Field 1961: 4).

Anquandah (1982: 125) observes that ‘lower’ offices headed by sub-chiefs were created to assist the *Mantse*. They included the *Asafoatse* (military chief), *Mankralo* (state administrator), *Dzaasetse* (chief administrator), *Otsamie* (chief spokesperson) and *Shepee* (commander of the military wing). The new political arrangement allowed the *Wolomo* to fully focus on his spiritual obligations to the state’s deities, namely *Gao*, *Osabu*, *Tsawe* and *Aya*, as well as meeting the spiritual aspirations of the people. According to Omenyo (2001: 11), the transition of political and judicial authority of the *Wolomo* to the *Mantse* occurred about 350 years ago. The *Otufo* nobility rites observed to initiate young adolescent girls into adulthood and the *Kpledzo* rites were some of the annual cultural activities observed by the people in the past and are still relevant to the current population. The two rites were primarily to promote virtue, piety, fidelity to natural obligations (such as to parents) and spiritual sanctity in the community.

The archaeological research

The archaeological excavation was preceded by two surface surveys, each at Sega and the ancient settlement quarter of Kpone. The two settlements lie on the beachfront and are characterised by several rocky promontories which extend several metres off-shore and are visible at low tides. Apart from a few

scatters of shrubs, the entire Sega site is bereft of trees. Much of the topsoil had also been extensively disturbed, primarily by construction activities of the contractor who built the West African Gas Pipeline Limited (WAGPL) and subsistence farmers who annually cultivate maize and vegetables around the gas storage facility.

One striking observation at the centre of the Sega site were several bottle fragments of liquor and a knee-high sandcrete wall built around a baobab tree, tied with white and red calico cloth around the mid-section of the trunk. According to the current *Wolomo* of Kpone, Nummo Gao (personal communication, 24 July 2017), the prevalence of bottle fragments was a consequence of annual pacification rites offered to the *Gao* deity prior to the celebration of the *Homowo* festival. Ethnohistorical traditions of the people also intimate that this vicinity originally housed the shrine of the *Gao* deity, hence the choice of the area for pacification rites.

The dominant cultural materials discovered during the surface survey at Sega were veritable quantities of stone slabs of no identifiable shape and size which the people assert were used as floor tiles and buttresses to secure house foundations. Other notable finds included potsherds (9), mollusk shells belonging to different species (15), faunal remains (6), a fragment of locally made pipe (1) and fragmented ceramics (2). A small, undisturbed area, located 27 metres south-west of the WAGPL (GPS location: N.05° 40' 08.8', E.000° 02 11.9'), was selected for archaeological investigation. A trench designated Trench 1, measuring 2 m x 4 m was opened and the sterile level was 126 cm below ground surface.

Unlike Sega, the surface survey at Kpone was inconsequential and no material remains were retrieved. This settlement pattern was heavily convoluted and the entire ancient settlement quarter had been built upon by the current inhabitants. A few stone slabs similar in shape and size to those discovered at Sega and a few scatters of mollusk shells constituted the only material remains of significance retrieved. At the old settlement quarter, a unit designated Unit 1 and measuring 2 m x 2 m was opened. This unit was located 127 m south of the Kpone Methodist Church at *Apemamin*, a suburb of Kpone (GPS location: N 05° 41 14.7', E. 000° 03 25.6'). The unit also lay 41 m east of the ruins of an ancient Dutch trade post. The sterile level of Unit 1 was 100 cm below ground surface and an arbitrary level of 20 cm was used to control vertical provenience. A quarter inch mesh was used to sieve and recover material remains from soils collected from Trench 1 and Unit 1.

Two distinct cultural levels, based on the types of cultural material remains discovered, were discerned. The first designated *Cultural Level 1* contained

a mix of cultural material remains of local and foreign origins in varying proportions. At Sega, this stretched from the ground surface to stratigraphy Level 5 below ground surface (0–120 cm). At Kpone, Cultural Level 1 stretched from the ground surface to stratigraphy Level 4 below ground surface (0–80 cm). That Cultural Level 1 contained a mix of cultural material remains of both European and local origins suggests that the occupation period represented by that stretch of the stratigraphy corresponded to the Atlantic contact period when Europeans visited the region and interacted socio-economically with the indigenous populations of the area.

The second cultural level designated *Cultural Level 2* contained cultural material remains of local origin only. At Sega, this stretched from the level underlying Cultural Level 1 to the sterile level (120–160 cm, shaded area of Table 1). At Kpone, Cultural Level 2 stretched from the level underlying Cultural Level 1 to the sterile level (80–100 cm, shaded area of Table 2). That Cultural Level 2 contained only material remains of local origin is an indication that the occupation period represented by that stretch of stratigraphy predated the arrival of Europeans (pre-Atlantic contact period). It is also an evidence that the Sega and Kpone settlements pre-dated the arrival of Europeans.

A total of 234 artifacts, 472 botanical remains, 213 mollusk shells and 457 bones were recovered from Trench 1. At Unit 1, 204 artifacts, 108 botanical remains, 56 mollusk shells and 46 bones were retrieved (Tables 1 and 2). A significant proportion of the bones from the two sites, totalling 171, comprised *Pisces* remains. All the finds were sent to the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies Laboratory to be analysed. This was undertaken in three phases with assistance from Mr Bosman Murrey, a former Chief Technician of the facility. The first phase of this aspect of the study involved soaking the finds in clean water for some time to soften soils and rootlet attachments, after which they were gently cleaned with a soft hand brush and sun-dried. Under phase two, all the finds were quantified and labelled with ink. The site name, recovery date, unit/trench name, stratigraphy level and name of the person effecting the documentation constituted important information inscribed on each find. This was done to facilitate site identification, record provenience and finds quantification. Phase three involved identification of all the faunal remains according to their respective phyla and species. This aspect of the work was undertaken with assistance from some colleagues in the Department of Marine and Fisheries Sciences, University of Ghana. The types/quantum of cultural remains retrieved from the two sites are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Tables 3 and 4 show the types/quantum of bones retrieved.

Table 1: Types of material remains (excluding fauna) retrieved at Sega, Trench 1

Cultural material types		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Total	Percentage values
1	Grinding stones	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.15
2	Imported smoking pipes	1	2	6	3	1	-	-	-	13	1.01
3	Alcoholic beverage bottle fragments	2	9	23	19	27	41	32	3	156	12.18
4	Imported ceramics	-	4	11	21	9	-	-	-	45	3.51
5	Metal objects	3	12	21	9	11	8	7	15	86	6.71
6	Botanical remains	23	63	111	132	49	61	20	13	472	36.87
7	Daub	1	-	12	7	3	-	-	5	28	2.18
8	Dress buttons	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.07
9	Glass beads	1	6	15	21	9	-	-	-	52	4.06
10	Iron slag	-	-	2	4	11	23	29	17	86	6.71
11	Medicinal suppositories	3	11	39	21	14	17	61	47	213	16.64
12	Slate pencils	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	3	0.23
13	Bauxite bead	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	0.07
14	Belt buckle	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.07
15	Querns	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	0.15
16	Cowry (<i>Cypraea moneta</i>)	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	0.07
17	Local pottery	5	13	7	33	28	12	9	11	118	10.15
Total according to the strata level		39	121	253	272	163	162	159	111	1280	100

Table 2: Types of material remains (excluding fauna) retrieved from Kpone, Unit 1

Cultural material types		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total	Percentage values
1	Local pottery	11	27	32	19	9	98	23.5
2	Imported ceramics	7	11	3	-	-	21	5.04
3	Stone grinders	-	1	-	-	-	1	0.2
4	Smoking pipes (local)	1	-	-	-	-	1	0.2
5	Smoking pipes(imported)	-	3	7	-	-	10	2.4
6	Querns	-	3	1	2	1	7	1.6
7	Metal ring	-	1	-	-	-	1	0.2
8	Alcoholic beverage bottles	9	13	11	17	6	56	13.4
9	Bauxite beads	-	1	-	-	1	2	0.4
10	Mollusk bead	-	-	-	1	-	1	0.2
11	Botanical remains	7	27	33	27	14	108	25.9
12	Medicinal suppositories	5	13	9	14	7	48	11.5
13	Iron slag	-	-	1	5	9	15	3.6
14	Glass beads	2	9	11	-	-	22	5.2
15	Metal objects	6	2	4	11	2	25	6.0
Total according to the strata level		48	111	112	96	49	416	99.34

Table 3: Count of mollusk shells/bones recovered at Sega

Strata level	Mollusks remains	Pisces remains	Bovid (goat)	Bovid (sheep)	Bos (cow)	Aves	Total	Percentage values
1	---	2	---	---	---	-	2	0.4
2	---	8	---	---	---	-	8	1.8
3	31	24	9	11	3	2	80	18.8
4	54	53	7	10	9	1	134	31.5
5	61	14	13	8	7	6	109	25.6
6	61	7	3	2	2	2	77	18.1
7	3	1	1	2	1	1	9	2.1
8	3	-	-	2	1	-	6	1.4
Total count by strata	213	109	33	35	23	12	425	99.7

Table 4: Count of mollusk shells/bones recovered at Kpone

Strata level	Genus (species)						Total	Percentage values
	Mollusks remains	Pisces remains	Bovid (goat)	Bovid (sheep)	Bos (cow)	Aves		
1	5	14	14	5	-	-	38	13.6
2	4	9	11	9	6	-	39	13.9
3	25	21	23	15	4	3	91	32.6
4	16	11	41	3	11	2	84	30.1
5	6	7	12	-	2	-	27	9.6
Total count by strata	56	62	101	32	23	5	279	100

Discussion

The large quantum of *Pisces* remains retrieved is direct evidence that exploitation of aquatic fisheries was an important vocation of peoples of the study areas in the past. The total number of *Pisces* remains retrieved was 171, and these constituted 20.28 per cent of bones recovered from the research area (843). Of this number, 15 were recovered from *pre-Atlantic contact cultural levels*, compared to 156 at the *post-Atlantic contact cultural levels*. The pre-Atlantic contact cultural level was represented by stratigraphy Level 5 at Kpone, and stratigraphy Levels 6, 7 and 8 at Sega. The post-Atlantic contact cultural levels were represented by stratigraphy Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 at Kpone, and stratigraphy Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 at Sega.

It appears from the ethnoarchaeological evidence that fishing had its antecedents in antiquity. It was probably the lynch-pin of the local economy in ancient times because several early European accounts underscored its economic importance. Jean Barbot (1992: 519), for example, noted that: 'after that of merchant, the trade of fishermen is the most esteemed and commonest.' The exploitation of onshore aquatic resources appears to have been more relevant than offshore resources in ancient times because, as Barbot (1732: 186) observed, among other things, 'the fishery on the sea is inconsiderable because the shore is high and difficult to access, but the want of sea fish is abundantly taken care of by the great plenty there is in the lakes and rivers'. Barbot also noted that 'they have a peculiar way of catching fish in the night time; along the strand, by means of round wicker baskets, fastened to long poles, holding the pole in one hand, and in the other, a lighted torch, made of a sort of fierce burning wood. The fish generally make towards the light and so are taken in the baskets' (1732: 186).

The bulk of the *Pisces* remains retrieved could not be scientifically identified with their species types primarily because they were heavily fragmented, extremely denuded and without established biological reference marks. They were thus designated undiagnostic. However, a total of fifteen, comprising mostly larger bone parts (notably skulls and vertebral columns) were scientifically identified as belonging to both onshore and offshore species. The former included *Alecti alexandrinus* (*Anteyaa* or *Fonfo*), *Caranx crysos* (*Kpetome tsiyi*), *Prionoce glauca* (*Tsaflobi*), *Istiophorus albicans* (*Onyankle*) and *Decapterus rhonchus* (*Emule*). *Clarias gariepinus* (*Adwene*), *Arius heudeloti* (*Kokote*) and *Clarias gariepinus* (*Adwene*) were identified as belonging to the latter. The words in bracket are their Dangme names. Some species of *Prionoce glauca*, a wild carnivore, can grow to significant lengths at maturity (Kwei and Adu 2005; Fowler 1986) and would have required specialised skills to trap, hull overboard onto canoes and transport onshore.

Fishing probably stimulated the development and growth of the salt production industry in Kpone and Sega because salt is integral to fish processing and preservation. Though there was no archaeological evidence directly supporting salt production, it is instructive to note that several early European traders operating in the region alluded to its importance in ancient times. Barbot (1732: 187) for instance asserted ‘the sea along the coast, affords no less variety and plenty of excellent fish, and yields abundance of salt, by boiling its water to a consistence, both which turn to a very considerable profit and advantage, not only to the Blacks inhabiting the coast, but to innumerable multitudes for several hundred leagues further up’. Reindorf (1966: 63) corroborated this assertion when he also intimated, ‘towns along the coast applied themselves to the salt making industry. Those who did this acquired great riches because the demand from the interior was constant and if peace could be attained the coastal towns could have been the most prosperous on the Gold Coast’. Barbot (1732: 205) also noted that ‘the proper season of the year to make salt, especially in the pits, is from the latter end of November till the beginning of March, the sun being then in the zenith and consequently, its force is greater than at any other time of the year’.

Ethnohistorical narratives recounted to me by some elderly respondents of the *Appia We* clan indicated that their forebears produced substantial quantities of salt the natural way along the shallow fringes of the Gao and Laloï Lagoons. According to them, the methodology involved deliberately digging troughs along the banks of the above-named lagoons and connecting the troughs via channels to the shoreline. This allowed in-flow by gravity of sea water into the troughs during high tides after which the channels were blocked when filled by rocks and soil. The exceptionally high daily

temperatures experienced in the study area during the peak dry season (approximately 32–35° Celsius) facilitated rapid evaporation of sea water trapped in the troughs, leaving a thin fine film of salt crystals at the base of the troughs after some weeks. Sixteen roughly circular depressions were noted along the west bank of the Laloï Lagoon which appeared to be man-made on account of their almost standardised shapes, depths and sizes (10 cm deep by 1 m across). However, it would be premature and contestable for now to adduce that they served as salt producing troughs until their functions have been scientifically established.

Unlike fishing, it was difficult to glean the nature and practice of crop farming in the archaeological record because much of the tangible evidence required to support it was scanty, patchy and indirect. This situation can be attributed to the poor preservation regime of soils in the study area which have high concentrations of humic acid which promotes rapid decomposition and decay of botanical remains (Dickson and Benneh 1982: 32). This handicap notwithstanding, veritable quantities of charred remains of palm kernel shells (*Elaeis guineensis*) and some fossilised rootlets which could not be scientifically identified constituted the only plant remains retrieved during the research. The former, which directly supported this subsistence strategy, totalled 580, of which 108 were recovered from Kpone and 472 from Segá. The bulk, mostly recovered from upper levels of the stratigraphy (0–40 cm), was relatively well preserved, with their nuts intact. However, those underlying them were characterised by multiple minute pores which extended about 2–3 mm into the shells, apparently the result of insectivore action to reach the nuts within. Millet was probably another crop cultivated alongside oil palm because ethnoarchaeological investigations by Anquandah (1982: 19) in the late 1970s, which also involved the collection of Dangme oral traditions and historical linguistics, indicated that proto-Dangme populations occupying the eastern coastal belt subsisted on an economy based on millet (*nmaa*) and yam (*hielyele*) cultivation. The word *nmaa* was in the past used to refer to corn, millet and food. This archaic word where it refers to food presently has been replaced by another word, *niyeni*. Slash and burn farming appeared to have constituted the principal method used by the indigenous population to clear and prepare the land prior to planting because, as Barbot (1732: 196) observed:

When the seed time is at hand, every Black marks out a spot he likes, which is usually on rising grounds near their towns and villages and having promised to pay the usual rent to the officers appointed to that purpose, the kings being lords of all the lands, the head of the family, assisted by his wives, children, slaves, if they have any, sets fire to the shrubs and bushes, which for the most

part overspread the earth or else cut them close to the ground, for they will seldom bestow the pains of grabbing up the roots for which reason they soon sprout up again, yet they think it sufficient for sowing their seed to turn up the ashes of the shrubs and bushes with the earth slightly, which they do with a sort of tool or spade call'd *loddon* and are so dexterous at managing it that two men will dig as much land in a day as one plow can turn over in England.

The recovery of stone grinders (Figure 2), mullers and querns from the archaeological record is germane and can be cited as indirect evidence to support crop cultivation and traditional medical practice because they are utilised in the research area primarily to pulverise vegetables and process medicinal herbs. All the grinders appeared to have been extensively used because the central areas which constituted the main pulverisation areas were lower on average by about 1 cm, compared to the outer surrounding ends. Close examination of the working surfaces with a magnifying glass also revealed a concentration of several non-standardised indefinite abrasive lines.

Bosman (1705: 305) noted that farming was an integral aspect of the local economy in ancient times. He asserted that 'besides trade, the inhabitants employ themselves in agriculture and fishing, the first of which proves reasonably profitable'. Barbot (1732: 185–6) also intimated that, 'the land affords plenty of provisions and abundance of fine large oranges'.



Figure 2: Part of a grinding stone from Segá

The recovery of cowrie shells identified as *Cypraea moneta* supports the notion that intra-regional exchanges were central to the facilitation of the local economy prior to European contact. Garrard (1980: 4, 12) who investigated early intra-regional exchange systems on the Gold Coast noted that *Cypraea moneta* was used not only as currency but also as a store of

value prior to the Atlantic contact era. The recovery of bauxite beads, locally called *Akyem te*, (Figure 3), from the archaeological context at Segá is germane and clear attestation that exchange with neighbouring polities was an important commercial enterprise undertaken by peoples who occupied the study area. Ethnohistorical narratives of the people of Kpone did not intimate the existence of an extant bauxite bead production industry. Kpone and Segá also have no bauxite reserves to facilitate production of bauxite beads. Their recovery is thus indicative that they were procured from an external source, most probably via exchange. The source area was most likely Akyem Abompe, located approximately 132 kilometres north-west of the study area, which has extensive bauxite reserves and is renowned for its extant bauxite bead manufacturing industry. Archaeological investigations conducted at several ancient coastal and hinterland sites in Ghana have yielded bauxite beads, sometimes in veritable quantities (Biveridge 2005; 2011; 2014; Anquandah 2008).



Figure 3: Some recovered bauxite beads from Segá

Indigenous populations of the study area may have produced mollusk beads as well in the remote past. The recovery of one such bead at Segá bears testimony to this assertion (Figure 4). The shell of *Sepiella ornata* (cuttlebone) was identified as the species used to manufacture this bead. The flesh is also a delicacy in the research area. That only one was found however suggests its production was probably more of a leisure activity than a full-time one.



Figure 4: A mollusk bead from Sega

The result of petrographic analysis undertaken on twenty potsherds randomly selected from different stratigraphy levels at the two sites is yet more evidence to support the existence of an intra-regional exchange network in the remote past. The results indicated that quartz, garnet, orthoclase, plagioclase and kaolinite constituted the principal minerals in the potsherds. The percentage compositions of the above-named minerals in the sherds are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Minerals composition (%) of potsherds selected for petrographic analysis

Mineral type		Percentage of mineral composition
1	Quartz	10
2	Garnet	40
3	Orthoclase	5
4	Plagioclase	12
5	Kaolinite	20

All of the above-named minerals are synonymous with the *Basic Dahomeyan Geological System*, the major rock formation underlying the Akuapem-Togo Range which has for centuries been occupied by Dangme populations renowned for their extant potting traditions (Anquandah 1982: 115). The major minerals constituting this system are quartz, feldspar, garnet and epidote. There are also substantial quantities of mica and hornblende (Kesse 1985: 33, 37). Meanwhile, mica, epidote and hornblende constituted the principal mineral constituents of clays from the study area; their glaring absence in the body fabrics of the sherds is clear attestation that they were

procured from an external source, while the presence of quartz, garnet, orthoclase, plagioclase and kaolinite is a strong indication that the vessels were procured from Shai country. That the peoples of Shai and the study area live only 21 kilometres away from each other and speak the same dialect of the Dangme language would have facilitated exchanges between them. Salt, shellfish and smoked and salted fish were probably the principal items exchanged for Shai pottery.

Two physical attributes of the vessels recovered from the study area are also strongly supportive of their Shai origins. First, two sherds retrieved from Sega were embossed with the 'rising sun' insignia. According to Anquandah (1993: 648), this motif was the trademark of ancient Shai potters. Second, thirty-seven of the sherds (representing 17.1 per cent of the pottery assemblage) were coated with red hematite (red-slipped), while twenty-one were smoke glazed (smudging). The remaining 158 sherds (representing 73.1 per cent of the pottery assemblage) were plain surface hand-polished. According to Anquandah (1982: 118–19), the above three surface treatment types were distinctive attributes of ancient Shai potters. It can thus be safely postulated that the peoples of the study area sourced their pottery needs from Shai.

It is also worth noting that several early European traders to the Gold Coast, some of whom visited the research area and interacted with the locals, corroborated the existence of an ancient exchange network with outlying polities. Describing trade at Ningo and Lay, Barbot, for example, noted that the inhabitants were pretty civil and fair traders who conducted profitable trade at Spice, a large inland town. He further asserted that 'the Blacks of this village and the country about it, drive a trade of cattle, which they fatten in their pasture grounds and either the Gold Coast Blacks come for it or they carry it along the said coast and to *Acra*, where they make thirty crowns of a bullock' (Barbot 1732: 186).

Exchange along the Sega and Kpone coastlines appeared to have attracted peoples of other ethnic affiliations to relocate there because four clans (*Wei*) at Kpone, *Appia*, *Ofosu*, *Bediako* and *Sackey*, have Akan-designated names. Integration of migrants probably impacted the local economy by enhancing urbanisation and facilitating rapid population growth. This is because the quantum of cultural material remains retrieved from the upper stratigraphy levels which constituted Cultural Level 1 increased significantly, compared to Cultural Level 2 which constituted the lower stratigraphy levels.

The recovery of remains of domesticated sheep, cattle and goats bears testimony to the importance of animal husbandry. The following constitutes some parts retrieved from the excavations: fragmented pieces of skull (6),

parts of rib bone (9), parts of *scapula* of Bos (2), parts of *phalanges* of sheep (3), *metapodial* (10), teeth (2), parts of *astrugulus* of Bos (2), parts of *phalanges* of goat (6), parts of *humerus* of sheep (6), parts of *phalanges* of sheep (3), lower jawbone and *metapetal* of Bos (1), *metapodial* (2), and part of the *neural spine* of sheep (1). Other parts included part of the *metapodia* of goat (1), the tooth and *astrugulus* of sheep (1), part of the *metapodial* of sheep (1), *humerus* (1), part of a rib (1) and part of the *neural spine* of a Bovidae (1).

Animal husbandry and pastoralism were probably practised alongside fishing and crop farming because several early European records alluded to it. Bosman (1705: 304) noted the following about pastoralism: 'the country hereabout is indifferent, populous and fertile but extraordinarily stored with cattle, as cows, hogs, sheep, besides chicken, all of which are here bought very cheap by the blacks of the Gold Coast to transport to the upper coast'. Barbot (1732: 186) also corroborated its importance positing that, 'the country of Ningo, *Lempy* or *Allampy* (Dangme country) is flat and low, populous and fertile and particularly stored with cattle, cows, sheep and swine, besides poultry which are continually brought up there to be carried along the Gold Coast.'

The faunal inventory also included significant quantities of remains of a variety of undomesticated *Mammalian*, *Aves* and *Reptilian* species, suggesting that hunting and trapping were hitherto important vocations undertaken alongside animal husbandry. Some of the parts comprised the lower jaw, *humerus* and *astrugulus* of cane rat (*Thyonomys swinderianus*), *humerus* of wild pig (*Potamochoerus proms*), *testudinata*, *caviapice* and *plastron* of tortoise. Others included *metapodial* of duiker (*Cephalophus niger*, *maxiwelli*) and the *vertebrae* and fang of an unidentified serpentine. The ends of broken bones showed a pattern consistent with forceful disarticulation, attested by their fractured jagged edges, an indication that butchering was the common preferred trapping technique of ancient Dangme hunters. There was also evidence of marrow extraction exemplified by the fine 'V' shaped cut marks on bone. The continued reliance on wild game reflects a subsistence strategy which extended into antiquity.

It can be inferred from the large quantum of mollusk remains retrieved from excavations (269) and their wide scatter overlying several portions of the ancient settlement, quarter that the exploitation of mollusks was a major adaptive technique of the peoples of the research area. This excludes twenty-one calcified shell middens concentrated along the southern end of the settlement, close to the shoreline. Unlike mollusk remains from archaeological contexts, which were species identified and quantified, shell constituents of the middens could not be quantified because the bulk were

calcified or heavily fragmented. Quantitatively, mollusks constituted the most exploited *Phyla* of which five were identified (*Mammalia*, *Mollusca*, *Pisces*, *Reptilia* and *Aves*) in that order of significance. Mollusks were classified broadly into two classes: *Bivalvia* and *Gastropoda*. Table 6 below shows the *Phyla* types, various species identified, and their natural habitats.

Table 6: Phyla type, species, their vernacular names and natural habitats

<i>Phyla</i> type	Species name	Vernacular name	Natural habitat	
1	<i>Bivalvia</i>	<i>Pectin</i>	<i>Ngler</i>	Marine
		<i>Arca afra</i>	<i>Nshor adordey</i>	Marine/freshwater
		<i>Arca senilis</i>	<i>shinnie</i>	Marine/freshwater
2	<i>Gastropoda</i>	<i>Nassa semistriata</i>	<i>Waah</i>	Terrestrial
		<i>Thais haemastoma</i>	<i>Aglorb</i>	Marine
		<i>Turritella meta</i>	<i>Momochiley</i>	Marine
		<i>Semifusus morio</i>	<i>Nshor waah</i>	Marine

Their large quantum is a strong indication that the community derived a substantial proportion of their protein requirements from mollusks. It is also indicative that the exploitation of mollusks probably engaged a substantial number of the local populace, undertaken alongside animal husbandry, hunting and trapping of game. Respondents intimated that they were not only exploited for food but for other purposes as well. According to Jonas Engmann, an established goldsmith at Kpone, the shell of *Sepiella ornata* constituted an important tool in a goldsmith's kit in the remote past (personal communication, 21 July 2017). Its importance lay in the fact that the shell is not hardy like other mollusk shells and therefore allowed the goldsmith to carve out hollow moulds of the projected designs to be made. Molten gold was poured in and the ornament removed after solidification. Engmann (*ibid.*) also posited that shells of some mollusks, notably *Pectin* and *Arca senelis*, were commonly used as dishes to weigh gold dust. Unlike baked clay crucibles in which tiny grains of sand making up the body fabric could disintegrate and adulterate the gold dust, the above-named mollusks are not friable and hence are well-suited for the above purpose.

Another respondent Abladu Ashon, intimated that the shells of *Arca afra* which has medicinal properties, were in the past pulverised into a smooth powdery talc and applied to the body after bathing to beautify it (personal communication, 21 July 2017). This was also mixed with specific medicinal herbs, which were not disclosed to me for esoteric reasons, and used for the treatment of eczema. According to Abladu Ashon, grounded shells of some

mollusks were also exploited as paint and a bonding agent in traditional architecture while the inedible offal was used as bait to catch fish. The deputy chief fisherman (*Wolieatse*), Tetteh Mensa, also intimated that some mollusks were used in pacification rites and as musical instruments in the past. The said rites and accompanying rituals were dedicated principally to the *Gao* deity and specific marine spirits (*Gyema worgin*) for spiritual protection over the town's fisher-folks and to guarantee bumper harvests prior to the 'opening' of the new fish season every year. According to Mensa, the shell of *Thais Haemastoma* was used as a musical instrument in the past. The height of this mollusk species at maturity ranges from 70–110 mm while the width is about half the height. The brown to fawn coloured outer lip is toothed with some 2–3 rows of rounded tubercles and several spiral bands. Converting the empty shell into a musical instrument involved two stages. The first involved removing pieces of the pointed apex with a cutting device after which the rough jagged edges created were abraded on a flat levelled stone to smoothen the surface of the rounded hole. It gave a sharp shrilling sound when air was forcefully blown into the hole and by properly controlling the pitch sweet music was generated. According to Mensa, it was one method employed by early fisher-folks to entertain themselves during extended fishing expeditions which could be boring.

Substantial recoveries of iron slag totaling ninety-six, with a total weight of 307 kg at the two sites, is a testimony that people settling in the research area had developed the technological know-how of smelting iron and forging tools. Their discovery at both pre-and post-European contact cultural levels is also indicative of the fact that the people were engaged in this vocation prior to European contact and that the tradition continued into the Atlantic contact era. The production of iron weaponry and other tools which are more hardy, stronger and durable would have enhanced the settlement's security. This probably boosted development and growth of other sectors of the economy because iron tools would have expanded cultivation areas significantly, guaranteeing food stocks in the long term. Macroscopic analysis of forty-six pieces of iron slag, randomly selected from different stratigraphy levels, revealed the presence of several tiny vitrified shiny glassy-like structures of what appeared to be trapped air bubbles on their exterior surfaces. Further investigative work will be required to establish the smelting processes employed, as well as their chronological implications.

Some early European traders operating along the eastern coastal belt testified to the dexterity, deftness and proficiency of Dangme traditional medical practitioners. Their reports suggested they had profound in-depth knowledge of some medicinal plants and herbs. Bosman (1705: 224), for

example, intimated that ‘the chief medicaments here in use are first and more especially lime and lime juice, malagots (otherwise called the grains of paradise) or the cardamom, roots, branches and gums of trees, and about thirty several sorts of green herbs which are impregnated with an extraordinary sanative value.’ He was so impressed and enthused by their astuteness that he advised Europeans with physical ailments to consult them. He posited:

the green herbs, the principal remedy in use among the Negroes are of such wonderful efficacy that it is much to be deplored that no European physician has yet applied himself to the discovery of their nature and virtue; for I do not only imagine but firmly believe that they could prove more successful in the practice of physick than the European preparations especially in this country, because before they reach us, they have lost all their virtue and are mostly corrupt. Besides, our constitution is in some measure changed here by the climate and therefore this country remedies in all probabilities are better for our bodies than the European is (Bosman 1705: 225).

Bosman further reiterated, ‘those who are to come to this country may if they please, endeavour to explore these plants. For my part, I shall here take my leave of them with only informing you the better to evince the strange efficacy of these herbs, that I have several times observed the Negroes cure such great and dangerous wounds with them that I have stood amazed thereat’ (1705: 226).

Anquandah (1985: 13; 1996: 18; 2003a: 11; 2003b: 12) has since the late 1980s consistently argued that archaeological recoveries of two distinctive vessel types, locally called *tsofa kukwe* and *likor likor* in Dangme-land, should be considered as indirect proof to support Dangme traditional medical practices. He noted that their physical attributes are very similar to current ethnographic models utilised in traditional herbal preparations and should therefore be designated as medical accoutrement.

The recovery of a gaming disc (Figure 5) is attestation that the indigenous population used their pastime in a variety of ways. It appeared to have been strung in the middle with twine and vigorously rotated spirally in a clockwise fashion. Halting the rotation process caused the disc to speedily spin reversely.



Figure 5: Gaming disc from Sega

Conclusion

The relatively expansive occupation areas of Sega and Kpone (approximately 64,680 and 39,224 square metres respectively) represented by wide surface artifact scatters and veritable quantities of stone blocks suggest that the two polities were densely peopled theocracies superintended by *Wolomei* in ancient times. Their close proximity to the coast and two large freshwater lagoons was significant and geographically strategic, and appears to have rapidly facilitated socio-economic development. The archaeological and historical evidence indicates that the local economy was mixed, based on a variety of specialised workforces which could be broadly classified into two economic groupings. The first comprised those engaged in primary activities (fishing, crop farming, pastoralism, animal husbandry, hunting and trapping); while the second consisted of those engaged in secondary activities (exchange, traditional medical practice, portaging, traditional priesthood, iron smelting and forging). Other vocational specialists who may have existed and played primary roles in the facilitation of the economy probably included weavers, saddlers, canoe and thatch builders. However, it must be emphasised that there is no material evidence in the archaeological record supporting the existence of these vocations. The recovery of remains of very large fish such as *Prionoce glauca*, which are naturally adapted to very deep oceanic habitats and can grow to lengths of over three metres at maturity, is also a clear manifestation that indigenous fisher-folks of the study area had developed highly advanced technological and navigational systems which enabled them to exploit this deep-sea fishery resource.

The archaeological study and analysis also indicate that intra-regional exchanges were central to the facilitation of the local economy. Needs like pottery and bauxite beads, which were not produced locally, were procured via exchange from other polities; while salt, processed fish and mollusks constituted some items exported from the research area. The ability of Dangme traders to safely transport the above-named commodities, some of which are weighty, over long distances attests to their resourcefulness and dexterity. Wealth generated from exchanges, iron smelting and other craft industries probably led to social stratification in the community. Exchange also appears to have facilitated ethnic heterogeneity, attested by clans with Akan-designated names. The combined evidence (socio-cultural and economic data) suggests that urbanisation and state formation processes had been initiated and were probably underway at ancient Sega and Kpone prior to Atlantic contact.

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Quand la reine-mère Dokuwa libère l'Akyem Abuakwa de la domination Ashanti

Kouamé René Allou*

Résumé

L'Akyem Abuakwa, royaume akan (le royaume akan le plus connu est celui des Ashanti) aux confluent des fleuves Birim et Oda dès 1701, va s'opposer à l'ascension fulgurante de l'Ashanti. Il apportera donc un soutien actif aux irrédentistes denkyira qui refusaient la défaite de leur royaume. Ce choix politique des rois akyem Abuakwa va provoquer une violente conquête et une dure domination ashanti vis-à-vis de leur royaume. Les rapports entre l'Akyem Abuakwa et l'Ashanti vont osciller entre rébellions et représailles sanglantes. En 1816, après les morts tragiques des rois Kofi Asante et Asare Bediako, la reine-mère Dokuwa prend en main les affaires du royaume akyem Abuakwa. Grâce à une stratégie intelligente, elle parvient à libérer l'Akyem Abuakwa du joug de l'Ashanti.

Mots clés : Dure domination Ashanti, rebellions, Akyem Abuakwa la reine-mère, Dokuwa, stratégie, libération

Abstract

As early as 1701, the Akyem Abuakwa Akan kingdom (the best known Akan kingdom is that of Ashanti) at the confluence of Birim and Oda rivers rebelled against the swift rise of Ashanti. It therefore actively supported the irredentist Denkyira who refused to accept the defeat of their kingdom. This political choice of the Akyeme Abuakwa kings was the result of a furious conquest and hard Ashanti domination of their kingdom. The relations between Akyeme Abuakwa and Ashanti turned into open revolts followed by bloody reprisals. In 1816, after the tragic deaths of Kings Kofi Asante and Asare Bediako, Queen-mother Dokuwa took the reins of the Akyeme Abuakwa kingdom. Thanks to an intelligent strategy, she succeeded in liberating Akyem Abuakwa from Ashanti yoke.

Key Words: Hard Ashanti domination, rebellions, Akyem Abuakwa Queen-Mother, Dokuwa, strategy, liberation

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Introduction

L'Akyem Abuakwa est le premier et le plus important des trois royaumes akyem. Les deux autres sont l'Akyem Kotoku et l'Akyem Bosome. L'Akyem Abuakwa est connu des sources écrites sous les noms Ahim et Great Acany (carte hollandaise de Moure 1629). Peu avant la moitié du XVI^e siècle, l'Akyem Abuakwa est connu des sources portugaises sous le nom Acane Grande.

Un lignage de matriclan Asona (les sociétés Akan sont réparties en sept matriclans) est à l'origine de la fondation du royaume Akyem Abuakwa. Il est originaire de Kokobiante en Adanse. Il s'agit d'un petit village près de Sodua et entre Akrokeri et Dompoase (Daaku 1969). Les villages d'Ansa et de Kokobiante ont été des centres de rassemblements puis de dispersions des lignages de matriclans Asona.

Le grand ancêtre du lignage royal asona de l'Akyem Abuakwa est Nana Kuntukunuku. C.C. Reindorf donne une liste tout à fait fiable des dirigeants asona depuis ceux qui n'étaient que chefs de Kokobiante à ceux qui sont devenus les rois du royaume Akyem Abuakwa, jusqu'à Amoako Atta qui a régné de 1866 à 1888 (Reindorf 1966). Le plus grand roi d'Abuakwa connu et dont le nom est associé à l'érection du royaume est Ofori Panyi. D'après la tradition orale, c'est lui qui a mené le peuple de Kokobiante en Adanse à Abuakwa dans la zone du confluent des fleuves Oda et Birim (Warm 1958 : 109-110).

La capitale de l'Abuakwa sera établie à Kyiebi (Kibi). Que dire des convictions de la tradition orale, quand les sources écrites donnent la certitude de l'existence d'Acane Grande dès 1548, et de ses autres noms : Akim, Ahim, Great Acany au XVII^e siècle (Astley 1968) ? Nous pensons que bien avant Ofori Panyi, des Asona et d'autres matriclans adanse se sont installés dans la zone du Birim. Mais les Asona se réfèrent au chef de Kokobiante jusqu'à l'avènement d'Ofori Panyi. C'est lui qui, en succédant à Anim Kwatia, décide de transférer le siège et les autres objets royaux de Kokobiante à Kyiebi.

D'après la liste de C.C. Reindorf, Ofori Panyi est le treizième successeur de Kuntukunuku. L'un des noms forts et anciens du peuple Abuakwa est *Okye*, de sorte que le roi porte à la fois les titres d'*Abuakwahene* et *Okyehene* (Roi des Abuakwa et des Okye). Abuakwa signifie guerrier Abu. *Okye* est un nom ancien des Akan qui signifie « se saisir de », « s'emparer de ». Il traduit le caractère guerrier.

Les Asona vont intégrer à leur État, à savoir l'Akyem Abuakwa, des Guan (un peuple proche par la culture des Akan) du sous-groupe Kyerepong, premiers habitants du pays, mais aussi les multiples matriclans venus de l'Adanse. L'Akyem Abuakwa va subir la domination de l'Ashanti, après

des guerres qui vont s'étendre de 1717 à 1720. Les rapports entre l'Akyem Abuakwa et l'Ashanti vont se caractériser par des rébellions suivies de représailles sanglantes, jusqu'à l'avènement de la reine-mère Dokuwa. C'est elle qui trouvera la stratégie pour libérer le peuple Abuakwa de la dure domination ashanti.

C'est l'intérêt de cette contribution : deux parties serviront d'articulations à celle-ci. La première a trait à la dure domination ashanti et aux rébellions akyem Abuakwa férocement réprimées. La deuxième concerne l'avènement de la reine-mère Dokuwa et la libération de l'Akyem Abuakwa du joug ashanti.

La dure domination Ashanti et les vaines rébellions Akyem Abuakwa avant l'avènement de la reine-mère Sokuwa

Dès 1701, après la victoire ashanti sur le Denkyira, sont signalés, en décembre de la même année, des affrontements entre l'Ashanti et l'Akyem Abuakwa. Les Ashanti n'avaient pas apprécié le soutien militaire massif de l'Akyem Abuakwa au Denkyira, non plus que l'accueil de nombreux réfugiés denkyira.

Pendant les combats, Osei Tutu, le premier roi des Ashanti, sera tué et son corps emporté par les eaux du fleuve Pra. Ce fut en 1717. Le document qui permet de situer la mort d'Osei Tutu en octobre 1717 dit en substance : « Les Ashanti ont perdu une bataille, il y a eu beaucoup de morts de part et d'autre et le Zaay a trouvé la mort. Les Ashanti ont donc opéré un retrait de leurs troupes » (NGKB Gan Hendrix 1717).

Les Akyem, pour leur part, mettront en sécurité leurs femmes et enfants en Akwamu. Après la trêve de 1717, les combats reprennent en 1718 avec une nouvelle offensive des Ashanti, et c'est en 1720 qu'Opoku Ware, leur roi, parvint à vaincre les Akyem. En 1724, l'on a la confirmation que l'Akyem Abuakwa est vassal de l'Ashanti. Un document hollandais indique à cette date que l'Ashanti veut déclarer la guerre à l'Akwamu, qui a maltraité des Akyem, car ces derniers sont des amis (entendre vassaux) de l'Ashanti (Beuns 1724).

En 1741, le roi de l'Akyem Abuakwa Owusu Akyem, successeur de Ba Kwante, se révolte (Van Kuijl 1741) contre l'autorité du roi ashanti Opoku Ware. Dès 1742, la rébellion est matée dans le sang (Van Kuijl). De nombreux akyem sont tués et environ quatre mille sont faits prisonniers.

Les affrontements avaient eu lieu près de la rivière Bena (Reindorf 1966 : 81). Toute l'histoire des rapports entre l'Akyem Abuakwa et l'Ashanti est jalonnée de révoltes et de répressions. Toujours en 1742, Pobi Asomani monte sur le trône abuakwa. Il refuse de payer les 1 000 pereguan de poudre d'or¹ que lui réclame le roi Opoku Ware.

En septembre 1746, des Akyem, excédés par l'oppression ashanti, trouvent refuge dans le Fante à Akyemfo, le Kwahu, et d'autres vont plus à l'est, passent la Volta et s'installent dans la zone de Kpesi, en République actuelle du Togo (Cornevin 1969 : 29).

Pour s'assurer à nouveau de la docilité des Abuakwa, l'armée ashanti envahit le territoire akyem en 1765. Les troupes du chef guerrier Sè Kuma commises pour cette mission harcèlent les hommes du roi Pobi Asomani (Fynn 1973 : 58-83).

La destruction systématique des champs par les guerriers ashanti provoque une terrible famine. Le roi Pobi Asomani et ses principaux chefs décident de se faire sauter avec la poudre à canon plutôt que de tomber entre les mains de leurs ennemis (Huydecooper 1765 ; Mutter, Petue & Crossle 1765). Une lourde amende est à nouveau imposée aux Abuakwa et à leur nouveau roi, Obiri Koran. En septembre 1766, ce dernier se plaint de ces amendes ruineuses et refuse de mettre fin à sa campagne militaire contre le roi Dako d'Akwamufié comme l'exige le roi ashanti Osei Kwadwo.

Ce dernier fait pression sur les notables akyem pour qu'ils déposent Obiri Koran. Ce qui est fait et Twum Amporofo est intronisé. Ce dernier est déposé après 25 ans de règne. Ses sujets lui reprochaient sa trop grande docilité à l'égard de la domination ashanti et sa gestion tyrannique des affaires du royaume. Ofosu Apraku est de ce fait intronisé comme le nouveau roi de l'Akyem Abuakwa (Fynn 1973 : 78). Pendant son règne, ses sujets du village d'Aseneyewa lui reprocheront d'avoir fait exécuter quatre personnes. Ofosu Apraku perdit le procès à la suite de cette affaire devant le tribunal du roi des Ashanti.

La suite des événements nous est connue par un document danois qui indique que c'est à la suite d'une brève expédition, en 1798, que le roi Ofosu Apraku est tué par les Ashanti (Wrienberg 1798). D'après la tradition orale en revanche, Ofosu Apraku fut déposé et Atta Owusu Yiakosa intronisé pour le remplacer. Dans un premier temps, Atta Owusu Yiakosa semble se soumettre au pouvoir ashanti. Il prend part à la campagne militaire ashanti de 1806-1807 contre le littoral fante.

Mais en octobre 1811, il exprime clairement sa volonté de ne plus se soumettre à l'Ashanti. Il fait capturer plusieurs marchands ashanti de passage sur ses terres. Parmi les otages, il y avait un officiel ashanti nommé Owusu Mankyiri, et qui était porteur de la rente payée par la compagnie danoise (Reindorf 1966 : 153). Dès que la nouvelle est sue à Kumase, deux contingents ashanti dirigés respectivement par Adu Sei Kra et Opoku Frede sont envoyés contre Atta Owusu Yiakosa.

Mais de lourdes pertes sont infligées aux troupes ashanti, et en novembre 1811, Opopo Frede Frede rentre sans gloire à Kumase. Atteint de variole, le vaillant roi Atta Owusu Yiakosa meurt brusquement, pour sa part, dans son camp à Kwanyako. Cet événement va profondément choquer le peuple Abuakwa. Il est rappelé par le jurement² « Wukuda ne Kwanyako » : « Mercredi et Kwanyako » (Ward 1918 : 159).

Les Abuakwa, avec le soutien de leurs alliés akwapem, poursuivirent la résistance. Les champs de bataille furent transposés dans les collines de l'Akwapem. En octobre 1816, les chefs guerriers ashanti Amankwa Abinowa et Apia Dankwa ont la conviction d'avoir rempli leur mission parce que le roi Kofi Asante de l'Akyem Abuakwa et successeur d'Atta Owusu Yiakosa est tué pendant les combats.

Asare Bediako, le nouveau roi abuakwa, reprend le flambeau de la résistance, mais les Ashanti parviennent à s'emparer du trône. Devant ce grand désastre, Asare Bediako fait célébrer de son vivant ses propres funérailles. C'est une pratique qui existe chez les Akan. Elle se fait quand l'on estime avoir subi un sort pire que la mort, ou qui équivaut à celle-ci. Après le rituel, Asare Bediako se donne la mort. À cause de cet acte, ses neveux utérins directs seront écartés de l'accès au pouvoir. Face à ce grand désastre dans le royaume Akyem Abuakwa, la reine-mère Dokuwa prend en main les affaires du royaume.

L'avènement de la reine-mère Dokuwa et la libération de l'Akyem Abuakwa de la domination Ashanti

La reine-mère Dokuwa, devant la situation catastrophique que vit le royaume akyem Abuakwa, décide de le diriger. Elle met en place une diplomatie de conciliation avec l'Akyem Kotoku. En effet, pendant la campagne ashanti contre l'Abuakwa en novembre 1811, le roi de Kotoku, Kwakye Adeyefe, accepta de fournir des troupes auxiliaires à l'Ashanti contre l'Abuakwa. Or l'Akyem Abuakwa et l'Akyem Kotoku sont des royaumes alliés depuis des temps immémoriaux. L'attitude de Kwakye Adeyefe a constitué une rupture de l'alliance. Dokuwa décide alors de renouer de bons rapports avec l'Akyem Kotoku. Elle remercie personnellement le prince Kwadwo Kuma du siège de Kotoku qui, avec ses partisans, s'est battu aux côtés du roi Atta Owusu Yaikosa. Elle l'assure de son soutien militaire afin qu'il accède au trône de Kotoku.

Aussitôt dit, aussitôt fait, des troupes abuakwa aident Kwadwo Kuma à vaincre Kwakye Adeyefe. Cependant, ce dernier part avec le trône de Kotoku se réfugier à Kumase, la capitale des Ashanti. Kwadwo Kuma, le nouvel allié de la reine-mère Dokuwa, très mécontent, procède à l'exécution

systematique de tous les Ashanti qui résident dans son royaume. Ce qui n'est pas pour déplaire à la reine Dokuwa.

Dokuwa savait son royaume divisé entre deux options. Le refus d'une nouvelle allégeance à l'Ashanti, mais aussi le désir d'éviter de nouvelles épreuves au peuple Abuakwa. Elle soumet démocratiquement la question aux chefs du royaume. Les chefs Okra du village d'Apapam, Obeng Ayakwa du village d'Apedia et Kwasi Asiman du village de Tete expriment leur refus farouche à une quelconque soumission à l'Ashanti.

En revanche, le chef Tano, du village d'Asiakwa, était favorable à une telle option d'allégeance, le matrilignage royal d'Asiakwa du nom d'Oyoko ayant des liens de parenté avec la famille royale ashanti. L'Akyem Abuakwa se retrouve donc divisé à propos de l'attitude à avoir vis-à-vis de la domination ashanti. Résultat, Tano le chef d'Asiakwa sera décapité sur ordre des chefs opposés à l'allégeance.

La reine-mère Dokuwa ne fera rien pour empêcher ce meurtre. En réalité, c'est elle qui, dans l'ombre, avait permis cela afin qu'il n'y ait aucune faille dans la cohésion du royaume à propos de la résistance face à la domination ashanti. Dokuwa savait que le roi des Ashanti prendrait des mesures de rétorsion s'il apprenait les circonstances de la mort de Tano. Pour anticiper sur une telle issue, elle envoya discrètement deux messagers, Afe et Akroma, auprès d'Amoako Panyi, le régente de Kotoku, afin que les divergences soient aplanies.

La rencontre entre les deux parties eut lieu à Damase pour mettre en œuvre la réconciliation. Le fils d'Amoako Panyi, Afrifa Akwada, est intronisé comme roi d'Akyem Kotoku. La reine Dokuwa a dû jouer un rôle discret et efficace dans le choix du fils de son allié afin que l'alliance perdure. Afrifa Akwada va s'associer en effet à la reine Dokuwa pour résister à l'Ashanti. Sa mort accidentelle, suite à la chute d'un arbre, va, de ce fait, profondément affecter la reine Dokuwa.

Lorsqu'Agyeman, un neveu utérin direct de Kwakye Adeyefe, accéda au trône de Kotoku, Dokuwa, par une diplomatie discrète, l'amena à faire l'option de la résistance à l'Ashanti. Il attaquera à trois reprises les Kwahu parce que ceux-ci fournissaient des troupes auxiliaires à l'Ashanti contre l'Akyem. Il quitta Soadru, sa nouvelle capitale, pour se réfugier au fort Christiansborg, en affichant clairement son hostilité vis-à-vis de l'Ashanti en 1824.

L'année suivante, soit en 1825, les affrontements entre les Akyem et les Ashanti commencent à s'intensifier. La reine Dokuwa comprit que la meilleure façon de résister à l'Ashanti était de s'attacher au protectorat britannique sur la Gold Coast. C'est ce qu'elle fit, en s'impliquant dans la guerre du protectorat contre l'Ashanti. Ses troupes s'illustrèrent par leur bravoure à la bataille de Dodowa (Dudua) en 1826.

L'Ashanti subira un revers cuisant à cette bataille. Après cet épisode douloureux, des Ashanti du royaume confédéré de Juaben, en rupture de ban avec le roi des Ashanti Osei Yaw Akoto, demandent à se réfugier en Akyem Abuakwa. Ces Ashanti juaben étaient dirigés par Kwasi Boaten connu sous le nom Boaten Panyi. La reine Dokuwa leur fait bon accueil. Elle fait preuve d'un grand esprit de tolérance en accordant l'asile à ces Ashanti juaben.

Elle leur cède des terres et leur permet de créer la chefferie autonome d'Ashanti-Akyem. Le traité d'avril 1831 confirmera l'indépendance de l'Akyem vis-à-vis de l'Ashanti. Le choix politique de la reine Dokuwa de lier le sort de son royaume aux royaumes et chefferie impliqués dans le protectorat britannique a porté ses fruits.

Après 1826, l'Akyem Abuakwa est libéré du joug Ashanti. Ce fut par la stratégie intelligente de la reine Dokuwa. Elle dirigea avec sagesse le peuple Abuakwa jusqu'en 1842. Son règne a été l'un des plus appréciés. Son successeur est le roi Atta Panyi.

Conclusion

Ce que les rois de l'Akyem Abuakwa ne sont pas parvenus à faire, à savoir libérer leur royaume du joug de l'Ashanti, une femme l'a fait. C'est la reine-mère Dokuwa. Grâce à une diplomatie efficace auprès de l'allié Akyem Kotoku et au choix stratégique d'entrer dans la coalition du protectorat britannique, elle est parvenue à libérer l'Akyem Abuakwa de la dure domination ashanti.

C'est au plus fort de grandes souffrances vécues par le peuple abuakwa, après les morts tragiques des rois Atta Owusu Yiakosa, Kofi Asante, Asare Bediako et la prise du trône par les ennemis ashanti, qu'elle décide de prendre en main la direction du royaume. Elle mettra fin à plus d'un siècle de domination ashanti (1720 à 1826).

Notes

1. L'unité de pereguan/pereduan fait 2,250 onces d'or. Les 1 000 pereguan font 2 250 onces d'or.
2. Le jurement chez les Akan est une courte phrase qui rappelle un événement malheureux. Quand il concerne le royaume, le prononcer revient à faire appel à la justice royale.

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Recruitment, Resistance and Memories of the First World War among the Terik of Kenya

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Abstract

While the First World War was, from the Terik point of view, an unpopular and painful event, it inaugurated a deeper interaction between the British colonial government and the Terik. Terik memories of the war are complicated and ambivalent. Informants recall the war not only as a contest between the British and the Germans, but also as a time of widespread famine and forced recruitment. Driven by British anti-German propaganda, political anxieties and forced recruitment, Terik carriers and *askari* endured disease, suffering and death in the battlefields of East Africa between 1914 and 1918. These tragedies are deeply seared into Terik memories, but so are those of their bravery, heroism and being part of the victorious side. While they brought some economic and social benefits to the veterans, they also deepened British colonial cooptation of the *Gapjepkoi* ruling elite as well as its unpopularity among the Terik.

Résumé

Si la Première Guerre mondiale a été, du point de vue des Terik, un événement impopulaire et douloureux, elle a inauguré une ère de plus grande interaction entre le gouvernement colonial britannique et les Terik. Les souvenirs de la guerre des Terik sont compliqués et ambivalents. Les informateurs se rappellent la guerre non seulement comme une lutte entre les Britanniques et les Allemands, mais aussi comme une période de famine généralisée et de recrutement forcé. Animés par la propagande anti-allemande des britanniques, les inquiétudes politiques et le recrutement forcé, les porteurs et « askari » Terik ont enduré maladies, souffrances et morts sur les champs de bataille de l'Afrique de l'Est entre 1914 et 1918. Ces tragédies sont profondément gravées dans la mémoire des Terik, de même que les victoires, la bravoure, l'héroïsme et l'appartenance à la partie victorieuse. Tout en apportant des avantages économiques et sociaux aux anciens combattants, la guerre a également renforcé la cooptation coloniale britannique de l'élite dirigeante des *Gapjepkoi*, et leur impopularité auprès des Terik.

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Introduction

The experiences of the Terik people in the First World War cannot necessarily represent those of other Kenyan African groups. Nevertheless, some comparisons can be made between the experiences of the Terik and those of the other Kalenjin sub-ethnic groups in the First World War, as documented by Lewis Greenstein (1975). The Terik, a small sub-group of the larger Kalenjin network of ethnic groups, contributed hundreds of men to the British First World War effort. The exact number of Terik people who participated in the war is unknown; but from field interviews with fourteen Terik informants, they supplied an inordinately large number of youths towards the war effort. The Terik population at this time was approximately 8,000 (see Table 2). From 1914 to 1917, the entire Kisumu district mobilised approximately 27,000 carriers alone (see Table 1) out of a total of 179,000 for the entire British East African Protectorate (Hodges 1986: 207).¹

This article is based mainly on archival data and oral testimonies of a fast-disappearing set of second-hand informants who are descendants (children and grandchildren) and associates of Terik recruits into First World War. Despite their limitations, the testimonies paint a vivid account of the war experiences of Terik recruits and their communities in Nyang'ori, western Kenya. Recounted to the researcher mainly in the Terik language between May and June 2015, the testimonies reflect their perspectives of their own society and experiences during the war.

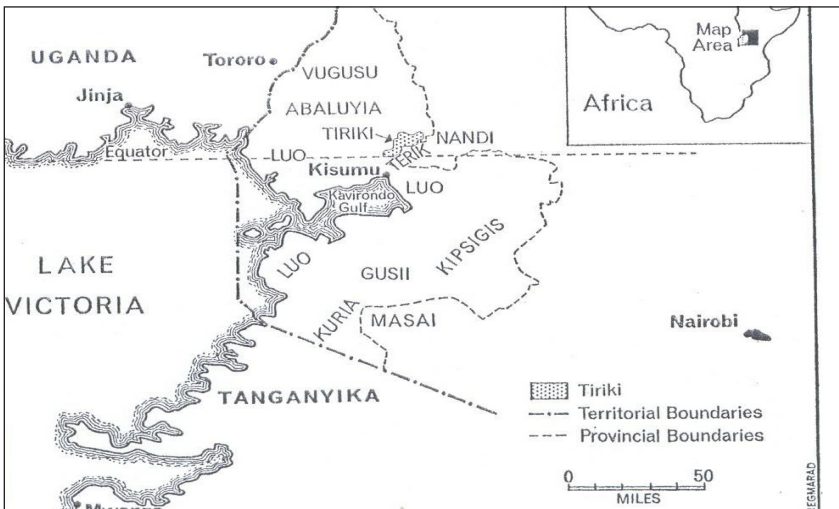


Figure 1: Map showing the area of study (Nyang'ori Location, part of the present day Terik area)

Source: Sangree, W.H. (1966: XXVI)

Terik informants have three descriptions for the First World War. The two most common are *Boriethab Jerumaan ak Ingeresa* and *boriethab rubeeth*. *Boriethab Jerumaan ak Ingeresa*² means, literally, ‘the war of the Germans and the English (British), and refers to the main protagonists in the war. *Boriethab rubeeth* means the ‘war of hunger’ and refers to the famine of 1918 to 1919 which ravaged the Terik area and virtually the entire then British East Africa Protectorate.³ In Terik-lore, the famine is also frequently referred to as *masiemui* or *jemuiya*⁴ because food was so scarce. People had to cut, boil and eat *muiywek* (dry skins and hides) in order to fend off hunger during the prolonged drought. Terik elders generally hold that *masiemui* (meaning ‘the ones who wouldn’t lie on the hides’ possibly because they had eaten it out of hunger) was occasioned by the ‘atrocities’ that had been committed by the community’s *murenik*⁵ recruited into the war. They also contend that the ritual of *ng’aanyetab met*,⁶ (the ‘opening of the head’ rituals) were not properly conducted on the returning First World War veterans to cleanse them and the community. This was born out of the belief that the *murenik* coming from the war were ‘unclean’, having engaged in and touched ‘evil’ things or people. Kipruto Araab Kapkuot, a Terik informant, asserts that no returnee should have been allowed to enter into a house or bring the things used in a war into the compound before the cleansing rituals.⁷ Kapkuot added: ‘There were some things I personally saw like a spring rest bed, a gun that I held and we used to play with, metallic objects, military uniform, and utensils like cooking pans and mugs. Terik people by tradition do not possess or keep things of *Kapchemuswo*.⁸ They regard them as unclean and as a source of bad omen. Some returnees are thought to have come back to their homes before undergoing proper cleansing rituals. The third phrase used by the Terik in the description of the war is *boriethab lazima*.⁹ All the informants recalled in great details episodes of how the recruits were snared and captured. A significant number of informants vividly recall these episodes of forced recruitment.

The period just before the start of the First World War recruitment was rife with propaganda. The British officers presented the Terik with terrifying consequences of German victory in the war, including the German occupation of their area. Solomon Araab Jebren, an informant, explained: ‘the British told us that the Germans were bad people who would turn us into slaves; that if we allowed the Germans to come and live in our land they would prevent us from getting children, they would prick our eyes with sharp needles, they would cut off the hands of those who steal (cattle), and they would crush our testicles and make us sterile. As much as we disliked the British, we preferred them to the unknown enemies, the Jerumaan.’¹⁰ Richard Kiblagat Araab

Jepkoi, another informant, also explained some propaganda on the war as was narrated to him by his grandfather and First World War veteran, Abaa Araab Tumo: ‘The British told us that the Germans were after our cattle and grazing lands, so we were to join hands and fight them lest we lose all these things. We also feared that the Germans would enslave us and bring the Arabs (sic) to our Terik lands.’¹¹ Kapkuot emphasised the motivation by the Terik to protect their land: ‘The Terik were told that they had to fight the Germans so that they would not intrude into their land.’¹² While many Terik remained reluctant to participate in the war, this intense anti-German war propaganda convinced a larger section of the Terik to support their British colonisers in the war. First World War scholars have documented similar recruitment tactics elsewhere in German East Africa, Nyasaland and French West Africa (Moyd 2016; Forgaty 2008; Lunn 1999).

In addition to the anti-German propaganda, the British also offered inducements to Terik recruits. Jemunai Jemathin explained: ‘They were informed that those who would prove to be brave and fight on until their allies, the British, defeat the Germans, would enjoy privileges including payments and more importantly, jobs in the colonial government upon their return home’.¹³ These promises proved attractive to Terik youth. A large section of the Terik eventually threw their lot in with the British. More importantly, the traditional political and initiation rituals leaders (*Giruogindet* and *Jeptuminik*)¹⁴ of the *Gapjepkoi*¹⁵ clan mobilized for the Terik’s support of the British in the war. Charles Kiptarus Araab Tanui, an informant, noted: ‘The British had long established themselves here and they are the ones on whose side our people were recruited to fight in the war. The Germans were aliens and unknown to us.’¹⁶ Despite garnering support from Terik youth and leaders, many were still sceptical about the war and the recruitment exercise was fraught with tension and violence. The tensions and violence became evident during the recruitment drive by the colonial officials assisted by Terik colonial Chief(s) Headman, Jepsirgoi. The Kisumu District Annual Report for the year 1916–17 captured this contradictory situation: ‘the heavy demands made upon them for military labour and for stock have been met without any disturbance ... almost all have an intense fear and hatred of service with Carrier Corps.’¹⁷

‘Raiders of the dawn’: Terik recruitment and resistance in Nyang’ori Location

The British recruitment of *askari* (soldiers) in British East Africa for the First World War began in the late 1914. Writing in the Provincial Annual Report of 31 March 1914 – 1 April 1915, Nyanza Provincial Commissioner (PC)

John Ainsworth stated: 'for practically eight months of the period under review, the general condition of all the Districts have undoubtedly been considerably affected by the present war.'¹⁸ The District Commissioner's annual report for Kisumu District for the same period is more specific about the labour situation occasioned by the war: 'Owing to the war, the labour question has been rather abnormal ... there has been considerably small demand from settlers and farmers who presumably for reasons of the war have not been able to undertake as much cultivation as formerly, while there has been a considerable demand for labour from military and other government purposes.'¹⁹ The unease in the entire province was aggravated in no small measure by the fact that South Kavirondo District had been attacked and occupied by the German forces for several weeks in September 1914.²⁰

Among the Nandi, a traditional enemy of the British colonial government (Matson 1994), the mobilisation of settlers and farmers in Nandi District was treated with alarm. PC John Ainsworth noted: 'Some anxiety arose in connection with reported unrest among the Nandi shortly after the outbreak of the war. There is no doubt that the Nandi became extremely nervous owing to the mobilization of the Uasin Gishu settlers and in the Muhoroni and Tinderet. This was also the cause of further suspicion of both white and black, and it became necessary to institute frequent patrol – Native and European – along the border, resulting ultimately in peace.'²¹ The Terik (closely ethnically related and neighbours to the Nandi to the East) keenly shared in this suspicion of British intentions as related by informants to the present study.²² Ainsworth took some measures in this early period to calm nerves among Africans with some success. He writes: 'in the early period of the war, a feeling akin to astonishment and suspicion seemed to possess the natives of various districts. The people generally were informed of the state of affairs and the reasons for the participation of the British Government were explained to numerous meetings eventually resulting in a feeling of confidence and understanding coupled with an apparent desire amongst the Chiefs and Elders to help where possible ... Chief and Elders of Kisumu and North Kavirondo districts made spontaneous gifts of livestock as meat for troops, and assisted materially in sending out their men to join the carrier corps.' Indeed, some of the so-called 'warrior tribes' like the Nandi (and related ethnic groups) hitherto considered hostile to the British, were to provide the highest number of soldiers in the Kings African Rifles (KAR).

British officers tended to favour the so-called 'warrior communities' as *askari* in the KAR (Greenstein 1975: 72). In the British conquest of communities in Kenya, they had encountered the longest and bloodiest resistance from the Nandi ethnic group (Matson 1994). Hence, they

considered the so-called ‘Nandi-speaking’ groups as war-like and thus good material for recruitment into the First World War. So, British colonial recruiters for the First World War drew mainly from the so-called ‘warrior’ communities like the Nandi and the Maasai. Jebren argued: ‘Recruitment for *askaris* was mainly done in the warrior communities of the Nandi, Kipsigis, Maasai and Turkana. Few Luo and Maragoli were recruited as *askari*.’²³ Kapkuot agreed with this sentiment: ‘Unlike the Germans, the British recruited very capable Africans from the African communities that had *murenik* [military or war-skilled youth] system.’²⁴ Even though the British may have preferred pastoral communities with established ‘warrior’ culture to serve as *askari*, records show that they also recruited massively across all other ethnic communities to serve in the British East African campaign of the war (Hodges 1986: 207–8). While it is not possible to state who served in what capacity and the numbers for each ethnic group, those recruited from Nyanza province (where the Terik and the Nandi belonged) suggest that the British also recruited massively among the other ethnic groups in the area.

Table 1: Kisumu District carrier recruitment, hut and poll tax supplied, 1913–19

Year	1913/14	1914–15	1915–16	1916–17	1917/18	1918/19
Carrier corps		4,572	8,888	5,604	8,922	
Hut & poll tax (rupees)	270,939	303,354	308,556	501,460	548,920	565,835

Source: KNA. DC/CN/1/5/2. Kisumu District Annual Report, 1916–1918

Table 2: Nyang’ori Location population census, hut and poll taxes, 1911–19

Year	1911–12	1912–13	1914–15	1915–16	1916–17	1917–18	1918–19
Population	7553	7199					6,779
Hut & poll tax (rupees)	6,480	6,123	6,705	2469	12,635	14,040	13,620

Source: KNA. DC/CN/1/5/2. Kisumu District Annual Report, 1911–1919

Terik informants remember distinctly the age groups and sets from which the British recruited. They included the *Kipthoithoi* (the youngest sub-set) of Gimnyigei, and *Jongin* and *Kipthoru* (the two oldest subsets) of Nyongi age groups. These were the active warrior age groups during the period of the First World War. These age groups were initiated into warriorhood in the Terik traditional circumcision rituals from the 1890s to early 1910s (Biegon

2016). At this stage of their life, they would have been expected to be actively involved in cattle raiding to find stock as bride price for their impending marriages and also to gain notoriety in community folklore. They would also be the first to respond to the frequent skirmishes with their kinsmen and occasionally arch-foe, the Nandi, and to a lesser extent their Luo and Maragoli neighbours. Ondiek Araab Jepkoi was the *Giruogindet* of the Terik at the time. The ageing Jepsirgoi was gradually ceding his responsibility to his younger kinsmen within the *Gapjepkoi* clan. The *Gapjepkoi* clan had for several years provided political leadership (*Giruognot*) and also traditional initiation leadership (*Jeptuminik*) in the highly regarded circumcision rituals (*Tumwek*) for the Terik ethnic group (*ibid.*).

In 1900, the Terik, under the leadership of Jepsirgoi, had been defeated by British colonial forces (Matson 1994: 55–6). The British had also put down a second Terik anti-colonial insurrection in 1902 (*ibid.*: 56). What finally convinced the Terik of the superiority of the British colonial forces was the defeat of their militarily superior neighbours and kinsmen, the Nandi, and the assassination of the Nandi *Orgoiyot* (prophet-seer leader), Koitalel Araab Samoei, in 1905 (Meinertzhagen 1957: 256). After his appointment as the Chief of Nyang'ori Location in 1902, Jepsirgoi, the Terik and the British colonial officers reached a tentative detente. Jepsirgoi and his clansmen were to become important allies and recruitment agents for the First World War *askari* among the Terik. This amity between Jepsirgoi and the British was not necessarily widely shared among his people. Recruitment for the war is recalled by most Terik informants as being fraught with tension, with the youths deserting and fleeing into the neighbouring Nandi forests.

These recruitment exercises of the *murenik* to serve in the First World War, to significant lengths, involved use of force. Despite the propaganda efforts by British authorities, the recruits were apprehensive about participating in a war that they did not know much about. While uncertain about the numbers of recruits, informants like Charles Kiptarus Araab Tanui were clear about the type of men desired by the British. Tanui said: 'highly muscular, healthy and strong men were the much sought-after recruits into the war.'²⁵ The *Giruogindet* and his aides identified the potential recruits and then rounded them up in their farms and houses. Solomon Jebren Araab Gorko was told in greater detail by his father Kipkoech Araab Ndune, and aunt, Jepketer Jebo Ndune, how the recruitment took place. He recounted: 'No one wanted to be recruited. I understand that the potential recruits were secretly identified after which *askaris* would visit their homes and take them by force.'²⁶ With time, potential recruits found ways of escaping recruitment and a game of hide-and-seek would ensue. Jemunai Jemathin

was told by her father Okwach Kimasan Araab Sawe, who was a First World War veteran, about the recruitment: 'They were recruited by force. In fact, the war is commonly referred to as *boriethab lazima*. At first, people were recruited even during the day while in their daily errands in the farms, grazing fields and so on, but potential recruits became wary and would run away and hide in the forests and return home at night.'²⁷

The local Terik leadership (*Giruogik*) actively collaborated in British recruitment exercises and, in addition, the British hired mercenaries from other 'warrior' communities, especially the Maasai, to capture the recruits (Greenstein 1975: 99–104). Raiding parties of recruiters were made up of British officers and their African collaborators like the Maasai and the influential Terik *Giruogik*. Informants paint a picture of intense fear and paranoia in Terik at this time. Potential recruits fled into the Nandi forests during the day. Richard Kiblagat Araab Jepkoi substantiated Jemathin's recollections of fleeing potential recruits: 'Some recruits fled, claiming that they were afraid that they were going to be eaten by the white men.'²⁸ When the recruiters observed that the young men disappeared during the day, they devised new strategies. According to Jebren, 'the *askari* started to abduct the potential recruits at night by surrounding their *siroinoisiek* [boys' sleeping quarters]²⁹ before storming into them for the person they had identified. Potential recruits somehow got wind of this plot and ran away from their homes. The *askari* were always willing to pursue these youths wherever they went.'³⁰

These activities earned these recruitment officers the name 'Raiders of the dawn' which became part of Terik folklore. These night and dawn swoops were not a preserve of the Terik. Maxon (1980) notes that 'it was difficult to obtain enough recruits without resort to various kinds of forceful measures.' In South Kavirondo, the seizure of young men from their homes at night was undertaken.³¹ The Maasai *morans* involved in the recruitment drive are remembered as being particularly cruel. Jebren noted: 'The Maasai were bad people because whenever they visited the *siroinoisiek* and found out that the young men had already escaped, they burnt the *siroinisiek* and drove away their herds of cattle.'³² It is evident that The Maasai took advantage of these recruitment drives to raid stock from the Terik and the Nandi. The proclivity of the Maasai *moran* to drive away cattle from communities they raided as part of the British colonial conquest forces is a well-established feature in Kenya's colonial literature (Macdonald 1899; Meinertzhagen 1957; Spear and Waller 1993; Matson 1994).

The role of the Terik *Giruogik* in these recruitment exercises had important long-term consequences for their society. Henry Kipruto Araab Kapkuot noted that: '*Giruogindet* Ondiek Araab Jepsirgoi worked well

to recruit people into the war. I am not sure whether he was paid but he assisted the British officers in obtaining recruits among his people.³³ Jamin Jepakitui Araab Kijo agreed: 'My father informed me that the British officers sought the assistance of the *Giruogik* who were able to identify homes with young men who had the desired characteristics.' Kijo explained further the actual kind of assistance given to the British recruiters by Terik *Giruogik*: 'The *Giruogik* were able to identify homes with young men who had the desired characteristics. The *Giruogik* gave the names and the white officers invaded the homes for forceful recruitment. They recruited tall, strong, muscular youth.'³⁴ The *Giruogindet* was able to identify the men who were suitable for the war in terms of age-set (*morans*) and physical attributes as well as location.

It is conceivable that without the assistance of the *Giruogik*, the colonial officers may have had to identify and to forcefully recruit *Ng'etiek* (uncircumcised youth) and junior elders (slightly older, married men), and this, in all likelihood, would have caused a general outcry from the community. These sections of men were not customarily allowed to go to war (Hollis 1909; Pilgrim 1961; Huntingford 1944; Langley 1979). Jepsirgoi helped the British colonial officers to identify young men of the 'warrior age group' at that time. As mentioned above, these were mostly from the *Jongin* and the *Kipthoru* sets of the *Nyongi* who were the *murenik* proper at the time. Fewer of the *Kipthoithoi* of the *Gimnyigiei*, who were then 'junior elders' and who had just married, were recruited. These *murenik* were at an age where they had been traditionally prepared and sanctioned to go to war against enemy communities. Jepsirgoi also organised to help the British in tracing these young recruits whenever they had disappeared run away from recruitment.

The *Giruogik* have been indicted by informants as being overly aggressive and vindictive in their recruitment efforts on behalf of British colonial officers. Loice Jemunai Jemathin, an informant whose father, Okwach Kimasan Araab Sawe, was a FWW veteran, recounted:

My father was one of those whose capture at dawn was recommended by *Giruogindet* Sonono ... He was recruited soon after the death of his older and only brother Okoro. He recalled how when they arrived at the colonial government's labour and training camp at Kibos near Kisumu, one of his tribesmen pleaded with the recruitment officers there to let Okwach stay behind because he was now the only son in the family and that he was newly married and had a young baby boy and there was no one left to take care of his wife and the child ... Sonono strongly insisted to the recruiting officers to ensure that Okwach had gets recruited. The community elders led by Sonono assisted the government in coordinating the recruitment of men in Terik.³⁵

This tension and disaffection engendered among the Terik by the British recruitment exercise is evident in Jemunai's narrative. Beyond mobilising Terik youth for the British war effort, recruitment seemed to be an instrument for disciplining those perceived as errant and socially disruptive. Jemunai adds: 'Sonono perceived Okwach as a rude trouble maker who always caused chaos and fights especially in the drinking sprees and other social events in Terik villages, and was happy to send him away to war.'³⁶ The social tensions generated by forced recruitment grew after First World War and contributed considerably to the growing unpopularity of the *Gapjepkoi* leadership.



Figure 2: Loice Jemunai Jemathin Jebo Okwach, an elderly Terik informant

The late Loice Jemunai Jemathin Jebo Okwach, daughter to First World War veteran, Okwach Kimsan Araab Sawe, she spent a long time with her father and heard numerous narrations on the First World War from him which she kindly shared for the present study. This photo was taken on 11 December 2015 at Kapko village in Terik location, South Nandi. Photo: Published courtesy of Emmanuel Kipkemboi Koech and Albert Kipkemboi Tiony.

Jepsirgoi and Sonono may have had varied motives for their enthusiastic cooperation with the British colonial officers during the recruitment exercise. Nonetheless, a variety of events in the recent past may have convinced the

Gapjpekoi clansmen of the superior power of the British colonial government. The brutal British conquests of the Terik in 1900 and 1902, the defeat of the 'truculent' Nandi³⁷ and killing of their *Orgoiyot* Koitalel Araab Samoei in 1905 (Meinertzhagen 1957) must have cast an ever-looming shadow on the political leaders of the Terik community. It was reasonable to expect, therefore, that the Terik *Giruogik* would seek to protect 'their regime' by acquiescing to the clearly more superior British forces. Jamin Kijo's explanation for the rationale behind the actions of the actions of the *Gapjpekoi* clansmen, led by Jepsirgoi during the recruitment, therefore, bears some credibility: 'To me, the reasons for Jepsirgoi's decision to collaborate with the British were two: to create peace with the colonial government and, to safeguard his leadership position.'³⁸ Kijo's explanation broadly does justice to the spirit of the time. The consequences of the recruitment efforts of the Terik *Giruogik* are an important subtext to this story of the Terik in the First World War and will be looked at in further detail.

Recruits were mainly taken from their homes in Nyang'ori Location to the nearby Kibos Quarantine Camp.³⁹ Their names and health status were verified and they also engaged in light training. The British allowed fiancées of the recruits to visit and view their training, and they were informed to encourage them. Jepketer Jebo Ndune explained to Solomon Jebren Araab Gorko her visit to see her lover, Okwaro: 'While at Kibos training, these young men's girlfriends and wives were allowed into the camp so that they would encourage and motivate them ... with the hope that they would stay brave and come back home after the end of the war so that they can get married ... they went there daily in the morning and came back in the evening. Jepketer Jebo Ndune said Okwaro had promised to marry her and even tried to request if she could accompany him to the war but that was not accepted.'⁴⁰ After successful tests in Kisumu and Kibos, the recruits were dispatched to different war zones, including Voi and Taveta on the Kenyan coast and Mwanza and Tabora in Tanzania. Those dispatched to the Kenyan coast were transported by train⁴¹ while those who were taken to Mwanza went across Lake Victoria by ship.⁴² Once in these areas, they would wait to be transported to the actual battlefields.

We were brave! Memories of Terik battlefield encounters

Out of the twenty-two First World War Terik recruits who provided information to the informants for the present study, only five can be confirmed to have been soldiers, namely Okwach Kimasan Araab Sawe, Aba Araab Tumo, Daniel Ajon Araab Osenwo, Ondiek Araab Baiya and Araab Mase (see 'World War One veterans who came from the Terik ethnic

community following the References section in this article for full details). The memories of the war experiences of these veterans had been acquired mainly through reenactments and narrations to other Terik people during *Mabwai* and irregular community sessions of performances. *Mabwai* were evening fireside storytelling sessions from the elderly to the young in Terik homesteads. Sometimes, war veterans spontaneously regaled the Terik villages with performances of their experiences for the young. Kiptarus Araab Tanui, for example, described how some of the veterans visited schools and dramatised their war experiences for the young school children. He explained:

While in School, Araab Mase and Okwach who were then old men would come when drunk and then tell us these stories. They would say: 'Who else can compare to us? We went into Tanzania, we fiercely fought the *Jerumaan*, killed many until they surrendered.' Holding their walking staff as though it was a gun, they would dramatize their experiences in the battle fields proudly bragging: 'Who amongst you has ever held a gun? Guns were like toys to us, we shot the *Jerumaan*, Twa! Twa! Twa! We were brave! Some of our *Ingeresa* compatriots were killed but we survived!'⁴³

These replays, conveyed dramatically by the narrators even in the present day, afford us a glimpse into the kinds of First World War experiences and memories valued by Terik recruits and their descendants. They include the high number of deaths caused by diseases, hunger, thirst, exhaustion and battle casualties. War manoeuvres, forms of transport (and equipment) and fierce battles like the one at Tabora are also an indelible part of these experiences and memories.

As noted above, the leading causes of the deaths of these African recruits were disease, hunger, thirst, exhaustion and injuries from the war. Archival reports show that as early as December 1914, the Medical Officer in Kisumu was expressing concern about the condition of the African First World War returnees: 'A number of porters were returned from Nairobi as being medically unfit. When the medical officer at Kisumu conducted an examination of the men, he reported that eighteen were suffering from starvation and three from dysentery.'⁴⁴ The anxiety the condition of these men caused to the administration in Nyanza can be noted in a letter sent by the Assistant to Provincial Commissioner, Mr H.H. Horne: 'Nothing but war would justify us in returning porters in such a pitiable condition. Many can barely walk and deaths are frequent.'⁴⁵ Two kinds of diseases were frequently mentioned as causing a high number of deaths among African service men in the war. First was a disease the Terik referred to as *Jelole* which was characterised by severe stomach ache, diarrhoea and vomiting and which the informants believed was caused by the foods which the African service men ate in the First World War.

The second disease was characterised by swelling throughout the body and was referred to as *nundut* by the informants; this also killed numerous African recruits. Solomon Jebren Araab Gorko explained:

They [Terik recruits] talked of *tende* [dates] a kind of food made of flour which looked like and tasted like *sukari nguru* [beet sugar]. The food was a health hazard to many people and it caused chronic diarrhoea that killed many people. I understand whenever someone contracted the bloody diarrhoea disease, it took a very short time before he died. Several died at night while asleep. The disease was called *Jelole*. The disease later came to be known as *bortab nyongiik* [the disease of the *Nyongi* age group] because it almost wiped out all the *Nyongi* age group who went for the war.⁴⁶

Naming the disease *bortab nyongiik* (the disease of the *Nyongi* age group) conformed to the Terik practice of ‘immortalising’ an age group by naming a major event that occurred during the ‘reign’ of that age group. The naming of *bortab nyongiik* also demonstrates that the disease claimed a large number of casualties and caused enough serious alarm to the community to warrant its identification with the *Nyongi* age group of 1910s. Jemunai Jemathin had a similar story from her father: ‘There was an outbreak of different diseases at the camp but the most spoken about was a disease that caused excessive diarrhoea and vomiting and another one, *nundut*, which caused big growths and rashes, especially on the face and cheeks. Many people died as a result of these diseases and he told us that Ajon Araab Osenwo experienced extreme diarrhoea and he became totally weak and unable to be actively engaged in the war.’⁴⁷

Many other informants spoke about these diseases and that they claimed a high number of casualties. Jemunai Jemathin explained an interesting episode involving his father and the disease:

My father recalled how one day, he saw his fellow *askari* getting his stomach operated on Afterwards, the doctors brought him greenish, fat-like medicine in a small bottle and explained that the medicine would treat his stomach problems. He believed that the medicine was extracted from the intestines of the man he had seen being operated on earlier and he was reluctant to take the medicine. My father said that he accepted the medicine, placed it under his pillow and waited until nightfall then he quietly went out, poured out the medicine and threw the bottle away. He thought that the ‘medicine’ would harm him rather than heal him. In the same night, he got a vision in his sleep. In the vision, he saw spirits that instructed him to wake up early the following day, go into the forest and gather roots and leaves of specific plants revealed in the vision. He was instructed in the vision to make a concoction by crushing the roots and the leaves, and then add water and then drink it and that this will heal him. He woke up and carried out the instructions in the vision and

after taking the medication, he felt better again. He said everyone suffered bloody diarrhoea. The diseases affected only the Africans.⁴⁸

The disease evoked fear, suspicion and anxiety among African recruits. The informants explained that diarrhoea was commonly experienced by Africans and not their European colleagues, leading them to believe that it was caused by the food rations provided at the African camps. Africans service men mostly lived and prepared their foods in their own camps, separately from their Europeans counterparts, during these campaigns.

The stories around the food recruits ate during the war and which they suspected caused diseases have become almost mythical. It is understood that as soon as the recruits ate this food, they lapsed into unexplained illnesses and many died. Kiblagat Araab Jepkoi explained other examples from the experiences of another First World War veteran, Araab Tumo: 'Araab Tumo said that sometimes there was total lack of water and many African soldiers would collapse and die because of thirst. Others died from snake bites. Many however died from a disease they called *Jelolet* and *nundur*.'⁴⁹ Kiplangat Araab Saina agreed: 'Many people died in the war from the harsh climate and diseases.'⁵⁰ The stories of the growing death toll in the wars reached home and caused unrest in the Terik community. Jebren Araab Gorko's comment reflects the growing frustrations with the war as the number of casualties grew: 'I think the war had negative consequences because these people were forced to work as slaves and many were killed by getting involved in a war they had no idea about.'⁵¹

Scholars agree that human and pack animals provided the more common means of moving cargo and war equipment across the vast plains of Tanzania where most of the war took place (Maxon 1980). Details of the high number of carriers used in this war and the high death rates among this category of service men on the East African war front have been documented (Maxon 1980; Moyd 2016; Farwell 1987; Gillispie 2018; Page 1987; Rosberg and Nottingham 1966). Terik informants assert that people, donkeys, horses and mules were used for transport and that there were no aircrafts; vehicles were limited.⁵² A significant number of the recruits from Terik may also have been carriers, which goes counter to the belief that so-called 'warrior' communities were mostly recruited as *askari* in the First World War. This fact is sometimes mentioned directly but can also be discerned from the vivid explanation by the Terik informants of the kind of suffering that the carriers went through. Kiptarus Araab Tanui remarked: 'The highly muscular, healthy and strong men were potential recruits perhaps because of the heavy and physically demanding work that they were going to be engaged in. I understand many of the recruits from this area became carriers of the items used in the battles.'⁵³

Jamin Araab Kijo elaborated on the kind of items that they carried: 'The recruits carried foodstuffs, ammunition, clothing, tents, medical equipment and so on. Others were cooks.'⁵⁴ The informants of Jebren Araab Gorko painted a bleak picture of the fate of the carriers:

I understand the bags and boxes were extremely heavy but the carriers were forced to carry them. Those who showed any kind of weakness were beaten ... and even killed by people from *Ithopia* (sic) [perhaps referring to the lighter-skinned people who would most likely be coastal Swahilis] and *Marabuk* (sic) [Arabs] who were the commanders employed by the *Ingeresiek* [the British] to supervise them. These people really mistreated the carriers by even hitting their backs using guns ... Those who were overwhelmed by the heavy goods and items they carried were pushed and beaten with guns. He said they were beaten like cattle. Some were beaten to death. As proof that these people were dead, their clothes were handed over to their families.⁵⁵

The plight of the carriers is hardly surprising, considering the vastness of the land they traversed with goods on their heads and backs. The supply lines were extremely long. People from Terik trekking or fighting in Taveta, Voi, Tabora and Mwanza would have found themselves in a completely new geographical setting and with unfamiliar weather and foods (Page 1987). Hodges shows that the so-called 'carrier corps' was a crucial element of the First World War in East Africa, yet they were maltreated by a combination of factors like poor planning (preferential treatment being given to the fighting units), poor food, poor clothing, overwork (long walks), excessive loads, and lack of proper coordination of the lines among others (Hodges 1986: 205–6). The high number of deaths among the carriers alarmed the British colonial officers and prompted the formation of the Military Labour Corps in 1915 to administer this vital section of the British First World War campaign in East Africa (Hodges 1986).

Except for the big and decisive skirmishes at Tabora, most of the warfare in East Africa that the Terik participated in consisted of guerrilla attacks. As in Europe, German and British forces made extensive use of trenches during their attacks and retreats. Kipruto Araab Kapkuot explained: 'Ajon informed me how they used to dig trenches which were used to plan for the attacks especially in Tabora.'⁵⁶ Jemathin agreed: 'The war was intermittent and there was little or no open field battle. They undertook the attacks together with British forces. They established temporary green tents and dug out trenches that they used to plan and execute their attacks ... whenever there was an attack, they would leave all their belongings and run for battle.'⁵⁷ Tanui recalls from his informants: 'there were no open field battles, we dug trenches, there was use of spies and intelligence.'⁵⁸ They all concurred that the recruits could sometimes go for weeks or months in the camps without any battle.

The Battle of Tabora in September 1916 was the fiercest and bloodiest war in which the Terik participated. Though it was Belgian forces that eventually captured Tabora, the Terik recalled it as a victory for the British forces that claimed a lot of casualties. The fierceness of the battle in Tabora is attested to by other studies (Moyd 2016; Samson 2012; Strachan 2004). Jepkoi remembered his grand uncle, Abaa Araab Tumo, manned a machine gun. Tumo relayed to him:

Tabora was the major battle field ... a railway line passed near the place. This was the place where many people were killed and the Germans surrendered. He recalled that while they were at Tabora, the Arabs and Swahilis who had survived denied the British forces water to quench their thirst and deliberately poured all stored water onto the ground. The Arabs and the Swahilis did this out of frustration because many of their people had been killed.⁵⁹

The Tabora battle was an open combat with fierce exchange of gunfire as opposed to the 'hide-and-peek' (guerrilla) tactics that they were used to.⁶⁰ Jemunai Jemathin also remembered her father's narrations about the battles at Tabora and Mwanza: 'My father said that they defeated the Germans during their time at Tabora and Mwanza. Their military camps were also established at these places.'⁶¹ The role of the Indian army was also recalled by Kiblagat Araab Jepkoi: 'The war to Tabeta (sic) [Taveta]. The Indian army came by train and fought the Germans, killing several of their number.'⁶² The combatants also suffered snake attacks.⁶³ Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck is certainly well remembered by some Terik informants as an outstanding soldier: 'Aba Araab Tumo was full of praise for the German Commander 'Bainitu Bobeek' (sic) [Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck]. He said "Bobeek" was a strong, very capable soldier'. He used to joke about this name, as *Bobeek* in Terik language means 'of the water.'⁶⁴

'Agents of progress' or 'bringers of tragedies'? The ambivalent legacy of Terik war veterans

Terik informants explain the end of the First World War in terms of victory to the side that they supported and therefore as a happy occasion for them. Those Terik that returned were greeted as heroes Terik survivors of the war were crowned community heroes. Kiptarus Araab Tanui explained: 'the war ended when the German commander surrendered and left for his own country'.⁶⁵ Kipruto Araab Kapkuot said: 'The Germans were defeated. Some Teriks managed to return and they told us that they had won the war and that their opponents, the Germans, opted for retreat and surrender.'⁶⁶ And so, the end of the war is remembered as having been a victory for the British

forces whom the Terik supported during the war. The war veterans are also generally regarded as having been the agents of some kind of 'progress' among the Terik. Araab Saina claimed that: 'the war veterans came back happy. They were highly respected.'⁶⁷ Others are known to have become successful entrepreneurs: 'Kabunja Araab Jebogo was able to accumulate a lot of cows after the war. He came to be known as rich a man owning a lot of cows.'⁶⁸ They brought home new 'objects' to the community that were seen in a positive light as the case of Abaa Araab Tumo illustrates: 'Abaa Araab Tumo brought home clothes, blankets and shoes and they also got some pay.'⁶⁹

These new items like utensils, metal bars and spring beds which were brought into the Kalenjin economy began to push the boundaries of imagination of new 'economic materials' in the local economy, albeit gradually. Kiptarus Araab Tanui argued: 'Those who had gone to the war were seen to be living a life that was considered "better" [quote marks are mine]. This was especially true in the construction of buildings and agriculture. Their families were seen to have become generally well off. They came and settled in their families' lands. They used the money paid to them to support their children to start businesses and they also engaged in new cattle keeping techniques, like keeping quality breeds and spraying.'⁷⁰ Kipruto Araab Kapkuot gave an even more elaborate explanation of the Terik First World War returnees:

These people must have been very strong because after such a strenuous exercise, some who came back, established homes and families and led normal lives. They found a new place in the society. They were highly respected and consulted on government issues as they were seen as having the experience of working with the colonial government. They were considered "modern" [quotation marks are mine] gentlemen even in their old age. Some of them were disciplined and raised their children well. These men built new types of houses never seen before in the area. They were the ones who introduced new crops into our lands, e.g. tobacco and peas.⁷¹

Undoubtedly, First World War Terik veterans earned some money from the war. War experiences introduced them to the idea of money, wider networks of trade and consciousness of distant places. In Terik villages, these veterans were among the few people who held any amount of cash at all. Witnessing the importance of literacy during the war motivated them to send their children to take advantage of the schooling system in the early colonial period. These veterans had worked with the colonial army officers and were able to see them at their most vulnerable, as well as their strongest conditions. In addition, these veterans provided the early lines of contact (and communication) between the local colonial officials and their local community.

Some Terik ex-combatants returned to deserted homes. Their wives had left their homes to marry someone else or had gone back to their parents⁷² The war also depleted the Terik of their able-bodied youths. Kipruto Araab Kapkuot explained: 'Surviving the war was not guaranteed and families with able-bodied men suffered the most.'⁷³ Other informants recall that 'plenty' of the recruits died in the war, while some returned but were in poor health and many others died even after returning home. Kapkuot argued: 'I understand they were very weak. Some who had gone as youth were now mature young men. They were received with joy. People organised *ng'aany'etab met* [opening of the head] ceremonies that involved slaughtering a sheep to cleanse and bless them. It was believed that they were unclean, having engaged in and touched "evil/unclean" things and people.'⁷⁴ The famine of *Masiemui*, which came soon after the First World War and during which Terik people remember boiling and eating dry cattle hide out of desperation, caused much anguish in the community. They associated this famine with possible crimes that their sons had committed against other people in the war.⁷⁵

As the death toll became unbearably high, informants recount that the *Giruogindet*, Sonono, was blamed for the ills that were befalling them. The *Giruogindet* and his long-reigning clan of *Gapjepkoi* became unpopular. The tragedies that accompanied recruitment for the First World War formed the initial roots of the unpopularity of this ruling clan. These early causes of unpopularity would reach fruition, in combination with a host of other factors, during the period of British colonial rule over the Terik people (in Nyang'ori Location of the then Nyanza province of British East Africa) in the post-war period. The *Gapjepkoi* clansmen's reign over the Terik was extended into the colonial period when the leaders from the clan were coopted into 'British indirect rule over in Nyang'ori Location.' After Sonono, however, there was an interlude of a non-Terik Chief who presided over Nyang'ori Location from 1924 to 1939 with important consequences, chiefly in-migration of massive numbers of Maragoli and Tirikis into what the Terik considered to be their land, subjugation of Terik pastoral practices and associated customs (for example, female circumcision), and the forceful removal of the Terik from parts of their land and into the Nandi's among others. After Chweya, the *Gapjepkoi* came back to power through Mosson Araab Berek (1939 to 1945) and Antonio Kipketter Araab Jepkoi (1945 – 1961). But the accumulation of all the complaints that the Terik had in the entire colonial era was blamed mostly on the *Gapjepkoi* ruling elite. A 'new elite' group that consisted of clergy, educated elites, businessmen and former soldiers in the Second World War (e.g. Henry Kipruto Araab Kapkuot)

successfully championed the dethronement of the *Gapjepkoi* clansmen from political leadership over the Terik people in a messy campaign that became part of the decolonisation rhetoric in Nyang'ori Location.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. KNA/ KNA. DC/CN/1/5/2. Kisumu District Annual Report, 1916–1917: 5.
2. *Jerumaan* is the Terik reference for the Germans; *Ingeresa* is the Terik name for the British. *Borieth ab rubeeth* means 'the war of hunger'. Terik people remember the First World War by this name because of the famine that was experienced in the area at the end of the war.
3. KNA. DC/CN/1/5/2. Kisumu District Annual Report, 1918–1919: 1.
4. A famine that is widely narrated by Terik elders, which came after the war and during which people boiled and ate *muiywek*. *Muiywek* is dried cattle skin that is mostly used as sleeping mats.
5. The name for Terik warriors who usually are circumcised young men regarded as the 'reigning warrior age group'.
6. Literally refers to the ritual of 'the opening of the head'.
7. Kipruto Araab Kapkuot, 2015.
8. Items considered ritually unclean, especially those recovered from wars where people had been killed.
9. Literally 'the war that we were forced into'. *Lazima* is a Swahili term for 'being forced' or 'being compelled'.
10. Solomon Araab Jebren, 2015.
11. Richard Kiblagat Araab Jepkoi, 2015.
12. Kapkuot, 2015.
13. Jemunai Jemathin, 2015.
14. *Giruogindet* (pl. *Giruogik*) is the title for a Chief Elder of the Terik. This is not necessarily an office but a titular chair at the 'Council of Elders' (*Boisiekab kok*) deliberations. *Jeptuminik* (sing. *Jeptumion*) refers to ritual elders during the circumcision ceremonies.

15. *Gapjekoi* clansmen supplied most of the *Jeptuminik* in the immediate pre-colonial Terik society.
16. Charles Kiptarus Araab Tanui, 2015.
17. KNA/ KNA. DC/CN/1/5/2. Kisumu District Annual Report, 1916–1917: 1.
18. KNA. PC/NZA 1/10. Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1915: 1.
19. KNA. DC/CN 1/5/1. Kisumu District Quarterly and Annual Report, 1909–1918: 29.
20. KNA. PC/NZA 1/10. Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1915: 1.
21. KNA. PC/NZA 1/10. Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1915: 2.
22. Jepkoi, 2015; Kapkuot 2015.
23. Jebren, 2015.
24. Kapkuot, 2015.
25. Corroborated by Daniel Saina, 2015; Jebren, 2015; Jemunai, 2015; Jepkoi, 2015; Kiplangat Saina, 2015; Loice Jemunai Jemathin Jebo Okwach, 2015; Tanui, 2015.
26. Jebren, 2015.
27. Jemunai, 2015.
28. Jepkoi, 2015.
29. *Siroinoisiek* mean huts built for the young post-circumcision as their living quarters.
30. Jebren, 2015.
31. KNA. DC/KSI/1/2.
32. Jebren, 2015.
33. Kapkuot, 2015.
34. Jamin Jepkitui Araab Kijo, 2015.
35. Jemunai, 2015.
36. *ibid.*
37. Charles Hobley, 'Report on Wanyanguori expedition', April 1900, Entebbe Secretariat Archives, A4/28: 12.
38. Kijo, 2015.
39. KNA. DC/CN/1/5/2. Kisumu District Annual Report, 1918–1919: 1.
40. Jebren, 2015.
41. *ibid.*; Kapkuot, 2015.
42. Jepkoi, 2015.
43. Tanui, 2015.
44. KNA. Ministry of Health M.D. 38/968. 1914.
45. KNA. Ministry of Health M.D. 38/968. 17 December 1914.
46. Jebren, 2015.
47. Jemunai, 2015.
48. *ibid.*
49. Jepkoi, 2015.
50. Kiplangat Saina, 2015.
51. Jebren, 2015.
52. Kapkuot, 2015; Kijo, 2015; Tanui, 2015.

53. Tanui, 2015.
54. Kijo, 2015.
55. Jebren, 2015.
56. Kapkuot, 2015.
57. *ibid.*
58. Tanui, 2015.
59. Jepkoi, 2015.
60. *ibid.*
61. Jemunai, 2015.
62. Jepkoi, 2015.
63. Jemunai, 2015,
64. Jepkoi, 2015.
65. Tanui, 2015.
66. Kapkuot, 2015.
67. Saina, 2015.
68. Ajoro Araab Anwana, 2015.
69. Jepkoi, 2015.
70. Tanui, 2015.
71. Kapkuot, 2015.
72. Jepkoi, 2015.
73. Kapkuot, 2015.
74. *ibid.*
75. *ibid*

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Interviews with informants on the First World War from the Terik ethnic community

Name	Date	Place of interview	Age	Age-group	Age-grade	Clan
Ajoro Araab Anwana	5 May 2015	Nandi/Chepkumia Location/ Koibem	1950/65	Korongoro	Kipthoru	Kapkenda
Charles Kiptarus Araab Tanui	22 April 2015	Soi	1950/65	Korongoro	Jongin	Kapko
Daniel Ajon Araab Saina	22 April 2015	Terik, Kapko	1953/62	Korongoro	Thehagaath	Kapko
Henry Kipruoto Araab Kapkuot	21 April 2015	Vihiga/Nyang'oi/Musawa	1920/95	Jumo	Jongin (1938)	Kaboroch
Jamin Jepkitui Araab Kijo	2 April 2015	Vihiga/Kapchemung'	1916/99	Maina	Thehagaath (1931)	Kapkenda
Kipkoros Nyaengo Araab Okwach Kimasan	24 April 2015	Terik/Kapko/Kapkemen	1938/77	Sawe		Kabiny
Loice Jemunai Jemathin Jebo Okwach	30 April 2015	Lessos, Centre Kwanza, Mogoona	1920/95 (Approx.)	Maina	Kipthoithoi	Kabiny
Josiah Kibigona Araab Saina	4 April 2015	Mosop/Kipkarren Selia/ Kapserton village	1936/79	Sawe	Jongin	Kapko
Richard Kiplagat Araab Jepkoi	6 May 2015	Nandi/Kapsabet town/ Kapng'etuny village	1947/68	Korongoro	Jongin	Gapjepkoi
Samson Kibitok Araab Keny	5 May 2015	Nandi/Yala Trading Centre/ Chepkumia	1940/75	Sawe	Kipthoru	Kapkenda
Solomon Jebren Araab Gorko	9 May 2015	Nandi/Kombe Location/ Chepkok village	1920/95	Jumo	Jongin	Kabiny
Wesley Elisha Kiplangat Araab Saina	4 May 2015	Nandi/Kapsabet town/police station canteen	1947/68	Sawe	Kithoithoi	Kapko

World War One veterans who came from the Terik ethnic community

Name	Ethnic group	Clan	Sub-dan	Totem	Age group	Age grade
Aba Araab Tumo	Terik	Kaboroch	Gapiepkoi	Lelwat (fox)	Nyongi	Jongin
Ajon Araab Nunei	Terik					
Araab Bwanga	Terik					
Araab KapAnando	Terik					
Araab Mase	Terik	Kipkoigei	Kapombeje		Nyongi	Jongin
Cheseret Araab Okech	Terik					
Daniel Ajon Araab Osenwo	Terik	Kapko	Kapoooro	Genda/Segemiat (Bee)	Nyongi	Jongin
Gimundus Araab Jonjet	Terik	Kapko	Kapoooro	Genda/Segemiat (Bee)	Kimnyigei	
Gonen Araab Ochieng'	Terik				Gimnyigei	
Goren Araab Nunei	Terik					
Jebui Araab Jepkiui	Terik	Kapkenda	Kapchemoje	Robtha/Toiyoi (Sun)	Nyongi	Jongin
Jepkitwai Araab Jепterit	Terik				Kimnyigei	Kipthoithoi
Jesanga Araab Amono	Terik				Nyongi	
Kimonu Araab Kimerin	Terik	Kapkenda	Gopkogono			
Odera Araab Kipsang'	Terik					
Okwach Kimasan Araab Sawe	Terik	Kabiny	Kapmoeth		Kimnyigei	Kipthoithoi
Okwaro Araab Beiyе	Terik				Kapkoiyо	

Ondiek Araab Baiya	Terik							
Ondiek Araab Sagas	Terik						Kimnyigei	
Orege Araab Jepkijo	Terik						Nyongi	
Owuor Kabunja Araab Jebogo	Terik	Kapkenda	Kapkooyo	Koiyo/Asis (the sun)			Nyongi	Jongin
Segero Araab Kipsombo	Terik		Kapomooro					



Parcours de la première génération de leaders politiques en Casamance : affirmation identitaire et luttes politiques au Fuladu¹ (1946-1958)

Mouhamadou Moustapha Sow*

Résumé

Cet article se propose de retracer le parcours et les luttes politiques de trois figures pionnières de la scène politique du Fuladu (Casamance). Il s'agit, en l'occurrence, d'Amadou Lèye Diop dit « Diop Michel », Yoro Kandé et Demba Koita, tous membres de l'Union Progressiste Sénégalaise (UPS). Ils jouèrent un rôle de premier plan dans la vie politique du Fuladu de 1948 à 1958. Parmi les facteurs les plus déterminants qui expliquent leurs trajectoires, nous pouvons retenir l'école coloniale et l'héritage familial. Dans notre étude, nous chercherons à comprendre comment ces deux facteurs ont forgé différemment l'itinéraire professionnel et politique de chacun de ces trois leaders et déterminé le jeu de positionnement dans les différentes instances délibératives et représentatives à l'échelle locale et nationale.

Mots clés : Fuladu, Elites, Colonisation, Ethnicité, Ecole, Casamance, Sénégal

Abstract

This article retraces the life and political struggles of three pioneering figures of the political scene in the Fuladu (Casamance). They are Amadou Lèye Diop nicknamed "Diop Michel", Yoro Kandé and Demba Koita; all members of the Senegalese Progressist Union (UPS). From 1948 to 1958, they played key roles in the political life of Fuladu. Among the most central factors that explain their itinerary, one can retain colonial schooling and family heritage. This study aims to comprehend how these two factors have, in different ways, framed the political and professional career of each of these three leaders, and how these in turn have determined their positioning strategies in various deliberative and representative spheres at the local and national levels.

Key Words: Fuladu, Elite, colonization, Ethnicity, School, Casamance, Senegal

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Introduction

La période qui suivit la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale fut caractérisée par une rapide accélération des réformes institutionnelles et des libertés dans les territoires sous domination coloniale française (Benoist 1994 ; Roche 2001). Au Sénégal comme dans le reste de l'Afrique Occidentale Française (AOF), la proclamation de la nouvelle constitution, qui adoptait l'Union française, la loi Lamine Guèye et la mise en place d'assemblées territoriales suscitèrent un nouvel engouement pour la vie politique et électorale. Pour preuve, entre 1945 et 1958, neuf consultations à caractère général se tinrent au Sénégal (Atlan 2001:135). Les nouvelles élites scolarisées, répondant à la dénomination d'« évolués » et composés de fonctionnaires, d'instituteurs et de syndicalistes de plus en plus nombreux, supplantèrent progressivement les chefs de canton et les chefs coutumiers et s'engagèrent dans la bataille pour la représentation des populations dans les nouvelles instances délibérantes.

Au Sénégal, la bipolarisation de la vie politique incarnée par le Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais (BDS) de Léopold Sédar Senghor, d'une part, la Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière (SFIO) de Lamine Guèye, d'autre part, trouva son prolongement au Fuladu. Mais sur le plan local, la compétition politique, au-delà de l'opposition BDS/SFIO, révéla une lutte farouche entre les protagonistes du nouveau parti de Léopold Sédar Senghor.

Cet article essaie ainsi de retracer les trajectoires politiques de trois figures pionnières de la vie politique moderne au Fuladu. Il s'agit principalement de Amadou Lèye Diop dit « Diop Michel », Yoro Kandé et Demba Koita. Après avoir présenté l'itinéraire familial et scolaire de ces trois figures ainsi que le rôle joué par le commerce et la scolarisation² dans la formation et l'affirmation de cette nouvelle élite dans l'arène politique locale, nous mettrons l'accent sur les diverses stratégies mises en place à l'occasion des différentes compétitions électorales entre 1952 et 1958 pour l'occupation des différentes instances délibératives et de représentation des populations. Nous essayerons d'articuler enfin cet engagement politique, dans un combat plus général de l'affirmation de la Casamance dans le champ politique sénégalais à la veille de l'indépendance³.

Des itinéraires croisés et complémentaires

À la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, se développa une prise de conscience collective à l'échelle de la colonie du Sénégal. En effet, l'activité des forces politiques sénégalaises s'accéléra à partir de 1944 et atteignit son point culminant en 1946 avec l'introduction d'une série de réformes sociales, politiques et institutionnelles qui touchèrent à la fois le Sénégal

mais l'ensemble des territoires sous domination coloniale française (Benot 1989 :54 ; Beoist 1994 :32).

En Casamance, intervient, en 1944, une réforme administrative qui fit de Ziguinchor l'unique cercle de la Casamance comprenant sept chefs-lieux de subdivision : Ziguinchor, Oussouye, Bignona, Sédhiou, Kolda et Vélingara. Cette réforme administrative ouvrit davantage le champ politique casamançais et accéléra, en même temps, le renouveau du personnel politique. L'action des conseillers généraux censés représenter les populations casamançaises et dont la plupart n'étaient pas originaires de la Casamance et des chefs de canton fut de plus en plus contestée par une nouvelle élite politique issue de la petite bourgeoisie commerçante, des fonctionnaires et notamment des instituteurs. L'irruption de cette dernière catégorie socioprofessionnelle dans le champ politique fut largement facilitée, à partir de l'année 1947, par l'avènement sur la scène politique locale du MFDC (Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (Roche 2017 ; Manga 2012 ; Awenengo 2004).

Jusqu'en 1950, l'activité politique dans les subdivisions de Kolda et de Vélingara fut globalement peu dynamique. Selon un rapport du chef de subdivision de Vélingara, A Pinel, « la vie politique de la subdivision ne demande pas de commentaire particulier. La population composée en majorité de cultivateurs demeure calme, ne s'intéressant d'une manière générale qu'à ce qui la touche assez près : cultures, vivres, femmes. La politique n'a pas encore pénétré dans cette brousse et il semble qu'elle ne soit pas encore sur le point de s'y instaurer » (ANS, 2G50-106). Le paysage politique était marqué par la présence de trois forces politiques d'importance très inégale. Il s'agit de la SFIO représentée par les commerçants Lamine Ba et Abdoulaye Diallo et qui domina l'arène politique à Kolda et Vélingara jusqu'en 1951, puis du Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais (BDS) dirigé par Amadou Diop dit « Diop Michel » et du Regroupement Démocratique Africain (RDA) représenté par un médecin vétérinaire, Handane Baba. Il s'y ajoute le Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (MFDC) qui se trouvait être une organisation très influente à caractère régional, représenté à Kolda par l'instituteur Yoro Kandé. À la fin des années 1950, suite à un processus de recomposition politique, survint Demba Koita, secrétaire des Greffes, en remplacement de Amadou Michel Diop.

Amadou Lèye Diop dit « Diop Michel » : du commerce à la politique

« Diop Michel⁴ », de son vrai nom Amadou Lèye Diop, était issu d'une famille maraboutique et commerçante. Il naquit vers 1898 à Bouno, en Moyenne Casamance (actuel département de Sédhiou). Très peu porté sur les études, Amadou Lèye Diop s'orienta vers le commerce et mit à profit

le réseau de contact que son père, Sasoum Lèye Diop, avait noué avec les responsables des maisons de commerce établis à Ziguinchor et à Kolda. Il investit, très tôt, dans le commerce et l'élevage et pratiqua la culture du mil et de l'arachide. Grâce aux rendements de ses multiples activités économiques et commerciales, Amadou Lèye Diop acquit une notoriété et un capital relationnel très importants auprès des populations et des chefs de canton. Il n'est pas dès lors surprenant que l'autorité coloniale le présenta comme « un commerçant aisé à Kolda, où il y est établi depuis plusieurs années » (ANS 20G11 (144) 1952). Cette réputation de grand commerçant disposant d'une clientèle à la fois nombreuse et fidèle⁵ prépara son entrée sur la scène politique casamançaise.

Sur le plan politique, ses débuts furent un peu difficile eu égard à la toute-puissance de l'aristocratie traditionnelle et des chefs de canton dans les années 1940. « Diop Michel » n'eut pas, ainsi, les mêmes succès avec le commerce. Dès le départ, il fut candidat malheureux de la SFIO aux élections du Conseil général en 1946 avant de militer au BDS de Senghor grâce aux conseils de son ami le docteur Gabriel Carvalho. Il relégué Ahmadou Lamine Ba au second plan et se positionna rapidement comme le représentant légitime de ce parti à Kolda. En 1952, Amadou Lèye Diop fut élu conseiller territorial de Kolda (ANS, 20G68 (17) 1952). Grâce à l'influence des élus MFDC et à son poids politique dans la subdivision de Kolda, il fut élu membre de la commission des travaux publics. Mais Amadou Lèye Diop, qui avait le sens des affaires, eut une carrière politique brève (Kandé 2006) en raison des démêlés qu'il eut avec la justice. Il fut impliqué dans le détournement des fonds d'une coopérative⁶. Dans un télégramme officiel, le gouverneur du Sénégal informe son supérieur : « *Je vous rends compte que par jugement du 14 janvier 1955 Diop Michel, conseiller territorial, a été condamné par la justice de paix de Kolda à un an de prison pour usage abusif de biens et du crédit d'une coopérative* » (ANS 17G541 (144) 1955). « Diop Michel » purgea sa peine à Gorée. Cet emprisonnement mit fin à la carrière politique d'un homme « *adulé par les populations* » [Entretien avec Charles Olympe Cissé 2005]. Cette éviction de Diop Michel du champ politique fut perçue comme une sorte de complot politique ourdi par ses adversaires comme Yoro Kandé [Entretien avec Yoro Pira Baldé 2004]. Pour ce dernier, il était clair que Amadou Michel Diop n'était pas un autochtone et ne disposait pas en conséquence de la légitimité pour représenter, et encore moins pour défendre les intérêts des Peuls du Fuladu⁷. C'est fort de toutes ces considérations que la rivalité politique entre les deux protagonistes du BDS à Kolda revêtit une forte intensité. Après sa déchéance au plan politique, Amadou Michel Diop joua discrètement le rôle de sage conseiller

politique auprès du jeune greffier, Demba Koita, nouvellement entré sur la scène politique.

Yoro Kandé⁸ ou les Peuls d'abord...

Contrairement à Diop Michel, Yoro Kandé, qui naquit en 1927 à Thiafféna, dans le canton du Patim-Kibo (Dabo, Kolda), dut son ascension politique à sa scolarisation et à son appartenance à la communauté peule du Fuladu. Ici, comme c'était souvent le cas en Afrique Occidentale Française, ce sont les instituteurs, « ces mangeurs de craie », qui furent au-devant de la lutte politique (Hézéquel 2005). Titulaire d'un diplôme de moniteur des écoles, Yoro Kandé servit d'abord à Bignona en 1945, puis à partir de 1947, il fut muté à Sédhiou comme surveillant au cours normal de cette localité.

À l'instar de Amadou « Diop Michel », c'est à Sédhiou que le jeune enseignant prit goût à la politique et fréquenta Ibou Diallo. Sédhiou, à cette époque, était un véritable centre de bouillonnement intellectuel et politique. Il adhéra dès les premières heures à l'idée de la création du MFDC. « *En tant que jeune instituteur, j'avais les mêmes aspirations que les Ibou Diallo, je me battais pour représenter les Peuls de Kolda et de Vélingara.* » [Entretien avec Yoro Kandé 2002] Ayant adhéré au MFDC et devenu le chargé à l'organisation, Yoro Kandé refusa de militer au BDS à sa création. De Sédhiou où se forgèrent véritablement sa conscience politique et son désir de participer au combat politique de la Casamance, Yoro Kandé entreprit de propager les idées du MFDC auprès des populations peules, lesquelles étaient pour la plupart réceptives au discours de leurs leaders. Pour les Peuls de Kolda, « Certains leaders politiques du Fuladu comme Yoro Kandé faisaient partie des membres fondateurs du MFDC qui avait pour vocation de porter les revendications de la population, de lutter contre la marginalisation, et d'exiger la reconnaissance, l'égalité vis-à-vis des nordistes, et le désenclavement » [Entretien avec Samba Ndiaye Baldé 2016]. Il ressort de cette affirmation que la prise de conscience de la marginalisation économique de la Casamance par rapport au reste du Sénégal était très tôt présente et vivace dans l'esprit des populations casamançaises, notamment celles du Fuladu. Ce qui justifiait pour elles l'adhésion et le soutien aux leaders politiques de la Casamance qui avaient créé, dès 1947, le Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (Manga 2012).

L'adhésion au MFDC reposait d'abord sur une aspiration profonde pour le jeune instituteur à représenter son ethnie, son cadre identitaire de référence, mais il demeurait surtout convaincu que seul l'engagement politique pouvait lui offrir l'occasion de défendre les intérêts de sa communauté d'origine et de lutter contre les travaux forcés et les corvées auxquels les populations

peules du Fuladu étaient soumises. Au sein du MFDC, Yoro Kandé mit son intelligence et son énergie au service du développement du mouvement dans toute la Casamance. Le clivage générationnel qui le séparait des personnages d'envergure comme Ibou Diallo et Émile Badiane ne fut point un obstacle pour le jeune leader politique de la Haute Casamance. Il reçut d'ailleurs le soutien d'Ibou Diallo dans la compétition politique à Kolda.

À partir de 1955 et à la suite des déboires judiciaires du conseiller territorial Amadou Michel Diop, par ailleurs représentant du BDS, Yoro Kandé devint le chef du BDS-MFDC dans la subdivision de Kolda. Il reçut un second mandat de conseiller territorial dans le cadre du Bloc Populaire Sénégalais (BPS). Mais l'action politique de Yoro Kandé dans la commune de Kolda rencontra des complications avec l'émergence de nouveaux leaders politiques, en l'occurrence Demba Koita.

Demba Koita, un intrus dans le champ politique

Demba Koita naquit le 1^{er} janvier 1922 à Dialambéré dans la subdivision de Kolda. Dialambéré était un village fondé par son grand-père, Habibou Koita, ancien compagnon de guerre de Moussa Molo [Entretien avec Ogo Mballo 2005]. Comme Yoro Kandé, Demba Koita entra à l'école de Médina Abdoul. Son parcours professionnel comme secrétaire des greffes le conduisit à Kaffrine, puis à Kayes (Soudan français), à Ziguinchor et à Kolda. Au tribunal de Kolda, Demba Koita acquit une notoriété sur le plan professionnel et tissa un réseau relationnel assez dense auprès des populations. De par sa position professionnelle et sa connaissance du milieu social, Demba Koita intégra la petite bourgeoisie locale composée essentiellement de commerçants, et se lia d'amitié avec certains hommes politiques, notamment Amadou Michel Diop. Il n'était pas, en réalité, préparé à entrer dans l'arène politique. C'est par un concours de circonstances qu'il se retrouva dans l'arène politique sénégalaise. En effet, au lendemain de la disgrâce d'Amadou Michel Diop, Demba Koita fut contraint par ses amis et « Diop Michel » lui-même de poursuivre le combat politique engagé, même si sa carrière dans la magistrature ne le prédestinait guère aux charges politiques.

Mais visiblement Demba Koita disposait de trois atouts majeurs : premièrement, il fut un intellectuel et un brillant fonctionnaire, qui avait réussi à gagner la sympathie de plusieurs commerçants établis dans l'escala de Kolda. Deuxièmement, Demba Koita fut un natif du terroir où ses parents et arrière-grands-parents avaient joué un rôle de premier plan dans le royaume du Fuladu⁹. Troisièmement, sa fonction de secrétaire des greffes au tribunal de Kolda avait fini de faire de lui un médiateur social dans la petite ville de Kolda et ses environs. Bien qu'il ne soit pas Peul par son nom de

famille, Demba Koita disposait de solides attaches familiales dans le terroir, parlait et comprenait parfaitement la langue peule. Il avait l'avantage d'être au-dessus du jeu des références sociales en vigueur au Fuladu et incarné surtout par Yoro Kandé. Ainsi, il fut le leader idéal qui réunissait la légitimité académique et intellectuelle et la légitimité historique pour faire face à Yoro Kandé. D'autant plus que ce dernier, selon les partisans de « Diop Michel », n'était pas étranger à la descente aux enfers de leur mentor. Mieux, tous les « étrangers » résidant à Kolda s'identifiaient à Demba Koita comme étant leur leader. Mais selon Ogo M'ballo¹⁰, l'ascension politique de Demba Koita fut liée à la longue et solide amitié qu'il tissa avec Assane Seck, qui favorisa son adhésion au Parti du Regroupement Africain (PRA-Sénégal). Avec les regroupements politiques en cours durant cette période avec la création de l'Union Progressiste Sénégalaise (UPS), Demba Koita et ses amis se lancèrent à la conquête de la commune en créant le Regroupement démocratique de Kolda au sein de la même formation.

À la lumière de ce qui précède, il y a lieu de constater que l'école coloniale influença à des degrés divers les parcours des trois protagonistes de la vie politique à Kolda. Chacun mit à profit sa position professionnelle pour élargir sa clientèle politique et porter à sa manière le combat pour la défense des intérêts des populations. Les élections pour la représentation à l'Assemblée territoriale ainsi que celles relatives à la Commune furent les champs d'expérimentation de l'exercice du pouvoir politique.

Premier test électoral des élites politiques du Fuladu (1951)

Les élections législatives de 1951 furent révélatrices de la force du BDS dans la colonie du Sénégal. Ces compétitions électorales mirent pour la première fois en avant deux listes, SFIO et BDS-MFDC, respectivement dirigées par Lamine Guèye et Léopold Sédar Senghor. En Casamance, la SFIO, force politique dominante, connaissait une double scission : la première, d'envergure nationale, conduisit à la création du BDS en 1948 ; la seconde, de dimension régionale, donna naissance au Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC).

À l'échelle de la subdivision de Kolda, la liste SFIO était conduite par Abdoulaye Diallo, celle du BDS par Amadou Michel Diop et Lamine Ba. Si les électeurs de la section SFIO de Kolda étaient pour la plupart les commerçants et la petite bourgeoisie locale, ceux du BDS se recrutaient essentiellement dans le monde rural, particulièrement dans la paysannerie¹¹. De ce fait, au niveau local, les élections législatives de 1951, bien qu'elles eussent une ampleur à l'échelle de la colonie du Sénégal, présentèrent un enjeu local très important qui révéla dans une certaine mesure l'opposition

entre citoyens dits « évolués » et monde rural. La lutte entre les deux partis dominants, la SFIO et le BDS, souleva de vives tensions à Kolda et des violences éclatèrent pendant la campagne électorale et le jour du scrutin.

Dans la subdivision de Vélingara, « une importante propagande a été faite par le BDS alors que la SFIO, certaine de son succès, n'avait pas beaucoup bougé¹² ». Yoro Kandé et Ansou Mandian, responsables politiques du MFDC à Vélingara, ont convaincu leur électorat. Le rapport politique mensuel ajoutait : « Ce parti (la SFIO) déchanté dès les premières heures, car, malgré les isolements, le cultivateur malhabile laissait apercevoir un bout de billet vert ; et ceux-ci affluaient, alors que la couleur rouge ne se voyait que rarement¹³. » À l'issue du scrutin, la coalition BDS remporta largement le scrutin devant la SFIO.

Tableau : Résultats des élections législatives de 1951

Inscrits	7 797
Nombre de votants	3 114 ¹⁴
Suffrages exprimés	3 094
BDS	2 560
SFIO	486
RPF	48

Ces résultats donnaient une assise politique au MFDC-BDS en Haute Casamance, notamment à Vélingara. La victoire du BDS était, en Casamance, celle du MFDC aussi. Désormais, les représentants du mouvement jouirent d'une réputation qui leur donna l'occasion d'être les véritables interlocuteurs du monde paysan. Le parti de Senghor, à travers ses représentants au Fuladu, réussit à capter une clientèle politique à partir des réseaux à caractère ethnique et culturel. Dans sa démarche, Yoro Kandé mobilisa un électorat composé de cultivateurs, de pasteurs, d'artisans locaux appartenant en majorité à la communauté peule grâce à un discours axé sur le registre de l'ethnicité et de l'autochtonie. La quasi-totalité de nos informateurs ont confirmé ce propos : « Nous sommes les plus nombreux et nous devons diriger¹⁵ », en faisant allusion à la forte présence des Peuls dans la subdivision administrative de Kolda. Yoro Kandé réclamait surtout la fin des travaux forcés devenus insupportables pour les populations en dépit de la promulgation de la Loi Houphouët Boigny en 1946. C'est pourquoi il apparut, très tôt, comme le leader naturel des populations du Fuladu et le principal défenseur de leurs intérêts auprès des autorités administratives.

Les élites politiques à la conquête de leur premier mandat électif (1952)

Après les élections législatives de 1951, les territoires de l'AOF s'apprêtaient à participer au scrutin de l'Assemblée territoriale. Douze ans après sa création, le Conseil général avait été supprimé par le gouvernement colonial français et remplacé par l'Assemblée territoriale. Pour contenir la revendication nationaliste, les autorités coloniales mirent progressivement en place des institutions destinées à favoriser la participation politique des « indigènes » à la gestion de leurs localités. L'instauration de l'Assemblée territoriale compliqua le jeu électoral. De nouveaux enjeux déterminèrent le choix et l'orientation des électeurs.

Depuis la création du BDS en 1948, on assista dans toute la colonie du Sénégal à une accélération de la vie politique et institutionnelle. La lutte pour la représentation des populations devint un enjeu systématique de positionnement des nouvelles élites politiques. Chaque tour de scrutin devenait un moment crucial qui révélait de nouveaux leaders et façonnait de nouveaux destins. Après 1951, les changements institutionnels dus à la suppression du Conseil général et à la mise en place de l'Assemblée territoriale redonnèrent à la compétition politique toute sa dimension en AOF et en AEF. Cette nouvelle institution, où devaient siéger les cinquante futurs conseillers territoriaux, aiguïsa les appétits des responsables politiques. Dès lors, les leaders de toute obédience politique s'engagèrent à conquérir les suffrages des électeurs.

En Casamance, à la faveur de la réforme administrative consacrant l'avènement d'un cercle unique avec sept subdivisions en 1944, huit postes furent mis en compétition pour la seule circonscription électorale de Ziguinchor dont faisait partie la subdivision de Kolda. Le BDS et la SFIO proposèrent chacun une liste. Les candidats du BDS étaient Ibrahim Diallo, Émile Badiane, Robert Delmas, Édouard Diatta, Amadou Lèye Diop, Yoro Kandé, Babacar N'diaye et Djibril Sarr.

La liste SFIO était dirigée par E. H. Mamadou Dianne, Assane Diack, Abdoulaye Diallo, Magor Gaye, Lamine Daffé, Emmanuel Gomis, Khael Dia et Laurent Carvalho.

La composition des deux listes révéla le déséquilibre dans la représentation des élites en Haute Casamance. En effet, dans la subdivision de Kolda, à l'instar du reste du Sénégal, la bipolarisation SFIO/BDS se poursuivit lors du scrutin du 31 mars 1952. D'une part, il y avait le camp d'Abdoulaye Diallo, responsable local de la SFIO et, d'autre part, celui d'Amadou Lèye Diop et Yoro Kandé, adoubs par Léopold Sédar Senghor et Mamadou Dia. La liste SFIO était toujours dominée par les élites commerçantes et urbaines

tandis que celle du BDS fut composée majoritairement de lettrés originaires de la Casamance. De plus, la liste BDS avait l'avantage de présenter trois figures politiques originaires de la subdivision de Kolda, alors que seul Abdoulaye Diallo représentait la subdivision de Kolda sur la liste SFIO.

À l'issue du scrutin, la circonscription électorale de Ziguinchorregistra les résultats suivants : 34 180 voix pour le BDS contre 3 365 pour la SFIO sur un total de 37 672 votants, dont 37 416 suffrages valablement exprimés¹⁶. Ces élections furent remportées, une fois de plus, par le BDS. À l'échelle du territoire du Sénégal, cette victoire relégua dès lors la SFIO de Lamine Guèye au second plan. Les socialistes n'obtinrent que neuf sièges sur un total de cinquante.

En Casamance, il y eut une recomposition du paysage politique en faveur des responsables du MFDC. Cette victoire insuffla une nouvelle dynamique unitaire chez les responsables du parti régionaliste et mit en évidence leur influence et leur popularité en Casamance. Les résultats enregistrés par la coalition BDS-MFDC dans la circonscription électorale de Ziguinchor furent déterminants pour la victoire finale du BDS. Le cercle de Ziguinchor avait enregistré 92 pour cent de suffrages pour le BDS, soit le meilleur résultat du parti fondé par Léopold Sédar Senghor dans toute la colonie du Sénégal (Atlan 2001:491 ; Awenengo-Dalberto 2005:213). Le village l'emporta sur la ville. Ce fut aussi la fin de la représentation politique des anciens conseillers généraux de la Casamance.

Ces élections pour l'Assemblée territoriale consacraient le déclin de la classe politique jusque-là incarnée par Lamine Guèye et la plupart des élites urbaines. Ce triomphe politique du BDS était la conséquence de l'extension de la citoyenneté à toute la colonie du Sénégal grâce à la Loi Lamine Guèye de 1946, mais surtout à l'action politique des leaders du MFDC. « La défaite du leader socialiste fut ressentie par ses amis comme une profonde injustice du corps électoral à son égard, compte tenu des combats qu'il avait conduits dans le passé pour améliorer son sort. » (Roche 2001:131) Ce combat avait permis la recomposition de la classe politique et l'élargissement du corps électoral. Il en résulta aussi l'émergence de nouveaux pôles de pouvoir et l'avènement d'une nouvelle élite. Ces élections marquaient l'entrée de plain-pied de la Casamance et de ses élites politiques dans le territoire sénégalais. Le MFDC avait joué sa partition de fort belle manière dans la victoire même si les germes d'une scission au sein du parti régional ne tardèrent pas à apparaître (Manga 2012:95).

Dans la subdivision de Kolda, les résultats du scrutin donnèrent aux élus, pour la première fois, l'occasion de siéger dans une assemblée. Amadou Michel Diop et Yoro Kandé devinrent ainsi les premiers conseillers territoriaux de la Haute Casamance. La gestion de la victoire du BDS en

1952 entraîna très vite des remous au sein du parti, venant des élus de la Casamance. Ces derniers, qui incarnaient le nouvel espoir des populations de cette région, n'obtinrent pas de promotion dans la nouvelle assemblée et dans les instances dirigeantes du parti (Roche 2001:138).

Sous l'instigation de leurs leaders, Ibou Diallo, Émile Badiane et Édouard Diatta, les représentants de la Casamance boycottèrent le congrès du BDS tenu à Rufisque entre le 31 mai et le 2 juin 1952. Ce boycott fut couronné de succès dans la mesure où Édouard Diatta fut désigné au poste de président de la commission permanente de la nouvelle institution. Mais cela ne réglait pas définitivement les oppositions internes qui minaient les relations entre le BDS et le MFDC. Les responsables de ce mouvement avaient toujours du mal à s'imposer dans les organes du parti. Le MFDC était, aux yeux des responsables du BDS, un mouvement nécessaire à la mobilisation des masses et pourvoyeur d'électeurs. Cette marginalisation au sommet des responsables du MFDC accéléra le processus de désintégration et de sabordement du mouvement durant les années 1955 et 1956 (Manga 2012:95).

À partir de 1957, la scène politique s'élargit et s'ouvrit à de nouveaux leaders, comme Demba Koita qui, à son tour, eut l'ambition de jouer sa partition dans le combat pour la représentation des populations de son terroir. Il en résulta la naissance au Fuladu d'une communauté politique relativement homogène, mais aux trajectoires différentes.

Les élections municipales de 1958 et leurs enjeux locaux

À Kolda, la vie politique était fortement agitée à la veille des élections municipales prévues le 27 avril 1958. Ces élections mirent en jeu deux tendances issues de la même formation politique : la liste UPS de Kolda et celle du Rassemblement démocratique de Kolda. Cette dernière, conduite par Demba Koita, était une dissidence de l'UPS au niveau local¹⁷. Yoro Kandé, conseiller territorial, était le mandataire de l'UPS dans la subdivision de Kolda.

Ce choix porté sur Yoro Kandé, conseiller territorial, n'avait pas plu aux partisans de Demba Koita. Concernant les raisons de cette nouvelle dissidence, Olympe Daniel Cissé soutient :

Au retour de Ziguinchor, nous avons saisi Bouna Kane, l'administrateur du cercle, pour lui dire que nous voulions partir au PRA-Sénégal avec les responsables du MAC dont Assane Seck. Après plusieurs entretiens à Kolda et avec les responsables du parti à Dakar, notamment avec Mamadou Dia, nous décidions d'en faire un problème interne au BPS. C'est ainsi qu'on créa le Rassemblement démocratique de Kolda (RDK) en 1957 chez le vieux Diop Michel [Entretien avec Charles Olympe Cissé 2005].

Dans une déclaration officielle publiée en avril 1958, les responsables de la liste RDK justifiaient leur décision de créer une liste parallèle et concurrente à celle de la liste UPS en ces termes :

Malgré le souffle d'union apporté par nos élus lors de leur récent passage, le conseiller territorial a voulu agir en dictateur pour l'établissement de la liste des candidats aux élections municipales du 27 avril 1958. Citoyens conscients de nos droits et de nos responsabilités, nous avons été amenés à déposer notre liste sous le nom du Regroupement démocratique de Kolda (RDK). Nous sommes et restons membres du MOUVEMENT PARTI D'UNION PROGRESSISTE SÉNÉGALAISE (UPS) SECTION SÉNÉGALAISE DU PARTI DU REGROUPEMENT AFRICAÏN (PRA¹⁸).

Le RDK apparut comme une réponse à la politique dite « ségrégationniste » de Yoro Kandé et de ses collaborateurs au sommet du BDS-MFDC. De plus, la création de ce regroupement fut le résultat de cette vieille rivalité politique qui opposa Yoro Kandé à « Diop Michel » avec, pour cette fois, l'intrusion de Demba Koita et de ses acolytes.

La naissance du RDK¹⁹ fut un fait nouveau dans le jeu politique à Kolda. Elle marquait une rupture avec l'unanimité imposé par Yoro Kandé, conseiller territorial. Mais l'avènement de ce regroupement consacrait aussi la naissance d'une nouvelle classe politique dont la figure de proue était Demba Koita. Pour la première fois dans l'histoire politique de Kolda, l'UPS, parti dominant, présentait deux listes, lors de ces élections municipales, opposant légitimistes et dissidents²⁰.

L'examen de la composition ethnique et sociale des deux listes permet de constater que la liste RDK avait surtout travaillé à un équilibre ethnique. On y trouvait toutes les ethnies, toutes les confessions religieuses et toutes les tranches d'âge même si « l'engagement politique » [Entretien avec Charles Olympe Cissé 2005] était un préalable pour y figurer. En revanche, la tendance parrainée par Yoro Kandé et conduite par Oumar Diack ne tint pas suffisamment compte de la composition sociologique et de l'âge. Y figuraient des candidats d'âge avancé et n'ayant pas une grande influence sur la vie économique et sociale locale. Bâti et organisé autour des intérêts des forces et personnalités politiques en présence, le jeu des alliances exacerba les oppositions entre les tendances politiques en compétition et rendit la campagne pour les élections municipales plus difficile.

La liste RDK, conduite par Cheikh Sidya Niang, promit, au cours de la campagne électorale, de prendre des mesures visant à améliorer l'état sanitaire de la ville de Kolda ainsi que la situation sociale de ses habitants. Dans leur profession de foi, huit points²¹ structuraient leurs mots d'ordre de campagne :

- électrification de la ville ;
- bitumage des principales artères de la commune ;
- dotation des quartiers de robinets pour la distribution d'eau ;
- confection de caniveaux pour drainer les eaux d'hivernage qui causent chaque année des dégâts importants dans les quartiers ;
- dotation de la maternité d'une ambulance pour le transport des femmes en couche ;
- augmentation du nombre de classes dans les deux écoles de la ville pour permettre la scolarisation de tous les enfants ;
- clôture et entretien des cimetières pour le respect de nos morts.

À la veille de la campagne, les responsables de la liste RDK attirèrent l'attention de l'administrateur-maire de Kolda, André Cau, sur un certain nombre de faits et gestes qu'ils reprochaient à leurs adversaires :

Il nous est revenu qu'au cours des diverses réunions qu'ils ont tenues dans la ville de Kolda, nos adversaires de la liste UPS ont proféré des paroles de menace à notre encontre. Ils auraient même déclaré publiquement qu'ils seraient prêts à endosser la responsabilité des dégâts que pourraient commettre leurs troupes, à savoir frapper nos responsables et électeurs, incendier nos cases et saboter nos réunions et faire venir de l'intérieur de la subdivision des troupes de choc pour saboter les élections. Nous attirons respectueusement votre attention sur le fait qu'un projet de truquage des élections est en cours. Nos adversaires envisagent de faire voter en masse des gens qui n'habiteraient pas le territoire de la commune ANS 11D1/217).

Même si ces accusations furent démenties par les adversaires, cette lettre permit à l'administration locale de mesurer tout l'enjeu des élections et de prendre en conséquence les dispositions adéquates pour sécuriser à la fois le vote et les électeurs. Toutefois, les autorités administratives ne jouèrent pas la carte de la neutralité. En effet, « elles étaient plus proches de nous dans la mesure où Bouna Kane était aussi un étranger dans la subdivision » [Entretien avec Charles Olympe Cissé 2005]. Cette affirmation révèle à quel point les élites politiques de cette époque avaient été habitées par cet esprit de discrimination et son ancrage dans le jeu politique.

Ainsi furent créés dans la commune de Kolda trois bureaux de vote installés respectivement à la résidence, au centre culturel et à l'école de Saré Moussa. Mais la configuration de la circonscription électorale laissait apparaître deux sections d'inégale importance : dans la première, on dénombrait 1 736 inscrits sur la liste des électeurs, dans la deuxième 246, soit un total de 2 582 inscrits (ANS 11D1/217²²). Ces élections, auxquelles Yoro Kandé ne prit pas part, puisque n'étant pas un résident de la commune, montrèrent l'influence de l'élite

commerçante et des « évolués » dans la petite cité. Sur les raisons de son absence sur la liste UPS lors de cette élection, Yoro Kandé précise : « *Je n'étais pas intéressé par la mairie. Car il n'y avait pas beaucoup de Peuls à Kolda. Ma base politique se trouvait dans le monde rural* » [Entretien avec Yoro Kandé 2002]. Cette précision montre, en partie, la dimension « ethniciste » de sa politique et le caractère rural de son électorat, sources de ses inimitiés avec les leaders politiques et habitants de la commune de Kolda. Malgré les fortes oppositions politiques entre les deux tendances, les élections se tinrent dans le calme et la paix dans la ville de Kolda.

Au terme du scrutin, la commission de recensement du vote pour les élections municipales proclama les résultats suivants : la liste RDK, à la tête de laquelle figurait Niang Cheikh Sidya, remporta les élections sur celle dirigée par Diack Omar²³.

À l'issue des élections municipales, Cheikh Sidya Niang et Demba Koita furent respectivement élus premier et deuxième adjoints au maire²⁴. Babacar Diop, adjoint au chef de subdivision, exerçait en même temps les fonctions d'administrateur-maire de la commune de Kolda²⁵. La victoire de la liste RDK donna la prééminence politique à Demba Koita dans la commune, alors que Yoro Kandé, conseiller territorial, était le responsable politique le plus populaire dans le monde rural. Pour preuve, il avait toujours remporté les élections de la Société de la mutuelle pour le développement rural (Kandé 2006:61). L'absence de Yoro Kandé s'explique par sa volonté d'« exercer son leadership dans le monde rural [...] et d'apparaître aux yeux des responsables nationaux de l'UPS comme le leader qui a fait perdre le parti » (Kandé 2006: 61). En fait, au-delà de la bonne préparation de ces élections, les responsables du RDK avaient bénéficié de la complicité des autorités administratives locales et du soutien des grands commerçants installés dans l'escale de Kolda. Face à la politique « ségrégationniste » instaurée par Yoro Kandé et ses partisans, ces derniers avaient mis les moyens matériels et financiers nécessaires²⁶ pour permettre aux mandataires de la liste RDK de mener une campagne bien organisée et de convaincre l'électorat de la commune.

Ces élections, même si elles ne marquèrent pas la fin de règne de la première génération de politiques incarnée par Amadou Michel Diop, Yoro Kandé, Abdoulaye Diallo, Ahmadou Lamine Bâ, constituèrent un tournant dans le jeu de recomposition et de renouvellement des élites au sein de l'arène politique locale. Tout compte fait, Yoro Kandé continua d'assumer pleinement ses responsabilités parlementaires au niveau national et au sein de l'UPS jusqu'en 1963, année au cours de laquelle il fut exclu de l'UPS. Auparavant, il fut nommé par décret, en 1961, premier maire tandis que son rival Demba Koita, qui réintégra définitivement l'UPS, devint le premier maire élu en 1963 (Entretien avec Boris Diallo, ancien maire par intérim de Kolda).

Conclusion

Le Fuladu fut au rendez-vous de toutes les compétitions politiques et électorales au Sénégal, dans la période qui suivit la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. En 1952, il envoya ses premiers représentants élus, Amadou Lèye Diop, dit « Diop Michel », et Yoro Kandé, à l'Assemblée territoriale. Jusqu'en 1958, ils furent les figures politiques de premier plan de la vie politique à Kolda. Si Yoro Kandé, Demba Koita, Fodé Fanné et Ansou Mandian incarnaient le groupe des « évolués » et des fonctionnaires, Amadou Lèye Diop, Abdoulaye Diallo, Amadou Lamine Ba étaient des commerçants reconvertis en responsables politiques suivant les fluctuations de la conjoncture. C'est pourquoi ces nouvelles élites symboliques (Rocher 2002:139²⁷) aux trajectoires différentes luttèrent ardemment pour occuper les postes de responsabilité et sauvegarder les intérêts des populations et ceux de leur groupe d'appartenance dans le cadre global de la lutte pour l'indépendance du Sénégal.

Dans la mémoire collective des Koldois, Yoro Kandé laissa l'image du leader politique attaché à la défense des intérêts des populations peules. Il acquit aussi sa bonne réputation grâce à son combat contre les travaux forcés et sa lutte pour une reconnaissance des Peuls dans le champ politique. Cette première génération de leaders de l'arène politique moderne s'affirma, dans un contexte difficile de conquêtes des libertés et de positionnement au sein de la Casamance d'abord, et au Sénégal ensuite, pour l'intégration effective de leur terroir dans l'espace national.

Notes

1. Le Fuladu, ancien royaume de Alpha Molo et de Moussa Molo, correspond ici à l'entité géographique dénommée Haute Casamance qui couvre l'actuelle région de Kolda.
2. Dans sa thèse, Céline Badiane Labrune (2008:177) montre comment l'école devint à partir des années 1950 un enjeu politique pour les nouveaux conseillers territoriaux de la Casamance.
3. Cet article n'a pas pour ambition de faire le bilan des réalisations des leaders politiques dont il est ici question. Un autre travail de recherche en cours reviendra largement sur ces aspects et leur héritage politique.
4. Selon Mountaga Dia, l'appellation de « Michel » de Amadou Diop renvoyait au prénom d'un des patrons blancs établis à Ziguinchor (entretien 14 mai 2010).
5. Selon ses compagnons politiques et des membres de sa famille, dont son fils aîné Sassoum Lèye Diop, homonyme de son père, « Diop Michel » accueillait souvent beaucoup d'étrangers et des clients qui lui étaient fidèles à son domicile familial.
6. Ses proches, notamment son fils Sassoum Lèye Diop, soutiennent ne pas avoir eu connaissance de ce détournement et de son incarcération à Gorée.

7. Ce sentiment xénophobe était aussi observé chez les vieux Diolas catholiques de Bignona partisans de Émile Badiane. Lire à ce sujet les travaux de Philippe Méguelle et de Mohamed Lamine Manga.
8. Sur plus d'informations sur son parcours scolaire, professionnel et son combat politique, je renvoie le lecteur à Sow M.M. « A lavmarge de l'Etat colonial et postcolonial au Sénégal : Yoro Kandé et la construction d'un leadership politique au Fuladu (Haute Casamance), 1945-1963 », in *Annales de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences humaines, ETHOS, Nouvelle série, n°48*, 2018, pp. 115-137.
9. Selon Ogo M'ballo, Habibou Koita, grand-père de Demba Koita, est un fidèle lieutenant de Moussa Molo, ancien roi du Firdou.
10. Ogo M'ballo, notable à Kolda, a rédigé un manuscrit de 6 pages sur la vie et l'œuvre de Demba Koita daté du 31 décembre 2008. Ce texte, qui se fonde essentiellement sur des enquêtes orales qu'il a menées, permet, malgré certaines erreurs, d'avoir des informations utiles sur le parcours scolaire et politique de Demba Koita.
11. Entretien avec Abdoulaye Diallo, Kolda le 16 mai 2016.
12. ANS, 2G51/105 : rapport politique annuel, Vélingara, 1951.
13. ANS, 2G51/105 : rapport politique annuel, Vélingara, 1951.
14. Entretien avec Samba Ndiaye Baldé, Kolda le 21 mai 2016.
15. Entretien avec Samba Ndiaye Baldé, Kolda le 21 mai 2016.
16. ANS, 20G68 (17) : résultats des élections aux assemblées territoriales, 1952
17. Les entretiens que nous avons eus avec certains notables, dont Boris Diallo, persistent à souligner que Demba Koita avait rejoint le PRA-Sénégal. Il existe une confusion dans la mesure où on oublie souvent que l'UPS était une section sénégalaise du PRA-Sénégal.
18. Profession de foi du Regroupement démocratique de Kolda (RDK) lors des élections du 27 avril 1958.
19. Il est curieux que ce regroupement n'ait pas été mentionné par la plupart de nos informateurs. Cela explique-t-il la spontanéité du mouvement et son envergure de moindre ampleur ?
20. Composition des listes : la liste légitimiste comprenait : Omar Diack, Babayel Diop, Telliye Diallo, Demba Poulo Baldé, Mamadou Samba Diallo, Ibrahima Diallo, Sidy Kandé, Oudousse Ba, Boubacar Diaité, Arona Kandé, Kéba Diaité, Abdoulaye Diallo, Niokhor N'diaye, Edouard Diatta, Babacar M'Baye, Moustapha N'Diaye. La liste RDK, dissidente, était constituée de : Demba Koita, Cheikh Sidiya Niang, Fodé Fanné Mamadou Seydi, Abdoulaye N'dao, Olympe Cissé, Mara Cokissy, Mamadou Salif Diallo, Babacar N'diaye, Baba Handane, Mamadou Oury Diallo, Bassirou Bâ, Alioune Sané.
21. Les points soulevés dans cette profession de foi du RDK continuent encore aujourd'hui de figurer en bonne place dans les programmes des listes en compétition pour le contrôle de la commune de Kolda. C'est avec le programme « indépendance 2006 », que la commune de Kolda a obtenu le bitumage de plusieurs axes de la ville.

22. Voir aussi Kandé (2006) qui revient avec des détails intéressants sur l'organisation et les résultats par bureau de ces élections municipales.
23. Selon N'diaye Babacar, le choix de porter Niang Cheikh Sidya à la tête de leur liste était un choix stratégique dans la mesure où leur principal leader, Demba Koita, pour des raisons professionnelles, se trouvait au Soudan.
24. Dans un récent entretien avec Boris Diallo, instituteur à la retraite et ancien secrétaire municipal à la Mairie de Kolda, la liste RDK, victorieuse, n'eut jamais l'opportunité d'exercer son mandat.
25. En dépit de la victoire de la liste RDK, le bureau ne fut pas validé par l'autorité administrative. Faute de documentation suffisante, nous n'arrivons pas à apporter des éclaircissements sur cette période tumultueuse de la vie politique koldoise.
26. Charles Olympe Cissé, au cours de notre entretien, a sans citer de nom affirmé que ce sont les commerçants installés qui ont mis les moyens matériels et financiers à leur disposition puisque le Parti les avait abandonnés au profit de la liste des partisans de Yoro Kandé.
27. Selon Guy Rocher, par élites symboliques il faut entendre qu'« il s'agit de personnes ou de groupes qui se présentent ou qu'on présente comme des prototypes de certaines manières de vivre, de faire, de penser, ou qui incarnent certaines qualités, certaines valeurs ».

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Youth Activism and Ethnic Violence in Nigeria: From Decolonisation to the Nigeria-Biafra War

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Abstract

Scholarship on violent conflicts in Africa has often constructed two images of the youth: the powerless victims deprived of any human agency and the ruthless perpetrators of acts of violence seen in many cases of child soldiers, armed militias, rapists and looters. Relying on interviews, archival materials and other sources, this article examines youth activities in Nigeria during the decolonisation politics and the first decade of independence, including the Nigeria-Biafra War and post-war period, focusing on ethnic violence and survival. It argues that the politicisation of ethnicity and resource distribution in Nigeria unleashed chains of violence that culminated in the thirty-month devastating war; and that in terms of the pre-war, wartime, and post-war events, Nigerian youth have played complex and varied roles that make it difficult to classify them as either actors or victims of the violent conflicts in the country.

Résumé

Les études sur les conflits violents en Afrique ont souvent construit deux images de la jeunesse : des victimes impuissantes privées de toute compétence humaine et les auteurs impitoyables d'actes de violence d'enfants-soldats, de milices armées, de violeurs et de pilleurs. S'appuyant sur des entretiens, des documents d'archives et d'autres sources, cet article examine les activités des jeunes au Nigeria pendant la décolonisation et la première décennie d'indépendance, y compris pendant la guerre Nigéria-Biafra et la période d'après-guerre, en mettant l'accent sur les violences ethniques et la survie. L'article affirme que la politisation de l'appartenance ethnique et de la répartition des ressources au Nigéria a déclenché des cycles de violence

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qui ont abouti à la guerre dévastatrice qui a duré trente mois; et qu'en ce qui concerne les événements d'avant-guerre, de guerre et d'après-guerre, la jeunesse nigériane a joué des rôles complexes et variés qui rendent difficile leur classification en acteurs ou victimes des conflits violents dans le pays.

Introduction

Scholarship on violent conflicts in Africa has often constructed two images of the youth: as powerless victims deprived of any human agency, a depiction which resonates strongly within the humanitarian community; and as ruthless perpetrators of acts of violence seen in the many cases of child soldiers, armed militias, rapists and looters (Beah 2007; Denov and Maclure 2007; Human Rights Watch 2003; 1994; Barth 2002). The ambiguity of the youth as vulnerable victims of development crises, as well as 'ultra-empowered' agents and perpetrators of violent acts who have played a key role in the collapse of African states, has been documented (Honwana and De Boeck 2005; Abbink and Kessel 2004). Yet, there are youth who, due to their privileged position and sheer hard work and determination, have contributed to national liberation, nation building and development in Africa. The history of warfare in modern Africa has shown that young people have increasingly constituted major combatants in civil wars. While the majority of these teenage combatants have been young men and boys, girl fighters have also become increasingly common (MacKenzie 2012; O'Gorman 2011; Coulter 2009; Coulter, Persson and Utas 2008; McDonnell and Akallo 2007; McKay and Mazurana 2004; Wilson 1991). There are several reasons why African youths have been drawn into violent conflicts as members of national armies, paramilitaries, rebel groups and other armed organisations. While some were abducted and physically forced to become combatants, others willingly volunteered to fight. In their study of why young soldiers voluntarily choose to fight, Rachel Brett and Irma Specht (2004) discuss a number of reasons, including general environmental factors, such as conditions of impoverishment, the individual personal history of the youth and the disintegration of their world. Other factors include poverty, lack of access to education and other basic social services, youth unemployment, hopelessness and despair, as well as the influence of family and friends, politics and ideology, culture and tradition.

Citizenship status, ethnicisation of politics and the politicisation of ethnolinguistic pluralism in many African countries have served as motivating factors, as communities and social groups feel marginalised, alienated, under-represented or denied of their rights to exist as bona fide members of the state (Sall 2004; Nnoli 1998; Kandeh 1992). Mamadou Diouf (2003: 5) aptly

notes that the exclusion of young Africans from the 'arenas of power, work, education, and leisure' has forced them to 'construct [spaces] of socialization and new sociabilities' in which they assert their identity, either on the margin or at the centre of society. These problems are often blamed on the elites (political, military and business), who not only control the political and economic apparatuses of the state, but have also placed their personalities and ethnolinguistic backgrounds or religious orientations above good governance and the well-being of the citizens. Elite disdain and indifference and the consequent geography of youth delinquency and resistance have made generational tensions and youth crises prominent themes in recent analyses of civil conflicts in Africa (Burton and Charton-Bigot 2010; Waller 2006).

In this article, I examine youth activities and ethnic violence in Nigeria from the decolonisation politics to the Nigeria-Biafra War of 1967–70. The article discusses the roles of young Nigerian men and women in the events leading to the outbreak of the war and during the war. I argue that the politicisation of ethnicity and resource distribution in Nigeria unleashed chains of violence that culminated in the thirty-month devastating war, and that in terms of the pre-war, wartime and post-war events, Nigerian youth played complex and varied roles that make it difficult to classify them as either actors or victims of the violent conflicts in the country. Among Nigerian youth were intellectuals, students and activists who engaged in the decolonisation struggle and nation-building efforts, as well as those who felt exploited, marginalised and excluded from avenues of power and resources by the colonial and post-colonial states, thereby becoming perpetrators of violent acts. In demanding their rights, inclusion and integration, Nigerian youth had engaged in contentious politics or contentious collective actions, employing violent acts as a legitimate weapon of negotiation against real or perceived state and societal oppression, marginalisation and indifference. Understandably, studies on Nigerian youth during these periods have largely focused on urban poverty, juvenile delinquency, vigilantism and criminalisation (Osaghae et al. 2011; Heap 1997; 2010; Pratten 2008; Fourchard 2005; 2006). While this article has benefited from these studies, it extends the discussion by including the roles of Nigerian youth as intellectuals, nationalists and nation builders; and as perpetrators of acts of violence and victims of senseless killings. At this juncture, it is important to define who constitute the youth.

Who are the youth?

There are multiple definitions and categorisations of the youth. In this article, I refer to the youth as a demographic and social category whose members are eligible to participate in specific institutions and functions. They are the

foundation and future leaders of any society due to their creative energies and talents, their labour power and dynamism. Because the youth are seen as a measure of how a country can reproduce and sustain itself, they are regarded as the greatest investment for a country's development as they are in the most productive phase of their life as citizens. The youth include individuals who do not yet have the material means and the recognition to establish themselves as providers for others, and are often a vulnerable group with peculiar but unmet needs and aspirations. Generally, the youth have a history of considerable tensions and conflicts, engendered by the process of social and physical maturation as well as struggles to adjust to societal realities around them.

Youth are often described in literature as a victimised, marginalised, excluded, threatened and abused social category, and consequently angry, bitter, frustrated, desperate and violent. Due to the increasing disappearance of traditional kin-based, community and multi-generational associations that had managed the transformation from boyhood or girlhood to manhood or womanhood, and the inability of institutions of the African state and society to mediate or mitigate adverse effects of such an inevitable transition, Nigerian and African youth have constantly struggled and negotiated for survival, identity and inclusion. As a political force, they have related and responded to state and society, depending on their levels of incorporation or alienation, engagement or disengagement, integration or deviance, and rapprochement or resistance.

This article reinforces the dichotomous and yet complex image of the youth as agents of development and nation-building on one hand, as well as instruments of violence and underdevelopment on the other hand, as captured in African youth studies (Honwana and De Boeck 2005; Abbink and Kessel 2004). It suggests that governments and non-governmental organisations have used biological age to categorise the youth. While the United Nations General Assembly defines the youth as those persons between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, the African Youth Charter categorises individuals from fifteen to thirty-five years old as youth or young people. The Nigerian government classifies the youth as young men and women between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five. In colonial Nigeria, out of a total population of 30.4 million in 1952–53, males constituted 48.9 per cent and females 51.1 per cent. For ages below fourteen years during this period, the population was 46.1 per cent male and 45.1 per cent female; ages 15–59, 46.6 per cent male, and 46.4 per cent female; and above 50 years, it was 7.3 per cent male and 8.5 per cent female. In 1963, there were 28.1 million males and 27.6 million females out of a total population of 55.7 million (Ekundare 1973; Mabogunje 1968).

According to the 1991 Population Census in Nigeria, there were 30 million youth out of a population of 88.9 million, and of these, 14 million (47 per cent) were male and 16 million (53 per cent) were female (Federal Government of Nigeria 2001). While in 2006 the youth constituted about 40 per cent of the 140 million people in Nigeria; in 2011, they accounted for 43 per cent of the 162 million Nigerians (Population Reference Bureau 2011). It was in recognition of the growing population of the Nigerian youth and their critical role in development that the government established the National Youth Policy in the 1980s, with subsequent reviews over the years (Federal Government of Nigeria 2009; 2001). The African Youth Charter's categorisation of individuals between fifteen and thirty-five years old as youth is adopted here because the age bracket reflects colonial and postcolonial categorisations of youths in Nigeria. However, it is important to note that the youth organisations examined below had senior or elderly members and leaders who were self-proclaimed 'youth'. The discussion below relies on different genres of primary and secondary sources, including archival records and oral interviews.

Nigerian youth and the decolonisation movement, 1930s–50s

The British brought together different ethnolinguistic groups into what became known as Nigeria through several processes of conquests, cooptation and amalgamation. The British colonial administration introduced a number of innovations, such as increased access to Western education, which brought about literacy and multilingualism; health and other social services; infrastructural development; increased urbanisation; a monetised economy; and increased access to foreign capital. These innovations helped to improve the lives of many Nigerians. At the same time, the colonial government pursued exploitative policies and discriminatory practices that alienated many Nigerians from the colonial state and undermined their well-being. Colonialism engendered a culture of violence and exploitation, which had serious consequences for the decolonisation politics and process of nation building in postcolonial Nigeria (Falola 2009; Ochonou 2009; Chuku 2005; Lugard 1920; Nigerian National Archives, Enugu (NNAE) 1914). Colonial administrative policies – regionalism, development of administrative headquarters, infrastructural development, increased urbanisation, among others – had ambivalent impacts on inter-group relations in Nigeria. As Obaro Ikime has argued, 'colonial rule was something of a paradox: on the one hand, it brought Nigerian peoples together in new groupings and for new purposes; on the other, it emphasised already existing differences and introduced new ones' (2006: 97).

The history of the youth movement in Nigeria can be traced back to the 1920s when the Union of Young Nigerians (UYN) was established by a group of progressives in Lagos. Under the leadership of J.C. Vaughn (Yoruba), Ayo Williams (Yoruba) and Ernest Ikoli (Ijo), the UYN was founded immediately after the 1923 elections to the Legislative Council in order to emancipate young Nigerian men from the political domination of such older figures as Herbert Macaulay and John K. Randle and to develop their interests in the affairs of their country (Coleman 1958: 217). The UYN remained active for five years and contested elections, but was unsuccessful. Similarly, the generational differences between forward-looking youth and old-time conservative moderates led to the formation of the Nigerian Union of Young Democrats (NUYD) in 1938 by professional and middle-class supporters of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). They detested the 'accommodationist and parochial outlook' of the leadership of the NNDP (Sklar 1963: 58). Ayo Williams, a barrister and former leader of the UYN, became the first president of the NUYD.

Another youth organisation of importance is the Lagos Youth Movement (LYM) that was founded in 1933 by Ikoli, Vaughn, Samuel Akinsanya and H.O. Davies. Eyo Ita (1903–72) and his Nigeria Youth League Movement (NYLM) in Calabar, with the slogan 'Youth Must Save Society', influenced the founding of the LYM (Azikiwe 1961: 306–7). Regarded as 'the nucleus of Nigeria's first genuine nationalist organization', the LYM was critical of the 'inferior status of the Yaba Higher College' as a vocational institution for diplomas and therefore demanded government scholarships for its students to pursue more studies in the United Kingdom (Coleman 1958: 218). Leaders of the youth movement also demanded the appointment of Africans to high positions of the civil service. They campaigned against legislative discriminatory practices against Africans. In 1936, the LYM changed its name to the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM).

The NYM was described as the first genuine Nigerian nationalist organisation, which was strengthened by the return of Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904–96) in 1937 (after his nine-year sojourn in the United States of America and three years in the Gold Coast), who in 1938 brought to the movement 'militant racial consciousness; an expanding sensationalist press; and a large number of educated Nigerians previously excluded or unmobilized' (Coleman 1958: 224). Many Igbo youth also joined the NYM due to Azikiwe's influence. With an increased number of radical members and its own newspaper, the *Service* (later, the *Daily Service*), the NYM assumed more active political and nationalist roles hitherto unknown, and contested and won elections to the Lagos Town Council and all three seats in the Legislative Council in 1938. The successful election results ended the

political dominance of Herbert Macaulay's NNDP. In its Nigerian Youth Charter and Constitution, the NYM emphasised self-determination and national unity. It pursued the unification of Nigerian ethnolinguistic groups as well as public education for national consciousness. With branches in major cities throughout Nigeria, the NYM embodied a multi-ethnic principle in character and in its membership. The NYM's success was so remarkable that it was described as the 'first major step in the Nigerianization of the nationalist movement' (Coleman 1958: 225).

It is important to note that both older and young men dominated the leadership and membership of the NYM. Women's involvement in the NYM was as auxiliaries through the NYM Ladies' Section, which was headed by Oyinkan Abayomi (1897–1990), whose husband, Kofoworola Abayomi, once served as the president of the parent body. If there were women members of the NYM or LYM, they were few and were excluded from the executive committees and policy-making positions of the movements. Yet, women provided the movement's powerful support base for voter and resource mobilisation. Reasons for the limited involvement of young women in the affairs of the NYM could be explained. The politics of gender within the ranks of the NYM and lack of interest on the part of male members to advance women's interests forced a few interested women, such as Abayomi, to focus their effort on women's organisations to address issues important to them. The patriarchal sensibilities that emphasised the education of sons over daughters whereby, parents preferred to send their sons as heirs to formal schools since daughters, would be married away, placed women in a disadvantaged position. The gendered nature of mission and colonial education offered boys and young men opportunities to train for leadership and other positions in society while domesticating girls and young women through a curriculum that emphasised wifehood, motherhood, home economics and management, hygiene, needlework and other related activities. Moreover, the NYM and its predecessors were urban-based. In colonial Nigeria, women and girls, especially single ones, were discouraged from moving to the cities through job discrimination, their demonisation and criminalisation as prostitutes and carriers or transmitters of diseases. As Akin Mabogunje (1968: 265–6) rightly observed, during this period, 'Lagos remained a predominantly male and very youthful city.' Patriarchal sensibilities also explained why when political parties were formed by men in the 1950s, women could only be admitted as auxiliaries through their membership of women's wings of those parties (Chuku 2009; Mba 1982).

From 1939, a chain of events, shaped by the intersections of ethnicity, generational competition, personalities and policy issues occurred, and culminated in the demise of the NYM in 1951. There were discernible

cracks in its leadership as older members pursued moderate proposals of giving educated Nigerians a greater share in the government, as more radical members, led by Azikiwe, campaigned for a rapid process of self-determination. At the age of thirty-five, Azikiwe resigned from the executive committee in 1939, citing business concerns related to the competition between his group of newspapers, especially the *West African Pilot* and the *Daily Service* under the editorship of Ernest Ikoli. There were also political and intra-ethnic problems. Following the resignation of K. Abayomi from the Legislative Council in February 1941, Ikoli (president of the NYM) and Samuel Akinsanya (an Ijebu Yoruba and the vice president) competed for the legislative vacant seat. With overwhelming Yoruba support, mainly from non-Ijebu, Ikoli defeated Akinsanya who enjoyed Azikiwe's support. Akinsanya and his Ijebu Yoruba kinsmen, as well as Azikiwe and other Igbo members of the NYM, interpreted Ikoli's victory as a manifestation of intra-Yoruba ethnic prejudice in which Lagos Yoruba could not support an Ijebu Yoruba. But Obafemi Awolowo (1909–87), an Ijebu, supported Ikoli over his fellow Ijebu. Consequently, Azikiwe, Akinsanya and their supporters left the NYM and a press war ensued between the *West African Pilot* and the *Daily Service* (Okafor 1989; Arifalo 1986; Awolowo 1960). The departure was a major blow to the NYM, which got its mass support from the Igbo. Richard Sklar (1963) attributed Azikiwe's clash with the Yoruba elite of the NYM as a latent sign of Igbo-Yoruba tension and a major factor in the ethnic hostility that erupted later.

Nigerian youths also played important roles as student union activists. Organised student activism in Nigeria started with the formation of the Nigerian Union of Students (NUS) in 1939 by a new generation of secondary school students and young educated Nigerians at Abeokuta Grammar School. With three branches by 1943, leaders and members of the NUS organised the Ojokoro Youth Rally in the outskirts of Lagos, protesting to the Secretary of State for the Colonies against restrictions preventing Nigerian students from going to the United Kingdom for further studies. Leading nationalist figures spoke at the rally, and at the end, participants affirmed the need to pursue Nigeria's self-government through a united national front. Because of its success and impact on young Nigerian minds, the rally was described as 'one of the critical events in the political mobilization of youth in World War II' years (Coleman 1958: 263).

In March 1944, students of King's College, Lagos went on strike when the colonial government converted their dormitories into an army barrack. The strike was forcefully suppressed and some of the student leaders were conscripted into the army. Frustrated by the strike experience and the high-

handedness of the government, student leaders saw the need for coordinated nationalist efforts under a central body. On 10 June 1944, the NUS organised a mass meeting at the Glover Memorial Hall, Lagos, to address the strike, ways of raising funds for a national school, and the establishment of a representative national body. The meeting was presided over by Herbert Macaulay and the outcome was the establishment of the National Council of Nigeria (NCN) on 26 August 1944, with over forty organisations, which included political parties, ethnic unions, trade unions, professional associations, literary societies, religious groups, social clubs and women's organisations. As members of the NCN, these organisations resolved to work in unity to achieve Nigeria's independence. Macaulay was elected as president of the Council, and Azikiwe as the general secretary, two personalities whose domineering political influence allegedly prevented leaders of the NYM from joining the new organisation. By 1945, the NCN had over 100 affiliate organisations, including three ethnic unions from the Cameroons, resulting in a change of name to the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). Following the death of Macaulay in 1946, Azikiwe took over the leadership of the NCNC, utilised his chain of newspapers and turned it into a formidable nationalist organisation. It has been generally acknowledged that from 1944 to 1957, the NCNC, which later became a political party in 1951, operated as the leading pan-Nigerian nationalist organisation (Sklar 1963; Coleman 1958). Though men dominated its leadership, the membership of the NCNC was overwhelmingly youth.

Another important youth organisation during this period was the Zikist Movement, founded in 1946 by a group of young Nigerians, including Kolawole Balogun (Yoruba), Abiodun Aloba (Edo), Habib Abdallah (Igbira) and Igbo youths: Melie Ajuluchukwu, Osita Agwuna, Mokwugo Okoye, Nduka Eze and many others. Inspired by Azikiwe and his writings, the Zikist Movement was the most radical anti-colonial movement in Nigeria because the Zikists (members of the movement), in their call for 'Positive Action', included labour activism, civil disobedience and armed sabotage as legitimate instruments of decolonisation. In 1948, they issued 'A Call for Revolution' in which they viciously attacked the colonial system from all fronts and urged Nigerians to mobilise for violent civil disobedience. Through the Zikist-controlled newspapers, such as the *African Echo* and *New Africa*, as well as Azikiwe's *West African Pilot*, the Zikists campaigned for non-payment of taxes, boycott of European goods and culture, and the rejection of regionalism, gradualism and ethnic divisiveness among Nigerians. They declared Azikiwe their leader and vowed to defend and protect him at all costs for laying the foundation of Zikism, which they espoused (Iweriebo

1996; Olusanya 1966; Agwuna 1949). Ironically, Azikiwe criticised the violent utterances of the Zikists and disassociated himself and the NCNC from the movement. For this reason, some of the Zikists resented and never forgave Azikiwe, even though he used his newspaper to defend some of their members following their arrests, trials and imprisonment on grounds of sedition. The Zikists were also inspired by Nwafor Orizu, who in his book called on African youth to mobilise for political action against colonialism and for an African redemption or *African Irredentism* already espoused by Azikiwe in his *Renascent Africa*. Orizu was the one who propounded 'Zikism' as a philosophy (Orizu 1944; n.d.).

The Zikists and other youth were involved in the widespread protest demonstrations over a labour tragedy in which twenty-one striking miners of the Iva Valley coal mines near Enugu were massacred and fifty-one were wounded by the colonial police in November 1949. The tragedy brought prominent members of the NCNC, the leadership of the Zikist Movement and the NYM, and other Nigerian youths together to form the National Emergency Committee (NEC). As a coalition of leading nationalists, the NEC called for immediate self-government for Nigeria and the investigation of the shootings at Enugu. It fearlessly criticised the brutality of the colonial government and its police against Nigerians. As a consequence of the Iva Valley tragedy, anti-government protests erupted in major eastern towns, including Enugu, Onitsha, Aba, Awka, Owerri, Port Harcourt, Calabar and Umuahia (Colonia Office 1950; NNAE 1949). While the government accused leaders of the Zikist Movement of instigating and mobilising the masses for the protests, and cracked down hard on them and the demonstrators with increased police violence, it worked through the NEC to contain the crisis. As a result, the NEC called on the miners to resume work. It also condemned the monopolistic and exploitative practices of European firms and this was instrumental in the abolition of discriminatory practices against African staff at the University College, Ibadan. The Iva Valley crisis also brought together unionists and led to the formation of the Nigerian Labour Congress in 1950 (Jaja 1982/1983; Akpala 1965; Colonial Office 1950). The proscription of the Zikist Movement in April 1950 did not silence its members. Former Zikists formed a new organisation, the NCNC Youth Association in January 1951, and played a key role in helping the NCNC Central Working Committee to assert its authority over 'recalcitrant ministers' in Eastern and Central governments who were forced to resign from their ministerial positions. However, its members were bitterly disappointed when the NCNC party leadership chose regionalism in 1954 against a unitary state they espoused (Sklar 1963).

The anti-government protests over the shooting of striking coal miners triggered other protests in the Eastern Region, organised by World War II veterans, some of whom were young men. The ex-servicemen saw themselves as victims of broken promises and injustice by the government. They formed the National Ex-Servicemen's Welfare Association (NEWA) in 1946, the Nigerian Union of Demobilized Servicemen (NUDS) in mid-1946, which was soon overtaken by the Nigerian Ex-Servicemen's Union (NESU), to demand for their rights. In May 1949, a group of them broke away from the NESU and founded the Unemployed Ex-Servicemen's Union (UEU) at Aba, Eastern Region. Many members of the UEU and other demobilised soldiers joined the Zikist Movement and the NCNC. They became resolute in their campaign to destabilise the colonial government through acts of civil disobedience. Aside from organising protests, which threatened public order, and joining the decolonisation politics, some of the war veterans carried out anti-social acts such as robbery, while others entered different types of trade (Nwaka 1987; Olusanya 1968). The experiences and activities of the youth members of World War II veterans constituted part of the broader history of youth activism, violence and decolonisation politics of the 1940s–50s.

There was also active youth mobilisation for nationalist political consciousness in the north. The inauguration of the College Old Boys Association by graduates of Katsina College in 1939 marked the beginning of this process. Though the association existed for only two years, its former members formed several discussion groups of educated young men in many northern towns in the 1940s. These included the Zaria Friendly Society, the Zaria Provincial Progressive Union, the Sokoto Youth Social Circle, the Kano Citizens' Association, the Bauchi Discussion Circle, and the Bauchi General Improvement Union. Leaders and members of these associations were educated northern Nigerian youth in public service, who had been exposed to nationalist ideals from southern Nigeria and abroad. They were thus able to pioneer what was regarded as 'embryonic political societies' in the north. Two of the most important of these societies were the Bauchi General Improvement Union (BGIU) and the Youth Social Circle (YSC) of Sokoto.

The BGIU was established in 1943 as a quasi-political party under the leadership of Sa'adu Zungur (1915–58, a Hausa) and Aminu Kano (1921–83, a Fulani). Zungur and Kano were fervent critics of indirect rule and the system of Native Administration. With other educated northern youth, they used the BGIU as a platform to attack the Native Authority system and agitate for reforms; activities that were not taken lightly by the emirs of northern Nigeria, who felt threatened. The BGIU prompted the

formation of similar pressure groups in the north. The Youth Social Circle of Sokoto (YSC) was founded in 1945 by progressive intellectuals such as Shehu Shagari, Ahmadu Danbaba and Ibrahim Gusau, with Ahmadu Bello, the Sarduna of Sokoto, as its adviser and patron. The goal of the YSC was to reform the autocratic and exploitative system of Native Administration. Founders and members of the YSC later became leaders of the Sokoto branch of the Northern People's Congress (NPC). In 1948, the YSC was affiliated to the NPC (Whitaker 1970; Dudley 1968).

Another important youth organisation in the north was the Northern Elements' Progressive Association (NEPA, 1945–49). The NEPA was founded in Kano by Habib Raji Abdullah (an Igbira), who was one of the leaders of the Zikist Movement, Abdurahman Bida (Nupe), Abba Said, Abubakar Zukogi (Fulani), Umaru Agaie (Nupe) and others. The NEPA campaigned for economic development, political reform and educational opportunity for northern students. It was a major youth association that rallied support for the NCNC's pan-Nigerian delegation national tour of 1946 and was thus incorrectly regarded as Azikiwe's anti-colonial movement in the north. The association faced strong opposition from the Kano Native Authority as its members were fired from the civil service. It became moribund in 1949 when Abdullah and other leaders of the Zikist Movement were imprisoned (Whitaker 1970; Post 1963). The NEPA was regarded as the forerunner of the Northern Elements' Progressive Union (NEPU).

Opposition to the Native Authority system by the younger generation of Hausa, Fulani, Igbira and Nupe ethnicities that gave rise to the above-mentioned youth organisations, including the NPC and NEPU, also motivated educated Kanuri youth to establish the Bornu Youth Improvement Association (BYIA) in 1949, under the leadership of Ibrahim Imam (1916–80), a Kanuri progressive politician. The BYIA was in a way the forerunner of the Bornu Youth Movement (BYM). The BYM was founded in June 1954 as a political party by a group of young Kanuri in Bornu emirate, who were critical of the Native Authority. United by Kanuri nationalist consciousness and with Imam as their patron, young radical Kanuri members of the party fought to reform the Native Administration through political activism. They entered into alliance with NEPU (1956–58) and in 1956 won two of the 131 seats in the Northern House of Assembly for Yerwa (Maiduguri) and eight seats in the Town Council elections of 1957. In the 1959 federal elections, the BYM-Action Group Alliance contested for seats (Whitaker 1970; Dudley 1968; Post 1963). The BYM became a major opposition party to the NPC, opposition that resulted in several political disturbances in the north.

Nigerian youth were undoubtedly dominant features of the major political parties that were involved in decolonisation politics: the NCNC, Action Group (AG), the NPC and the NEPU. While some of the political parties were formed by adults, others drew their membership and support from young Nigerians. From the 1950s when Empire Day was transformed into National Youth Day, such youth crowd gatherings were galvanized into large political rallies by Nigerian nationalist leaders and their political parties (Aderinto 2018). One example of political parties founded by Nigerian youth was NEPU. It was formed in Kano by a group of radical young educated men who were dissatisfied with the conservatives that dominated the *Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa* (Northern People's Congress). NEPU members used Azikiwe's *Daily Comet* in Kano and the *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* to publish their criticisms of the Native Administrations and other political issues. They campaigned for the emancipation of the *Talakawa* (commoners), equal access to better health facilities, more schools in the north, a northern University College, and increased scholarships for northerners to study in the UK. NEPU emphasised the indivisibility of the north and south; supported the NCNC leadership during the Eastern House of Assembly crisis; but opposed the creation of the Middle Belt State championed by the United Middle Belt Congress. In the 1959 Federal Parliamentary elections, NEPU won eight of the 174 seats from the north (Dudley 1968; Post 1963).

Southern Nigerian women and female youth were also politically active during this period. They featured prominently in the formation and membership of an all-female political party, the Nigerian Women's Party (NWP), founded in 1944 under the leadership of Oyinkan Abayomi. Nigerian women were driven by their long history of marginalisation from the political leadership of the colony and their struggle for political relevance. Under the platform of the NWP, women and female youth campaigned for women's rights: the right to vote and be represented on the Lagos Town Council (LTC) and the Legislative Council for the Colony; more vocational and secondary schools and training centres for girls and women; women's admission to the police force; and improvement of women's healthcare. They also protested against the restriction placed on young girls from migrating to Lagos and discrimination against African nurses, among other issues of concern. The NWP drew its membership from the elite and market women, girls and young women, some of whom were schoolgirls and members of the Girls Guide. The party's manifesto contained mentoring and preparing these young women for modern politics and nation building (Chuku 2009; Awe 1992; Mba 1982; *Daily Service* 1944; *West African Pilot* 1944a; 1944b). With a limited franchise in 1950, the NWP fielded the first women

political candidates of colonial Nigeria. Though the party lost the two seats to the LTC that it contested, its establishment and activities were major achievements in the history of Nigerian women in politics.

Unfortunately, the three major political parties mentioned above followed ethnic lines: the AG was dominated by the Yoruba, the NPC by the Hausa-Fulani, and the NCNC by the Igbo. Nigeria was polarised by the ethnic politics of these political parties and the colonial policy of regionalisation. The educational imbalance between the Northern and Southern Provinces derailed the country's independence and exacerbated the situation. For instance, while by 1937 primary school enrollment in the north was merely 10 per cent and secondary school less than 2 per cent; in the south in the 1940s there were 400,000 primary school students in Nigeria with only 30,000 coming from the whole of the north. The record was worse in higher education where in 1951 out of 16 million northerners, only one had a full university degree – Dr A.R.B. Dikko of Zaria – and a few others, such as Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Aminu Kano, with two-year post-teacher college university training in the UK (Ozigi and Ocho 1981; Fafunwa 1974; Public Record Office 1930). Thus, when on 31 March 1953, Anthony Enahoro, the AG House of Representative member from Ishan Division, tabled a motion for the attainment of self-government for Nigeria in 1956, northern members led by Balewa and Bello objected on the grounds that they were not ready. When the motion failed, the northern Representatives were insulted and abused by the Lagos crowds in addition to being criticised and ridiculed in the southern newspapers. As a reaction, they issued an eight-point programme, containing secession of the Northern Region from Nigeria (Enahoro 1965; Sklar 1963).

The leaders of the AG and NCNC thought that touring the northern cities to campaign for self-government in 1956 would be useful. But when

S.L. Akintola of the AG scheduled a tour of Kano with members of his delegation in May 1953, the move was met with a violent uprising (16–19 May), which resulted in the killing of thirty-six men, twenty-two of whom were of Igbo origin, with 241 wounded. Igbo landed property and businesses worth tens of thousands of pounds were destroyed and looted. The official record of the dead was fifteen northerners and twenty-one southerners (Ekwe-Ekwe 1990; Coleman 1958; *The Northern Region of Nigeria* 1953). It was an irony that the Igbo became casualties of a conflict between the Hausa-Fulani and the Yoruba. Apparently, it was due to the northern perception of Igbo economic threat and political domination. Ahmadu Bello (1962: 136–7) acknowledged that 'while the Action Group in Lagos had been the prime mover', the fighting in Kano was 'between the

Hausas ... and the Ibos [Igbo]; the Yorubas ... were, oddly enough, out of it.' The northern fear of Igbo domination was not without any basis. Their culture of individualism, competitiveness, entrepreneurship and liberalism facilitated Igbo educational and economic progress, and their settlement in northern towns where they managed private businesses and dominated the public service and government statutory corporations. While from a northern perspective, the attacks on the Igbo were justified due to long endured acts of provocation, to the Igbo, such acts of violence against them were unwarranted and unjustifiable. It is important to note that the perpetrators of the Kano violence were mostly youth.

Fear of regional and ethnic domination had fuelled the quests and agitation for either secession from Nigeria or the creation of separate states within the regions and the country. The 1950s, in particular, witnessed a number of secession agendas and agitations, which mostly came from the NPC-led Northern Region and the AG-led Western Region. For instance, in 1950, at the Ibadan General Conference, the north used the threat of secession to demand and obtain north–south parity of representation in the federal legislature instead of the recommended 45:33:33 per cent quotas for the Northern, Eastern and Western Provinces respectively. In 1956, the Northern House of Assembly and House of Chiefs passed a resolution that virtually endorsed secession and demanded that 'self-government' for Nigeria in 1956 be replaced with self-government 'as soon as practicable' (Tamuno 1970; Sklar 1963; Bello 1962; Smith 1960; NNAI 1958 and 1950). The NPC's motto: 'One North, One People', and the policy of northernisation it had pursued since 1954 to reduce dependence on southern civil servants and professionals did not help the already existing tension between the north and south (Schwarz 1968; Bello 1962). Similarly, following the debate over the status of Lagos (a Yoruba town) at the 1953 London Constitutional Conference, the AG-led Western Region threatened to secede. At the 1954 Constitutional Conference in Lagos, the AG delegation demanded the inclusion of the right of secession in the constitution. Azikiwe, the leader of the NCNC, vehemently rejected secession, arguing that it 'is incompatible with federalism'; it 'is an invitation to anarchy'; and it 'is suicidal' (Azikiwe 1961, 126–7; Ezera 1960: 186–9).

Increased demands for state creation by ethnic minorities started in 1954, following the adoption of a federal system and the institutionalisation of regional governments as powerful political entities dominated by the three major ethnic groups: the Northern Region and the NPC by the Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups (often referred to politically as the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group), the Eastern Region and the NCNC by the Igbo, and the

Western Region and the AG by the Yoruba. Bitter ethnic contestations and the perceived fear of ethnic marginalisation of minorities led to the establishment of the Minorities (or Willink) Commission of 1957, chaired by Henry Willink, whose responsibilities comprised recommending ways of allaying minority fears and determining whether state creation would constitute a lasting solution. Even though the Commission confirmed the existence of genuine fears and apprehension on the part of ethnic minority groups in Nigeria, it was against state creation for a number of reasons, including the non-viability of new states due to the financial burden and insufficiently trained administrative staff, and the general belief that such a move would not end ethnic minorities' problems in Nigeria. The Commission instead recommended safeguarding ethnic minorities through a strong federal government where no single ethnic group would dominate, federal control of the police force, and protection of fundamental human rights (Vickers 2010; Colonial Office 1958). More secession threats and agitation for ethnic self-determination and state creation occurred after Nigeria's independence with devastating consequences. In spite of the deep-rooted problems facing Nigeria, nationalist leaders and British officials were able to broker the country's independence on 1 October 1960, with Balewa as the prime minister and Azikiwe as the governor-general. On 1 October 1963, Nigeria became a federal republic.

Nigerian youth and post-independence crises leading to the outbreak of the war

Unfortunately, all the problems of the 1940s and 1950s – a contentious federal system; aggressive regional rivalries; fraudulent and highly contended census exercises; divisive and volatile party politics and power struggles; gender inequality; thuggery; rigged and violent elections; intra-ethnic violence; ethnic distrust and hostilities; and fears of ethnic minorities of their domination by the majorities, among others – continued after independence. For instance, the Tiv uprisings of February and November 1964, which led to the death of over 326 civilians and eleven policemen, were as a result of their perceived marginalisation in the Northern Region by the majority Hausa-Fulani and their NPC government. The Tiv agitations for the creation of the Middle Belt State since the 1950s, and their threat of secession in 1965, which were understandably opposed by the NPC-led government, were decisively crushed by government police and military forces (Post and Vickers 1973; Tamuno 1970).

Another violent separatist movement was led by the Ijo youth in Eastern Region who were dissatisfied with the recommendations of the Minorities

Commission. In February 1966, Isaac Boro, Sam Owonaro and Nottingham Dick led a group of Ijo youth to a violent secession bid and declared an independent Ijo state – ‘Delta Peoples Republic’ – to be carved out of the Igbo-dominated Eastern Region. The rebellion was swiftly suppressed by the military and the three young leaders were arrested, tried and condemned to death for treason. They were later released in 1967 but Boro and Dick died shortly after while fighting to defend the newly created Rivers State and the unity of Nigeria (Tamuno 1970).

The 1964 and 1965 elections were marred by electoral mal-practices and increased civil disorder and violent protests. With growing discontent among many Nigerians and observers alike, it became obvious that the federal system, as it was operated in the country, was dysfunctional and needed to be amended or changed. Consequently, a bloody military coup led by an Igbo, Chukwuma Nzeogwu (1937–67) was carried out on 15 January 1966. The plan was to kill all senior federal government officials, premiers of the four regions and senior military officers. But, whereas the coup was well executed in the Northern and Western Regions where some of the marked politicians, such as Prime Minister Balewa, Bello, premier of the Northern Region and Akintola, premier of the Western Region, were killed, it was unsuccessful in the Eastern Region because those pencilled in to be killed somehow escaped. Loyal officers and troops foiled the coup and rallied in defence of the government, and a new military government headed by Major General T. Aguiyi Ironsi was established (Mainasara 1982; Ademoyega 1981; Madiebo 1980; Panter-Brick 1970).

Initially, the coup was well-received by many Nigerians, particularly in the south, and was seen as a last resort to turn the country around from the brink of collapse and end the corruption and divisive politics of incompetent politicians. However, opponents of the coup, especially northerners, had a different interpretation. They saw the coup as an Igbo effort to dominate the Nigerian government and military since many of the coup plotters were young Igbo officers and none of the marked Igbo politicians was killed. Unfortunately, the suspicion of an Igbo conspiracy to control the country and destroy northern power was reinforced by Ironsi’s policies and actions. For instance, contrary to northern opposition, Ironsi abolished federalism and the four regions, and established a unitary government with a unified civil service. The four regions as the federating units controlled their civil services. The Northern Regional government was able to reduce perceived Igbo or southern Nigerian domination by employing, on a contract basis, Asians and Middle Easterners, who were replaced with northern graduates as soon as they qualified to serve in those positions. Thus, the northern

leadership and informed northerners saw Ironsi's unitary government as an attack on the 'little' regional autonomy they had enjoyed and as a part of the grand plan to impose and entrench Igbo and southern hegemony on them. They were also dissatisfied with the Ironsi administration's handling of the coup plotters, accusing Ironsi of not being decisive in condemning their actions and bringing them to justice.

Consequently, violent demonstrations erupted in the north against Ironsi and Igbo residents there. In May 1966, students of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) and the Institute of Administration, Zaria, and gangs of northern youth invaded Igbo neighbourhoods, looted Igbo shops, destroyed their property, killed and wounded many (interview, Akpan, 2012; interview, Oraeki, 2012; interview, Odi, 2003; interview, Enigwe, 1993; interview, Uga, 1993). Mary Oraeki, an undergraduate at ABU during this period, witnessed the horror and was still terrified when she shared her experience with me in 2012. With claims of Igbo domination and exploitation of northerners, the violence escalated to other northern cities where the Igbo played prominent roles in commerce and transportation. It was also alleged that some Igbo northern residents exhibited hubristic behaviour; they were thoughtless in their actions and utterances. For instance, a few of them allegedly made caricatures of the northern leaders who were killed in the coup. During the pogroms against the easterners, northern youth carried placards, calling for the secession of the north and the destruction of Ironsi and his administration (Schwarz 1968). It was estimated that between 300,000 and 500,000 Igbo fled the north (Eastern Nigerian Government 2000a [1966]; 2000b [1966]). Unfortunately, Ironsi was so concerned with demonstrating that his administration was not an Igbo one but a national government that he did nothing to end these senseless massacres of the Igbo in the north.

On 29 July 1966, young northern military officers carried out a counter-coup against the Ironsi administration, killing him and many Igbo officers and troops. They demanded the secession of the north from Nigeria, a demand also echoed by the emirs. But with the successful execution of the July coup, northern leaders advised against secession, which they saw as an 'irrational proposition' that would cut off the north from the sea and 'from Nigeria's promising new oil wealth' (Schwarz 1968: 206, 210). Consequently, Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon (October 1934–), a young officer from the Middle Belt and of Angas ethnicity, became the military head of state. He restored the regions and proposed a constitutional conference to consider an acceptable system of government and basis of association for the regions and ethnic groups in Nigeria. Unfortunately, conference delegates could not arrive at a consensus. C. Odumegwu Ojukwu (1933–2011), the military governor of the Eastern Region, refused to recognise Gowon on the grounds that he

was not the most senior and qualified officer to head the Nigerian military government.

Meanwhile, between September and October 1966, northerners launched another series of violent attacks against the Igbo and other easterners. As was the case in the May massacres, 'ex-politicians, civil servants, local government officials and former party stalwarts stage-managed the pogroms. The main difference was that this time the army joined in' (Schwarz 1968: 215–16). While the systematic massacres of easterners were instigated and stage-managed by the northern elite, they were carried out by their youth, many of whom were the most vulnerable and victims of political corruption, neglect and manipulation, a case of victims becoming killers too. With increased numbers of casualties (10,000 to 30,000), mounting fear, suspicion and insecurity, many Igbo in the north (between 1.5 and 2 million) fled to their homeland in the Eastern Region (De St. Jorre 1972; Lewis 1968).

Escalating tensions led to mass exodus of easterners from the north, west, mid-west and Lagos; and in the east, the arrival of bodies of the dead and wounded increased the problems of absorbing returnees. Ojukwu ordered the evacuation of non-easterners from the region. The air in the Eastern Region was filled with anger, frustration, sorrow and demand for secession. The Igbo and many other easterners felt that their fundamental human rights had been violated, yet the government was unable or unwilling to ensure their protection and bring to justice the perpetrators of the pogroms against them. During the meeting of the Eastern Consultative Assembly, 26–27 May 1967, Ojukwu was given the mandate to declare the independence of Eastern Nigeria as the Republic of Biafra 'at an early practicable date' (Biafran Government 1967; Ojukwu 1967).

The Gowon administration responded by declaring a state of emergency throughout the country and announcing, on 27 May 1967 the creation of twelve states to replace the four regions (five in the north; three in the west; three in the east; and the mid-west). It also re-imposed the blockade, which was initially imposed against the east in early May in retaliation to the Eastern Regional government's appropriation of federal revenues (excluding those from oil) in order to address the problems of returnees, especially federal civil servants, but was revoked on 20 May (Nigeria 1968; Schwarz 1968). The Igbo saw these actions as a smart move by Gowon to neutralise them politically and economically, especially as he carved out most parts of the oil-producing areas from the Igbo-dominated state. On 30 May 1967, the Eastern Region seceded when Ojukwu declared the Republic of Biafra. Eastern youth, women and children rushed to the streets in excitement and jubilation (interview, Cookey, 2012; interview, Obi, 2012; interview, Udoh,

2012; Akpan 1972). Though the easterners were determined to survive, the jubilation, however, was short-lived as events soon turned into a horrific experience of bloodbath and starvation.

The war

Following the successive events discussed above and after unsuccessful peace attempts, the federal military government declared war against Biafra on 6 July 1967. It is ironic that the pre-war pogroms against the Igbo and some other easterners by the northerners were aimed at driving them out of Nigeria, and yet, when they seceded, it was the same Hausa-Fulani-dominated north that went to war to keep them in Nigeria. Within the federal circle, it was believed that 'police' action against Biafrans would take only a few weeks to bring them back to Nigeria. But the war lasted for thirty months. Biafrans gallantly defended their sovereignty, but by the middle of 1968, they had lost almost the entire territory inhabited by non-Igbo ethnicities, many of whom supported the federal government mainly due to their fear of Igbo domination and exploitation. At this point, Biafra was completely blockaded by sea and soon after reduced to the Igbo heartland.

Many Biafrans, especially the Igbo, were displaced. They had to adjust to the realities of the war, which included scarcities of food, medical services, means of transportation and other necessities of life. While the federal government employed starvation as a war tactic, the Biafra propaganda spread rumours that Nigerian authorities were using poison to complete their genocide against the Igbo and other Biafrans. The result was severe starvation, malnutrition, *kwashiorkor* (a protein deficiency disease) and death of many Biafrans, especially children, women and the elderly. The situation could have been graver but for the activities of relief organisations (Byrne 1997; Africa Research Group 1970; Smock 1970; Africa Concern 1969; Brown and Mayer 1969). Biafrans were also faced with insecurities caused by constant air raids, heavy artillery, shelling, and the menace of both federal and Biafran soldiers.

However, Biafrans demonstrated resilience in the face of unimaginable hardships and serious threat of extinction. While many young men and women volunteered, others were conscripted to serve in military and paramilitary units. Many others went into hiding. Young men formed the Biafra Organization of Freedom Fighters (BOFF) and received special training to engage in guerrilla warfare and espionage. There were Biafran female spies, who often solicited favours from either Biafran or Nigerian officers. Some of these women and other young Biafrans joined different Civil Defense organisations to safeguard civilian populations and their quarters as well as mobilise provisions, articles of clothing and medications

for the military. Biafrans demonstrated their resilience and ingenuity through many technological innovations and inventions carried out in their Research and Production Directorate (known as RAP). Under RAP, Biafran scientists, engineers and technicians produced different kinds of weapons, equipment, tools and machines that helped to sustain the war for almost three years and placed Biafra on the path of technological development. Other directorates included the Directorate of Food, the Directorate of Information and the Directorate of Transport and Fuel (Oragwu 2010; Arene 1997; Nwankwo 1972). Some young Biafran men and women were involved in overseas missions, educating their audience about the Biafran cause, and soliciting and mobilising aid.

Civilians were mobilised for war efforts; striving to survive and working in government establishments, hospitals, schools and with different relief organisations. Many households experienced role reversal as women became breadwinners or heads of households and did everything within their capability to ensure the survival of their families. Girls and young Biafran women were engaged in the risky smuggling trade across the Biafra borders for food, provisions, medicines and the Nigerian currency. Although farming was irregular and hazardous, women and girls did their best to produce food for their families and for sale. Others combed the forests for wild foodstuffs. Some women sold prepared food, and others established mini-restaurants and drinking houses. But a few privileged ones became food contractors, supplying foodstuff to either Biafran or Nigerian military units (Uchendu 2007b; Chuku 2002).

Many of the people directly involved in the war, either militarily or in non-military capacities were youths. Biafra soldiers and recruits were in their youthful age; many were teenagers or in their early twenties (interview, Chiorlu, 2012; interview, Ekanem, 2012; interview, Onwudinjo, 2012; interview, Iloeje, 2012; Uchendu 2007a; interview, Acholonu, 1993). In fact, the two leaders of the war were relatively young; Gowon was thirty-two years old and Ojukwu thirty-three. John de St. Jorre (1972: 373) noted: 'The war was fought by the early- and mid-thirties like the leaders themselves They scorned the older generations of politicians, lawyers and administrators who had failed old Nigeria and pushed them into the background.' The federal military attacks and the devastating impact of the embargo forced Biafra to surrender on 12 January 1970.

Consequences of the war and post-war Nigeria

It is estimated that between 2 and 3 million people died, most of them of Igbo extraction. There were also over 3 million displaced Igbo (Falola and Heaton 2008). Many of the civilian casualties died of starvation. As actors

and victims, the war affected the youth individually and collectively and in their positions as members of the military, paramilitary, and displaced and dispersed populations. So many lost their lives and others were permanently disabled. The survivors have constantly struggled with the horrors and scars of the war and many have passed on. Eastern Nigeria, especially Igbo homeland, suffered from enormous devastation and destruction. Its economy was in ruins.

Some of the Biafran young women and girls who were abducted by the soldiers as well as those who, as an economic survival mechanism, engaged in war 'marriages' through patterns of relationships with Nigerian soldiers of different ethnicities, had lasting experiences. A few of them were happily married after the war when their soldier partners performed customary marriage rituals to legitimise their relationships. One such woman became the first lady of Nigeria when her husband became the military head of state. These were the few lucky ones. For many wartime female partners of non-Igbo Nigerian soldiers, the relationships ended inauspiciously after the war, with residual outcomes that included embarrassment, destitution, broken hearts, stigmatisation and rejection by their Igbo relatives and communities. The experience was traumatic and they had to live with the humiliation and social stigma associated with that type of life. Sample quotes from those whom I interviewed between 1991 and 2007 illustrate their states of despair, decades after the war had ended: 'Look at me! Is this a life worth living?' 'Please, do not ask me about that war. I do not want to talk about it War is bad and should be prevented at all cost.' 'While we all went to hell during that war, only few of us came back alive ... we cannot be the same again.' 'I am like a living corpse, rejected by my Hausa husband and Igbo relatives' (respondents prefer anonymity).

Individually and collectively, the Igbo and other Biafrans did everything within their power to rehabilitate themselves and reconstruct their homeland. Many self-help organisations and community development associations sprang up for these purposes and were successful. The federal government, for its part, launched a programme of reintegration and rehabilitation centred on 'three Rs': Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation. As early as March 1968, it established the National Rehabilitation Commission to oversee the implementation of the programme (interview, Ogonnaya, 2003; interview, Olumba, 1993). Many Igbo personnel were reabsorbed into the civil service and military. Efforts were made to rebuild destroyed infrastructure, including public utilities and social services, but not to pre-war levels.

Having realised the destructive nature of ethnic conflicts, the federal government pursued policies that promoted national unity and security.

Emphasis was placed on programmes that would increase interaction, tolerance and understanding among Nigerians of different ethnicities. One such programme was the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC), established in 1973. The NYSC programme required graduates of tertiary institutions to engage in one-year compulsory national service in a state other than their state of origin. The goal was to promote national unity and integration through greater inter-ethnic interaction and understanding among Nigerian youth. It was hoped that the programme would help to raise a new group of highly disciplined and 'detrribalised' Nigerian youth, the future leaders of the country. The Citizenship and Leadership Training Center, Shere Hills, Jos, which was established in 1951 for youth with leadership potential, was modified in 1989 for leadership training, empowerment and character development among Nigerian youth (Federal Government of Nigeria 2009; Marenin 1979).

Many have commended Gowon's 'no victor, no vanquished' policy for helping to ensure the integration of the Igbo back into Nigerian society without government retribution, Igbo re-entry into the military and the civil service, as well as access to university education. Inasmuch as the above observation might be true, it is also important to note that it was the same government that pursued a banking policy immediately after the war that denied the Igbo access to their pre-war bank accounts in Nigeria, and offered those who deposited Biafran money in banks only 20 pounds, regardless of the amount involved. This policy was followed soon after with the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree (Indigenization Decree) of 1972 that naturalised foreign enterprises and assets in Nigeria. Only Nigerians with enough capital were able to buy up shares of the naturalised foreign firms. Financially, the Igbo were not in a position to bid for the auctioned enterprises. Thus, the cumulative outcome of federal post-war fiscal and economic policies for the Igbo was that they were pushed down from their pre-war commanding economic apex. They had to start from scratch to rebuild their lives, economy and homeland.

The Igbo also suffered from the 'abandoned property' issue, which was worse in Port Harcourt, the city they literally built (Chuku 1999; interview, Nwapa, 1993; interview, Nwogu, 1993). When the Igbo fled Port Harcourt as a result of the war, their houses and other landed property were either occupied or claimed by non-Igbo ethnicities of Rivers State (created in 1967). At the end of the war, when they returned to reclaim their property, they were informed that a body, the Abandoned Property Authority (APA), created by the Rivers State government in August 1969, had been 'vested with powers for the custody, control and management of every abandoned property within the [state]' (Tamuno 1972: 277). The Rivers State government gave persons claiming their property sixty days to register with authentic documents of

ownership. There was no measure taken to ensure that those who lost their property documents in the course of the war recovered their property. Having taken off during the war, the Rivers State government was faced with a scarcity of office buildings and other structures, and Igbo property came in handy. Such property was taken by the state permanently. The East Central State government (the only Igbo state created in 1967) was critical of the Rivers State policy on Igbo property and claimed that the people lost 5,600 buildings, undeveloped land, machinery and petrol stations in Port Harcourt and the surrounding areas. Ironically, the Rivers State government failed to disclose the list of Igbo property in the state (Tamuno 1972: 278). In a number of northern cities, such as Kano, Kaduna and Jos, many Igbo recovered their property and renegotiated their position in the new political and economic environment of post-war northern Nigeria (Anthony 2002).

While, undoubtedly, the war led to widespread popular resentment toward the Igbo, as many Nigerians blamed them for the war and its devastating impact, the Igbo had often felt a sense of alienation from the country and distrust of other ethnic groups. Consequently, the war strengthened ethnic ties and led to the proliferation of ethnic associations. Accusations of ethnic marginalisation increased in the country, as the economic and political conditions continued to worsen with many Nigerians feeling alienated from the state. It is not surprising that there has been a resurgence of ethno-nationalist sentiments and separatist movements in the country, a topic which is beyond the scope of this article

Conclusion

Young Nigerian men and women embodied complex identities as nationalists, political leaders, student activists, heads of state, military officers, coup plotters, scientists, administrators, civilians, market women and men, civil servants, unionists, security-guards and bodyguards. Through the efforts of many of them, Nigerians regained their freedom from Britain. When the political and military elites and their cohorts, who hijacked the state apparatus to entrench their privileged status and fan ethnic flames, exhibited a life of unlimited opportunities and affluence, alienating the majority of the population from the state and confining them to the margins of the society, it was the Nigerian youth that initiated a revolutionary process to overthrow them. They organised a bloody coup and counter-coup of 1966 against the elites. Nigerian youth were perpetrators and victims of violent acts. They responded violently to the ethnicisation of politics and the politicisation of ethno-linguistic pluralism and resource distribution engineered by the elites. They were instrumental to the outbreak of the war. The two heads of state – Gowon and Ojukwu – were

youths; many of their advisors and those who executed the war were mostly young men and women. At times, the youth had been manipulated by the elites, as we saw in the chains of violence unleashed against the Igbo and other easterners in the north in 1966.

Unfortunately, the problems that led to the outbreak of the war have not been seriously addressed. Segments of the Nigerian population believe in 'moving on' in the interest of peace and national unity. Those who subscribe to this view have neither bothered to ask nor addressed the serious question of why post-war Nigeria has witnessed the proliferation of ethnic separatist agitations and movements, phenomena that have been spearheaded by the youth. Rather than criminalise and brutalise the youth who engage in ethnically-driven political movements, efforts should be made to address their concerns and fears. If not promptly and seriously addressed by those in authority, the growing youth disillusionment and hopelessness, especially in the face of authoritarian, extravagant and exploitative dispositions by the state and its controllers amidst economic crisis, a high unemployment rate and increased poverty and hardship, could have a more destabilising effect on the country than can be imagined.

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***Operation Vijiji* and its Aftermath: Land Nationalisation, Villagisation and Disputes in Mbulu District, North-Western Tanzania, 1961–2006**

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Abstract

The Tanzania rural transformation policy, which was done through the nationalisation of the major means of production, *Operation Vijiji* and legal reforms, was one of the greatest socio-economic experiments in Africa. Expected to bring development to the majority of rural Tanzanians, nationalisation and villagisation have generated considerable land disputes in Tanzania over the past four decades. Scholarship on the Tanzanian land question has focused mainly on the lack of people's involvement in decision making and ecological change as major causal factors of land disputes. The link between nationalisation, *Operation Vijiji*, legal reforms and land conflicts has not received much attention. This article argues that the high incidence of land disputes in Mbulu District in northern Tanzania could be attributed to the poor and hurried implementation of land nationalisation and *Operation Vijiji*.

Résumé

La politique de transformation rurale en Tanzanie, qui s'est traduite par la nationalisation des principaux moyens de production, l'*Opération Vijiji*, et par des réformes juridiques, a été l'une des plus grandes expériences socio-économiques en Afrique. La nationalisation et la villagisation, censées apporter le développement à la majorité des ruraux tanzaniens, ont généré de nombreux conflits fonciers en Tanzanie au cours des quatre dernières décennies. Les études sur la question foncière en Tanzanie ont principalement porté sur l'absence de participation de la population à la prise de décisions et sur les changements écologiques, en tant que facteurs déterminants des conflits fonciers. Le lien entre nationalisation, *Opération Vijiji*, réformes juridiques et conflits fonciers n'a pas fait l'objet de beaucoup d'attention. Cet article

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affirme que le nombre élevé de conflits fonciers dans le district de Mbulu, dans le nord de la Tanzanie, pourrait être attribué à la mise en œuvre médiocre et trop rapide de la nationalisation des terres et à l'*Opération Vijiji*.

Introduction

Many land problems in postcolonial Africa are the result of colonial policies. Colonial states created inequalities and injustices in African land control and use, as well as the forceful transformation of peasants from subsistence agriculture to the cash crop economy (Moyo 2003; Elias 2014; Amanor 2007). Immediately after independence, African countries attempted to resolve land problems by redistribution, transfer, cost reduction or nationalisation of land (Viet 2011; Moyo 2003). The postcolonial government of Tanzania encouraged a freehold system and the nationalisation of all major means of production, including land. Julius Kambarage Nyerere, the president of the leading nationalist party, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), justified land nationalisation in 1958, arguing:

In a country like Tanganyika where Africans are poor and foreigners are rich, it is quite possible that within eighty or hundred years if the poor Africans were allowed to sell their land, all land in Tanganyika would belong to wealthy immigrants and the local people will be tenants. If we allow land to be sold like robes, within a short period of time there would only be a few Africans possessing land in Tanganyika and all the others would be tenants (Maina 1974; URT: Shivji Commission 1991).

After securing power in 1962, Nyerere's government nationalised land and vested control over it in the president as the executive head of the government (Mtwale 2000; Shivji 2001; Kauzeni 1993). Nationalisation aimed at abolishing the capitalist land ownership system so as to reduce the gap between large and small landowners.

Despite the postcolonial Tanzanian government's interventions in land matters through nationalisation, *Operation Vijiji*, land laws and policies as well as land dispute resolution mechanisms, land conflicts still persisted in the country. In examining the high incidence and persistence of land disputes in Mbulu, a northern Tanzanian district, this article argues that the Tanzanian government's interventions, which started under the leadership of Nyerere, did not produce the much anticipated socio-economic transformation or close the gap between different categories of land owners in rural areas. Rather than being resolved, rural land problems have changed in their forms and magnitude over the last four decades. The article historicises and situates land conflicts in Mbulu within the context of rural transformation programmes in Tanzania and other postcolonial African countries.

Historical context of Mbulu District and the land question

Mbulu District is among the five districts of Manyara region in Northern Tanzania. Other districts are Hanang, Babati Rural, Babati Urban, Kiteto and Simanjiro. Before the 1995 general elections, Mbulu District was part of the Arusha region, together with eight other districts including Ngorongoro, Monduli, Arusha Town, Arumeru, Babati, Hanang, Kiteto and Simanjiro. In 1995, a new district named Karatu, which had been a division of Mbulu District, was established. This study covers the old Mbulu District, before Karatu acquired new status as a separate district. The dominant ethnic groups in Mbulu District were the Iraqw, who constituted the majority group, followed by Datoga and Hadzabe who were minority groups (Marmo 2014).

The Iraqw community of Mbulu District historically obtained land rights through three major processes namely: allocation, inheritance and clearing of virgin land.¹ Land allocation was done by the traditional leaders called the *Kahamuse*. The *Kahamuse* were involved in the allocation of land to new immigrants and providing more land to families needing extra land. Land could also be transferred from one person to another. In Iraqw society, the rights of original land holders were very strong in the pre-colonial era. Land tenure was enjoyed by people who had formerly borrowed land from others, and usually, their occupancy remained undisturbed throughout their lives.

The Iraqw land tenure system changed over time. From the 1890s, it was undermined by the German colonial government (*ibid.* 349). Power over land allocation shifted from the *Kahamuse*² to the colonial administrators (*ibid.*). The changes in the land tenure system continued during the British colonial period. Throughout the Iraqw populated areas, the most serious damage to the land was caused by overgrazing.³ Three major reasons contributed to overgrazing. First, there was a rapid increase in the number of livestock as a result of improvement in veterinary facilities, which lowered the death rate of livestock. Second, the Iraqw desired to own larger amounts of cattle for prestige.⁴ Third, the Iraqw culture of lending cattle enabled each household to have access to a good number of cattle. This led to overstocking, which was intensified during the 1940s. The Iraqw's response to overstocking was two-fold; first, they moved with their stock to less overstocked areas, and second, they lent their livestock to people living in areas not experiencing overstocking. Such a process, however, did not reduce the pressure on the land. Communal grazing lands, which were ordinarily respected under customary law, were affected and in most cases many people were left with individual grazing land.

In the 1940s, the British colonial government introduced various modernisation campaigns in Mbulu District, which interfered with the allocation of both grazing and agricultural land. The Mbulu Development Plan (MDP) in 1948, for example, aimed at transforming rural societies from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture (Mpangala 2000). The MDP focused on various programmes, such as destocking, bush clearance and progressive farming (Raikes 1970). Bush clearance paved the way for the government's resettlement policy in the newly cleared areas, which disrupted the old procedure of land allocation under customary tenure. The so-called progressive farms affected the distribution and utilisation of land by introducing a new form of land allocation under directives given by the colonial government (*ibid.*). Despite the new colonial land tenure system, the Iraqw still referred to the traditional boundaries allocated by the *Kahamuse*. However, given the reality of colonial power relations, the position of *Kahamuse* was weak regarding land matters. This marked the beginning of the transformation from the traditional land tenure system to the new colonial land tenure system.

The 1950s witnessed an increase in the population of Mbulu District (see Table 1). Some people started claiming land over which they originally had rights. For example, people in central Mbulu reclaimed land in Kainam, which had a different agricultural cycle from that of Mbulu. Catherine Boone noted that the pressure on land had become too high in Iraqwland by the 1950s, especially in south-western Mbulu, from which further out-migration was impossible (Boone 2001). As a result, there was a return-flow of children asking their parents for access to their original farmland. People started to make contact with others beyond their villages. Furthermore, individuals' economic activities were not limited to their own villages. It was quite common in central Mbulu, for example, for a man to cultivate plots outside his own village, and some individuals even maintained fields in completely different areas. Some men living in central Mbulu had maize fields in eastern Mbulu. By the 1960s people of central Mbulu owned pieces of land in Karatu sub-district, which were over 70 kilometres away from Mbulu town.⁵ This partly disrupted the traditional tenure system because the original landowners were in a position to reclaim their rights and those who temporarily owned such land were forced to surrender it. However, disputes which arose from this process were easily settled by the *Kahamuse*. The foregoing discussion indicates that in the pre-colonial period the exploitation of land in the district was peaceful. It shows that the interventions carried out by the colonial government provided a foundation for land conflicts in subsequent periods.

Postcolonial state intervention: nationalisation and villagisation

Under Tanzania's nationalisation programme, economic activities were grouped into three categories: those restricted inclusively to state ownership, those in which the state had a major share and controlling power, and those in which private firms could invest with or without state participation (Shivji 1994). Following the Arusha Declaration of 5 February 1967, and the passing of the nationalisation Act of 1971, Nyerere's regime nationalised all banks and large industrial enterprises, including larger scale agricultural processing industries. Nationalisation adversely impacted land ownership and its utilisation. Reaction to nationalisation across the country was mixed. In Mbulu, some people supported the action, others opposed it. Poor peasants, who owned small pieces of land, supported the action. They expected to be given more land, and hoped that the gap between them and the large landowners would be reduced. On the other hand, the large landowners protested against nationalisation, on the grounds that their land would be confiscated without their consent (File: Basodawish Village 1974). This situation caused insecurity with regards to land ownership and control, particularly in the northern parts of Mbulu District. Small landowners started to grab land belonging to other people, on the grounds that land was national property, '*ardhi ni maliya umma*'.⁶ Oral accounts indicate that land disputes in this period intensified. The local authorities under the *Kahamuse* did not cooperate with the government because their authority over land allocation and distribution was no longer recognised.⁷ Putting land into the hands of the central government and ignoring the role of traditional leaders jeopardized the indigenous right to own land. It planted the seeds of land disputes in different parts of the district.

Nationalisation was followed by *Operation Vijiji*, the compulsory resettlement of the people in planned villages, which took place between 1973 and 1976 (Lawi 2000). *Operation Vijiji* involved large-scale relocation of peasants and pastoralists into villages, in order to encourage communal life. To implement the relocation, the government took the initiative of selecting and demarcating sites where people would be re-located (URT: Shivji Commission, 1991). By the end of 1976, a larger part of the population in mainland Tanzania had been resettled in nucleated villages (Lawi 2000: 319). *Operation Vijiji* also involved land allocation without any formal procedures. This resulted in widespread confusion over the land tenure system in rural areas because the security of people's customary rights had been threatened (Shivji 1994). The government did not delegate any power to the village authorities to control and allocate land and there were no clear guidelines on how to protect new owners who obtained land under *Operation Vijiji*.

In Mbulu District, *Operation Vijiji* was implemented by the District Operation Committee (DOC), which was given the mandate to distribute and allocate land to the villagers. The process was carried out in an oppressive fashion. People were brutally shifted from their former homesteads to new villages, even during the night.⁸ Dean McHenry and Goran Hyden noted that people were forced to move immediately by state security forces, including the police, army and militiamen (McHenry 1979; Hyden 1980). People were rounded up without being given notice and dumped into villages without time to prepare shelter for themselves (*ibid.* 211). They were often ill-treated, harassed and punished in the name of TANU, the ruling party. Those who refused to move to *Ujamaa* villages were portrayed as backward or individualists (Hyden 1980). Their land was confiscated and reallocated to new applicants. People left behind their farms, houses, crops, livestock and other property. They were given notice to surrender their land to the new applicants. The justification given by the village leaders in many parts of the district was that all land belonged to the state. Thus, it could be allocated and re-allocated to villagers.⁹

Although the villagisation programme had good intentions, it ultimately failed. The decision to transfer people from their former areas to the newly designated villages did not involve local communities. Local communities in Mbulu District strongly opposed the programme because their old settlement patterns and attachment to resources had not been considered. In addition, the officials entrusted with land redistribution allocated it arbitrarily. After some time, those whose land had been confiscated discovered that the process was illegal and began to reclaim their land. The villages in Mbulu District most affected by the villagisation programme were Mbulumbulu, Kambi ya Simba, Rotia, Wheat Scheme, Qurus, Endamariiek, Endabash and Getamok.

Between 1979 and 1980, when *Operation Vijiji* ended, former landowners whose land had been confiscated and re-allocated to new owners took their cases to court. They claimed the return of their land. Issa Shivji argues that the success of some of these claims alarmed official circles as it constituted a reversal of the villagisation programme (Shivji 1994). In some areas of Mbulu District a few original owners, specifically those in a strong financial position, succeeded in repossessing their land through court action. Some poor people failed to recover their land as they could not meet the legal costs accrued during the court cases. So they gave up their rights. This caused fear and frustration among the people who were given the right to own land through *Operation Vijiji*.¹⁰

Another source of land disputes during *Operation Vijiji* in Mbulu District was embedded in the prerequisites for establishing a new development

village. One of the prerequisites was that a new village should comprise at least 250 households; failure to reach this meant they would be moved to a nearby village to fulfil that requirement (URT: Shivji Commission, 1991). This created three major problems. First, those who were shifted to nearby villages were mainly rejected because they were considered by the established residents as aliens. Second, the land which belonged to the people who were forcefully shifted to the nearby villages was later grabbed by others. This affected villages such as Lusittete, Upper Kitete and Slahhamo in Mbulumbulu Division. Third, the process of re-organising villages distorted traditionally established boundaries,¹² and these disputes were complicated by the lack of proper procedures and fairness in the demarcation of village boundaries. There were discriminatory practices in which certain villages were given priority over others. Respondents from different villages stated that grazing land was the main cause of disputes. For example, the boundaries between Maretadu Juu and Qamtanana villages on the one hand, and Maretadu Chini and Labay villages on the other, led to unequal distribution of grazing and open land for cultivation.¹³

In this connection, the boundaries established by the traditional authorities contradicted those established by the Village Operation Committee (VOC). In Gehandu ward, for example, the disputes between Titiwi and Qatesh villages was caused by the contradiction between the traditional boundaries established by *Kahamuse*¹⁴ and the new village boundaries created by the VOC. The centre of the disputes was Gurufa valley, which was formerly shared by both villages as grazing land. Similarly, the dispute between Harsha and Diyomat villages was over the *Mbuga* (the swampy area), which was used during the dry season as a grazing area by both villages before *Operation Vijiji*. This followed the fact that the demarcation established during *Operation Vijiji* alienated the people of Harsha from *mbuga* areas.¹⁵ The major problem here was that the VOCs had not involved the traditional authorities in the re-allocation of land. The setting of these boundaries was ordered by the district authority without considering the interests of the villagers and their traditional leaders. In some areas, for example, natural boundaries created in the pre-villagisation period, based on their ritual protection of the country and locally known as *maso aya*, were disturbed.

Many village boundaries established during *Operation Vijiji* were not demarcated scientifically. Boundary markers were improvised and involved such things as trees, ridges, rivers, planted sisal shoots and valleys. In some areas people even used graves or burial sites as markers, which were used to protect their land against invasion by other people. Initially, these

boundaries were respected since people were cautioned that *Operation Vijiji* was a government order, which could not be questioned. However, from the 1980s to the 1990s, land shortages led people to start questioning the boundaries and even to uproot boundary markers such as sisal plants.¹⁶ Even burial sites, which were respected by traditional Iraqw, were cultivated. This further intensified land disputes in Mbulu.

The creation of new boundaries affected the size and location of individual plots. Some people's plots were sub-divided in such a way that part of their land was in one village and another part in a neighbouring village. Disputes emerged because the people affected were not given adequate and proper compensation. People were silenced on the pretext that the operation was a government order, and nobody could oppose it.¹⁷ Such problems were experienced in the creation of boundaries for Daudi, Bargish Antsi, Isale and Wa/ama villages. Andrew Coulson, cited by McHenry, contends that *Operation Vijiji* was dominated by the interests of the bureaucrats who controlled its implementation (McHenry 1979: 213). Shivji and McHenry also argue that reliance on the party or state officials distorted the initial objectives and undermined the long-term success of *Operation Vijiji* (*ibid.*). For Benno Ndulu, however, the greatest problem of villagisation was the absence of political consciousness of both the village leaders and villagers, in that the latter always worked under pressure from above (*ibid.*). While the arguments of these scholars have much merit, it also needs to be pointed out that *Operation Vijiji* in Mbulu District was poorly organised. The programme did not consider socio-economic factors such as the size of families, the cultural values that connected people to their ancestors' land, or the quality of the newly allocated land. Some people were given poor land while their fertile land was grabbed or reallocated to others. It is not surprising that some people started to go back to their original land as soon as they had the opportunity, ignoring the allocation by the government. Others grabbed open land reserved for grazing.

During *Operation Vijiji* the government insisted that those who were given land should develop it. Those who failed to do so had their land confiscated and redistributed to new applicants.¹⁸ For example, in the southern part of the district, people with large herds of cattle shifted with their livestock to look for more open land and left the plots they were given during *Operation Vijiji*. When they returned to their former land they found new owners and engaged in disputes with them. The government also assumed that the land allocated to each family would sustain their lives. However, in some parts of Karatu, people moved with their herds to unoccupied areas such as Laja, Barray and Murus because the three acres of land allocated to them were not

enough to sustain their livestock and cultivation. When migrating, they left their plots to their relatives and friends under different agreements. Some leased their plots for an unlimited time, others agreed to exchange their land for crops, but others just left their plots to be freely used by others.¹⁹ However, with the increase in the value of land between the 1980s and 1990s, caused by what Kaijage and Tibaijuka refer to as the new economic opportunities engendered by economic liberalisation and crop marketing, disputes emerged (Kaijage and Tibaijuka 1996). People who had left started re-claiming their land on which leasees had already established themselves.

The Tanzanian government's plan to increase food production at village level during *Operation Vijiji* also became a source of dispute. Since the project needed a substantial amount of land, village governments confiscated people's excess land with the intention of opening 'Development Village Farms'.²⁰ But by the mid-1990s, these development village farms had collapsed in many parts of Mbulu District and the land remained idle.²¹ In response, the government began to re-allocate the land to new applicants without considering the interests of the former owners whose land had been confiscated by the village governments and used to open village farms. Many of the original land owners filed court cases against their village leaders.

During *Operation Vijiji* land disputes were also magnified by internal contradictions between government organs in the provision of land rights. The main contradictions were between village governments and Ward Executive Officers (WEOs). The two organs worked together to deal with land problems but contradictions emerged in decision making. For example, the WEOs would supervise land allocation without involving the village government,²² and the village government would make decisions concerning land matters without following instructions given at ward level. In this confused situation, land matters remained in a state of flux for a long time, and as a result people took matters into their own hands by grabbing any open land, water points or forest reserves. In a nutshell, *Operation Vijiji* was conceived and implemented arbitrarily by government officials without the consent of the local population. It also lacked proper scientific planning and gave rise to confusion and frustration for Tanzanians, especially the people of Mbulu.

Legal reforms, judicial deficiencies and bad governance

The Tanzanian government enacted a number of laws in the 1990s in an attempt to resolve disputes and court cases challenging the land dispossession during *Operation Vijiji*. The Regulation of Land Tenure (Established Villages) Act of 1992 abolished customary land rights, terminated the authority

of the ordinary court of law in land matters, and ended the proceedings pending in normal courts of law (Maina 1974: 30). In addition, the Act banned the enforcement of any court decision or decree in all land matters, and instead established tribunals with exclusive jurisdiction.²³ However, the High Court ousted the Regulation of Land Tenure (Established Villages) Act of 1992 as an unconstitutional piece of legislation in 1994 (Coldham 1995). The abolition of customary land tenure in Mbulu District intensified land disputes. Many people owned their land under the customary land tenure system. They feared that they might be evicted since the customary system of land ownership was no longer viable. Furthermore, the 1992 Act instigated land disputes in the district because many land cases remained pending, on the grounds that the Act had withdrawn the jurisdiction of the courts to hear those cases. People with land cases in the courts were requested to wait until land tribunals were formed. It took almost a decade for land tribunals to be established and start functioning officially.²⁴ By then, some people were already engaged in fights over rights to their land.

In response to the decision of the court concerning the Regulation of Land Tenure (Established Villages) Act of 1992 Act, two pieces of legislation were passed, the Land Act of 1999 and the Village Land Act of 1999. Among other things, this legislation vested the power to administer land issues in the Commissioner of Lands, who established elaborate procedures for the application, allocation and regulation of land, presumably to enhance transparency (Mtwale 2000). Section 5 of the 1999 Village Land Act vested the power of allocating land in the village assembly, to make land matters more transparent (Tenga and Mramba 2008). In Mbulu District, the law raised the consciousness of the people, who started to revive their old land cases that had been opened before the 1992 Act. These were the cases which were opened against the village leaders who had re-allocated people's land to other people or for whatever use.²⁵ Some people resorted to force to demand the return of their original land which had been taken during *Operation Vijiji* on the basis that they would be protected by the 1999 Village Land Act (Baker and Wallevik 1988; URT, Census 1988; Yanda et al. 2013). Others criticised some components of the Iraqw traditional land tenure system, such as the traditional land-leasing system and men's dominance in land matters. Section 5 of the 1999 Village Land Act gave the right of occupancy to anyone who used land for over twelve years. This contradicted the Iraqw community's customary law, in which people leased their land without limit. People reacted strongly to the changes by reclaiming land they had leased over twenty years ago, causing disputes between the original landowners and the new owners.

The 1999 Land Act also provided openness on land matters in the family. Iraqw men had historically sold land without involving their families. They sold land verbally by agreeing with the buyer without following legal procedures.²⁶ With the establishment of the 1999 law, Iraqw women, who had not been historically allowed to inherit land from their parents, began to challenge men's dominance in land-related matters. For example, land disputes took place between Harmi Gille and his wife in Daudi Division, and Fabian Tomas and his sister Devota Tomas in Gongali village.²⁷

Most of the cases in the primary courts remained land-related. Despite the fact that people could no longer bring to court cases to reclaim their land under the Regulation of Land Tenure (Established Villages) Act of 1992, they brought their land-related cases under other laws including criminal law. Such cases became a kind of metaphor for land disputes.²⁸ These court cases mostly involved people who were in a strong financial position and who filed cases alleging criminal acts, such as the uprooting of crops, burning of houses; and threatening behaviour, including the use of weapons. Such cases in some instances ended in people losing their land.

In 2002, land tribunals were formed with the intention of reducing the long chain of bureaucratic procedures for hearing land cases. Many land cases started to be settled at ward, district and zonal levels. Ward tribunals performed a mediatory function of securing peace and harmony and were a competent court of law that determined land disputes arising from the Land Act. On the other hand, the District Land and Housing Tribunal dealt with appellate cases and had jurisdiction over matters coming from the Ward Tribunals (Rwegasira 2012). The expectation of the people was that land disputes that had existed for over four decades would soon be ended. Contrary to such expectations, land tribunals at ward, district and regional levels made decisions on land cases without relying on evidence obtained from the village level. In Mbulu District, members of the land tribunals did not visit the sites in dispute, but were rather influenced by corruption.²⁹ Land tribunals at ward level sometimes undermined village government decisions. At the district level, decisions made by the ward land tribunals were also ignored, and poor people continued to lose their rights. The creation of land tribunals was a positive development because it brought services closer to the majority of the people who could not afford to pursue land cases in courts located far from their villages. However, the way in which land matters were handled revealed that the elders and the community in the areas in dispute were not involved in the decision making.³⁰ The top-down approach, which characterised decision making by land tribunals, tended to instigate rather than resolve land disputes.

Moreover, it was observed that in Qaru village disputes had emerged between the youths of the ruling party *Umoja wa Vijana wa Chama cha Mapinduzi* (UVCCM) and other villagers. The land which originally belonged to the villagers was reallocated to UVCCM in 1978. The villagers reacted by claiming that the land given to UVCCM was the property of their grandfathers before *Operation Vijiji* and had been re-allocated to UVCCM without their consent. However, by the 1990s, this dispute had degenerated into a physical confrontation between the two sides because the procedure used to settle the disputes brought about a clash between the judiciary and the village government. In 1991 the villagers were given back their land through a court procedure, which recognised their customary land tenure. However, in 1994 UVCCM appealed against the decision, based on Section 22 of the Regulation of Land Tenure (Established Villages) Act of 1992, which recognised land allocations made during *Operation Vijiji*, thereby undermining the legitimacy of claims made on the basis of traditional land tenure.³¹ There is generally a contradiction between the Regulation of Land Tenure (Established Villages) Act of 1992 and the traditional land tenure system, which led to the land dispute in Qaru village.

The available evidence shows that there was abuse of power by government officials at various levels regarding land matters in Mbulu District. The leaders lacked accountability, efficiency and transparency. In most cases, they were directly or indirectly involved in land allocation as well as in the alienation of large tracts of land for their own interests. Village and ward leaders, who were given the mandate to allocate land, used their administrative position to grab people's land for their own interests and allocate it to their families and friends.³² They protected people who obtained land illegally by allowing them to plant permanent crops to justify their ownership (URT: Shivji Commission 1991: 84). Village leaders also allocated land to people without documentation for future reference. Worse still, in areas where land allocation was documented, copies of documents were not given to the people concerned, and so land was easily confiscated due to a lack of evidence of ownership.³³ Paradoxically, the same village leaders were the ones who were responsible for settling land disputes, and consequently, villagers found themselves in a quandary.

Corruption and favouritism among government officials played a major role in instigating land disputes. During the setting of village boundaries and the allocation of individual plots, village leaders were corrupted and so they failed to take measures against those who had grabbed other people's land.³⁴ The dominant forms of corruption in many parts of Mbulu District included bribery in form of money, cattle, goats, crops and beer.³⁵

Corruption gave some people the opportunity to expand their land beyond their allocated boundaries, thereby causing dispute with their neighbours. Some village government officials deliberately violated some land allocation procedures in favour of one side. They isolated village land committees, cell leaders, councils of elders and neighbours during the allocation of land.³⁶

Some individuals in strong financial positions were able to influence the organs dealing with land matters so that the decision would favour them. Informants established that sometimes judgments were changed according to the amount of money given in the land cases concerned. One example is the dispute in 2000 between Qaru and Endabash villages over the village farm, in which rich farmers convinced the Endabash village government to allow them grab the land over which the Qaru village government had rights.³⁷ In some areas, village leaders forced people to pay them money so that they would be given fertile pieces of land.

These practices led people to have a negative attitude towards village governments. The evidence found in Endabash and Kambi ya Faru villages show that, between 1980 and 1990, good fertile land was allocated according to a person's economic position and his or her relationship with the village leaders.³⁸ However, in most cases, the informants blamed leaders at different levels for being corrupt and deliberately infringing the rights of other land owners. Similarly, corruption became a serious problem in the courts in Mbulu District. In some places, magistrates were given pieces of land in the areas where they worked.³⁹ Consequently, they favoured the people who gave them such land, or the leaders of such areas. Informants accused some village leaders of delaying resolution of land-related disputes for long periods, creating time for one of the contesting parties to legitimise the occupancy of the contested land by planting crops.⁴⁰ Therefore, village leaders were accused of turning a deaf ear to issues relating to land disputes. Such problems were observed particularly at village level, where the voices of the poor and women were not heard.

Village leaders also lacked consistency in managing resources and resolving disputes over land. For example, in the 1990s, the Endabash and Kambi ya Faru villagers were competing for the utilisation of the land along the Endabash River. The village government prevented Endabash villagers from grazing on or cultivating the river bank, but when the same area was invaded by Kambi ya Faru villagers, the government remained silent. This gave rise to land disputes along the Endabash river bank.⁴¹ A similar situation was observed during the boundary disputes between Basodawish and Gongali villagers. The land between the borders of the two villages was formerly conserved to control soil erosion. When the problem of shortage

of land intensified, Gongali villagers invaded the area and the government was reluctant to take any measures.⁴² This led to the Basodawish villagers' reaction of grabbing the same piece of land. This study observed that the governance system, particularly relating to land, was poor and this drove villagers to using shortcuts, including land grabbing, to obtain their rights.

Village leaders were also involved in the double allocation of land. This happened when there was a change in village leadership. The village government could allocate land according to its own interests but when a new village government came into power, those whose land had been wrongly allocated by the outgoing government could appeal to the new government, which had a mandate to re-allocate the land to the aggrieved party. Such cases were observed in Endabash and Gwandumehhi villages. In Gwandumehhi village, for instance, a piece of land which was allocated in the 1990s to Mrs Adam Kumbi was reallocated to Slaa Mighay in the 2000s.⁴³ This caused Mrs Kumbi to file a case against Mighay and finally, Mrs Kumbi was granted rights over the land.

Under the Land Acquisition Act of 1967, the Tanzanian president had power to acquire land if it was required for any public purpose (Maina 1974: 254). Public purposes include government schemes, industrial sites, social services and housing or needs of people or groups of people who, in the opinion of the president, should be granted such land for agricultural development (*ibid.*). However, where land was acquired under this Act, compensation had to be paid to the people whose rights were lost. The evidence gathered by the 1992 Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters in different parts of Tanzania showed that the compulsory acquisition procedures stipulated in the Land Acquisition Act of 1967 were not being followed, particularly in rural areas (URT: Shivji Commission 1991). In many instances, such land was put into private hands, contrary to the apparent reasons for its acquisition. Similar results were observed by this study in Mbulu District, where compensation was not paid in respect to land taken during the establishment of various institutions, such as churches, schools and government offices.

There was no dialogue or consultation between the government and the people during the establishment and setting of the boundaries of those institutions. In Tumati village, for example, four acres were taken from the villagers to establish a school but the owners were not compensated.⁴⁴ People developed negative attitudes towards the establishment of institutions. They feared that the expansion of those institutions would jeopardize their land rights and ownership.⁴⁵ There was an intense land dispute between the Tatoga people and district officials during the establishment

of Dirim Primary School in 1971, when the district officials used the state's coercive apparatus to evict a number of people from their land without compensating them.⁴⁶ The Datoga, under the leadership of Gidibisiye, reacted to the district officials in different ways, including physical fights and uprooting of boundary markers. In connection, this study observed that the compensation of land created new problems in some parts of the district. First, the land used for compensation was not free as it had either been reserved for grazing or it belonged to individuals who had obtained it through customary procedures. Second, the whole process of compensation did not consider the quality of the land given to individuals, as some people were compensated with plots of poorer quality than their original land.

The evidence found in Kainam and Aicho villages clearly shows that there was a dispute between the leaders of churches on the one hand and villagers on the other between the 1990s and 2000s. During the establishment of these institutions, church leaders agreed to compensate the owners of the land, but the church leaders were not faithful in fulfilling their promises. The main reason was that the church leaders used the camouflage of the church to acquire land for their own private interests.⁴⁷ Such a case happened in Kainam village, where the Roman Catholic Church was involved in a land dispute with Paulo Surumbu, who claimed to have been cheated by the church leaders.⁴⁸ In this case, Surumbu had been promised a new piece of land as compensation, but no such land was given. This made Surumbu angry and he ended up invading the land the church had been given. In Aicho village there was a dispute between Tluway Akona/ay and the followers of the Lutheran Church because the setting of church boundaries had allegedly been arbitrarily carried out by village government officials and church leaders without involving either the land owner in question or the neighbouring community.⁴⁹

The evidence gathered by the Report of Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters (in the United Republic of Tanzania 1992) in different parts of the Tanzanian mainland shows that, from the late 1980s, liberalisation encouraged foreign investors to invest in land (*ibid*: 23). This process intensified the demand for land in different parts of Tanzania. Investors always communicated with government officials at regional and district levels, who in turn instructed village governments to allocate land to them.⁵⁰ In Karatu, for example, the central government entered into an agreement with investors and allocated them land without consulting the people. In 1991, Prince Aga Khan was given twenty acres of land which belonged to Kilimamoja village. The land was requested from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. Village leaders were forced to allocate the land to the investor without consulting the people.⁵¹

This allocation to the Aga Khan did not take into consideration the future requirements of the rural community for land. Also, those who invested in the tourism sector were allowed to build their hotels, camps and restaurants on land formerly used for grazing. The villagers had no way of defending such land because of the already established notion that grazing land is public land. Observations made in Ayalabe and Tloma villages show that an investor was given a piece of land in 2000, on condition that he would provide social services to the people of the said villages under the programme called *Ujirani Mwema* (good neighbourliness). However, up until 2011, the investor had not provided any service as agreed. Respondents reported that the investor was not offering such services because he had already bribed some government officials who were enjoying the benefits at the expense of the villagers.⁵² These benefits allegedly included the provision of temporary employment for their relatives, as well as cash.⁵³

In Oldeani ward, large tracts of land were owned by settlers of Asian origin. While settlers used that land for various agricultural activities, such as the production of coffee, wheat and horticulture, the surrounding villagers had an acute shortage of land.⁵⁴ The villagers were allocated small pieces of land surrounding the settler's plots, but some were allocated very steep land susceptible to soil erosion. The villagers felt aggrieved because the investors controlled the fertile land in the area, and those who attempted to reclaim it were arrested and jailed.⁵⁵ This caused long-lasting grievances on the part of the local population against settlers of Asian origin in the area.

Socio-cultural dimensions of land laws and disputes in Mbulu

Apart from the Tanzanian government's policies and programmes, elements of Iraqw society and culture contributed to land disputes. These included gender-related issues, the inheritance system and domestic violence. These elements of Iraqw community and culture failed to cope with the changes in land policy and laws. According to Iraqw culture, the last born had the right to inherit the larger share of his father's land while the rest of the sons were given small shares or, if land was unavailable, allowed to be allocated land outside their father's territory.⁵⁶ The last born was favoured because he was responsible for taking care of the parents when they grew old.⁵⁷ With the increase in population and the rise in people's awareness of land laws, these land inheritance and allocation practices faced serious challenges. By the 1990s and 2000s, many Iraqw had started to challenge these practices and demand equality in land ownership and distribution of land to children.⁵⁸ Also, since some parents were reluctant to distribute their land while still alive, after their death, their children started fighting over land.⁵⁹

Breakdown in family structures, which could be attributed to increasing alcoholism and unplanned marriages, also caused land problems among the Iraqw.⁶⁰ This contributed to domestic violence. Men, who according to Iraqw tradition were the controllers of land, started to sell it without involving family members.⁶¹ Aggrieved women therefore started to claim the sold land, which created disputes with the buyers of the land, while transforming gender dynamics in the society.⁶²

Polygamous marriages among the Iraqw also led to land-related disputes. As in many other communities in Tanzania, polygamy was regarded as a source of prestige and wealth in Iraqw society. Resources were allocated to the wives by the husband, who could also distribute land or livestock according to his own wish.⁶³ Disputes emerged because a husband could direct a larger part of his land to be allocated to his junior wife without considering the number of children of his senior wife. He might also use his power to sell land belonging to his senior wife without involving her and without even informing the village government.⁶⁴ In some instances, disputes emerged among wives after the death of their husbands due to unequal distribution of land when the husband was still alive.⁶⁵

Gender-related issues also generated land disputes among the Iraqw. Frederick Kaijage and Anna Tibaijuka in their illustration of gender-based exclusion from land argue that, in patrilineal communities, about 80 per cent of total population disinherits their female children, on the grounds that they would be expected to marry into different clans and have children within those clans (Kaijage and Tibaijuka 1996). Even during *Operation Vijiji*, which was implemented in the name of socialism and egalitarianism, issues pertaining to land rights for women were handled in traditional ways. Among the Iraqw, men owned most of the resources and made most of the decisions over allocating land for the different crops grown by the family, renting land or hiring farm equipment. They believed that women's rights over land were derived from their husband's family once a woman gets married.⁶⁶ Widows were denied land rights due to their gender. Traditionally, a widow with children had a right to access farmland but in practice her rights to own land among the Iraqw were secondary.⁶⁷ Women with no children were denied the right to access land. Land belonging to a widow could be grabbed by her brother-in-law or by neighbours on the grounds that nobody could protect that land. Although land disputes caused by gender inequality were not so pronounced three decades after independence, they intensified between the 1990s and 2000s due to land shortages on the one hand, and women's exposure to the changes in land laws and policies on the other.

The experience of the 1980s and 1990s shows that the majority of stakeholders had little knowledge of land laws and policies. Since their establishment, the organs dealing with land matters, such as the village, wards and division were not given instructions on how to handle land-related issues, such as allocation, selling, leasing and inheritance. Many decisions were taken based on past experience. The criteria used for selecting village land committees did not consider leadership skills; rather, members were just elected through the influence of village chairmen and Village Executive Officers (VEOs), while others obtained the position through bribing voters.⁶⁸ At the ward levels, experience shows that the majority of WEOs, who mostly had a low level of education, ended up making wrong decisions, which gave rise to disputes over land.

The Iraqw people also had a habit of selling their land locally, without following proper procedures. For example, in the 1970s, land could be sold or exchanged on a friendship basis without any documentation. Some people who moved to other areas exchanged their original land for cattle, especially between the 1970s and 1980s when land was abundant in the southern part of the district. This did not create any problems during that period because land was not scarce.⁶⁹ By the 1990s, the practice of normal land sales started to create problems because land had become scarce. Those who exchanged their land for cattle demanded more payment. But because the agreements had been entered into only verbally, there were no grounds for compensation.⁷⁰ The land problem was also aggravated between 1990 and 2000, because people did not adhere to land laws or other procedures when selling their land. Observation in the primary courts shows that, with the increasing value of land, the new landowners refused to return the land they had obtained from the original owners, and since the original owners had no documentary evidence to prove their right of ownership, they easily lost such land.⁷¹

With the Iraqw expansion in the southern parts of Mbulu District, the Tatoga migrated further south, particularly to present day Hanang District to look for more open land. The Tatoga allowed the Iraqw to occupy their land on two major conditions; first, to preserve their burial sites, and second, to make annual contributions to the Tatoga, particularly during their annual ceremony known locally as *bung'e*, which took place at their burial sites. This was carried out smoothly in the pre-*Operation Vijiji* period, but from the 1980s disputes occurred between the two ethnic groups. This is because the Iraqw started violating conditions on the grounds that the agreement had not been documented. In some areas, some Iraqw had owned land for more than fifteen years and had rights of occupancy from the village governments.⁷²

Similar to other ethnic groups in Tanzania, the Iraqw believe that the larger the size of the family the greater its wealth potential. In this regard, factors which brought about population increase in the district included polygamy, the availability of food, especially maize, beans and millet, and the health services established in the district, which contributed to a reduction in mortality rates. The rapid increase of the population in turn led to the emergence of land disputes over grazing and agricultural land. This increase in the population continued to exist in the postcolonial period, as shown in Table 1, which shows the annual rates of increase as well as figures on population density.

Table 1: Population growth rate for Mbulu District 1948–95

Year	Population growth	Annual growth rate	Density per km ²
1948	72,528	—	9
1957	90,288	2.2% (1948–57)	12
1967	167,500	5.9% (1957–67)	21
1978	193,775	5.7% (1967–78)	25
1988	268,129	3.2% (1978–88)	35
1995	348,117	3.7% (1988–95)	45

Sources: Population of Arusha Region: The Report of the Regional Development Directorate, Arusha Regional Commissioner's office. See also Regional and District Population Growth 1967–1978, Population Density and Sex Ratio for Mbulu District, Tanzania Central Statistical Bureau (1957; 1967), Bureau of Statistics (1978, 1988, Arusha Regional Plan (1995/96), Diocese of Mbulu (1995).

Under such demographic pressure the three acres allocated to each family during *Operation Vijiji* were patently inadequate. This caused tension among the people over the land in Mbulu. It would seem that the government did not foresee the phenomenal rise in the district's population. Jonathan Baker and Hege Wallevik noted that population growth in the whole of Mbulu district in the 1980s was approximately 3.8 per cent per annum. In 1988, the growth rate indicated here was above the national average of 2.8 per cent per annum (Baker and Wallevik 1988; the United Republic of Tanzania, Census 1988; Yanda et al. 2013). Moreover, in the 2000s the district experienced tremendous growth in population due to the improvement in social services, low level use of contraceptives, good nutrition and immigration into the district (*ibid.*). This increase led to the expansion of agriculture into marginal areas. The result was the concentration of people on grazing land because the available amount of arable land could not sustain the existing number of households. Land for public facilities such as roads, conserved areas, sports fields and a water source was invaded by cultivators.

Land disputes were observed between livestock keepers and farmers in A/ri, Marang, and Dongobesh villages, where people grabbed grazing land and water sources.⁷³

Conclusion

The experience of Mbulu District under nationalisation, *Operation Vijiji* and legal reforms shows how rural transformation policies generated contestations over land resources. Tanzania's nationalisation policy and *Operation Vijiji* which were expected to bring hope to local communities, resulted in anger and frustration among the local population. The policy and its implementation did not take into account customary ownership of land, individual land rights, and pressure from landless people who used nationalisation to grab the land from wealthier farmers. Rather than resolving land problems, nationalisation and *Operation Vijiji* escalated hatred among the rural population and exacerbated disputes in Mbulu District. While the villagisation programme had good intentions to further socio-economic transformation of the rural population, its implementation was disastrous. It was unplanned, lacking clear guidelines, financially handicapped, hurriedly done, and poorly managed by corrupt village officials. The collapse of the villagisation programme turned out to be a major failure on the part of the Tanzanian government. Many people returned to their old villages and engaged in disputes with the new owners of their land. Consequently, Mbulu District experienced high levels of land conflicts from 1976 to 1990.

The Tanzanian government did not directly address the weakness of nationalisation of land and *Operation Vijiji*; instead it embarked on legal land reforms. In 1992 it officially abolished customary land rights through the Regulation Land Tenure (Established Villages) Act. It followed the 1992 Act with the 1999 Land Act which gave power over land allocation and control to the village assembly, and the Land Disputes Court Act No. 2 of 2002, which shifted land cases from the court of law to land tribunals. The tribunals were established in different wards and districts with the expectation of bringing legal services closer to the community. Despite these legal reforms, Mbulu District continued to witness land disputes caused by contradictory land boundaries, violation of land laws, and lack of attention to the socio-cultural aspects of the Iraqw people, especially in relationship to land ownership, land transaction and land use. The operations of the various laws have also exposed the inefficiencies of government's mechanisms in resolving land conflicts.

Notes

1. Interview with Onaay Sasiyo Guwangw village, 6 January 2012
2. *Kahamuse* (plural), *Kahamusamo* (singular)
3. *ibid.*
4. TNA: 305, Tanganyika Territory, District Book for Mbulu District, op. cit. p. 25.
5. Interview with Melkiadi Amma, Gwandumehhi village, 15 November 2011.
6. Interview with Fabiano Victoria, Sanu village, 9 November 2011
7. Interview with Joseph Uo, Endabash village, 20 December 2011.
8. Interview with Fabiano Victory, Sanu village, 13 November 2011.
9. Interviews with Melkiadi Amma, Gwandumehhi village, 16 November 2011.
10. Interview with Sabina Tahhani, Basodawish village, 19 December 2011
11. Mbulumbulu Division Office, File: Ardhi, Tarafa ya Mbulumbulu, 1980.
12. Interview with John Duwe, Upper Kitete village, 17 December 2011.
13. Haydom Division Office, File: Ardhi, Tarafa ya Haydom, Kata ya Maretadu, 1994.
14. The Kahamuse were the Iraqw traditional leaders who were responsible for allocating land to individuals.
15. Mbulu District Council, File: Ardhi, No.7, 1993, Letter of Complaints from Harsha Village to Mbulu District Council, 1993.
16. Sanu Ward Office, File: Ardhi, Minutes of Ward Development Council, 17th May 1991.
17. Daudi Division Office, File: Ardhi, Tarafa ya Daudi Kijiji cha Moringa na Bargish Antsi, Kijiji cha Wa/ama na Isale, 1993.
18. Interview with Melkiadi Matiya, Bashay village, 23 November 2011.
19. Bashay Ward, File: Ardhi: Uanzishwaji wa Vijiji Vya Ujamaa, Kijiji cha Bashay, 1978.
20. The people's participation in the village farms was compulsory and punishment was given to individuals who failed to do so.
21. Haydom Ward Office, File: Minutes, Kikao Cha Kamati ya Ardhi, Kata ya Haydom. Interview with Damiano Gabriel (WEO), Haydom, 28 November 2011.
22. Interview with Melkiadi Matiya, Steven Quintine, of Bashay village, 23 November 2011.
23. *ibid.*
24. The Office of Land Tribunals, Daudi Ward, Mwongozo wa Kuunda Mabaraza ya Vijiji na Kata, 2000.
25. Interview with John Paresso, Dongobesh Juu village, 22 November 2011.
26. Interview with Selina Ngoyai, Moringa village, 14 November 2011.
27. Daudi Division Office, File: Migogoro ya Ardhi kijiji cha Bargish, 1999, Gongali Village Office, File: Migogoro ya Ardhi kijiji cha Gongali, 2000; see also Gehandu Ward, Mwongozo wa Kuunda Mabaraza ya Vijiji na Kata, 2000.
28. United republic of Tanzania: Jarida la Jinai, Endagikoti Primary Court, Kuingia Kwa Jinai, K/F299, Sura ya 16 K/A, 26-2-1993. See also URT: Primary Court Endagikot, Shauri la Jinai No. 39/2002, Case: Kuharibu Mali, 1994.
29. Interview with Josephat Tarmo, Melkiadi Amma, Gwandumehhi village, 13 November 2011.

30. Interview with Joel Getagno, Dongobesh village, 12 September 2011.
31. Qaru Village Office, File: Migogoro Ya Ardhi, Kijiji cha Qaru, Tarafa ya Endabash, 1994. Interview with Richard Dawite, VEO Qaru Village, 19 December 2011.
32. Interview with Lawrian Mariray, Bashay Village, 17 December 2011.
33. Gwandumehhi Village Office, File: Migogoro ya Ardhi Kijiji cha Gwandumehhi, 1988.
34. Endagikoti Division, File No.3, Ardhi, Migogoro ya Ardhi Kijiji cha Hare/abi, (Barua za Malalamiko), 2000.
35. Interview with Josephat Tarmo, Maraq village, 16 November 2011.
36. Daudi Division Office, File: Vijiji vya Maendeleo Daudi-1980.
37. Interview with Emanuel Panga, Endabash village, 20 December 2011.
38. <?> Endabash Division Office, File: Vijiji vya Maendeleo, 1979.
39. Interview with Melkiadi Amma, Gwandumehhi village, 15 November 2011.
40. Qaru Village Office, File: Migogoro ya Ardhi, Kijiji cha Qaru; Ripoti ya Uavamizi wa Maeneo ya Watu kwanja, Kuvuruga Ugawaji wa *Operation Vijiji*, 1974/75.
41. Interview with Hotay Nanaqi, Joseph Uo, Timoth Ka/ay, Julius Tarmo, and Emanuel Panga, Endabash Ward, 20 December 2011.
42. Gongali, Village Office, File: Migogoro ya Ardhi, Kijiji cha Gongali, 2001. Interview with VEO Gongali, 19 December 2011.
43. Endabash Ward Office, File, Migogoro Ya Ardhi, Kijiji cha Endabash, Malalamiko Mbalimbali.
44. Endabash Division Office, File: Baraza la Ardhi Kata ya Endabash, Judgments by the Ward Land Tribunals 1990.
45. Interview with Zakaria War/e, Dongobesh village, 21 November 2011.
46. Interview with Steven Quintine, Bashay village-Mbulu, 23 November 2011.
47. Marang Ward Office, File: Migogoro ya Ardhi, Kijiji cha Gwandumehhi, 1984.
48. Gwandumehhi Village Office, File: Migogoro ya Ardhi, Malalamiko Mbalimbali, 1990.
49. Endagikoti Division Office, File: Ardhi No.3 of 2000, Conflict between the members Roman Catholic Church and Paulo Surumbu of Kainam Village.
50. Bashay Ward Office, File: Kijiji cha Bashay Karatu, Migogoro ya Ardhi, Barua Mbalimbali Kutoka Vijiji, 1998.
51. Mbulumbulu Division Office File: Ardhi, Tarafa ya Mbulumbulu, 1990.
52. Interviews with Richard Dawite Qaru village, 20 December 2011; Steven Qwaray, Ayalabe village, 15 December 2011.
53. Interview with Jamhuri Maganga and Amna/ay Tlatla/a, Oldeani village, 24 December 2011.
54. Interview with Robert Maganga, Oldeani village, 24 December 2011.
55. Interview with Amnaay Tlatla/a, Oldeani village, 23 December 2011.
56. TNA: 305, Notes on Land, Sheet No. 14 A, 1941.
57. Interview with Tahhani Dagharo, Moringa village, 12 November 2011.
58. Interview with Selina Ngoyai, Moringa village, 15 November 2011.
59. Interview with Melkiadi Amma Gwandumehhi village, 14 November 2011.
60. Interview with Damiano John, WEO, Haydom Ward, 28 November 2013.

61. Daudi Ward Office, File: No. 1, Kijiji cha Moringa, Kamati ya Ardhi, 1998.
62. Haydom Ward Office, File: Kijiji cha Haydom, Malalamiko ya Ardhi, Kijiji cha Haydom, 1991.
63. Interview with Finda Bura, Melkiadi Amma, of Gwandumehhi village, 15 November 2011.
64. Maretadu Ward, File: Migogoro ya Ardhi, Maretadu Chini Village; Haydom Division, Malalamiko Mbambali, 1992.
65. Interview with Teresia Qamara, Gongali village, 28 December 2011.
66. Interviews with Rejina Bura, Gongali village; Sophia Ammi, Ayalabe village, 14 December 2011.
67. Interviews with Teresia Bura, Maretadu Juu village, 29 November 2011; Juliana Basso, Endabash village, 20 December 2011.
68. Interview with Melkiadi Matia, Bashay village, 23 November 2011.
69. Interview, with Tahhani Daqaro, Moringa village, 15 November 2011.
70. Interview with Damiano Gabriel, Hydrom Ward, 28 November 2011.
71. Endagikoti Primary Court, File: URT, Jalada la Wadaawa, Madai, Mahakama ya Endagikoti-Mbulu, Madai ya Shamba Ekari 1, 1992.
72. Haydom Ward Office, File: Baraza la Ardhi, Kata ya Hydrom, Mbulu, 2001.
73. Dongobesh Division Office, File: KT/DO/KJI/MU/31/ Station- Dongobesh: Subject, Kijiji cha Bashay, 1998; File: Migogoro ya Ardhi Kijiji cha Gwandumehhi, 2000.

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Le minbar de la dispute ou l'affaire de la « grande mosquée » de Bakel (1995-1996)

Saliou dit Baba Diallo*

Résumé

Entre 1995 et 1996, un violent conflit religieux a éclaté à Bakel (Sénégal), mettant en opposition les familles qui détiennent, depuis longtemps, le monopole de la vie religieuse de cette cité, plus exactement (sic) celle du quartier de Modinkané (situé au nord de la ville). Ce qui est en jeu, c'est la direction de la grande mosquée de Bakel, notamment la désignation de l'imam (guide religieux). La dispute a entraîné la fermeture momentanée de la mosquée par l'administration préfectorale. Cette crise constitue un des signes annonciateurs de changements du champ religieux de cette ville. Ainsi, à partir d'une approche inspirée de la « micro-histoire » (Ginzburg et Poni 1981 ; Rosental 1999) et d'une « histoire au ras-du-sol » (Revel 1996), cet article, tout en privilégiant le récit, interroge les dynamiques et les enjeux du « fait religieux » (Durkheim 2007), en particulier celui de l'islam, à l'échelle locale avec comme fil conducteur deux paramètres constitués par l'instrumentalisation des réseaux de parenté et l'entrée en scène de nouvelles catégories sociolinguistiques, et met en perspective la question du divin dans un nouveau contexte de « mondialisation religieuse » (Thual 2003).

Mots clés : Bakel, parenté, famille, urbanisation, mosquée, imam, administration préfectorale, vie religieuse

Abstract

Between 1995 and 1996, a violent religious conflict erupted in Bakel (Senegal) between the families that, for a long time, held the monopoly of religious life in this city, precisely (sic) in the neighborhood of Modinkané (located in the north of the city). The main issue was the leadership of Bakel's great mosque, particularly the choice of the imam (religious guide). The dispute resulted in the momentary closure of the mosque by the prefectural administration. The crisis

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is one of the heralding signs of change in the religious sector of this city. Thus, based on an approach inspired by “micro-history” (Ginzburg and Poni 1981; Rosental 1999) and “underground history” (Revel, 1996), this article, while favoring the narrative, questions the dynamics of “religion” (Durkheim 2007), in particular Islam, at the local level with as a common thread two parameters: the instrumentalization of kinship networks and the emergence of new socio-linguistic categories; and places the question of the divine into perspective within a new context of “religious globalization” (Thual 2003).

Key Words: Bakel, kinship, family, urbanization, mosque, imam, prefectural administration, religious life

« Ainsi, à cause de la bataille de deux petits lézards pour une mouche morte, modeste querelle dont personne ne voulut s'occuper, non seulement nos fiers amis le coq, le bouc, le bœuf et le cheval y laissèrent la vie, mais il en résulta un incendie, et une mort qui endeuilla toute la maisonnée... Seul le chien, fidèle à son devoir, sortit indemne de cette tourmente, et y trouva même une récompense inattendue... »

Bâ, Amadou Hampaté, 2000, *Il n'y a pas de petite querelle*, Paris, Stock, p.24.

Introduction

Le conflit est inhérent à l'histoire des sociétés humaines. Parallèlement aux images d'harmonie, d'interdépendance ou/et de pacifisme véhiculées de temps en temps, les sociétés humaines sont régies par des interactions qui nourrissent et produisent de la violence (Simmel 2015). En ce sens, le « fait religieux » (Durkheim 2007) ne fait pas exception. D'ailleurs, selon E. Durkheim, celle-ci se trouve être un des moteurs de l'évolution des sociétés humaines. Qu'en est-il alors de l'islam ? Historiquement, une double figure du musulman s'est constamment construite : d'une part, celle du conquérant armé, potentiellement tenté par le Jihad¹ (Kepel 2003) et, d'une part, celle du terroriste². Ce fantasme sera réveillé dans plusieurs situations historiques, depuis le Moyen Âge jusqu'à nos jours. Ce qui n'est pas sans précédent conflictuel (Ghasem 1984).

En Afrique, terrain sur lequel porte cette étude, en particulier au Sénégal, le processus d'islamisation a, en fonction des contextes et des générations, pris globalement deux directions. D'une part, s'amorce un circuit pacifique lié au « commerce transsaharien » durant la période médiévale (Mauny 1958 ; Cuoq 1984 ; Diop 2001) et, plus tard, à l'apparition des confréries soufies du XIX^e siècle qui constituent des réponses endogènes face à la domination coloniale (O'Brien 1971 ; 1981 ; Robinson et Triaud 1997 ; Babou 2011) et dont les attitudes pacifistes se retrouvent chez les leaders

de la « deuxième génération ». D'un autre côté, les rapports entre les élites locales religieuses, les élites traditionnelles et les puissances étrangères ont conduit à l'affrontement armé. Cette expérience tragique apparaît au moment de la pénétration des Almoravides vers le sud du Sahara au XI^e siècle (Benhsain et Devisse 2000), puis avec l'implantation des Européens au XIX^e siècle. Aujourd'hui, chemin faisant, le terrain africain est dominé par une prolifération des « mouvements extrémistes » qui revendiquent parfois des actions violentes. L'exemple du mouvement « Boko Haram » au Nigeria (Pérouse de Montclos 2018) est, à ce titre, illustratif.

À la lecture de travaux scientifiques et au regard de l'actualité, trois constats se dégagent. Le premier se décline par un schéma tripartite liant « élites traditionnelles, élites musulmanes et colons » ; et entre « réformistes, traditionalistes et confréries soufies ». Le second constat est relatif à l'établissement d'une relation de causalité entre les dynamiques de transformations internes et certains facteurs extérieurs (la colonisation, l'urbanisation, la migration, etc.). S'y ajoute un dernier constat relatif à la dramatisation du sujet religieux à travers l'actualité, installant un face-à-face entre les musulmans et le reste du monde. Qu'en est-il exactement de la vie religieuse des sociétés africaines à l'échelle locale ? Comment les acteurs religieux arrivent-ils à gérer une situation conflictuelle ? Quelle est la place de la famille dans les dynamiques religieuses ? L'héritage religieux traditionnel tend-il à disparaître au profit de nouvelles catégories religieuses « modernes » ?

Ainsi, il apparaît important de porter le regard sur les mécanismes internes du champ religieux à Bakel³. En étudiant l'affaire de la « grande mosquée » (1995-1996), nous sommes en mesure de questionner la nature et les limites du « contrat social » (Rousseau 2018) entre le temporel et le spirituel, la place des réseaux de parenté dans les dynamiques religieuses et les facteurs qui ont conduit au renouveau du champ religieux de Bakel. Nous formulons l'hypothèse suivante : la permanence des conflits religieux et les reconfigurations qui en résultent, comme c'est le cas dans l'islam, ne sont pas seulement liées aux conjonctures macroscopiques et extérieures, mais plutôt comme le produit de facteurs endogènes propres à ces « territoires islamiques ».

À partir d'archives publiques et privées, de sources orales et d'une documentation livresque, cet article examine les causes de ce conflit religieux, reconstitue la confrontation violente entre les différents protagonistes, questionne l'instrumentalisation des réseaux de parenté (maaremaaxu), de clientélisme (laadalemaxu) et d'affinité (xaanaxu)⁴ et pointe les enjeux du champ religieux de Bakel.

Les soubassements d'une vieille affaire

L'importance de la « longue durée » dans la compréhension des faits historiques et sociaux est appréhendée par l'historien Fernand Braudel (1958). Ainsi, il s'agit, à travers l'affaire de la « miiside xoore » (grande mosquée)⁵ de Bakel, qui a bien marqué la mémoire collective, de voir comment un recul historique permet de mesurer les tenants et les aboutissants d'une situation de crise. Cet « événement explosif » constitue un épilogue dans la longue histoire religieuse de cette cité. Il est vrai que le principal élément qui a opposé les différentes familles est la question de la légitimité dans la direction de la prière. Cependant, limiter la lecture à cette « prière du vendredi » d'août 1995 paraît réducteur. Car, comme le soutient F. Braudel, l'événement « s'annexe un temps supérieur à sa durée. Extensible à l'infini, il se lie librement ou non à toutes chaînes d'événements, à des réalités sous-jacentes, et impossible, semble-t-il, à détacher dès lors les uns des autres » (1958 : 728).

De prime abord, il semble intéressant d'interroger la nature et l'évolution des rapports entre le pouvoir spirituel et l'autorité temporelle à Bakel. En effet, jusqu'à la fin des années 1980, l'autorité religieuse était sous le contrôle des familles du quartier Modinkané. Cela remonte aux débuts de la fondation de Bakel, vers le XVII^e siècle, où s'est exercé le leadership des Kébé⁶ qui auraient remplacé les Bâ (restés à Diawara, village situé à une vingtaine de kilomètres de Bakel). Cette permutation entre les Bâ (premiers marabouts des N'diaye⁷) et les Kébé (Diallo 2016) s'est effectuée dans des circonstances peu éclairées. On ne sait pas précisément comment l'imamat⁸ a été confié par la famille N'diaye à la famille Kébé⁹.

La fonction religieuse s'est, au cours de la période pré-coloniale, élargie à d'autres familles de Modinkané. En effet, cette implication est liée en grande partie à la manière dont Modinkané (quartier des marabouts) a été créé (avant l'arrivée des Français à Bakel en 1818). Si les Kébé résidaient avec les N'diaye à N'diayega (fief du pouvoir politique), progressivement, pour des raisons d'une difficile cohabitation, semble-t-il, avec ces N'diaye, ils vont se joindre à d'autres familles maraboutiques, déjà installées à Modinkané. C'est la raison par laquelle la parenté et le religieux se sont entremêlés. Cela a permis à d'autres familles d'être associées à la vie religieuse de Bakel, avec souvent l'autorisation prononcée des Kébé. C'est le cas des familles Dramé, Diakhité, Sakho et Wane. Cette ouverture est facilitée par les liens de parenté tissés entre ces cellules familiales, par le faible effectif de personnes instruites parmi les Kébé¹⁰ et par l'ampleur du phénomène migratoire. Mais plus tard, l'installation de ces familles a provoqué un climat conflictuel. Ainsi, la parenté y a été à la fois un moyen de rapprochement et la source de

rivalités profondes dans le champ religieux où on assiste à une imbrication entre les logiques de parenté, de compétence (ou érudition) et de coutume.

Par ailleurs, l'implantation de l'administration coloniale n'a pas fait évoluer la coutume religieuse de Bakel¹¹. Entre 1927 et 1929, un conflit a opposé les marabouts aux chefs de village, autour de la réfection de la « grande mosquée ». Le commandant de Bakel d'alors a rapporté que les marabouts ont engagé des travaux pour modifier l'architecture de la mosquée sans avertir, comme la coutume l'exigeait, le chef du village de Bakel. Il semble que, dans de telles circonstances, la chefferie « n'aurait pas bien accueilli ce contournement. Car pour celle-ci la tradition devait être respectée et son avis compte »¹². C'est la raison pour laquelle elle s'est opposée de manière vigoureuse à la décision du commandant. Finalement, l'administration coloniale a jugé nécessaire de rester attachée à la coutume en donnant gain de cause à la chefferie villageoise. Mieux, elle imputa la responsabilité de cet épisode à deux interprètes et un brigadier-chef des gardes exigea même une mise à jour des fiches de plusieurs marabouts et d'écoles coraniques. Cette crise offre l'occasion à l'administration coloniale de réduire la marge de manœuvre de ces familles maraboutiques au nom de la nécessité de garantir la sécurité publique, de la nécessité de contrer la percée de l'enseignement coranique et d'affirmer sa volonté de christianisation. En un mot, d'asseoir encore mieux sa légitimité.

Dans les années 1950, une nouvelle crise religieuse porte cette fois sur le « cas Mpaly Wane »¹³. En effet, les Wane sont un groupe de marabouts qui entretient un lien clientéliste limité avec les N'diaye (Diallo 2016). Quant à Mpaly, il appartient à la septième génération de cette famille. Parallèlement à l'enseignement coranique reçu de son père, il a été un *cadi* (juge musulman) dans l'administration coloniale, avant d'être choisi comme imam pour remplacer temporairement, dit-on, Mamadou Sakho. Mais beaucoup voyaient d'un mauvais œil ce cumul de fonction. Et certains s'appuyaient sur la législation islamique, stipulant qu'il était impossible pour lui d'être en même temps un imam et un *cadi*¹⁴. Mpaly finit par quitter sa fonction d'imam¹⁵. Probablement, le fait qu'il ne soit pas issu d'une famille Kébé ou Dramé a accentué les critiques, voire précipité son départ.

Au lendemain de l'indépendance du Sénégal, en 1960, la crise religieuse refait surface. Cette fois-ci, elle oppose les familles Dramé et Kébé de Modinkané. L'atmosphère « post-coloniale » amène à imaginer que l'affaire de la mosquée a un lien avec la situation foncière à Bakel. Les conditions d'obtention du terrain de la grande mosquée restent toujours floues, car il est difficile de savoir si le terrain a été vendu ou offert à titre gracieux puisque cela a correspondu avec le départ des commerçants saint-louisiens de Bakel, dans les années 1940. Parmi eux, beaucoup ont vendu leurs terrains ou

les ont offerts¹⁶. Selon une version soutenue par la famille Dramé, Fodé Ladjji Dramé aurait acheté le terrain à titre symbolique pour en faire une mosquée. Une autre version précise que le terrain appartient à un certain Yéro Fall (maçon de métier). Ce dernier l'aurait donné aux populations de Bakel ; mais son offre serait conditionnée uniquement par un projet de construction d'une mosquée¹⁷. Aucune version ne fait état de l'appartenance du terrain à une famille Kébé. Au contraire, « tout le monde a sa part dans la grande mosquée¹⁸ ».

Dans les années 1970, l'architecture de la « grande mosquée » change. Anciennement construit en banco dans un style architectural soudano-sahélien, cet édifice en terre va être érigé avec du ciment sur une superficie élargie. Clôturée avec des bouts de bois, la mosquée sera encerclée par un mur en dur. De plus, avec l'évolution des moyens technologiques, une sonorisation installée, l'appel du muezzin devient plus aigu et ne se fait plus à simple et haute voix. Un minaret central a été érigé en dessus et donne à la mosquée un visage imposant. En vérité, cette initiative a été rendue possible grâce à une contribution effective des migrants, des populations de Bakel et des villages environnants. Parallèlement à la transformation physique, la mosquée dispose d'un nouveau cadre associatif¹⁹. Avec une délégation, venue de Dakar, ayant à sa tête El Hadji N'dioubou N'diaye, un cadre associatif a été créé. Il porte la dénomination « Association islamique pour la reconstruction de la Grande Mosquée de Bakel ». Elle regroupait l'ensemble des populations de Bakel résidant au Sénégal et à l'étranger. Avant la remise des clés de l'ouvrage et son ouverture, une assemblée générale a été tenue à Bakel pour fixer les modalités de fonctionnement de la mosquée et statuer sur la direction de la prière. À l'issue de la réunion, il a été décidé de mettre beaucoup plus l'accent sur la compétence, dans le choix de l'imam.

C'est à partir de ce moment que la situation échappe aux Kébé. Le climat de l'après-indépendance du Sénégal, l'éveil d'une conscience politique et l'influence des migrants internationaux ont certainement contribué à réduire leur poids dans la gestion des affaires religieuses. De même, le critère de l'âge est brandi au cas où les compétences sont égales entre les imams. Tiondy Dramé, candidat, a été choisi pour être imam. Il était le plus instruit, mais aussi le plus âgé. Par conséquent, son choix faisait l'unanimité. Ses suivants étaient Fodé Tarmata Dramé, Mabo Dramé et Samba Maimouna Dramé²⁰. Aucun membre de la famille Kébé n'y figure. Cette ouverture consacre les débuts de la fragilisation du pouvoir des Kébé et réduit leur marge de manœuvre.

On voit bien que la reconstruction de la « grande mosquée » et le choix de Tiondy Dramé ont installé un semblant de « démocratie » dans la direction de la prière, notamment celle du vendredi. Tiondy Dramé assura ainsi l'imamat jusqu'à son remplacement par Fodé Tarmata Dramé²¹. L'imamat est donc resté dans le cercle familial des Dramé. Ces dernières ont perçu ce transfert comme une transmission temporaire parce qu'elles considèrent les Dramé comme leurs maîtres²². Mais cette transmission annonce les débuts d'une confrontation entre les deux familles. L'informateur B. N'diaye déclare ainsi que « l'imamat refuse de sortir du cercle des Dramé²³ ».

C'est au moment de la succession de Tiondy Dramé dans les années 1970 que les prémices de la violence sont apparues. En effet, trois candidats étaient en lice pour succéder à Tiondy : ses deux cousins, Fodé Tarmata Dramé et Boulaye Bintou Dramé, et son fils, Ismaila Dramé. Finalement, c'est le moins âgé de ses deux cousins, Fodé Tarmata Dramé, qui a été choisi pour assurer l'imamat. Le choix porté sur Fodé Tarmata semble, du point de vue de la coutume, assez problématique. Car il n'est pas le plus âgé parmi les successeurs de Tiondy Dramé. Néanmoins, il est possible qu'un lien d'affinité et de complicité soit tissé avec Tiondy Dramé et qui dépasse les frontières de la parenté et de la séniorité. Ce que l'on sait, c'est que les trois protagonistes partageaient la même concession, mais ils n'habitaient pas les mêmes « follaque »²⁴. Cette séparation résidentielle est symbolique dans les relations familiales.

Le scénario de dévolution du pouvoir religieux de Tiondy Dramé ne s'inscrit pas dans le principe de la séniorité tel que lui-même l'avait hérité. Le mérite de Tiondy a été de ne pas transférer l'imamat à son fils Ismaila Dramé, ayant manifesté le désir de le remplacer. D'ailleurs, durant tout l'imamat de son oncle Fodé Tarmata Dramé, Ismaila Dramé a réfuté ce mode de dévolution du pouvoir religieux basé, selon lui, sur l'incohérence, c'est-à-dire ne reposant ni sur le droit d'aînesse ni sur la compétence. Il n'est pas étonnant d'entendre des témoignages faire état d'une « connexion » entre les deux candidats recalés, Ismaila Dramé et Boulaye Bintou Dramé ; les deux ne reconnaissent pas l'imamat de Fodé Tarmata Dramé, lequel passa, après son magistère, la « canne de l'imamat » à Mabo Dramé, d'une autre concession Dramé, qui est son neveu éloigné. Ce choix s'est fait au détriment de Boulaye Bintou Dramé. Ce dernier et son neveu Ismaila Dramé avaient vécu cet acte comme une mésestime, une défiance. L'argument des partisans de Fodé Tarmata Dramé est qu'Ismaila Dramé doit se soumettre au principe du droit d'aînesse. Il n'était donc pas question de lui céder l'imamat. Pourtant, ce n'est pas à travers ce même principe que Fodé Tarmata Dramé a reçu l'imamat. Boulaye Bintou Dramé a reçu le soutien de son neveu, Ladjji N'diabou Kébé, inscrit également dans la course²⁵.

Ainsi, l'image de « bien commun » du terrain de la « grande mosquée » de Bakel et la reconstruction de celle-ci dans les années 1970 auront de lourdes conséquences dans les choix futurs de l'imam puisque toutes les couches des populations ont désormais la voix au chapitre. Le relatif consensus autour de l'imamat de Tiondy Dramé ne constitue qu'une parenthèse d'une crise frontale dont le réveil sera inévitable.

La violence physique sous l'imamat de Mabo Dramé (né vers 1920 et mort en 2004)

Dans un article consacré à la violence politique sous le régime d'Abdoulaye Wade (président de la République du Sénégal, de 2000 à 2012, appartenant à la confrérie religieuse dite « mouride »), l'historien Ousseynou Faye définit la violence comme suit : « l'usage de la force pour porter atteinte à l'intégrité physique de quelqu'un perçu comme obstacle (appelé adversaire ou ennemi), s'emparer d'une partie ou de la totalité de ses biens, ou le contraindre à exécuter la volonté manifestée par son semblable »²⁶. Faye ajoute que « cette façon particulière de recourir à la force est reproduite dans les rapports entre des groupes de personnes, entre l'État et ses administrés, entre deux ou plusieurs États ou non en coalitions »²⁷.

À l'échelle locale, notamment à Bakel, la forme de violence sur laquelle on mettra l'accent est celle qui apparaît dans le champ religieux. Et les acteurs concernés sont issus des familles impliquées dans la gestion de la vie religieuse de la cité. En effet, si la violence politique au Sénégal a atteint son summum avec le régime du *sopi*, comme le montre O. Faye, on peut s'autoriser à dire, dans le contexte de Bakel et sous l'angle religieux²⁸, c'est sous l'imamat de Mabo Dramé, que la violence, en tout cas physique, surgit entre les différents acteurs religieux, qui ont jusque-là su trouver un compromis avec le sujet religieux à travers leurs rapports de parenté. Comment en est-on arrivé à ce niveau de violence alors ? Il semble d'ailleurs que Mabo Dramé aurait lui-même décliné la proposition de succéder à Fodé Tarmata Dramé. Car il estimait que la morale et la tradition lui interdisaient de diriger une prière au détriment de ses « aînés »²⁹ comme Fodé Boye Kébé et Mamadou Sikhou Dramé. Mabo Dramé avait peut-être perçu au départ qu'en surclassant ses « aînés » et en contournant le principe de séniorité, il pourrait semer des germes d'une violence.

Dès 1994, Mabo Dramé, pour des raisons de santé, dit-on, a affiché sa volonté de ne plus exercer les fonctions d'imam. Lui trouver un remplaçant pour les cinq prières quotidiennes ne posait pas de problème. Il en est autrement pour la prière du vendredi, qui est chargée de plus de spiritualité, de sociabilité et de symbolique. Mais comment lire le scénario de dévolution imamal ?

C'est à partir d'août 1995 que la crise prend une tournure violente. Revenons sur le déroulement des événements. Le récit suivant, qui nous a été rapporté par Boubou N'diaye (un des témoins privilégiés), insiste sur les péripéties de cette journée³⁰ :

C'était un jour de vendredi vers 13 heures ; je ne me souviens plus de la date. Tu sais, comme chaque prière du vendredi, c'est un imam qui dirige. Il fait son sermon (khoutouba) avant d'effectuer les deux raakat (prières). Ce jour-là, c'était Samba Maimouna Dramé qui était chargé de diriger la prière du vendredi ; il a été choisi par Mabo Dramé, malade. J'étais à la mosquée ce jour. Il a commencé par faire son sermon. Jusque-là, il n'y avait pas de problème. C'est lorsqu'il s'apprêtait à commencer la prière que les choses ont dégénéré. Sur le coup, Ladjí N'diombou Kébé s'était levé. Je te dis que si cela ne dépendait que de lui, il n'allait rien faire. C'est son frère Tandian Kébé qui l'a poussé en lui répétant sans cesse qu'il n'a pas honte de voir une autre personne prendre sa place alors que celle-ci lui revenait de droit. J'ai entendu cela puisque j'étais assis derrière eux. C'est ainsi que Ladjí N'diombou Kébé s'était levé et s'était dressé devant Samba Maimouna Dramé. Il lui a dit qu'il n'y aura pas de prière ici parce que Samba Maimouna Dramé a pris la place qui lui revenait de droit. Samba Maimouna Dramé n'a pas réagi malgré l'empoignade de Ladjí N'diombou Kébé, aidé par son cousin Tandia Kébé. Ladjí N'diombou Kébé a tenu son cou. J'étais assis en face d'eux à 5 mètres. C'est comme ça que les gens se sont levés, ont crié leur mécontentement avant de désertier la mosquée. C'était une honte pour Bakel ce jour-là. Et la prière n'a pas eu lieu. À la prochaine prière du vendredi, la gendarmerie était intervenue. C'était triste pour l'image de Bakel. Moi je dis que Ladjí N'diombou Kébé avait tort, car il pouvait nous laisser faire la prière et parler de cette histoire après³¹.

À travers ce récit, on voit que le choix de Samba Maimouna Dramé pour diriger la prière du vendredi réveilla les rancœurs entre les protagonistes. En fait, ce n'étaient pas les compétences humaines et savantes de Mabo Dramé qui étaient remises en question dans cette affaire de succession, mais surtout les modalités de dévolution de l'imamat vers Samba Maimouna Dramé. Si certaines franges religieuses soupçonnaient Mabo Dramé de confier astucieusement l'imamat à son neveu Samba Maimouna Dramé, d'autres justifiaient le choix de Mabo par le fait qu'il craignait qu'en convoquant une réunion, la situation ne dégénère. Peut-être aussi que son état de santé ne lui permettait pas de gérer une situation de succession.

À ce propos, les profils et les trajectoires des trois potentiels candidats pour la succession de Mabo Dramé méritent d'être éclairés. D'abord, Samba Maimouna Dramé. Ce dernier serait né vers 1922. Après une brève formation à l'école régionale de Bakel (actuelle école Ibrahima Malal Diaman Bathily) et des études coraniques auprès de son père Mamadou Dramé, il alla poursuivre, à l'âge de 28 ans, sa formation au Soudan français

(actuel Mali), entre 1950 et 1955, avant de retourner à Bakel. Plus tard, il migre en Casamance puis en Sierra Leone où il pratique le commerce, enfin en France au début des années 1960. À son retour de France, Samba Dramé s'occupe de l'école coranique de son père, dispense des enseignements religieux et dirige une mosquée à N'diayega. Ensuite, il y a Ladji N'diabou Kébé. Celui-ci a passé une partie de sa vie en France en tant que travailleur migrant. À son retour à Bakel, après sa retraite, il dirigeait la prière dans une mosquée, située entre Modinkané et N'diayega et connue sous l'appellation de « komo misiide » (« mosquée des serviles », en soninké). Son cousin Tandian Kébé assurait également la direction de la prière dans une mosquée située à N'diayega, non loin du « saaxa xoore » (grand marché). Et enfin, Ismaila Dramé, né en 1943, est un arrière-petit-fils du marabout et résistant de Mamadou Lamine Dramé (1840-1887). Originaire de Goundiourou (Mali), la famille Dramé s'installe à Bakel dans la deuxième moitié du XIXe siècle. Dans sa quête du savoir soufi, Ismaila Dramé commence d'abord le « talim » (premier apprentissage) auprès de son père à Bakel, puis le « tarbia » (auprès d'autres maîtres) et enfin la « tarqia » (voie finale du soufisme). Cette quête du savoir l'amène au Sénégal, au Mali et en Mauritanie. À son retour à Bakel, il s'associe à son père pour gérer une université (« moysi ») qui forme une centaine de jeunes venus essentiellement du Mali et de la Gambie. On voit que les parcours de ces trois personnages sont hétérogènes.

Du côté des familles Kébé, certaines personnes estimaient que les raisons de santé invoquées par Mabo Dramé n'étaient qu'un prétexte. Elles ont également compris que sa maladie était une occasion pour elles de revenir au-devant de la scène religieuse après un moment d'éclipse. D'autre part, la succession de Mabo Dramé installe une fracture au sein des familles Dramé. En effet, Boulaye Bintou Dramé, qui avait le contrôle des prières quotidiennes, voyait en Ismaila Dramé le légitime successeur de Mabo Dramé pour la direction des prières du vendredi. Il voulait certainement user de son statut de doyen pour confier l'imamat à Ismaila Dramé. Si Samba Maimouna Dramé a accepté également de diriger cette prière du vendredi, c'est peut-être une façon de montrer qu'il comptait remplacer son oncle Mabo Dramé à court, moyen ou long terme et de saisir une telle opportunité pour asseoir sa personnalité. Les enjeux étaient énormes dans tous les cas.

Après une longue période de convalescence, Mabo Dramé rentre à Bakel. Toutefois, ce retour, au terme des soins reçus, et sa reprise de l'exercice des fonctions d'imam n'ont pas mis un terme aux concertations entre les camps opposés et aux soupçons. D'ailleurs, plusieurs réunions eurent lieu autour d'une éventuelle succession. Dans ces réunions, il s'agissait de mettre à jour les critères de désignation de l'« imam râtib » (pour la prière du vendredi et celle des fêtes religieuses).

En dehors des deux familles religieuses qui sont en confrontation, à savoir les Dramé et les Kébé, d'autres familles vont entrer en scène à propos du projet de succession de Mabo Dramé. Il s'agit des familles N'diaye, celles qui ont l'exercice du pouvoir politique traditionnel à Bakel. En effet, les N'diaye sont chargés, si l'on suit la coutume, de désigner un imam pour diriger la « grande mosquée » de Bakel. Or on a déjà souligné le lien de clientélisme qui existait entre les N'diaye et les Kébé. Logiquement, les Kébé voyaient les N'diaye à leur côté. Mais la position non moins ambiguë des N'diaye et leur choix porté sur Samba Maimouna Dramé ont exacerbé la crise. À la place du respect du pacte qui les liait aux Kébé, les N'diaye ont porté leur choix sur le critère de la compétence³².

Cependant, les familles N'diaye ne constituent pas un groupe homogène. Traditionnellement, les N'diaye avait un représentant à Bakel, à Dakar et en France. Il s'agit du doyen de la famille établi dans chacun de ces lieux. Il avait un second, généralement le frère cadet, qui le remplace en cas d'indisponibilité. Au moment de la crise, El. Hadji N'diombou N'diaye était le doyen des N'diaye à Dakar. C'est chez lui que se tenaient les réunions des Ressortissants de Bakel à Dakar. À Bakel, le doyen et chef de village était Samba Demba N'diaye, secondé par son cousin Samba Boubou N'diaye. L'information parvenait également aux ressortissants de Bakel en France. En fait, au sein même des familles N'diaye, notamment ceux de Bakel, certains affichaient leur attachement à la longue tradition qui les liait aux Kébé, et n'ont d'ailleurs jamais rompu avec eux alors que d'autres, comme ceux de Dakar et de France, étaient certainement plus progressistes.

C'est la raison pour laquelle N'diombou N'diaye s'est confié à Boubou N'diaye, son neveu, pour assister et surveiller Samba Demba N'diaye et Samba Boubou N'diaye. Car il avait émis des doutes sur leur capacité à faire face à la « pression » des Kébé. Boubou N'diaye, témoin et acteur de plusieurs réunions tenues durant la crise, faisait à chaque fois un compte rendu à son oncle N'diombou N'diaye. Dans une lettre³³ datée du 25 août 1995 et destinée à son oncle, au milieu de la crise, il critique sévèrement l'attitude des Kébé, soutient le choix porté sur Samba Maimouna Dramé, défend le critère de la compétence et met en garde également son oncle sur les conséquences d'un éventuel choix de Ladj N'diombou Kébé comme imam. Il déclare qu'avec ce dernier, « la mosquée se [viderait et] les gens [iraient prier] à Al fâla³⁴ avec, comme conséquence, notre discrédit total, d'où nous n'aurons plus d'autorité ici ». Boubou N'diaye ne s'est pas également empêché de dénoncer les intrigues de Tandian Kébé (cousin de Ladj N'diombou Kébé). Mieux, il estimait que Tandian Kébé jouait un double jeu, en rapportant tantôt la faiblesse intellectuelle de son cousin Ladj N'diombou Kébé (une

manière de valoriser son profil) auprès de ses détracteurs, en dénonçant tantôt son attitude contre Samba Maimouna Dramé.

À la lecture de la lettre de Boubou N'diaye, on ne peut pas manquer de remarquer que la position des N'diaye, en tout cas ceux de Dakar, s'éloigne de la vieille tradition d'alliance qui les lie aux Kébé. Le soutien des N'diaye à Samba Maimouna Dramé explique le mépris supposé ou avéré des Kébé à leur égard, eux qui avaient non seulement dénoncé leur ingérence dans les affaires de parenté de Modinkané, mais aussi émis des doutes sur l'impartialité de Mabo Dramé. Cependant, le fait que les N'diaye se soient basés sur la compétence ne signifie pas qu'ils ont rompu la coutume qui les lie aux Kébé. C'est le profil de Ladji N'diombou Kébé qui ne les agréait pas. La majorité³⁵ des N'diaye a émis un avis favorable à Samba Maimouna Dramé pour diriger la prière du vendredi³⁶. Ce choix est un signe de démarcation de la longue tradition qui les liait aux Kébé.

Il faut également rappeler que derrière les agissements, il y avait les descendants des (anciens) serviles, notamment le clan de « Mooni Sooxodi »³⁷, qui a apporté son soutien aux Kébé. D'après certains témoignages, ce soutien était teinté « d'opportunisme étant donné que ce clan n'a pas pu résister à la tentative de corruption de Ladji N'diombou Kébé, qui était aussi un migrant retraité, donc socialement nanti³⁸. » Pourtant, c'est une tout autre version que nous fait comprendre Djéri Cissokho, d'origine servile et appartenant à ce clan :

Le problème m'a trouvé à Moudéry ce jour de la prière du vendredi. Mais je peux en dire quelque chose puisque j'ai échangé avec mon frère Samba Djéry. C'est lui qui assistait à certaines réunions. Celles-ci se tenaient chez le chef de village. Notre soutien à Ladji N'diombou Kébé était simple. Nous n'étions pas contre un imam à Bakel, mais nous avons pensé que la succession d'un imam doit suivre les règles, c'est-à-dire la coutume. Déjà, nous n'étions totalement pas associés dans les réunions. Nous avons trouvé cela anormal. Voilà la raison de notre frustration dans cette affaire! Les gens de Moudéry étaient même venus pour résoudre le problème, mais les N'diaye les ont ignorés. Notre relation avec les Kébé est ancienne. Tu sais, c'est le clan "Mooni Sookhodi" qui réglait les problèmes entre les Kébé, mais aussi entre les Kébé et les autres groupes sociaux. Tout ce qui concerne les Kébé nous concerne. Et ce qui nous a fait mal est que les gens (les N'diaye) ne nous ont même pas convoqués pour choisir le successeur de Mabo Dramé. Avant de prendre le laadalemaxu (coutume) pour dire que c'est la compétence qui doit primer, il faut s'asseoir et discuter. C'est comme trouver une personne dans sa maison et la déloger sans pour autant l'avertir; c'est comme trouver une personne assise sur sa natte et lui dire de se lever du jour au lendemain. Les choses ne se passent pas comme ça³⁹.

En vérité, le soutien du clan des « Mooni Sooxodi » aux Kébé a deux explications. L'une est un attachement à la règle coutumière. L'autre a trait à un vieux contentieux qu'ils ont eu avec les N'diaye. Ce contentieux porte sur une « histoire de cuisine »⁴⁰. De fait, ce clan n'était pas partant pour la violation du double pacte, celui entre les Kébé et les N'diaye, mais aussi celui entre eux et les Kébé. Trouver un terrain d'entente à tout cela était éminent.

La tenue des réunions à la mosquée à la place de la concession N'diaye témoigne des doutes que le camp des Kébé avait émis sur l'impartialité des N'diaye, pouvant légitimer la candidature de Samba Maimouna Dramé. Plusieurs réunions se sont tenues entre la concession du chef de village et la « grande mosquée ». Après de multiples échanges, fut maintenue la candidature de Samba Maimouna Dramé proposée par Mabo Dramé, au détriment de celle d'Ismaila Dramé, chose que Boulaye Bintou Dramé considéra comme un énième affront. Pour atténuer le conflit, les clans serviles ont réussi à convaincre Ladjji N'diombou Kébé en lui recommandant « d'aller prier à la mosquée d'Al fâla »⁴¹. En revanche, la crise religieuse a accentué la détérioration des relations entre ce clan et les N'diaye⁴². D'ailleurs, celle-ci finit par s'élargir sur le terrain administratif.

Le transfert des réunions à la préfecture de Bakel témoigne de l'échec des voies de recours traditionnelles dans la gestion des crises à l'échelle locale. Jusque-là, l'administration locale suit le respect de la séparation entre le pouvoir spirituel et le pouvoir temporel. Cependant, pour gérer la crise, contrer la violence et contraindre les acteurs à la négociation, l'administration, qui s'est « autosaisie », a adopté une « position neutre », quand bien même celle-ci ne faisait pas l'unanimité⁴³. D'ailleurs, plusieurs réunions eurent lieu chez les N'diaye et parfois dans la « grande mosquée » sans que l'administration ne soit mise au courant. C'est lorsqu'un consensus était introuvable et que le conflit prenait une tournure inquiétante (du fait des propos virulents notés dans les échanges lors des réunions) que l'administration était associée.

Les procès-verbaux des 15, 19 et 22 janvier 1996 ne mentionnent aucun consensus entre les différents protagonistes⁴⁴. Le préfet d'alors, El Hadji Malick M'bodj, qui a insisté sur la gravité de la situation, estima que la crise avait pris une dimension nationale parce qu'elle était rapportée par la presse. Ces documents indiquent que l'autorité municipale avait défendu l'ancienne règle remontant en 1886, celle du plus âgé parmi les instruits. À partir de cette position, deux camps se sont opposés : l'un qui défend la clause de 1886 et l'autre camp se référa à la coutume. Dans le procès-verbal, l'administration a souligné la « position de sagesse » de Diaman Bathily dans la crise, notamment dans la retranscription des discours du

soninké en français, un choix sur lequel les Kébé ont émis des doutes du fait de la proximité confrérique et parentale entre Diaman Bathily et Samba Maimouna Dramé⁴⁵.

Par ailleurs, l'influence des masses a été déterminante dans l'affaire de la « grande mosquée ». C'est ce qui présente cette affaire religieuse comme une affaire de personnalité (dans le sens de charisme). Comparée à Ladjji N'diombou Kébé et à Ismaila Dramé, la personnalité et l'image de Samba Maimouna Dramé étaient appréciées positivement auprès de l'« opinion bakeloise ». En plus d'avoir l'avantage de parler plusieurs langues locales, il avait un niveau d'instruction plus ou moins élevé en français, développait des affinités avec d'autres groupes ethniques et était, dit-on, plus proche de la « masse »⁴⁶. En revanche, Ladjji N'diombou Kébé était jugé arrogant. Et la discrétion d'Ismaila Dramé « dérangeait ». Son cas était symptomatique d'une marginalité à la fois familiale et sociale. Déjà, il avait eu des contentieux avec plusieurs érudits, dont son oncle Fodé Tarmata Dramé.⁴⁷ Depuis l'incident avec son oncle Fodé Tarmata Dramé, Ismaila Dramé a cessé de fréquenter la « grande mosquée ». C'est dans ces circonstances que Fodé Tarmata Dramé s'était autorisé à « glisser » l'imamat à Mabo Dramé (son cousin), issu d'une autre « concession Dramé ». Ce deuxième affront isola davantage Ismaila Dramé. Les populations de Bakel voient en lui un marabout, certes brillant, mais qui se suffit et qui ne se déplace jamais « même pour présenter ses condoléances ».

Finalement, c'est Samba Maimouna Dramé qui sera choisi. Il exerça la fonction d'imam de la « grande mosquée » entre 1995 et 2004⁴⁸. C'est au même moment qu'il se rapprocha du personnel religieux de Médina Gounass (cité religieuse du sud-est du Sénégal fondée par Tierno Mamadou Seydou Bâ, appartenant à une des branches de la « tidjania umarienne »). C'est par l'intermédiaire de Diaman Bathily, un enseignant et fils d'Ibrahima Malal Diaman Bathily, également de ce courant religieux, que ce contact spirituel a été noué. À son retour à Bakel, Samba Maimouna Dramé garda le contact avec ses « maîtres » et assistait régulièrement à leurs activités religieuses, dont la plus importante est le « daaka »⁴⁹. Attaché à la « tidjania d'obédience omarienne »⁵⁰, il faisait ses prêches dans plusieurs langues locales, dont le peul.

Tout compte fait, il est pertinent d'établir une corrélation entre la crise interne qui a secoué et continue de secouer les familles religieuses « traditionnelles » de Bakel, et l'émergence de nouveaux mouvements religieux, qui s'éloignent du mode de fonctionnement gérontocratique des familles de Modinkané. En mettant plutôt en avant la jeunesse et la compétence, les membres de ces mouvements sont des lettrés arabophones formés pour la plupart au Sénégal, en Égypte et même en Arabie Saoudite. Ils soutiennent d'ailleurs s'inspirer du Coran et de la Sunna du prophète Mohamed.

L'ouverture du champ religieux de Bakel depuis les années 1990

Depuis la fin des années 1980, les signes d'une « crise » socioéconomique sont apparus dans la majorité des familles au Sénégal, précisément dans les grandes villes comme Dakar⁵¹. Cet environnement socioéconomique délétère laisse un terrain fertile à de nouveaux courants religieux et à certains groupes sociolinguistiques qui s'offrent l'occasion de s'affirmer socialement. À Bakel, l'émergence de ces courants commence d'abord par la quête d'un d'ancrage territorial. C'est ainsi qu'on assiste à la floraison de petites mosquées. Cette démarcation architecturale et résidentielle annonce les débuts d'un projet identitaire. D'ailleurs, les mots « fondamentaliste » et « islamiste » sont souvent utilisés pour qualifier cette nouvelle catégorie religieuse « réformiste »⁵². Pourtant, la politiste Mame Penda Bâ précise qu'« au sein de cette grande catégorie, se côtoient en effet des salafistes piétistes conservateurs, des réformistes modernistes et des activistes islamistes. On pourrait même parler de fondamentalismes au pluriel, tant les courants qui traversent ce mouvement suinté sont variés⁵³ ».

Au Sénégal, c'est dans années 1950, à travers la voie associative, que le réformisme islamique se développe. Des associations se sont distinguées dans ce sens, en présentant le réformisme islamique comme moyen de lutte et de libération au cours de la période de décolonisation. Ce furent les cas de l'UCM (Union Culturelle Musulmane) à partir de 1953 et de l'AMEAN (Association des Étudiants Musulmans d'Afrique Noire) dès 1954. À propos du réformisme, Muriel Perez-Gomez décline un triple objectif qui consiste à : « parfaire la connaissance de la religion musulmane, en respectant rigoureusement le Coran et la Sunna, promouvoir l'enseignement de l'arabe par l'ouverture d'écoles, et s'attaquer à l'obscurantisme et au fanatisme en critiquant les rapports de dépendance instaurés entre le Serigne (Shaikh confrérique) et son talib »⁵⁴.

À l'échelle de Bakel, le réformisme islamique émerge dans les années 1970. Il se n'est pas fait sur la base d'associations structurées, mais plutôt à travers de petits groupes d'amis ou de parents. À partir des années 1980, son terrain d'action s'élargit. Aujourd'hui, on y observe la présence de plusieurs courants religieux « réformistes ».

Le principal courant « réformiste » à Bakel est celui de religieux qualifiés de « gens d'Al Fâla » (« Al Fâla dounko » ou « Al Fâla sooro », en soninké). Ce mouvement prend forme à partir des années 1980 avec la création d'une « grande mosquée », appelée « Al Fâla miiside » (en soninké) et située à Bakelcoura. En 1984, un groupe d'anciens migrants, dont trois frères d'une famille Dramé (Samba, Bouna et Shiakha), entreprend son édification.

Cependant, la concrétisation du projet est rendue possible grâce à l'appui financier de l'Ambassade du Koweït basée à Dakar. C'est ainsi qu'une somme de soixante-dix millions a été allouée. C'est ce qui a permis à la fois l'érection d'une école coranique et d'une mosquée.

Dès lors que certains membres issus d'une famille Dramé (marabouts et nobles) étaient à l'origine de ce projet, il était logique, à leurs yeux, d'en avoir une légitimité dans son mode de gestion. C'est ainsi qu'une forme de « patrimonialisation sociale et religieuse » se met en place. Les observations faites sur le terrain indiquent un mode de fonctionnement qui ne s'éloigne pas d'une « reproduction sociale »⁵⁵. Naturellement, l'imamat est assuré par des Dramé. Et le premier « imam râtib » (la personne qui assure les prières du vendredi et des fêtes musulmanes) fut Shiakha Dramé. Ce dernier arrive à Bakel en 1979, à la suite d'une longue période migratoire (1961-1978) qui l'a conduit en Guinée-Conakry, au Congo et en Centrafrique. Avec les revenus du commerce, il réussit à acheter des terrains à Bakel, s'y installe et s'investit dans le commerce et dans la religion. À partir de 2002, Shiakha a été remplacé par Khalou Dramé, son neveu. À la suite du décès de ce dernier en 2013, l'imamat s'ouvre à d'autres jeunes dont Lassana Dramé et Abdoullah Dramé. La direction des prières quotidiennes reste, elle, ouverte à tous ; mais l'autorisation du doyen de la famille Dramé est une condition *sine qua non* pour y prétendre. L'enjeu se situe dans la prière du vendredi. À notre connaissance, celle-ci est dirigée par un membre issu de la famille Dramé. À cela s'ajoute le fait que les frais liés à l'électricité et à l'eau soient assurés en grande partie par la famille Dramé⁵⁶. Tout cela donne à cette famille une légitimité dans la gestion de cette « mosquée d'Al fâla ».

Par ailleurs, à côté des « gens d'Al fâla », apparaît un second mouvement « réformiste », celui des « Sounadounko »⁵⁷, ouvert à toutes les catégories sociales de Bakel. En fait, les « Sounadounko » ne se distinguent pas assez dans leurs pratiques et leurs comportements religieux des « Dawagumou » de France⁵⁸. Et aux yeux d'une certaine opinion, émanant en particulier des familles religieuses traditionnelles, ce mouvement est peu influent, voire minoritaire et souvent soupçonné de porter une revendication sociale conduite par les familles d'origine servile et artisanne. Dès lors, les « Sounadounko » se retrouvent jusque-là à la marge de la vie religieuse de Bakel. L'adhésion est loin de séduire. Leurs moyens financiers et matériels sont peu suffisants et le discours qu'ils véhiculent nourrit souvent de la méfiance.

Malgré leur faible effectif, les « Sounadounko » ont une capacité d'organisation remarquable. Un groupe existait déjà dans les années 1970 autour d'une modeste mosquée située à la Montagne centrale (sud de Bakel). Nos enquêtes orales révèlent l'existence d'une diversité de profils dans

ce groupe. D'ailleurs, la première mosquée qui porte leur nom aurait été construite par un membre de la chefferie du village, N'diombou N'diaye, un ancien navigateur dans la marine française. Sur le terrain, la sympathie de certains membres issus des familles religieuses de Modinkané pour ce courant est réelle. Cela traduit à la fois un conflit générationnel et une affirmation sociale ou/et identitaire. Certains jeunes issus de ces familles trouvent une reconversion dans ce mouvement et tentent d'en faire un moyen de revendication de leur autonomie puisque l'autorité religieuse est inscrite dans une logique gérontocratique.

Comparés aux « gens d'Al Fâla », les « Sounadounko » n'ont pas une mosquée d'une allure imposante. Quelques modestes mosquées sont à leur nom. En réalité, cette marginalité territoriale, liée à la faiblesse de moyens financiers, est synonyme de marginalité sociale et religieuse.

En dehors d'une relative différence liée à l'implantation résidentielle, des divergences dans le ton et l'orientation du discours persistent entre les « gens d'Al Fâla » et les « Soundounko ». Les observations faites sur le terrain sont à ce titre illustratives. Les seconds reprochent aux premiers d'avoir de la complaisance, voire d'éviter d'aborder certains sujets de société dans leurs prêches tels que les « castes et hiérarchies sociales »⁵⁹, la corruption, les comportements versatiles des chefs de villages et des hommes politiques, etc. En retour, leurs interlocuteurs leur reprochent la radicalité des discours tenus et leur « insolence de jeunesse ». Ils leur suggèrent de se limiter à des interprétations du texte coranique et des hadiths⁶⁰. En réalité, le problème ne se situe pas dans la lecture des textes. Il y a une sorte de jeu de transfert qui s'appuie sur des différenciations sociales et promeut les expressions identitaires dans le champ religieux. Par conséquent, la connexion entre la frange radicale constituée de personnes issues des catégories sociales inférieures et les « gens d'Al Fâla » n'arrive pas à prendre forme. C'est avec les familles de Yaguiné (un quartier situé au nord de Bakel dont la majorité des résidents sont d'origine servile) que le relais est visible.

Par ailleurs, malgré la percée symbolique des courants réformistes, l'islam d'ordre « soufi » est loin de disparaître à Bakel. Certes, l'« islam sunnite traditionnel » adopté par les familles de Modinkané est sur le point de s'essouffler. Cependant, face aux « Sounadounko » et aux « gens d'Al Fâla », deux autres groupes soufis affichent une stratégie de résistance : il s'agit, d'une part, d'un groupe issu de la « confrérie mouride » (Monteil 1962 ; O'Brien 1970 et 1974 ; Diop 1981 ; Babou 2011) et, d'autre part, d'un groupe partisan de la « Tidjiania omarienne » (Robinson et Triaud 1997 et Triaud 2012).

Commençons par les « Mourides », membres d'une confrérie soufie apparue au Sénégal au XIXe siècle en réponse à l'administration coloniale, centré sur un personnage, Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba (1850-1927) et prenant forme depuis la ville de Touba. Aujourd'hui, ce groupe, à la fois ethnique et religieux, est bien implanté à Bakel et gagne même du terrain. En effet, la présence des « Mourides » à Bakel s'inscrit dans la longue tradition migratoire wolof vers cette cité. Une première vague migratoire wolof s'effectue durant la période pré-coloniale avec l'arrivée des N'diaye, fondateurs de Bakel et chefs traditionnels du village. Les N'diaye finissent par se « fondre » dans la masse soninké. Une deuxième vague migratoire concerne les traitants wolof (originaires en majorité de Saint-Louis, nord du Sénégal) installés à Bakel durant la période coloniale (Diallo 2016). La présence de cette catégorie était en grande partie tributaire de la traite coloniale. À partir du moment où celle-ci disparaît, la visibilité des traitants s'est considérablement réduite. Néanmoins, quelques familles sont restées définitivement à Bakel. L'installation des commerçants « wolof-mouride » remonte, elle, aux années 1970. Donc, si l'on s'en tenait à la trajectoire historique de Bakel, différents groupes ethniques et sociaux ont acquis leurs places depuis les périodes pré-coloniale et coloniale (Diallo 2016), faisant ainsi de cette ville un « creuset d'intégration » (Noiriel 1988).

La particularité de la migration des « Mourides » est liée au fait que l'activité commerciale soit accompagnée d'une forme d'expression identitaire et religieuse. C'est par le biais du commerce qu'il faut situer et comprendre le poids économique influent des « Mourides ». L'on n'est plus à l'époque des « paysans de l'arachide » (Copans 1981), mais d'une élite commerçante qui parcourt plusieurs contrées du Sénégal et du monde. Aujourd'hui, le destin des « Mourides » est intimement lié à la mobilité commerciale, aux niveaux national comme international (Dozon 2010).

À l'échelle de Bakel, la religiosité des « Mourides » a été timide à ses débuts. Les pratiques religieuses de cette communauté se limitaient au sein d'une modeste « dahira »⁶¹ (espace résidentiel réservé à la formation, à l'enseignement religieux et à la prière). Pour se rendre visibles dans cette ville, quelques entrepreneurs « mourides-wolofs » ont décidé, parallèlement au commerce, d'aménager un espace plus large à leur nom, un peu plus au nord de la ville, au quartier des HLM. Les conditions d'obtention du terrain nous sont inconnues. D'après nos enquêtes de terrain, c'est au début des années 1980, sous le Khalifat de Serigne Abdoul Lahad M'baké (troisième khalif général des « Mourides » de 1968 à 1989) à Touba, que le titre foncier a été acquis. Les informations sur la structuration semblent précises. Serigne N'diaye devient le premier président de cette nouvelle « dahira » mouride de Bakel. Après son décès en 1983, la « dahira » connaît d'autres présidents,

dont Cheikh Diop, Abderrahmane Diohané, Abdou N'diaye, Ibrahima N'diaye, etc. Entre 1995 et 2005, la présidence était assurée par Sèye. Dans l'ensemble, la « dahira » reste relativement bien organisée. Les cotisations sont mensuelles. Les activités portent sur sa gestion, des conférences religieuses, des cérémonies de prières à la mémoire de leur guide spirituel Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba M'backé, etc. La principale activité qui mobilise les Mourides de Bakel est celle consacrée au Magal (événement annuel dirigé vers Touba pour rendre hommage à Serigne Touba). Il semble que les activités soient ouvertes à tous, y compris les populations de Bakel et des villages environnants. En ce sens, le sociologue Momar Coumba Diop a bien raison de souligner que la « dahira » remplit plusieurs fonctions : sociale, religieuse, économique et politique (1981 : 80).

À la fin des années 1990, l'implantation des Mourides de Bakel devient plus visible sur le plan territorial⁶². Ils disposent désormais de leur propre mosquée⁶³ dont les premiers travaux ont commencé en janvier 1997. Bien avant cela, une campagne a été menée pour collecter des ressources financières avec comme ambition de bâtir un grand édifice digne de leur guide Serigne Touba. Les travaux ont pu reprendre en 2001 après un arrêt momentané. Depuis son érection, le choix de l'imam n'est pas sorti du cercle des Wolof et des « Mourides ». L'actuel imam se nomme Amadou M'backé, un commerçant originaire de Touba.

Il est clair que la mosquée des « Mourides » de Bakel gagnera en influence avec le dynamisme de leur activité commerciale et l'importance grandissante de leur poids démographique. À cela s'ajoute le fait que leur migration à Bakel devient de plus en plus familiale, donc définitive. Aujourd'hui, la migration des « Mourides » à Bakel entre dans sa phase de sédentarisation, sans que les liens avec Touba ne soient rompus. De cet ancrage territorial à Bakel, l'on perçoit chez les « Mourides » un lien entre l'expression identitaire wolof, l'activité commerciale et l'identité confrérique islamique.

Parallèlement au groupe des « Mourides », une autre frange « soufi » apparaît à Bakel. Il s'agit de la « Tidiana oumarienne »⁶⁴. Ce courant religieux affiche son dynamisme à Guidimpalé, au sud de Bakel.

Le mode de fonctionnement de la « grande mosquée » de Guidimpalé⁶⁵ porte une imbrication entre les identités religieuse, territoriale et ethnique. En fait, une première mosquée existait dans ce quartier et serait édifiée en banco vers 1956 par Mamadou Lô, un marabout et commerçant wolof. La mosquée se trouvait, paraît-il, à l'intérieur de sa concession. Comment expliquer alors qu'un marabout wolof s'installe à Guidimpalé, aménage un espace religieux et forme des enfants à l'enseignement coranique ? Rappelons que Guidimpalé fut un « quartier wolof » au cours de la période coloniale. Il a été créé par

l'administration coloniale dans la première moitié du XIX^e siècle pour accueillir des traitants français et des familles saint-louisiennes. C'est dans les années 1960 que les Peuls deviennent « majoritaires ». D'ailleurs, l'identité wolof est prégnante dans ce quartier. Il n'est pas surprenant de voir les résidents parler à la fois wolof et peul. Des liens matrimoniaux se sont tissés entre les familles wolof et peul. À titre indicatif, Mamadou Lô avait enseigné et formé plusieurs jeunes d'origine ethnique diverse, dont Abdoul Diallo, Tahirou Fofana, Amadou Anne, Amadou Abdoul Diallo, Bocar Bâ et Amadou Bâ.

Le projet d'édification d'une « grande mosquée » à Guidimpalé se concrétisa en 2001. Les soutiens sont venus des migrants ressortissants de ce quartier, basés en Arabie Saoudite. Un coût de 30 millions de francs CFA a été alloué pour son édification. Sur la demande des notables du quartier, un nouveau site avait été concédé par la municipalité de Bakel sous le magistère d'Ousmane N'diaye. Des querelles politiques auraient retardé la construction de la mosquée. En ce qui concerne son fonctionnement, entre 2001 et 2019, période de ralentissement du projet, le choix de l'imam se fait par les notables du quartier. Plusieurs personnes ont assuré la direction. Il est difficile d'établir une succession chronologique des imams. Parmi eux, il y avait Mamadou Lô, Thierno Bachir Thiam, Amadou Anne, Thierno Amadou Sow, etc.

L'inauguration officielle de la mosquée de Guidimpalé, en 2010, ouvre une logique ethnique favorable aux Peuls. Les prêches de l'imam sont généralement prononcés dans les langues peul et arabe. Un disciple de Thierno Kalidou (un célèbre marabout peul connu pour ses dons mystiques et ésotériques) de Boutanda (Mauritanie), Thierno Amadou Bâ, dirigea la première prière du vendredi. Modeste édifice au début des années 1960, la mosquée de Guidimpalé connaît une ampleur considérable à la suite des travaux d'élargissement puis de reconstruction entamée au début des années 2000. Elle devient aujourd'hui l'une des mosquées les plus importantes de Bakel (Diallo 2016).

Cette constellation des lieux de culte témoigne du dynamisme du fait religieux à Bakel et d'un « pluralisme identitaire » où s'activent des courants religieux porteurs de divergences d'interprétations des textes religieux.

Conclusion

L'analyse des situations conflictuelles offre les clés d'une meilleure compréhension des sociétés musulmanes. Contrairement au discours de paix souvent véhiculé par les élites religieuses, ces sociétés sont traversées par des contradictions internes, pouvant prendre une forme violente, et par conséquent porteuses de changements. Néanmoins, en fonction des contextes et des sociétés, les conflits religieux sont vécus différemment.

À travers l'analyse du conflit religieux de 1995-1996 à Bakel, trois éléments de conclusion peuvent être retenus. D'abord, on se rend compte de la complexité de la fonction d'imamat. Autrement dit, dans certaines sociétés musulmanes africaines, comme c'est le cas à Bakel, l'accès ou le choix d'un imam pour diriger la prière (celle du vendredi en particulier) ne se limite pas seulement aux logiques de compétence, de maîtrise de textes coraniques et/ou d'une bonne formation islamique. D'autres paramètres entrent en jeu, à savoir l'identité ethnolinguistique, les réseaux de parenté, les appartenances confrériques, le charisme, les hiérarchies sociales, la séniorité, les affinités amicales et le clientélisme social. Finalement, on est en droit de se demander si ces « sentiers invisibles » (Ronsental 1999) ne prennent pas le dessus sur les paramètres centraux.

Ensuite, la crise de 1995-1996 a révélé la place essentielle qu'occupent les réseaux de parenté et de clientélisme dans l'accès à l'imamat. On a vu que ce paramètre a été constamment instrumentalisé par les familles reconnues pour exercer l'imamat, les Kébé et les familles qui détiennent le pouvoir politique, les N'diaye. Si, avec les Kébé, l'imamat s'est volontairement élargi à d'autres familles, avec les N'diaye, c'est plutôt la longue tradition religieuse qui a été contournée. Cette situation a fragilisé les familles traditionnellement reconnues pour conduire la vie religieuse de Bakel. Dans cette cité, le « contrat religieux » liant acteurs sociaux a été mis à l'épreuve et a abouti à une violence physique.

Enfin, à travers cette crise, on perçoit une reconfiguration du champ religieux de Bakel, qui s'ouvre de plus en plus à d'autres catégories sociales et religieuses. Cette ouverture rend l'espace religieux plus hétérogène. D'un côté, apparaissent deux courants réformistes, les « Sounadounko » et les « gens d'Al Fâla ». D'un autre, surgissent des courants confrériques soufis partagés entre la « Tidjania oumarienne » suivie par les Peul de Guidimpalé (au sud) et le « Mouridisme » observé aux HLM (au nord) et porté par des commerçants wolof.

En somme, l'affaire de la « grande mosquée » (1995-1996) montre à quel point la violence était inscrite dans l'histoire sociale de Bakel. Aussi est-il vrai que le rythme d'urbanisation de la ville de Bakel donne l'occasion à d'autres acteurs sociolinguistiques et religieux de s'affirmer, mais ce renouveau religieux est lié à une crise interne qui secoue les familles religieuses traditionnelles de Modinkané.

Notes

1. Deux sens peuvent être accordés à cette notion. Le premier est celui du combat armé (appelé guerre sainte). Un second sens renvoie à l'éducation et à la purification de l'âme.
2. Le XXI^e siècle semble conforter le constat de Durkheim sur la religion au regard de l'actualité sur la géopolitique mondiale. Le 11 septembre 2001, les États-Unis, première puissance mondiale, sont frappés de plein fouet sur son sol. Cet attentat, qualifié de « terroriste », est revendiqué par le groupe « Al-Qaïda » et se traduit par l'écrasement de deux avions sur les tours jumelles du World Trade Center à Manhattan, symbole de la puissance économique américain. Un troisième avion s'est écrasé aux environs du Pentagone, un autre symbole de la puissance militaire américaine. La suite de cet événement est connue. Le monde musulman devient la principale cible. Dorénavant, un lien entre l'islam et le terrorisme est établi. Cette thèse sera confortée par l'émergence de « groupuscules musulmans » qui revendiquent çà et là des actes terroristes à travers le monde.
3. La ville de Bakel est géographiquement située dans la partie est du Sénégal. Elle appartient administrativement au département de Bakel et à la région de Tambacounda. Éloignée d'environ 700 kilomètres de Dakar, la capitale du Sénégal, Bakel se trouve pour l'essentiel à la marge des grandes villes. Son poids démographique a évolué au fil des années. Et les données statistiques sont approximatives. En 1988, sa population a été évaluée à plus de 7 000 habitants. En 2000, celle-ci se situe à environ 10 000 habitants. En 2007, Bakel se retrouve avec environ 13 000 habitants. Selon les recensements de 2010, sa population est estimée à environ 15 000 habitants. Une diversité de groupes ethniques peut également être observée à Bakel. En effet, les Soninké sont présentés comme des populations agricoles, les Peuls s'adonnent à l'élevage, les Wolofs et les Maures pratiquent le commerce et les Bambaras s'activent dans la pêche. Bakel dispose aujourd'hui d'une dizaine de quartiers (Plan d'Investissement communal, Bakel, 2005-2010).
4. Ces vocables sont tirés de la langue soninké.
5. La grandeur, ici, ne fait pas allusion à la taille mais à l'ancienneté, puisqu'à Bakel, il y a aujourd'hui d'autres mosquées plus imposantes, comme celle des Mourides aux HLM et celle des Peuls à Guidimpalé.
6. Nos enquêtes orales ont révélé chez les Kébé de Bakel l'existence de deux catégories familiales. D'une part, un groupe de Kébé qui soutient venir du Djolof, en compagnie des N'diaye, et, d'autre part, des Kébé qui disent venir du Mali. Aujourd'hui, avec les échanges matrimoniaux et la circulation du savoir coranique entre eux, ils forment relativement un seul clan. La frontière originelle semble céder la place à l'idéal clanique.
7. Officiellement, les N'diaye seraient la première famille à s'installer à Bakel. Après une période d'errance depuis le Djolof, puis le long de la vallée du fleuve Sénégal, ils s'installèrent sur le site de Bakel et en devinrent les fondateurs. Ils détiennent le pouvoir politique traditionnel de cette ville. À propos du contexte et des conditions d'implantation de la famille N'diaye à Bakel, voir Diallo Saliou dit Baba, « Bakel,

- trajectoire d'une ville de la moyenne vallée du fleuve Sénégal » thèse de doctorat d'histoire, Université de Poitiers, 2015-2016, 564 pages.
8. « Du mot imam : personne ayant la qualité de diriger la prière puis, par extension, le guide de la communauté dans son ensemble » (M. Gomez-Perez 1998 : 144).
 9. Ce pacte ne se limite pas à la direction de la prière dans les mosquées de Bakel. Il se manifeste également en cas de décès (lavage du corps du défunt), dans les mariages (prières au moment de la validation religieuse des fiançailles) et dans les cérémonies d'attributions des prénoms. Il paraît que ce pacte renferme un caractère sacré puisqu'un membre du clan Kébé ne peut s'autoriser à verser le sang d'un membre du clan N'diaye (et vice versa). Le mariage n'est non plus autorisé entre eux sous peine d'être frappé de stérilité ou de divorce précoce.
 10. Les Kébé reconnaissent leurs limites religieuses devant les Dramé. D'ailleurs, ils considèrent les Dramé comme leurs « *xaaranmoxo* » (*maîtres ou marabouts*). *Cette allégeance est à la fois un signe de respect entre les deux familles et une preuve d'humilité intellectuelle. C'est à travers ce canon que l'imamat a été transféré aux familles Dramé. Plusieurs membres des familles Kébé avaient fait leurs études dans les concessions des Dramé. S'agissant de cette affaire, il est difficile alors de parler de confiscation de la part des familles Dramé. Il s'agit plutôt de la logique de compétence qui aurait pris le dessus sur la coutume.*
 11. Il nous a été rapporté, à propos de cette histoire d'imamat, qu'une divergence remonterait au conflit de 1886. Celle-ci aurait été résolue par El Hadji Mamadou Sikhou Tandjigora, originaire de Koughany, village situé à quelques kilomètres de Bakel dans le Guoye supérieur. Ce dernier avait proposé comme critère que le plus âgé parmi les érudits brigue l'imamat (Entretien avec Diaman Bathily, Médina Gounass, Sénégal, 27/06/2015).
 12. A.N.S : 2G28-56 : Rapports mensuels politiques (...), 1928. ; A.N.S : 2G29-82 : Rapports mensuels (...), 1929.
 13. D'après ce que nous savons, il est le premier de la famille Wane à exercer la fonction d'imam de la « grande mosquée » de Bakel.
 14. Entretien avec Mamadou Tarmata Dramé, 15/01/2014, Paris.
 15. Entretien avec Mamadou Tarmata Dramé, 15/01/2014, Paris.
 16. C'est le cas de la « concession Cissé ».
 17. Entretien avec Boubacar Fall, 27/06/2015, Dakar.
 18. Entretien avec Boubou N'diaye, 24/06/2015, Bakel.
 19. Sur la liste du procès-verbal, il y avait N'diombou N'diaye, Samba Boubou N'diaye, Demba Malalia N'diaye, Bakary N'diaye, Boulaye Khoudjédj Diakhité, Sikhou Boye Diakhité, Mamadou Kaou Diakhité, Yakhoubou Sakhou, Biagui Sakhou, Fodé Tarmata Dramé, Samba Maimouna Dramé, Ladji N'diambou Kébé, Tiondy Dramé, Mabo Dramé, Mamadou Boulaye Konaté, Samba Coulibaly, Samba Lamane Konaté, Mamadou Barry, Boulaye Wane, etc. (Entretien avec B. N'diaye, 24/06/2015, Bakel).
 20. Entretien avec B. N'diaye, 24/06/2015, Bakel.
 21. Pourtant, Ladji N'diombou Kébé était souvent délégué par Mabo Dramé dans les rencontres avec l'administration préfectorale (Entretien avec B. N'diaye, 24/06/2015, Bakel).

22. Toutefois, un proverbe soninké nous aide à comprendre le sens du discours des Kébé. Le proverbe dit : « Tiens-moi ma part de viande ne fait de toi le propriétaire de la viande » (en soninké « *Tiguiti in tiye ken ta gnaana tiye gumme* »).
23. Entretien avec B. N'diaye, 24/06/2015, Bakel.
24. La différence de « follaque » n'est pas seulement physique. Elle transcende les liens de parenté et établit une certaine frontière liée à la filiation.
25. Entretien avec Diaman Bathily, déjà cité.
26. Faye, O. (2013), « La violence au temps du Sopi », in Momar Coumba Diop (sous la direction) *Le Sénégal sous Abdoulaye Wade*, CRES-Karthala, p.153.
27. Idem.
28. En avançant cela, nous n'oublions pas le fait que la violence est déjà inscrite dans l'histoire de Bakel. À titre d'exemple, on peut noter la confrontation qui s'est passée entre le marabout Mamadou Lamine Dramé et les Français. Certes, on ne peut pas la qualifier de violence religieuse *stricto sensu*, mais plutôt de violence politico-religieuse. Car celle-ci se passe, non au sein des familles religieuses, mais entre les leaders locaux et l'administration coloniale. Voir Henry Frey, 1888, *Campagne dans le Haut-Sénégal...*, (chapitre V : « Opérations contre Mamadou Lamine Dramé »).
29. Ici, le terme « aîné » fait allusion à la parenté élargie.
30. Il faut préciser qu'avec l'absence momentanée de Mabo Dramé, les prières quotidiennes étaient assurées par Boulaye Bintou Dramé, d'une autre famille maraboutique. Il fait office d'« imam ratib ». Il saisit cette occasion pour défendre la candidature de son neveu Ismaila Dramé.
31. Lettre de Boubou N'diaye du 25/08/1995 adressée à N'dioubou N'diaye (le doyen des N'diaye à Dakar). Cette lettre permet d'avoir une idée du jour de l'affrontement physique entre les protagonistes. La lettre de Boubou a été écrite un jour de vendredi du 25 août 1995. Il a évoqué un vendredi passé pour parler de l'affrontement physique, ce jour serait logiquement le vendredi 18 août 1995.
32. À cette époque, le chef de village résidant à Bakel était Samba Demba N'diaye ; son frère cadet Samba Boubou N'diaye jouait le rôle d'adjoint.
33. Nous avons réussi à trouver une lettre dans les archives personnelles de Boubou qui fournit quelques détails sur le conflit.
34. « *Al Fàla* » est une autre « grande mosquée » de Bakel sous le contrôle d'une famille Dramé originaire de Diawara, agglomération située à quelques kilomètres de Bakel. Nous y reviendrons.
35. Cela ne signifie pas que tous les N'diaye étaient favorables au choix de Samba Maimouna Dramé. El Hadji N'diaye nous a confié qu'il était pour le choix d'Ismaila Dramé. C'est son statut de cadet qui a réduit sa marge de manœuvre.
36. Entretiens avec Samba Demba N'diaye (25/06/2015, Bakel), Samba Boubou N'diaye (25/06/2015, Bakel) et El Hadji N'diaye (10/12/2015, Paris).
37. Entretien avec D. Cissokho, 24/06/2015, Bakel.
38. Entretien avec B. N'diaye, 24/06/2015, Bakel.
39. Entretien avec D. Cissokho, déjà cité.
40. Entretien avec D. Cissokho, déjà cité.

41. Entretien avec D. Cissokho, déjà cité.
42. Entretien avec D. Cissokho, déjà cité.
43. D'après Samba Demba N'diaye, l'actuel chef de village de Bakel, plusieurs réunions étaient tenues dans sa concession, à la « grande mosquée » et à la *préfecture de Bakel*.
44. Procès-verbal de la réunion du 15 janvier 1996 (affaire de la « grande mosquée » de Bakel) ; Procès-verbal de la réunion du 19 janvier 1996 (affaire de la « grande mosquée » de Bakel) ; Procès-verbal de la réunion du 22 janvier 1996 (affaire de la « grande mosquée » de Bakel).
45. Procès-verbal du 22 janvier 1996.
46. Entretien avec Diaman Bathily, 27/06/2015, Médina Gounass.
47. Entretien avec Ismaila Drame, 07/07/2013, Bakel.
48. Entretien avec Mamadou Drame (fils de Samba Maimouna Dramé), le 09/06/2015 à Bakel.
49. Retraite spirituelle inspirée du soufisme consistant à s'éloigner du monde temporel pour lire le Coran ; il est instauré dans les années 1940 par Thierno Mouhamadou Saidou Bâ (1900-1980) et se fait à quelques kilomètres du village de Médina Gounass.
50. La Tidjania est une confrérie religieuse complexe à cause de la diversité des sectes qui s'y retrouvent. Fondée en 1782 par Cheikh Ahmed Tidiane, elle a connu une implantation vigoureuse au Sénégal au XIX^e siècle.
51. P. Antoine, P. Bocquier, A. S. Fall, Y. M. Guissé, J. Nanitelamio (1995) *Les familles dakaroises face à la crise*, IRD-ORSTOM, 209 p.
52. M. P. Bâ (2012), « La diversité du fondamentalisme au Sénégal. », *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 206-207, p. 2.
53. À propos de la classification des courants dans l'islam, voir Fabienne, Samson (2012) « Les classifications en Islam », *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 206-207, pp.329-349.
54. M. Gomez-Perez (2012), « Un mouvement culturel vers l'indépendance. Le réformisme musulman au Sénégal (1956-1954) », in D. Robinson et J. L. Triaud, *Le temps des marabouts...*, p. 523.
55. Sur les hiérarchies sociales en milieu soninké, voir Éric Pollet et Grâce Winter, 1971, *La société soninké (Dyahunu Mali)*, Bruxelles, 556 p.
56. Entretien avec Shiakha Dramé (14/06/2015, Bakel) et Demba Dramé (12/06/2015, Bakel).
57. Le préfixe souna est arabe. Il fait allusion aux propos et écrits du Prophète Mohamed et la racine « dounko » fait allusion aux membres en soninké.
58. M. Timéra (1996), *op.cit.*, p.190.
59. Sur les « castes » et hiérarchies sociales en milieu soninké, voir E. Pollet et G. Winter (1971), *La Société Soninké (Dyahunu, Mali)*, Bruxelles, éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 556 pages.
60. Recueil comprenant l'ensemble des traditions relatives aux actes et aux paroles du Prophète de l'islam Mahomet et de ses compagnons.
61. M. Gomez-Perez (1998) propose la définition suivante : « mot d'origine arabe signifiant « cercle » et qui désigne au Sénégal des associations diverses de croyants,

- formées selon les classes d'âge, les confréries et les quartiers pour des objectifs limités d'entraide. » – « Associations islamiques à Dakar », in *Islam et Islamisme au Sénégal*, Paris, Karthala, p. 150.
62. Entretien avec M. Sèye, 01/07/2015, Bakel.
63. Le modèle architectural s'inspire en grande partie de celui de la grande mosquée de Touba (ville religieuse fondée par Ahmadou Bamba, fondateur de la confrérie mouride du Sénégal).
64. Inspiré des enseignements d'El Hadji Oumar Tall, résistant et figure religieuse du XIXe siècle. Il fait face à l'implantation du contrôle grâce à sa résistance armée qualifiée de Jihad.
65. Entretien avec Mahamadou Amadou Diallo, 19/06/2015, Bakel.

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